

TURF TWISTERS

BIOLOGICAL THATCH REDUCERS

Question: What's the latest on products marketed as biological thatch reducers? (Connecticut)

Answer: The idea seems logical, i.e., the introduction of thatch decomposing organisms to speed the decay rate. However, research data in most areas has been disappointing thus far. Better try on a small scale first.

SAND SIZE FOR BUNKERS

Question: Do you have any guidelines for selecting sand that is suitable for use in bunkers? (Missouri)

Answer: Sand particle sizes ranging between .25 mm and 1.0 mm have been satisfactory for use in bunkers. Particles larger than one millimeter (1 mm) have the tendency to remain on the putting surface; whereas, those less than 1.0 mm permeate the turf, causing little problems in mowing and keeping players from picking up pebbles from their line before putting. The sand should pass through a 16 mesh screen and be retained in a 60 mesh screen.

WHAT'S ALLELOPATHY?

Question: There are wars among nations, wars on the sports fields, wars among insects, animals, birds and all living creatures. Is there also war between plants? (New Jersey)

Answer: Yes indeed, there is warfare among plants and the term for it is allelopathy. In fact, VPI's *Plant Protection Newsletter* reports that just recently the Agricultural Research Service, U.S.D.A., sponsored a research planning conference on allelopathy at Starkville, Miss. Plants interact with one another by releasing chemicals which have a detrimental effect on each other. Such chemicals are released by leaching from foliage in rain water, decomposition of plant residues, or exudation from roots. This may explain the unexplainable weak spots often visible under trees.

As other examples, researchers and turfmen have observed the absence of *Poa annua* where ryegrasses predominate; and who can forget a takeover of good grasses by weeds; the constant battle between bentgrass and *Poa annua*; etc.