

TURF TWISTERS

WITH LOWER MOWING HEIGHTS

Question: Mowing heights on putting greens are being pushed lower and lower. Bench setting using the old bar-and-screw technique is becoming more and more difficult due to the small increments of change in mowing heights during the growing season. I realize the more precise gauge-type height adjustment tools are being used more often. However, I am a bit confused by the numbers. What do decimal numbers such as 0.130 mean in terms of cutting height? (Pennsylvania)

Answer: The decimal numbers represent fractions of an inch. For example, 0.125 is equal to $\frac{1}{8}$ inch; 0.140 is equal to $\frac{7}{64}$ of an inch; 0.156 is equal to $\frac{5}{32}$ of an inch; and 0.250 is $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch. The gauge-type height adjustment tools allow mowing heights between these heights to be set as well. These tools can take some getting used to, but they provide a greater level of precision when setting mowing heights.

DON'T CONSERVE

Question: We are facing an energy crisis in California, with the potential for rolling blackouts and higher rates for electricity. Is there anything we can do on our golf course to be more energy efficient and prevent any problems caused by the blackouts? (California)

Answer: The best advice is to be proactive. Even if your golf course is not currently facing an energy crisis, there are several things you should do to become more energy efficient:

- Obtain a power audit by your local utility account representative to make sure you are getting the best possible rate structure.
- Investigate upgrading irrigation pumping equipment.
- Back up computer programs to avoid losing data due to power surges or blackouts.
- Consider installing surge protectors and phase monitors on irrigation pumping equipment.
- Implement conservation measures in the maintenance facility and clubhouse, including energy-efficient lighting and timers on lights in such areas as restrooms and lunch rooms.

THE SUN

Question: I heard that morning sunlight is better for turf than midday or afternoon sunlight. Is that true? (Connecticut)

Answer: The current thinking is that morning sunlight is no better than the light at other times of day in terms of light quality. However, it is advantageous to turf health in terms of helping to dry the turf canopy and therefore reducing disease incidence. Furthermore, via photosynthesis plants produce their own food by converting energy from sunlight into usable forms. The morning is an optimal time for photosynthesis. Research and observation indicate that turf requires at least eight hours of sunlight per day (preferably including four hours in the morning) to sustain growth and recuperate from moderate wear.