

TURF TWISTERS

TOPDRESSING SAND

Question: We are in the process of growing-in a golf course with greens built exactly to USGA Recommendations. Speakers at recent turfgrass conferences have suggested it's okay to topdress USGA greens with straight sand as long as it's the same or similar to the sand used in the root zone mix. What are your thoughts on this? (Eastern Canada)

Answer: Topdressing properly built USGA greens with straight sand is acceptable if it is the same or very similar to the sand used during construction. Have the sand tested to be sure it is compatible with the original sand.

SHOULD STAY CONSISTENT

Question: I want to be sure my topdressing sand stays consistent from year to year. I can only afford to test it once each season with a soil laboratory. Is there a quick test I can run at the golf course when the sand is delivered to give me a good idea about its consistency? (Louisiana)

Answer: Each golf course should have a set of brass sieves for this purpose. A minimum of seven sieves and the pan is recommended. The sieves should include 2mm, 1mm, 0.5mm, 0.25mm, 0.15mm, and 0.05mm. Remember to shake the sieve stack for approximately five to ten minutes to make sure the finer particles work their way through the smaller sieve openings.

TO AVOID POOR ROOT ZONES

Question: Our golf course will be using reclaimed water next year. I am concerned that my *Poa annua* greens, built on native soil, will not be able to tolerate the additional salts in the water. What are my options? (California)

Answer: Investigate the possibility of supplying potable water to the greens through separate irrigation lines. If this is not feasible, it will be necessary to periodically leach the greens. This may be difficult with native soil greens, and eventually you may need to rebuild the greens with a sand-based root zone material. From a management perspective, be prepared to aerify more frequently and establish more creeping bentgrass on the greens through frequent overseeding. Creeping bentgrass is more tolerant of saline soil conditions.