

# Turf Twisters

**Q:** We've been utilizing a couple different plant growth regulators with seemingly good results. However, it is common to hear an assortment of different frequencies

and rates discussed at turf conferences. What's the best way to sort through what we've been hearing to achieve the best combination at our course? (Indiana)

**A:** First of all, be sure that any rate and frequency being considered is in line with the product label. The label should guide everything that is done; however, if specific

questions arise, contact the manufacturer. Then, evaluate any label-allowed differences on a turf nursery before moving out onto the course.

**Q:** Our bunkers are too wet. Would installing pop-up sprinklers on adjacent banks help keep the bunkers drier? (California)



**A:** Installing smaller-diameter pop-up sprinklers has helped some courses keep bunkers drier, but this degree of fine-tuning has its downside:

1. Be prepared to monitor, repair, and adjust hundreds more sprinklers.

2. Despite more sprinklers, there are often gaps in irrigation coverage that will

require more hand watering to keep the turf alive around the bunkers.

3. The lack of moisture can often make the sand too soft and create plugged lies.

The best advice is to limit the use of pop-up sprinklers and focus on sand quality, drainage, and raking programs in the bunkers.

**Q:** Many of our grassed slopes around bunkers turn brown and weedy in the summer. Can you offer any advice to prevent this occurrence? (New Jersey)

**A:** Chances are that south-facing slopes are providing the greatest turf growing challenges. These areas heat up and remain warmer relative to other locations due to their orientation to the sun. Cool-season turf-grass species are not well

adapted to this degree of warmth and dryness without frequent irrigation or natural precipitation. Monitor soil temperatures in these areas to determine the proper timing for application of a pre-emergence herbicide. On steep slopes, consider using a sprayable formulation rather than a granular to provide better coverage, followed by the recommended irrigation. Also, closely monitor and treat these areas for insect and disease activity. In the

transition zone, another strategy would be to re-establish these areas with a warm-season turf-grass species such as zoysia-grass for better heat, drought, and pest tolerance. Keep in mind that warm-season turf becomes dormant and loses its green color more rapidly and for longer periods of



time with the onset of cooler temperatures, and it is more prone to winter injury compared to cool-season turf.