

TURF TWISTERS

WEED-FREE PONDS

Question: My golf course uses effluent water for irrigation. The additional nutrients in the water cause many problems with algae growth in the storage ponds and ornamental lakes. What can I do to control the algae and maintain reasonable water quality in the lakes? (Nevada)

Answer: Your program must take several approaches. First, be sure that additional nutrients are not added to the lakes through fertilizer applications. Keep broadcast spreaders at least 15 to 20 yards away from lakes, and apply fertilizers with drop spreaders near the lakes. Second, provide adequate water circulation so that there are no areas of stagnant water. Next, a combination of physical and chemical control methods can be implemented. Investigate ozone injection, which has been reported to be very effective.

CAN ENHANCE

Question: One of the hottest items in our area is the new lightweight roller. I understand the potential danger of compaction, the uncertainty concerning the frequency of use, and the long-term effects from using lightweight rollers, yet do they really increase putting green speeds? Just how safe is a rolling program? (Virginia)

Answer: In concept, the rolling of greens is safe if done wisely. Without question, you can gain 12 to 18 inches with the Stimpmeter from the use of lightweight rollers. However, this increased speed is very short-lived (sometimes 12 to 18 hours). If you do not raise mowing heights, increase aeration, and topdress regularly, turf loss could occur. There continues to be concern about compaction over both the short and long term. These questions will be answered with time, so at this point a conservative approach would be wise. When used sparingly (two times a week) during the growing season, lightweight rollers smooth the putting surface, increase putting green speed, produce firmness and consistency, and have the potential of being a beneficial tool in a well-rounded putting green maintenance program. Rolling greens, as with any tool, can be used or abused.

GOLF COURSE QUALITY

Question: Our golfers are obsessed with planting trees in every available open area on the course. Several plantings planned for the future are located quite close to greens and tees. How can I persuade them to keep trees away from these critical areas? (Illinois)

Answer: There is no denying that well-placed trees can enhance the appearance and affect the playability of a golf course. On the other hand, the various problems associated with trees planted too close to greens and tees, including shade, root competition, and restricted air movement, are well documented. A 2-inch caliper cottonwood sapling, planted 15 feet from a green, may not appear to affect the putting surface for several years, but in time it will. Make an effort to determine the average mature height and crown width of tree species planned for use on the golf course. One useful reference is the *Manual of Woody Landscape Plants* by Michael A. Dirr, and there are many others. Armed with this information, you may be able to keep future tree plantings in their proper place.