

Q's and A's

Q.—Our soils are made up of very well-drained glacial material. Specifications for our new greens call for drain tile. Do you think that tile drainage is necessary? (Vermont)

A.—With the excellent drainage characteristics of your glacial material I would consider tile drainage superfluous. Tile is specified where the subsoil tends to be impervious or where the drainage is too slow. You don't need tile.

Q.—Our budget has not allowed us to use crabgrass preventive chemicals and, of course, we've had plenty of the weed. We do some reseeding. My question is, "should we aerify our fairways in the spring ahead of reseeding?" (Maryland)

A.—In your case I would not aerify in the spring. There is no sense in stirring up all those crabgrass seeds. By eliminating spring overseeding you could afford to use a premerge chemical on at least part of the course. Save your over-Continued on page 32

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GRAU

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seeding money for fall when you have a chance to get more for your money.

Q.—Some heated discussions arise around here concerning "artificial turf." You have been in this turf business a long time; how do you feel about it compared to natural turf?

(Ohio)

A.-My experience has taught me many things. Among them are: 1) There are some areas devoted to intensive use where natural turf never will make the grade. These include practice and teaching tees where space is limited; athletic fields where practice and play must take place, including band practice; and play areas, such as covered domes, where light intensity is too low to support growth. 2) Many intensive use areas are built so that natural turf has two strikes against it from the start. 3) With few exceptions, important turfgrass areas are not provided with intelligent management.

Serious, sober consideration of these factors (and others) can lead only to the conclusion that artificial turf will be used in those intensive use areas where natural turf fails for one reason or another. In discussing this subject with Dr. Joseph Duich, he asked, "Have you ever calculated what it costs to dry-clean football uniforms when all they have to practice and play on is mud?" Apparently the money spent for dry cleaning would make a handsome down payment on artificial turf.

Make no mistake, I am utterly devoted to natural grass turf but I know when to be realistic. Also, some of the artificial turf I've examined is for the birds. The manufacturers still have some homework to do.