

Turf Twisters

Q: I am hearing the term *vertical aeration* used more and more. What does this mean? Is this different from standard core aeration? (West Virginia)

A: This term refers to the use of deep vertical slicing tactics to aggressively remove thatch and organic debris. It is a form of vertical mowing that is often used in combination with standard core

aeration techniques. Channels can be cut into the soil profile to a depth of 2.5 inches. Research has demonstrated that this is not a stand-alone treatment strategy. Although a great deal of organic

material can be harvested, it is extremely difficult to work topdressing back into the channels created by the machines.

Q: We are in the process of adding more paved cart paths to our golf course and the superintendent at our course insists on building the paths to a minimum width of eight feet. We feel the wide paths will be too costly and will adversely impact play and the look of our golf course. What width do you recommend for cart paths? (Maine)

A: A width of eight feet is preferred for cart paths, and wider widths are recommended adjacent to some tees and greens where carts may be parked. The eight-foot width will make the paths more durable and enable the staff to move maintenance equipment over the golf course more easily. Work with your superintendent and a golf course architect to design and locate the cart paths where they will have the least impact on play



and appearance. Spending additional money up front for wider paths and effective

design is your best bet for success.

Q: Can zoysiagrass tees and fairways be core aerified in the spring as opposed to midsummer to avoid disruption during the peak golfing season? (Arkansas)

A: Although it is possible to aerify low-cut zoysiagrass in the spring (mid-May), the benefits of so doing are diminished, weed encroachment is encouraged, and recovery time is extended.

This being the case, it would be best to continue aerifying tees and fairways during the latter half of July when cultivation of the soil improves the movement of water into the soil and the zoysiagrass

can quickly grow over the open holes, thus smothering weed invasion and minimizing recovery time.

