

TOPICAL TURF TIPS

The Golf Course problem page, gives expert advice to management problems

QUESTION

I have been told by one of our members that it is illegal for any of the greenstaff to spray chemicals unless they have been on a course and obtained a certificate. The staff member who does most of the chemical spraying is over 60 years of age and has refused point blank to go on a course. He says he is "not going back to school at his age and in any case knows more about how to apply chemicals than any college lecturer!"

ANSWER

From January this year all greenstaff under 24 years of age, who use chemicals, MUST have attended a recognised training course for pesticide usage and obtained a certificate of competence. The training starts with the basic foundation module - PA1 and covers general information on pesticides, such as labelling, storing, environmental effects, keeping records etc. Once this certificate is obtained, there are further specialist modules covering tractor mounted spraying and knap-sack spraying. Your mature member of staff CAN continue spraying under what is known as the "grandfather clause", but he has to be supervised by a certificate holder, which means you have to take the appropriate courses as his supervisor or one of the other certified staff must take charge. Contact your local college for training course details. The cost is around £30 for each module. Money well spent if the club are to keep within the law and avoid expensive accidents.

QUESTION

I am getting an earful from my green committee, who say in the best summer we have had in years, the greens are in a dreadful state, despite an expensive irrigation system. I must accept that brown patches have developed on some greens, mainly poa annua, going from a brighter green to loss of grass cover virtually overnight. I am using the greenside sprinklers but sparingly, so as not to encourage thatch. The "expensive irrigation scheme" is a joke. They seem to forget it was put in on the cheap 23 years ago and wants completely updating.

ANSWER

It sounds as if you gave dry patch or thatch fungi, most likely a combination of both. Get spiking as quickly as possible followed by a wetting agent such as Turftex. If the sprinkler system is not coping with high spots or giving sufficient green cover then hand water. Keep a constant check on the thatch layer and aerate with both solid and chisel tines to keep the growing medium open. Contact your local servicing agent or dealer for the irrigation scheme and get them to give you a quote for an update. You will then have the facts and figures at your finger-tips and be able to make out a case with authority.

QUESTION

I have recently rebuilt a bunker to the right hand side of an elevated green to one of the par threes. On the left is a load of trouble with thick undergrowth so the golfer

invariably aims right and if he doesn't make the putting surface he is in the sand. This bunker claims more shots than any other on the course and is a constant source of complaint. Since it was reconstructed they now say the ball landing at the foot of what is quite a steep face is unplayable and unfair. What can I do about it?

ANSWER

Bunkers are hazards and are incorporated into the design of a golf course to penalise a bad or poor shot. Nevertheless they must be fair, giving the golfer an opportunity to redeem the situation and still make par with a well executed sand iron. If a golf shot strikes the top of the bunker and rolls into the sand, the design of the bunker should be such that it throws the ball into a playable position. We all know there are famous bunkers such as the Road Hole at St Andrews, but most members golf clubs are not laid out for championship events, but as a test of skill for the average amateur and the hazards should be designed to cater for his or her level of ability. Our suggestion is to take your own sand iron into the bunker and try a few shots yourself. If the ball does frequently become unplayable, then you will have to have another go at re-building.

Address your queries to:- The Editor, The Golf Course, 129a High Street, Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex. CO12 3AX



Turf Irrigation Services Limited

Betchton, Sandbach, Cheshire CW11 0TS
Tel: 04775-255 & 256 Telex: 367122 TIS G.

TORO

IRRIGATION PRODUCTS

TURF
irrigation



Always ahead of the game