

TURF TWISTERS

AS YOU SOW

Question: I've heard bentgrass seed can be sown more accurately by mixing it with fertilizer. How much seed and fertilizer should be mixed together? (Oklahoma)

Answer: A mixture of seed and a non-burning fertilizer can make it much easier to apply seed accurately, particularly very small seeds such as bentgrass. Let's assume you are using a 6% nitrogen fertilizer source. Mix 40 pounds of fertilizer and 5 pounds of bentgrass seed. Apply the mixture at the rate of 10 pounds per thousand square feet. This would result in approximately 0.5 pounds of nitrogen and 1.1 pounds of seed being applied per thousand square feet.

SO SHALL YOU MOW

Question: We have Tifway (419) bermudagrass fairways and roughs throughout our golf course. An ongoing debate has centered around the best mowing heights to provide both good playability and course definition for daily play. What are the standard recommendations? (Florida)

Answer: When active growth is occurring, a fairway mowing height of 0.5" provides an excellent playing surface for golfers of all skill levels. To provide good fairway/rough definition, it is recommended to have at least a 1" difference in heights of cut. With hybrid Bermuda roughs, a mowing height of 1.25" to 1.5" is best for general play. As turf growth slows down in the fall, slightly raising the mowing heights to between 0.6" to 0.75" for fairways and 1.75" to 2.0" for roughs is a good practice to improve wear tolerance and maintain course definition.

AND SOW AGAIN

Question: To fill in the bare spots, I overseed thin areas in our greens each fall after they are aerified and topdressed. Tiny seedlings usually can be seen in the holes a few weeks later, but after a month or so there is little bentgrass to be found in these areas. Do you have any tips to produce better results? (Iowa)

Answer: Bentgrass seedlings have a difficult time surviving on a green that is in play. The wear and compaction caused by concentrated traffic, daily mowing of seedlings at putting green heights, and other factors take their toll on the new turf. Try using .25"-diameter hollow quadratines set to penetrate about .5" deep as a pre-treatment for overseeding thin areas with a topdressing/seed mix. The close 1" x 1" spacing produces numerous shallow holes that can be ideal places for bentgrass germination and development.