

Turf Twisters

Q: A consultant has told us that shade is the primary reason that a couple of our greens are not performing well. I am confused, though, because the trees that have been recommended for removal only cause shading

during the fall and winter months. How can these trees be responsible? (Connecticut)

A: Shade during the fall months can reduce the turf's ability to harden off thoroughly, and winter shade fre-

quently leads to an increased incidence of winter injury. This can be a result of prolonged snow and ice cover and/or slower thawing in the spring with an increased number of freeze/thaw cycles. Full sunlight penetration all

year is a simple way to increase turf health and vigor, and maximizing light penetration all year can significantly reduce the potential for stress and disease problems.

Q: Our putting greens were sprigged this past summer and are currently in excellent condition. What are any common concerns that we should be aware of for the first winter play season? (Louisiana)



A: One of the most common issues of new putting

greens is perimeter thinning from continual mowing.

Young greens lack an appropriate pad of thatch and organic matter, necessary for stress recovery. To maintain good turf density during the winter play season, perimeter mowers (preferably walk-behind mowers) should be affixed with solid rollers. It is also important to disperse play properly over the winter

during the first season of growth. Limited entry/exit areas can become quite thin from increased traffic. These issues become tolerable following the first season of growth, when a proper pad has developed, but they are quite stressful during the initial year after sprigging.

Q: During extended periods without rain, the edges of our course, particularly areas underneath trees, tend to turn brown first. We have an irrigation system. Why does this happen? (Virginia)



A: Your situation is common. Sprinkler systems are set up on an overlapping pattern, and the quantity of water delivered to the outer edges of the course is lower on traditional double-row irrigation systems. Additionally, surface roots from the trees can extend a distance that is equal to roughly half the height of the tree, and trees and turf compete for what limited water is available.