

# Turf Twisters

**Q:** Last year we continuously experienced a severe yellowing of the turf during the growing season. Leaf blades elongated and appeared as if they were infected with some disease. The infected, chlorotic plants always grew above the canopy of the healthier-looking turf. Any thoughts? (Tennessee)

**A:** Enlist the aid of a diagnostic laboratory and request that a test for bacterial wilt be performed. Clogging of the plants' vascular systems from xanthomonas activity causes an unnatural elongated

growth pattern similar to turf trying to compete under extreme shade. Bacterial wilt could predispose the turf to complete collapse if harsh environmental conditions are experienced. If this condition

is in the fairways, then consider incorporating grasses that are not susceptible to this pathogen. Look at it as an opportunity to selectively remove *Poa annua*, which is susceptible to this organism.

**Q:** We installed a new double-row irrigation system on our golf course 20 years ago when I was the green chairman. It was a state-of-the-art system, but now the new green committee tells us that we need to replace it. Could that be possible? (New Jersey)

**A:** Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Although old irrigation systems can be kept running indefinitely with frequent repairs and a constant influx of parts and labor, at some point it becomes unwise to do so. Irrigation technology has advanced significantly since your system was installed, and even without the wear your current system undoubtedly has experienced,

dramatic improvements in coverage and distribution uniformity now are possible with the technology in topnotch new irrigation systems. This means that water, an increasingly precious natural resource, can now be managed and used with far greater efficiency.



New systems also can make a dramatic difference in turfgrass health and playability.

**Q:** We have just converted our greens to ultradwarf bermudagrass and are utilizing three aerifications per year with one-inch center spacings. It has worked wonderfully for us, but timing during the playing season is a concern. Do you recommend a late summer aerification as one of our timings? (Texas)

**A:** Absolutely! A late summer aerification on bermudagrass greens gives excellent agronomic benefits and healthier turf for the upcoming fall. Later summer/early fall is a time of increased heat, humidity, and rain

showers. These add to disease pressure as the bermudagrass is hardening off for winter. Late summer aerification greatly reduces the tendency for disease problems through a development of roots and rhizomes at summer's end.

