

TURF TWISTERS

WHICH SHOULD I CHOOSE?

Question: The temperature of the water in our irrigation pond reaches 86 degrees on hot summer days. There is also a well on our property where the water temperature goes no higher than 68 degrees. Should I consider pumping water from the well to syringe and cool our bentgrass greens during the summer? (South Carolina)

Answer: A gram of 86-degree pond water absorbs 580 calories of energy, while a gram of 68-degree well water absorbs 586 calories. Since the difference is only 6 calories of energy, don't spend extra money to extract water from the well. As far as water temperature is concerned, it makes no difference where you get the water for syringing purposes.

GYPSUM OR SULFUR

Question: My course is located in the state of Arizona where high sodium levels in the soil are a problem. In surveying area superintendents, there seem to be two popular responses to this problem. Some apply gypsum (calcium sulfate) to add calcium to the soil, and others apply sulfur to lower the pH. Both the gypsum and sulfur are reported to lower the sodium buildup. Can you shed some light on this topic? (Arizona)

Answer: You are correct in stating that both the gypsum and sulfur applications help reduce sodium buildup. The choice in any particular location would depend on the soil chemistry of the site. Gypsum is prescribed when the soil has a neutral pH reading and the amount of measurable calcium is low in relation to magnesium and sodium. When sulfur is prescribed, the soil generally has a high pH reading and will release calcium when neutralized with an acid solution. In both cases the calcium level is raised, which reduces the sodium adsorption ratio (SAR).

FOR TOP-NOTCH TEES

Question: We are in the early stages of building a new course, and the grassing specs call for Tifgreen (328) bermuda to be used on the tees. What are the pros and cons of this grassing scheme? (Florida)

Answer: Tifgreen (328) bermuda has been used instead of Tifway (419) on tees at several courses in the South over the past few years. The primary reason for its use is that it can tolerate a mowing height of about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. While this characteristic makes it possible to provide top-quality teeing surfaces, Tifgreen does require a different maintenance regime. First of all, Tifgreen bermuda is less aggressive and has a lighter color than Tifway, and extra fertilization is required to maintain uniform color and a dense turf cover when subjected to heavy play. A second consideration is that Tifgreen tees have experienced some surface contamination after a period of time. Though most golfers never notice this situation, the presence of two bermuda types does complicate management (herbicide) programs to some degree. Thus, while Tifgreen bermuda can produce top-quality tees, it is not necessarily superior to Tifway bermuda.