

TURF TWISTERS

IT'S NOT A SAINT ELSEWHERE

Comment: I can't agree with your answer to last January/February's query about velvet bentgrass for greens. Golfers love velvet! It thrives on neglect and is still beautiful. It has low fertility, low water, and minimum fungicide requirements. I've seen velvet greens over 50 years old and they are great! (Rhode Island)

Response: Well, we only said "velvet bentgrass should be on the endangered species list." We didn't advocate annihilation. Obviously it has its admirers and good points. But the fact remains that velvet is difficult to obtain today. It does have severe thatching characteristics, requires a strong topdressing program, is slow to recover from damage, and is prone to disease. It seems velvet is best adapted and accepted in New England. It is not a "Saint" elsewhere!

BUT WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Question: Why are turfgrass pathologists always changing the scientific and even our common names for turfgrass diseases? I find it frustrating, confusing and difficult to keep up with them! (Michigan)

Answer: If you're talking about *Drechsleria Poae* for Helminthosporium Melting Out; *Lanzia Sp.* or *Moellerodiscus Sp.* for Dollar Spot; *Bipolaris* Leaf Spot for Helminthosporium Leaf Spot; Necrotic Ring Spot for Fusarium Blight, and about a half dozen others in the past few years — we can only agree with your conclusion. However, at the recent American Photopathology Meetings, the scientists tried to standardize their terminology and the renaming of diseases. It appears to be a case of the more one learns — the less one really knows. For example, what once was Fusarium Blight may now be *Fusarium roseum*, *Fusarium tricinctum*, Fusarium Blight Syndrome, Summer Patch, Fusarium Crown & Root Rots or Necrotic Ring Spot! But what's in a name?

EXCEPT ON TELEVISION

Question: Tournament golf, especially as shown on TV, has had a tremendous impact on golfer's demands for ultra conditioning our course. Do USGA Championship courses maintain that level all year long? How? (Wisconsin)

Answer: It is virtually impossible to indefinitely sustain the ultra high turfgrass conditions developed for the major U.S. golf championships today (the U.S. Open, The Masters, the PGA, etc.). These courses, and we suppose all others scheduled for viewing on television, are the result of long (up to three years in some cases), careful planning, high, if not unlimited, maintenance budgets, and with the entire focus to bring course condition to its peak for one week. The era of having a golf course continually in modern U.S. Open condition is over!

But this doesn't mean high expectations and high standards of playability, day in and day out, are unreasonable and beyond us. Not at all. It just means the peaks cannot be turned into plateaus. Well, except on television!