

# TURF TWISTERS

## SEEING CIRCLES

**Question:** Recently our club built several greens, using sand and peat. Now we see many circles on the greens caused by fairy ring. Where did it come from and what can be done about it? (Indiana)

**Answer:** Fairy ring is not a turfgrass disease, but is caused by Basidiomycete fungi that live on dead organic matter in the soil. The spores have been in the organic matter and grew when the environment became favorable. Heavy thatch is also an excellent medium for fairy ring development. Occasionally, during wet periods, mushrooms are found about this ring of active growth. Most damage occurs during stress periods when the fungus removes most of the water from the soil and the grasses suffer from drought. Since the soil is extremely difficult to moisten at this time, holes must be punched around the ring and the area then flooded with water. This practice restores the grass, but doesn't kill the fungus. Only soil sterilization will do that. Some individuals report that wetting agents have helped to improve water penetration.

## ON THE LIP OF BUNKERS

**Question:** What grass do you recommend for the bunker "lip"?

**Answer:** There are several grasses that are suitable. These include bentgrass, Kentucky bluegrasses, zoysias, creeping red fescue and tall fescue. Tall fescue makes an awesome "lip." It does not weaken when subjected to drought conditions or sand dressings due to accumulative explosion shots. Another "lip" plant, that you might consider, one that is a weed elsewhere but is especially suited to these conditions is Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). It makes an attractive bunker lip since it forms a dense mat when mowed, it branches and roots at many of the joints and it has a heavy tough root system.

## THROUGH COLORED GLASSES

**Question:** We have noted when we renovate in fall that even when our "catch" of seeded grasses is poor and a new crop of *Poa annua* results, that our new *Poa annua* seems to survive better during any adversity the following summer. Am I looking at my world through "Poa's colored glasses," or is there substance to this observation? (New Jersey)

**Answer:** Your observations are keen and correct. We too have observed where thorough renovation is performed, the new *Poa annua* performs better than old, tired and worn *Poa annua*. There is something about seedling vigor, new growth, lack of thatch, etc., that together with soil cultivation improves chances for the new *Poa annua* to better withstand adversity during its first year. This doesn't insure that your *Poa annua* will absolutely survive any given summer, but it may help; and any *Poa* summer help is welcome, for those who wish to perpetuate *Poa annua*.