

# TURF TWISTERS

## BE PRUDENT

**Question:** This year there are several new pesticides available in my area that, according to university test data, appear to be remarkably effective. I am planning to use them on my greens and tees this season. Is that a good idea? (New Jersey)

**Answer:** Regardless of the available test data, it is prudent to proceed slowly with the use of new materials. It would be wise to first try the materials in test plots to determine their potential impact on your turf before you make large-scale applications to the golf course. Nursery greens are an excellent area on which to test new products that are available on the market.

## IN CASTING THE DECIDING VOTE

**Question:** For the past few years, I have had trouble maintaining creeping bentgrass on four of the back nine greens. At the heart of the problem are tall trees that block the early morning sun in summer and completely shade the greens in winter. I have discussed removing the trees with the Green Committee, but several members refuse to take action, stating that such action would lower the course's USGA Course and Slope Rating. Is this a valid concern, and how much of an impact can tree removal around four greens actually have? (Missouri)

**Answer:** It is true that the actions of the maintenance department can affect the USGA Course and Slope Rating. For example, raising the cutting height of the rough and moving all of the tee markers back 10 yards can increase the Course Rating by 1.1. Removing interfering trees more than 15 yards away from the perimeter of four greens, however, would only have a slight effect on the Course Rating. For an exact determination, you would have to contact your local Golf Association to have the course re-rated by the Rating Committee.

## WHEN MARKING THE GOLF COURSE

**Question:** It seems as if every year a controversy arises regarding who should mark the golf course. The two most likely candidates are the superintendent and the golf professional. In your opinion, which of these two individuals should be responsible for course marking? (Kentucky)

**Answer:** In most cases, the superintendent and golf professional should work together to properly mark the course. It will require input from both individuals to properly and fairly define hazards and ground under repair. However, when a tie occurs, the individual who will be making Rules decisions for the golfers should cast the deciding vote. This is usually the golf professional.