

# Turf Twisters

**Q:** Our course is constructing a new 11,000 sq. ft. practice putting green. Unfortunately, the money earmarked for this new construction is less than the lowest bid we received from building contractors. Our manager suggested that we build the green in-house to keep costs down, but we do not have a large enough staff or enough construction experience to build this large green. Any thoughts on this situation? (Maryland)



**A:** Frankly, it sounds as if you have answered your own question. If you have concerns about your ability to successfully complete this

project, they are probably valid. Golf course builders generally have better equipment and more experienced employees to complete these

projects. Additionally, undertaking a project of this magnitude will put extra strain on your maintenance staff to perform normal course maintenance. Thus, daily course conditions may suffer as your staff is forced to focus on construction. This is not to say you cannot complete this project in-house. Unfortunately, short-term savings are often considered ahead of long-term costs if you cannot complete the new green properly.

**Q:** Is it better to leach our greens before or after aeration? (California)

**A:** If your greens suffer chronic problems with

soluble salt accumulation, you would be better off leaching one week before you plan to aerate and top-dress. This will give you a clean slate going into the

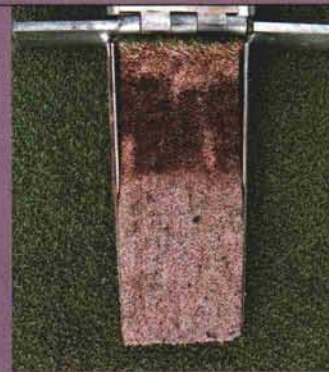
process and will likely allow the holes to heal faster. When leaching is performed after aeration, the water tends to travel down the holes more rapidly and does

not do a very effective job of reducing salts between the holes. This results in green dots above the aeration holes and yellow turf in between.

**Q:** Many of my members come from other regions where they aerate greens only once or twice yearly, and they are convinced that I punch holes in greens for the sole purpose of aggravating them and their guests. How do I convey the difference between Florida conditions and what they are accustomed to in other regions?

**A:** Bermudagrass produces more organic matter than

can be degraded by soil microbes in Florida. As a result, organic matter accumulates in the upper rootzone at an accelerated pace. This organic matter clogs up soil pores and creates saturated conditions within the rootzone. During periods of increased play, organic soils also become more easily compacted from traffic. As a result, roots become stressed during rainy conditions or during periods of



increased play. It is for this reason that putting greens are cultivated more rigorously than other regions to

keep the soil matrix diluted with sand.

It is impossible to compare different types of grasses (cool season vs. warm season) and different climates. Soil cultivation programs that are effective in one region may not necessarily work well in another region. Be patient with your membership and try to educate them on the conditions that occur in your region and how they differ from other regions.

