

Turf Twisters

Q: I live about 30 feet from a golf course. At approximately 6:10 a.m. each morning the mower cuts the grass just outside my bedroom window and I hear a number of other pieces of loud equipment being operated. What can golf courses do to be more neighbor-friendly? (North Carolina)



A: Unfortunately, the answer to your question concerning early morning disruptions is not an easy one. The maintenance crew must complete their morning tasks before golfers arrive, so that means

they must start as soon as it is light enough to see. There are a few options that can help: If only a few homes are affected, sometimes the grounds crew can wait until the end of their 2-hour morning rush to work in that area; some of the noise-producing work may be done the evening before;

identify the machinery causing the majoring of the noise (e.g. blowers) and use these tools after 9:00 a.m.; or a growing number of courses are using battery-powered, low-noise-producing machinery for early morning work. Discuss your concerns with the golf course superintendent and ask if one or more of these options could be implemented.

Q: How did the USGA come up with 80% sand / 20% peat for a putting green rootzone? (North Dakota)

A: There is nothing in the USGA guidelines for building greens that calls for such a mixture. In fact, the guidelines do not mandate any amendments if the sand provides the necessary porosity and saturated

hydraulic conductivity values. It must also meet the particle size distribution specifications. Most sands, however, cannot meet these requirements without some modification. The ideal percentage of sand and

amendment can only be determined by a physical soil testing laboratory. As a general rule, the mixing ratio usually falls somewhere between 80/20 and 95/5, depending entirely on the materials used.

Q: We are trying to replace a number of declining sugar maple and ash trees on the golf course. The Norway maple tree was highly recommended as a fast-growing replacement for those trees. What are your thoughts? (Connecticut)

A: The Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) is a vigorous, non-native, and invasive tree species. It is densely canopied and has aggressive roots that compete significantly with the turf for sun and water. The dense shade created by the canopy makes it nearly impossible to provide an acceptable playing surface under the tree. The wood is softer and more brittle than



the traditional sugar maple, making it more prone to storm injury. The tree's root system also has a tendency to wrap around the base of the trunk, girdling and eventually killing the tree.

The tree is undesirable in the view of many state foresters and biologists due to its invasive qualities. The best policy for long-term success is to select tree species that are endemic to your region and that have a proven track record. Contact your local Cooperative Extension agent to identify those species.

