

TURF TWISTERS

ELIMINATE SEASONAL PROBLEMS

Question: I just started a new job at a course located at an elevation of 9,500 feet. When the snow melted I discovered that two of the greens on the back nine were seriously damaged by snow mold. I spoke with the staff members who applied the preventive fungicide application last fall, and they told me that the two greens were treated the same as the other 16 greens. The two greens have good sunlight exposure and apparently have had similar problems in the past. Is there something I am missing, assuming the fungicide treatment was applied correctly? (Colorado)

Answer: Due to the dramatic topography and poorly drained soils that are prevalent throughout the mountainous regions of the West, your fungicide application may have been washed away by running surface water during a midwinter thaw. If surface water from adjacent hillsides is moving across the two greens, try opening a trench around their perimeters in the late fall to divert the flow in another direction.

BY INSTALLING

Question: Almost every year a few of our greens suffer ice damage in the low-lying areas. The greens are soil based and do not drain well, but we cannot afford to rebuild them. Are there any steps that can be taken to reduce the damage? (Nebraska)

Answer: Ice damage on greens often occurs in low-lying, poorly drained areas as a result of the freezing and thawing of water that accumulates from rain or melted snow. Obviously, better drainage is the key. Drainage can be improved with deep aerification, either to the entire green with large equipment or to small portions of the green with pitchforks or drills. However, if the green is soil based, aerification will not provide complete relief. An alternative is to install a drain line into the green that extends into the low-lying area. Prior to the onset of winter conditions, install a riser that extends from the drainage tube to the surface of the green. Cap the riser with a plastic grating that is low enough that it can be mowed over if necessary. Leave the grating in place for the winter. Although it might come into play occasionally, the improved drainage will be worth the inconvenience. Remove the grating and riser the following spring, taking care to mark the end of the drainage tube with a piece of metal. Next winter, the drain line can be found with a metal detector and the riser reinstalled.

IMPROVED EQUIPMENT

Question: Is there an inexpensive method of tracking the cost of maintaining our equipment? (Oklahoma)

Answer: The hour-meters on equipment seldom last as long as the equipment itself and are expensive to replace. An inexpensive substitute can be the time clock used by employees to punch in and out each day. Make a time card for each major piece of equipment. The card should be punched whenever the equipment is taken out and again when it returns. The mechanic can use the back side of the card to record the time spent working on the equipment. At the end of the week, you will have a good record of usage and maintenance hours.