

TURF TWISTERS

BUILD USGA RECOMMENDATION GREENS

Question: After years of debate, my club has finally decided to rebuild the two worst greens on the course. They are almost totally surrounded by trees, and I have had trouble growing grass on them. I just can't wait for the new USGA spec greens to solve all of my problems! Just wanted to say thanks. (Kentucky)

Answer: We have some "good news" and some "bad news" for you and your course. It is true that a green built to USGA recommendations helps provide an excellent grass growing medium, but even a perfectly constructed green will not guarantee success in heavy shade. Sand-based construction is primarily for better drainage and resistance to compaction. A good draining soil cannot overcome other limiting factors, such as the lack of sunlight. The grass should be better, but probably not as good as desired unless some trees and overhanging limbs are removed.

TO GET CONSISTENCY

Question: During past grow-ins, my Tifdwarf bermudagrass sprigs rapidly covered the surface of the greens. However, the putting surface lacked smoothness and firmness. Can you suggest a way to help correct this problem? (Louisiana)

Answer: In addition to frequent topdressing, try rolling the greens. A 1- to 2-ton commercial asphalt roller can be leased from your local rental company. Roll the greens in two directions after the sprigs have become well established (3 to 4 weeks). This action will both smooth and firm your putting surfaces, giving your golfers the uniformity they desire.

AND GOOD RESULTS FOR MANY YEARS

Question: We are preparing to go to great expense to restore our old greens to their original shape through reconstruction. Is there any easy way to mark the perimeter of our new greens so their exact shape can be maintained over the years? (Kansas)

Answer: Although a good surveyor can be certain the lines are never lost, few of us have the skills necessary to reestablish such precise curves with a transit. However, since you are going to rebuild, you have a great opportunity to "mark" both the perimeter of the green and drain lines electrically. After the shell of the new green has been shaped and the drain lines installed, lay a #14 irrigation wire along the shell's perimeter and in each drain ditch. Splice all connections to make certain you have continuity. The ends of the wire can be laid beside the rear flush point. In the future, the exact shape of the green and the location of all drain lines can be easily found with a wire-tracking device.