

Turf Twisters



Q: My father has played at our home course for almost 60 years. He raised the question about why our superintendent doesn't pole the greens anymore. Is this still practiced by courses throughout our region? (Virginia)

A: Dew poles are still available for use and, in fact, are part of the standard operating procedures at many courses in the Mid-Atlantic Region. Many years ago, dew poles were used to remove dew and guttation water on mornings when the greens were not mowed. Maintenance practices evolve, and

the use of this particular strategy is not very common today. Current course conditioning demands have led to daily mowing, but dew poles are still used to ensure that the surfaces are free of clippings and other debris. In this day and age, very few courses pole the greens daily to remove dew.

Q: The putting greens at our course were built in accordance with USGA recommendations about 15 years ago. The Tifdwarf bermudagrass base turf cover has now become heavily contaminated with off-types, and providing a consistent play and aesthetic character has

become a major challenge. Renovation and converting to an ultradwarf bermuda are planned for this summer, but the question is, do we need to completely rebuild the greens? (Florida)

A: With proper construction and subsequent good man-

agement, USGA greens can perform satisfactorily for 25 to 30 years or much longer. Thus, it should be possible to conduct a strip-and-till regrassing process to address the turfgrass problems and convert to a new cultivar. It is recommended to submit two to four profile core

samples to a physical soil testing laboratory for complete analysis. Along with making sure that no major structural problems exist, analysis of the rootzone mix is needed to determine the proper materials to add back and incorporate prior to replanting of the greens.

Q: Several sections of our golf course are covered with mud and standing water after a recent flood. What is the best way to go about fixing these areas? Will the mud or standing water cause long-term damage to the course? (California)



A: Often, getting onto the course immediately with heavy equipment for cleanup and repairs can cause more harm than good, so be patient. If possible, try to

pump any standing water into nearby drains to allow the area to dry out. Don't be alarmed if some areas remain under water for several days. Fortunately, some turf species can tolerate submersion for an extended period. Damage is dependent on a number of factors, including the temperature of the water, light intensity, duration of submergence, and the tolerance of the particular turf species. In the case of mud

or soil deposits, you should try to scrape the material off as soon as practical without damaging the area with heavy equipment or excessive traffic. The goal is to expose the turfgrass leaves so the plants can resume photosynthesis. Layers of mud and silt can cause long-term problems. Be prepared for multiple aeration treatments, especially on greens and tees, to break through any remaining mud layers.

