

# Turf Twisters

**Q:** I am the Green Chairman at our course, and the superintendent and I are having a disagreement concerning aeration. Since we are in a cold region where golf is played from late March to early November, I say we only need to aerify once a year. Our superintendent says twice with large tines is necessary. Is the spring aeration needed when we have no play during the winter? (Washington)

**A:** Aeration of greens generally is done to relieve compaction from traffic, provide avenues of sand through the surface to enhance drainage, and to assist in organic removal. While the specifics of your greens and site are not known, I would have to side with you since there is no growth or play during the winter months. Large-tine aeration in the fall will assist with winter drainage, but



spring aeration would seem unnecessary. Perhaps a compromise would be the use of very small tines in the spring, as this would also be a benefit for your players who

would not have to endure a three- or four-week period of regrowth following the aeration process.

**Q:** How can we find past rain and snowfall data for our golf course? (New York)

**A:** The Northeast Regional Climate Center (NRCC) is an excellent source for obtaining historical and present weather data from regional weather stations located throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states.

Similar regional climate centers can be found for the Southeastern, South Central, Midwestern, High Plains, and Western states. The climate centers can also download weather information, including ET rates, if desired.

Visit the NRCC website at [www.nrcc.cornell.edu/](http://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/) or contact them at (607) 255-1751 to learn more about their services or the other Regional Climate Centers.

**Q:** Is there any difference between the various kinds of ice covers that occur on greens? I have heard that ice that is milky or white in color is less likely to cause winterkill than the hard clear or black ice that we frequently see. Is this true? (Pennsylvania)



**A:** Winterkill of turfgrass is a poorly understood concept, but more research is being done on this topic. Recent research at Penn State University suggests that while the ice cover may appear different, its permeability is

the same. Thus, there is very little difference between white and black ice for turf suffocation potential. Duration of ice cover is more important in determining the potential impact on winterkill of turfgrass.

