

# TURF TWISTERS

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## A FAVORABLE CUSHION

**Question:** We completed a bermudagrass greens renovation program last year. Although we have excellent turf density and putting quality, the greens are firm and the golfers are unhappy with the difficulty in holding approach shots. What's the answer? (Florida)

**Answer:** Be patient! While everything is great on the surface, a period of no less than two full growing seasons is necessary with bermudagrass greens to develop a mature turf. A favorable cushion immediately below the surface of the greens must be given time to develop to provide the degree of turf resiliency for desirable shot-holding characteristics. Remember, you can't rush Mother Nature.

## ORIENTS

**Question:** Several of our tees are oriented in a manner that directs a drive well away from the intended landing zone. The employee who sets the hole locations and tee markers has a difficult time aligning the markers. As a result, many of the high-handicap golfers have trouble lining up their tee shots. Any suggestions? (Indiana)

**Answer:** Some people have a natural aptitude for aligning tee markers and others need all the help they can get. Build a large "T" from wood or irrigation pipe. Place the "T" upside down on the tee box turf. Point the base of the "T" towards the intended landing zone. Place the tee markers just off each side of the horizontal base. The results: perfect alignment. This device can be a bit unwieldy, but it makes an excellent training tool for new employees.

## THE PURPLE MARTIN HOME

**Question:** A purple martin house was installed several years ago on our golf course, but we have had no success in attracting these beneficial birds. What can we do? (New York)

**Answer:** The dimensions and location of the nest box must meet specific criteria. Check your nest box to make sure the dimensions include an overall house size of 25" x 25" with 6 to 30 rooms. The rooms should measure 6" x 6" x 6", and the entrances should be 2" to 2 1/4" in diameter. The nest box should be located in an open area 30' - 40' from trees and buildings, and near water if possible. Paint the house white to make it more visible, and be sure to clean out any previous nesting material. You may be more successful keeping out competitor birds by keeping the entrances plugged until May. In New York, purple martins should return about mid-May. Dates differ across the country. Contact the Purple Martin Conservancy Association at (814) 732-2610 or your local birding groups for more information.