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Turf *Twisters*

Q: The cost of sand in Hawaii is astronomical since all of the sand used on greens, approaches, and tees must be imported. With costs well over \$100 per ton and up to nearly \$200 per ton for dried sand, should we reduce sand use to save money, or is there any other way we can keep the greens from deteriorating? (Hawaii)

A: The answer is the same as the products we send back from our homes for reuse — recycle! Greens, tees, and some approaches and fairways are typically composed of 90% sand. Rather than taking off all of this sand when you core aerate, simply let the cores dry longer and demolish them to remove as much

sand as possible. Some of the organic debris that is left will go back into the holes and the rest can be swept or blown off. This procedure will save up to 50% of the amount of sand normally used to fill the holes. While not for the long term, this process can be done for a year or two without compromis-

ing agronomic conditions while addressing cost. Golf courses in the Pacific Northwest have been successful for decades when five to six inches of sand has been added on the fairways and on sand-based tees with no excess organic problems.

Q: Our maintenance staff spends many hours string-trimming turfgrass around the bases of tree trunks, a procedure that cannot be safely done with riding rough mowers. Is there anything that can be done to reduce such a time-consuming job? (Illinois)



A: The first course of action is to assess the golf course and ensure that the course is not overpopulated with trees. Not only would this reduce the number of hours spent string-trimming, but the trees and turf benefit as well. Next, try applying a plant growth regulator, such as Primo, around trees by using a backpack or hand-

held sprayer. Monthly applications will reduce turfgrass leaf elongation and will cut the number of hours needed for string-trimming by as much as half. Finally, to eliminate string-trimming altogether, Roundup can be sprayed in a ring around tree trunks (pictured). This does not harm the tree.

Q: I have heard the term “push and pull the fairways” used on many occasions. What does this refer to? (Ohio)

A: This is a term referring to a mowing procedure. Pushing the fairways is mowing the turf from tee to green and pulling is mowing from green to tee. Another way to look at this would be to see a dark and a lighter

appearance to the turf. The lighter appearance is pushed (mowed) away from the player’s eye, while the darker appearance is pulled (mowed) toward the tee. This mowing pattern is being used more frequently to aid in mowing efficiency. Less time is spent mowing with much less turning in the rough. Fairways are often pushed and pulled for championship events.

