

## REGULAR SOIL TESTS

**Question:** How often would you recommend running soil tests? (Kentucky)

**Answer:** In an ideal situation, annual soil tests are recommended. To keep costs down, representative testing can provide good information for most normal 18-hole operations. Select your best, worst, and one average green, tee, and fairway. This means that you will have identified nine areas for testing. Collect the samples from the same areas, at the same time each year, and use the same soil testing laboratory. This technique will provide good representative information while eliminating some of the variables involved with soil testing. Feel free to contact your local Green Section office for help in interpreting the test results.

## ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR

**Question:** We are considering the purchase of a roller to address players' desires for faster and smoother greens. I am concerned about roller use causing excess compaction. What guidelines should we follow? (Oregon)

**Answer:** Current research indicates that rollers can cause damage if used excessively, especially on the outside perimeter of the green. With this in mind, the following guidelines are suggested:

- Do not exceed two rollings per week.
- Time rollings to provide maximum speed and smoothness for the majority of the players. This usually involves a Wednesday/Friday or Thursday/Saturday schedule.
- *Avoid* rolling when the green is excessively wet, growing slowly, or under stress.
- Increase aeration frequency to a monthly schedule, using water or small tines. Spiking weekly will also be helpful.
- Raise mowing heights if rolling frequency is increased to three or more times each week. The additional leaf area will help compensate for the extra stress from increased rolling.

## DEFINING FERTILITY PROGRAMS

**Question:** I'm having problems maintaining consistently healthy, dense turf coverage throughout my Tifway (419) bermudagrass fairways. Given the predominantly sandy soil conditions throughout much of the course and the results of the soil nutrient tests, it's apparent that my approximate 1.5 lbs. of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. per year is too lean. Due to the significant budget increase required to provide a more appropriate fertility program throughout this large acreage, the finance committee has repeatedly cut back this budget item. How can I convince the *budget slashers* that the added expense will be well worth it to maximize overall fairway turf quality? (Florida)

**Answer:** Select one fairway, preferably a par 3 or par 4 with small acreage, and practice an appropriate nutritional program, which will not significantly alter the fertilizer budget. Towards the end of the growing season, when the golfers inquire as to why this fairway is much healthier than the rest, explain how the fertility program was adjusted to better meet the needs of the turf. More than likely, the increase for this line item in the next budget period will pass without a problem.