

Turf *Twisters*

Q: I've been a golf course superintendent for several years, and while I love to play golf, my work schedule makes regular participation in the game difficult. I've often heard the importance of regular play emphasized as being a good public relations/credibility tool. Any suggestions on how I can improve the frequency and regularity of playing the course I'm responsible for maintaining? (Kentucky)

A: First, approach the playing of the course you are responsible for maintaining as part of your job. In other words, it should be done during a regular business day and not pushed to evenings or weekends. Pick a weekday that accommodates your schedule and the club's calendar of activities. Once selected, block a tee time



that you will use each week. Interested members can be encouraged to fill out your group and, in so doing, combine the regular play of

the course you maintain with an opportunity to discuss concerns of interested players. Be sure to discuss this strategy with the Green Committee or your boss, but with a little planning a regular tee time can be a good policy.

Q: I recently received a soil nutrient test in which the results varied significantly from a test completed last year. Should I be concerned? (New York)

A: Soil nutrient test results can vary depending on the test protocol and extractants used by a laboratory. Therefore, it is always a good idea to request this information when a different laboratory is used to complete the analysis. Soil pH and available nutrients can also be influenced by fertilizer applications made immediately prior to

the soil tests. This is especially true on sandy soils with a low CEC and low buffering capacity, where nutrient concentrations fluctuate more widely. Have new soil nutrient tests completed if you are concerned with the inconsistencies, and contact your local Green Section agronomist or university specialist to review the test

results and its recommendations further. Remember that the soil test results provide only a snapshot of current nutrient status in the soil and that these levels will change over time. Use the test results to monitor the progress of your fertilizer programs and to serve as a basis for future applications.

Q: Is there a big difference between maintenance costs for ultradwarf and Tifdwarf putting greens? (Florida)

A: Ultradwarf bermudagrass greens require more aggressive thatch management than Tifdwarf; however, the difference in maintenance costs is dependent on several factors. Ultradwarf bermudagrass greens must be routinely

verticut, aerified, and top-dressed during the growing season to provide acceptable putting surfaces. We have noticed that the optimum timing for light verticutting and topdressing is every 7 to 14 days during the growing season. Also, greens should be core aerified at least 3 to 4

times each year. Many upper-end golf courses and golf courses with longer growing seasons (like those found in South Florida) are already providing similar maintenance practices for Tifdwarf, so the difference in maintenance costs is not as large as you might think.

