TURF TWISTERS

LOOK AHEAD

Question: How many black cutworm traps should I place around a green to protect the turf from damage? (Minnesota)

Answer: The traps that attract black cutworm adults are basically monitoring devices, and their use does not provide any level of cutworm control. However, the use of a few traps on the course could help prevent unnecessary pesticide applications to turf at courses located in the northern tier of states where black cutworms cannot overwinter. The first generation of cutworm larvae develop from the eggs laid by adults that migrate north from states having milder winters. Consequently, there is no need to treat the turf with insecticides or even sample for caterpillars until the initial wave of adults arrives and their eggs hatch on the turf. Adult arrival can be monitored with a few well-placed pheromone traps. Monitor greens and other high-priority turf before adults arrive if the previous winter was unusually mild.

TO EVALUATE AND IDENTIFY

Question: We are considering rebuilding our greens in a few years and are having a difficult time evaluating which bentgrass variety will be best for our golf course. What is your opinion? (Alabama)

Answer: There are a number of new bentgrass varieties available today. Many of these grasses appear to be regionally adapted. The USGA is sponsoring 15 putting green variety trials throughout the country. Make sure to review the results of the trials and pay particular attention to the varieties that perform best during the summer stress period. Seeing 15 to 20 of the leading varieties side-by-side, under the same growing conditions and management, is valuable in selecting the variety that is best for your course.

THE BEST ROOTZONE MIX

Question: Why doesn't the USGA include regional guidelines in their recommendations for the construction of golf greens? (received via the Internet)

Answer: Our recommendations include ranges of values that make it possible to adapt the guidelines to varying circumstances. For example, the SHC (saturated hydraulic conductivity) rate has a range from 6 to 24 inches per hour. Six to 12 inches is considered *normal*, while 12 to 24 inches is considered *accelerated*. In areas where very poor quality water must be used, extremely high annual rainfall is experienced, or bentgrass is being grown in a climate of high heat and humidity, the *accelerated* range should be employed. Otherwise, the *normal* range is the better choice.

Other values within the USGA's guidelines also include ranges. Since growing conditions can change radically over the span of just a few miles (e.g. water quality), it may never be possible to offer broad regional recommendations. Therefore, it is very important to know how to use the existing ranges in the guidelines to identify a rootzone mixture that is best suited to your area. Contact your Green Section agronomist for help.