

Turf Twisters

Q: My maintenance budget was reduced significantly from last year. What practices should we reduce or cut to decrease our operating expenses and still provide acceptable playing conditions? (Florida)

A: The long-term health of the turfgrass should not be jeopardized by reducing necessary practices like core aeration or fertilization; however, other practices like raking bunkers or maintaining out-of-play areas can certainly be reduced. Main-



taining primary playing surfaces (greens, tees, fairways) is of highest importance, and once these are taken care of,

golfers can decide where the reduced maintenance should occur. Examples include decreasing bunker raking and

edging, cart path edging, annual flower bed maintenance, or providing natural buffers in out-of-play roughs or lake banks by allowing the turf to grow taller. Time studies are valuable tools that golfers can use to see exactly how many man-hours can be saved by reducing these tasks. For additional ideas, read "Raising the Bar: How High Can You Go?" in the January/February 2003 *Green Section Record*.

Q: Many golf courses in our area will likely be faced with water restrictions this season in the face of an extended drought. How can our course best deal with communicating that golf can be more fun when the turf is dry? (Colorado)

A: Local golf associations and golf course superintendent associations can pool resources to effect a positive media campaign illustrating

that golf course superintendents are professional, responsible water managers and that the game offers more excitement with

bounce and roll. Positive communication will be critical during the current water crisis in the West. Spread the word!

Q: I like to get away from the busy driving ranges during the summer and hit some practice balls at a nearby park. When is a good time to seek shelter when I see lightning and hear thunder off in the distance? (Minnesota)

A: According to the Lightning Safety Institute, lightning is very unpredictable. You can be 6 to 8 miles away from a lightning strike and still be in immediate danger. Consequently, they recommend, "If you hear it,

clear it." In other words, if you hear thunder or see lightning, it's time to pack up and seek shelter. For more information regarding lightning, visit www.lightningsafety.com.

