

# TURF TWISTERS

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## PROPER LIGHT AND AIR CIRCULATION

**Question:** There is a lot of talk about opening up tree-pocketed areas of turf to improve air circulation and increase sunlight penetration. I understand what lack of air movement does to turf growth, but how much daily sunlight is needed on a bentgrass putting green to maintain healthy turf? (Indiana)

**Answer:** Light duration and intensity influence plant growth and development. While the exact amount varies, eight hours of direct sunlight each day is considered a good rule of thumb for healthy turf growth. When turf areas receive less light, the plant responds with thinner leaves, reduced shoot density, reduced tillering, and longer internodes. The net result is a turf stand that has less vigor and hardiness, and is more susceptible to environmental stress.

## + TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

**Question:** The hole locations on our golf course are changed every day throughout the golf season. We try to rotate locations so that six greens have holes located on the front, six in the middle, and six at the rear. In addition, nine holes are cut on the right side of the greens and nine holes on the left. This balances the golf course playability, and when placed in conjunction with tee marker locations, helps keep the course length fairly uniform from day to day. In order to achieve this, we occasionally have to locate holes in some fairly challenging positions. My question is, what constitutes a "legal" hole location? (Ohio)

**Answer:** There is no such thing as a "legal" hole location. The USGA has traditionally recommended five paces from the edge of the green (a pace is not specifically defined) with no severe undulations or slopes within the immediate three- to four-foot radius around the hole. The area around the hole should be on the same plane, but not necessarily flat. This may not always be realistic on smaller putting surfaces that experience a lot of play. The bottom line is, the golf course should be defined by the committee. Your rotation program sounds very good. The goal is to be consistent and fair. After all, *everyone* is playing to the same hole location.

## = TOP-QUALITY TURF

**Question:** We plan to regrass our bermudagrass greens within the next two years. Recently we've heard about problems in acquiring consistent, top-quality Tifdwarf bermudagrass sprigs. What can we do to insure we are getting what we pay for? (Florida)

**Answer:** Unfortunately, this is a problem in Florida as well as other states. Purchase of a true Tifdwarf bermudagrass can be somewhat of a guessing game because Florida does not have a turf certification program. Check the success of courses in your area that have recently completed regrassing programs. Observe renovation programs ranging in age from one to five years to accurately evaluate a supplier's material. In Florida, check with the University of Florida in Fort Lauderdale. The turf researchers there are currently performing side-by-side performance evaluations of Tifdwarf bermudagrasses from various sources.