

# TURF TWISTERS

## WALK AROUND THE GREEN AND

**Question:** As green chairman, I received a request by the superintendent to walk mow the greens. He already has triplex mowers and these seem to get the job done faster. Why should the club consider walk mowing the greens at all when this method seems efficient enough? (Alabama)

**Answer:** Triplex mowers were developed to allow courses to mow the greens more efficiently, with fewer staff, and at a lower cost. The mowers were not developed to provide an improved cut. Walk mowers are lighter weight and offer an improved quality of cut over triplex mowers. In addition, the potential for injuring the turf on the cleanup lap around the perimeter of a green is reduced with a walk mower.

## MAKE DECISIONS ON

**Question:** With so many new bentgrasses to choose from, I am having difficulty deciding which ones are best for my course. Can you help? (New Jersey)

**Answer:** You're right, there are a lot of new bentgrasses to choose from, and until they are thoroughly field tested, it will not be possible to identify all of their strengths and weaknesses. The National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) sponsors the national bentgrass trial, located at universities and research stations around the country. These tests are providing useful information about important characteristics of the grasses, but the acid test is not administered until they are planted on golf courses and subjected to real-world stress and varying microclimates. Soon you will have another option as the USGA's new putting green trials get underway at 16 golf courses across the U.S. The project is a cooperative venture between the USGA, NTEP, and GCSAA. Your best bet is to examine the bentgrass trials in climates similar to your own, and to visit courses where the new bentgrasses have been planted in a monostand and subjected to traffic. It goes without saying you can also contact your regional Green Section agronomists and state turfgrass extension personnel for additional information.

## WHICH TREES TO REMOVE

**Question:** Our 15th green is surrounded by tall oak trees and fails to see the sun until later afternoon. After years of playing on thin turf, the Green Committee is still reluctant to authorize tree removal. I have already pruned the lower branches to improve air circulation, cut the invasive feeder roots, and switched to lightweight walk-behind mowers with sectional rollers to minimize physical wear and tear. Can you offer other alternatives? (Iowa)

**Answer:** At a minimum, greens should receive seven to eight hours of direct sunlight exposure each day. Morning exposure is especially valuable because it helps reduce fungal activity by drying the turf after nightly irrigation and melts light frost before early morning play. With these points in mind, your best alternative is to review your unsuccessful remedial actions with the Green Committee and then resubmit your proposal for tree removal.