

# TURF TWISTERS

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## WHEN HUMIDITIES ARE HIGH

**Question:** Last August, after two months of hot, arid weather the humidity levels rose significantly, and irrigation seemed to cause more problems than I thought possible. Any suggestions? (Illinois)

**Answer:** Sometimes it helps to rely on daytime hand watering under the conditions you describe. Adding water to a wet soil only compounds the problem of heat dissipation when evaporation rates are low.

## THERE'S A COMMON DENOMINATOR

**Question:** The Tifdwarf bermudagrass on my brand-new putting greens experienced many problems last summer. The greens consistently showed a purplish, mottled appearance normally associated with the low-temperature response of Tifdwarf, along with a very open-type growth habit. Did I buy certified Tifdwarf bermudagrass from the sod nursery? (South Carolina)

**Answer:** During the summer of 1988, the Southeastern Region became aware of and worked with a number of courses with the very same problems. All of these courses were supposedly planted with Tifdwarf bermudagrass, but it was not possible to achieve the level of conditioning they expected. After eliminating the possibility of problems associated with disease or other pests, nutritional problems and basic management practices, it was determined there was a common denominator; the bermudagrass sprigs used for planting were all supplied by the same nursery. The Tifdwarf was definitely an inferior type, and not the true Tifdwarf variety developed and released by Dr. Glenn Burton.

As for addressing the correct problem, there is really no alternative other than removal of the present bermudagrass base and replanting with certified Tifdwarf. This is truly an unfortunate situation.

## FOR A SIMPLE SAND TEST

**Question:** Is there any way to tell if the sand we are receiving for topdressing is the same we originally had tested at the physical laboratory? (Oregon)

**Answer:** In addition to visual inspection, a simple process will tell you quickly whether your sand is the right stuff. To ensure consistency, use a half-cup measure of the sand you originally tested that is of good quality. Place the half-cup of sand in a jar and add a small amount of Calgon water softener powder. Half fill the jar with water and shake it vigorously for one minute. When you stop shaking, the water will have a cloudy appearance that will vary with the amount of silt or clay found in the sand sample. Seal and keep this jar as a sample reference.

As each new load of sand arrives, you can perform this same test to determine if excessive fines are in the sand. If the newer material is obviously dirtier than the original, simply send the load back. It is vital that the end user avoid excessive fines in the greens and receive what is ordered.