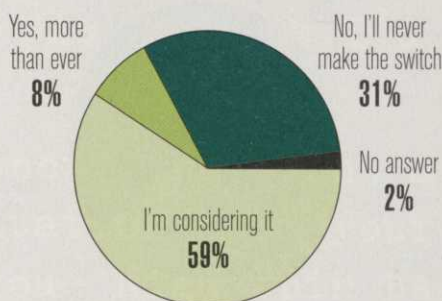
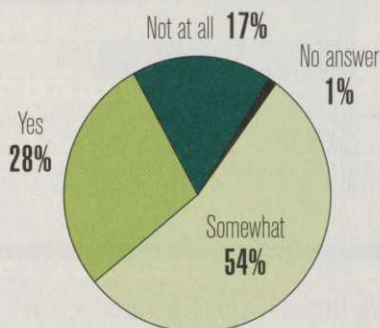


“I love someone who can look at a divot and figure out exactly what the hell a guy’s golf swing did to create it. I think that’s cool.” – **Rick Reilly**, Sports Illustrated columnist, on what he thinks of superintendents.

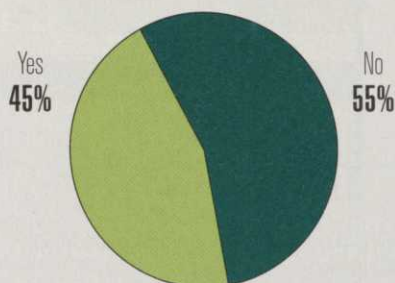
With the sharp increase in gas prices, will you consider using more electric equipment to offset fuel costs?



President Bush recently urged Americans to conserve energy, especially gas. Are you doing your part on the golf course to conserve?



Was your course damaged or hindered by bad weather in 2005?



“You go further south and *Poa annua* is a weed in our region. You go further north and it’s a desired surface. So we sort of split the middle here with it. If [superintendents] are trying to kill *Poa*, we can figure out how to do that. If they’re trying to manage it, we can figure out how to do that too.”

– **Keith Happ**, senior agronomist for the USGA Green Section’s Mid-Atlantic Region, on the respect and disrespect that superintendents have for *Poa* in his region.

“I do like disease. If that makes me strange, so be it.”

– **Bruce Clarke**, director of the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science and a turf disease aficionado.

“That show was just hectic.”

– Irrigation consultant **Dave Davis** on getting around at the sizable Golf Industry Show last February.

“It looks like somebody who works – and not at golf.”

– **Jon Jennings**, certified superintendent of the Chicago Golf Club, describing what his golf game looks like.



“Turf equipment gets [treated harder] than any other equipment I’ve seen. And I’ve seen it all. I’ve worked on everything from tanks, hand mowers and 18-wheel tractor-trailers. Turf equipment gets abused the most.”

– **Jay Rehr**, president of Turf Equipment Consulting and well-known golf industry mechanic.

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In this business you will be humbled. I don't care

how good you are or how good you think you are, Mother Nature can take it away from you any time."

— **Jimmy Ellison**, vice president of agronomy and golf course maintenance for Arnold Palmer Golf, on golf course maintenance in the real world.

"Let's face it: We're a chemical company. If nobody stands up for it ... well, we shouldn't be surprised if people say we don't need chemicals anymore."

— **Hans Reiner**, BASF executive, on the realities of the business.

"Thanks for the memories, Jack!"

— A fan yelling to Jack Nicklaus on the second day of the Memorial Tournament at Muirfield Village Golf Club in May. Nicklaus missed the cut in what could have been his last tournament at the Dublin, Ohio, course he designed and built.

"We don't talk about hurricanes here any more. It's like taboo."

— **Rob Kloska**, superintendent of the Jupiter Island Club in Hobe Sound, Fla.

"There's not a whole lot to do around here. But you manage."

— **Jerry Bonner**, who interned on the golf course maintenance staff at Pinehurst No. 2 this year, on the nightlife in the quaint town of Pinehurst, which ain't exactly Vegas.

"Reality is reality, and Mother Nature wins all battles. Just like today, I wanted rain but not an inch and a half."

— **Paul Galligan**, superintendent of Grand Traverse Resort in Traverse City, Mich., on dealing with the weather.

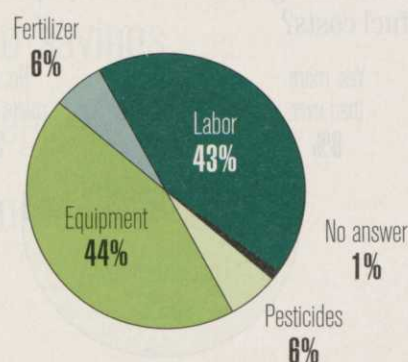
"I can't think of anyone who has put themselves through more misery than I have."

— **Shawn Emerson**, director of agronomy of Desert Mountain in Scottsdale, Ariz., who has participated in more than 50 golf course overseedings. ■

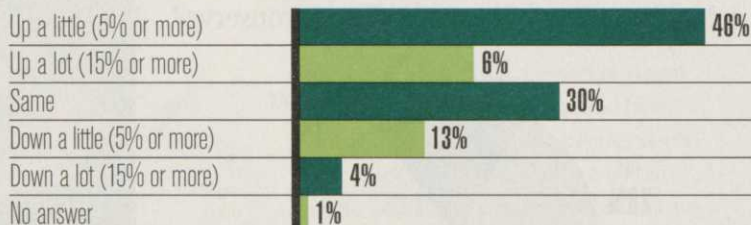
If there's one thing you could change about your job, what would it be?



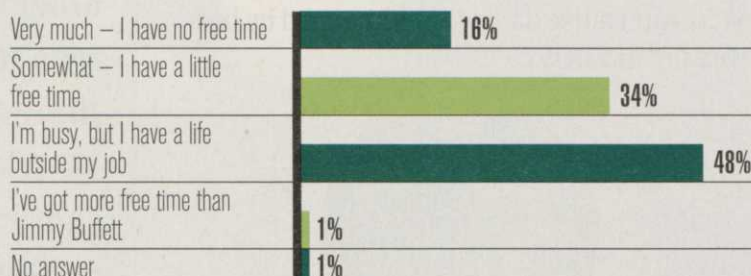
What is the area of your budget you're most likely to cut when asked to do so?



Do you think your 2006 maintenance budget will be...



Do the hours you work impact your life outside the golf course?



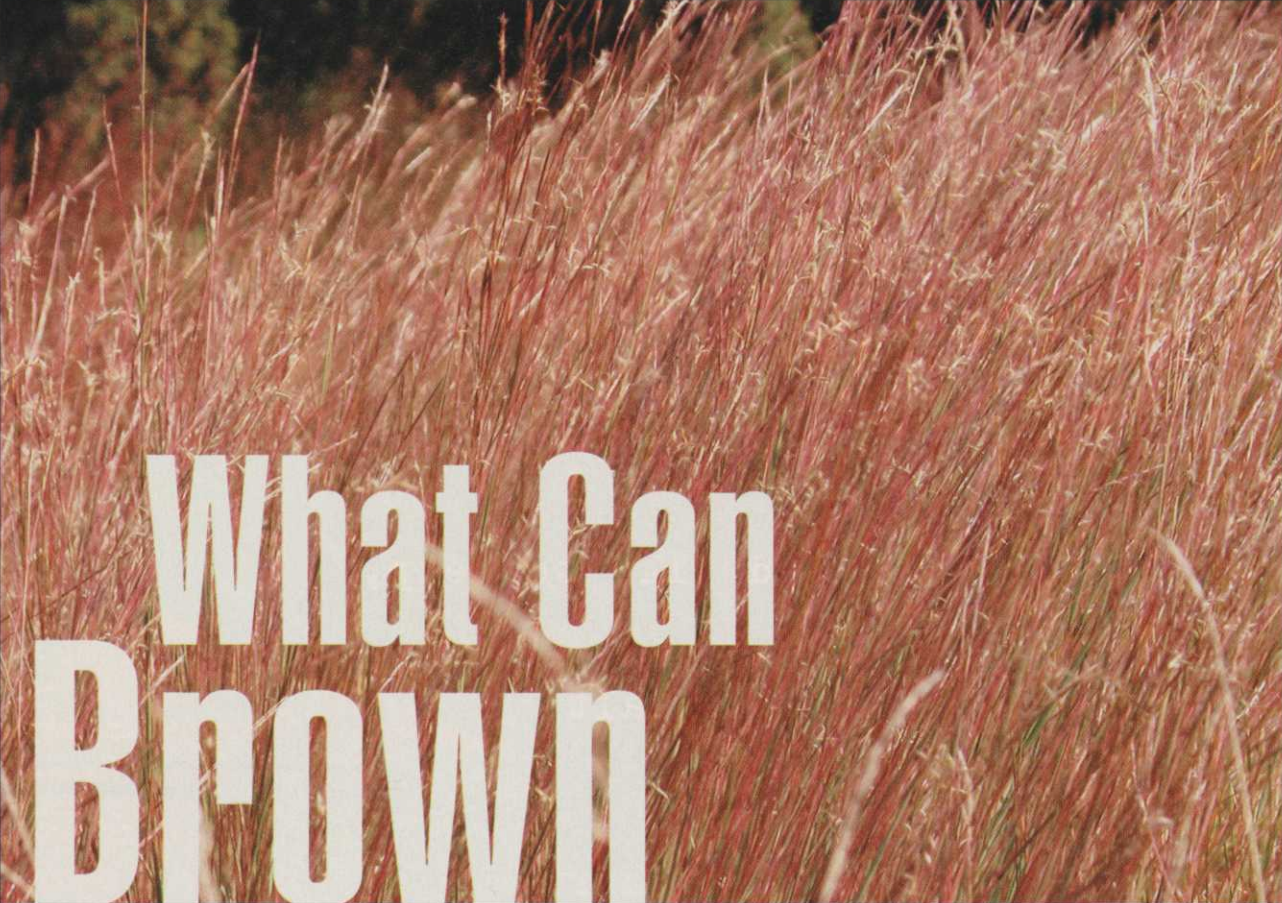
Editor's note: Findings are based on responses from 380 superintendents and golf course employees who participated in *Golfdom's* October online survey.

As much as I'd like to help,

I cannot remove the asphalt indentation from your precious high spin ball. For you should know that cart paths are not your intended target anymore than ancient oak trees or aluminum siding on a condominium. Bring me your dirt, leaves, mud and grass and I will restore and refurbish your gem to its original luster. But even my 50+ years of experience has not come up with any advice for that travesty you call a swing.



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What Can Brown

Do for You?

BY RON FURLONG

For starters, it can save
a few bucks . . . as well as
the environment

You know that saying, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence"? I think it's fence. Maybe it's "the other side of the hill"? Or maybe "the other side of town"? Anyway, you know the saying. Imagine for a moment a time in the future, maybe the not-too-distant future, when that saying changes from "the grass is greener" to "the grass is browner." Doesn't quite have the same ring, I admit, but we may just be headed in that direction.

Golf course superintendents are as guilty as anyone in wanting the golf course green and healthy. I'd be lying if I said aesthetics didn't matter to me. They matter to me

Continued on page 46

A desert landscape featuring a well-maintained golf course green in the foreground, with a cactus and rocky terrain in the background. The scene is bathed in warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

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It all adds up!

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Continued from page 44

probably as much as playability. I guess that leads to the question of what is aesthetically pleasing? Does turf have to be green to be appealing to the eye? Are we conditioned to the point where we think grass has to be green? What if we opted for some yellows? Or, yes, even a few browns.

What can brown do for you? Well, deliver your packages on time of course, but what else? Imagine intentionally shooting for a certain level of browns in your fairway, and another level in your primary rough. Maybe even a third shade in your secondary rough, or perhaps we're getting into the wispy shades of yellow in the deep stuff. What would be some of the positives to such an approach?

- How about the chance to feel like you're making a significant contribution to the environment. How? Well, no mow zones for one. Also, you'd be creating out-of-play areas, enhancing wildlife and cutting down on fuel and pollutants.

- Creating biodiversity.

- Creating more diverse aesthetics. You can only have so much lush, green, manicured turf on your golf course. Wildflowers, wetlands, native grasses ... the list is endless.

- Better fairway playability. Lush turf on your fairways does not always equal great playing conditions.

- Make your members into longer hitters. Roll, baby, roll.

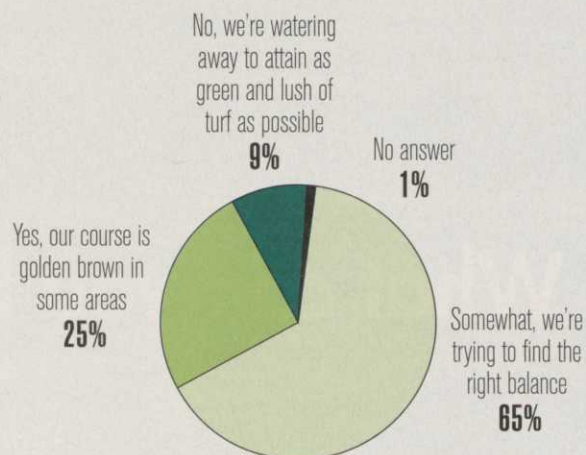
- Here's a good one: Save money! Less water, less fuel, less equipment repairs, less labor.

The very quotable A.W. Tillinghast, the great golf course architect from early in the last century, once wrote: "I do not endorse the necessity of watering the entire course, or I might say the desirability, no matter how much money you may have. Surely watering may be carried to the extreme, as certainly is the case frequently in the watering of putting greens. ... In many cases there is the tendency to rush to the conclusion that the fairway turf is dead after a drought because the plants are browned and seared. I do not recall in these parts (northeast United States) ever seeing any well-established fairway turf permanently destroyed by drought. Apparently dead, the grass will be restored to color when the rains do fall finally, for the roots are alive. ..."

I won't take this forum to present any arguments against Tillie's agronomic theories, but his words do invoke consideration, even today.

Returning to golf's roots, that's what we're talking about here, as in the way the game was meant to be played. But be careful now, technology is not such a bad thing. Things have improved, and the manner in which we accomplish tasks is more often than not better. But maybe a very small, cautious step backward, gingerly extending your toe into

Are you managing water use as efficiently as possible?



Editor's note: Findings are based on responses from 380 superintendents.

the past, is possible here. Maybe a little more knowledge of the true nature of this sport's past is in order.

In 1842, William and Robert Chambers printed the following words in the *Chambers Edinburgh Journal*: "To appreciate golf fully, it must be studied in some such school as that of St. Andrews, where its whole character is fully developed, in consequence at once of the admirably adapted ground, and the enthusiasm of the votaries."

The "admirably adapted ground," of course, is not all that green. We all watched a wonderful Open this past July on the hallowed grounds, which were shimmering in yellows, browns and a slight hint of green. Jack bid his farewell on the bridge and not a dry eye in the house could be found as he extended his arm around Tom Watson and the two of them basked in the true color of the sport — brown. I don't remember any commentator mentioning the lack of lush, green turf.

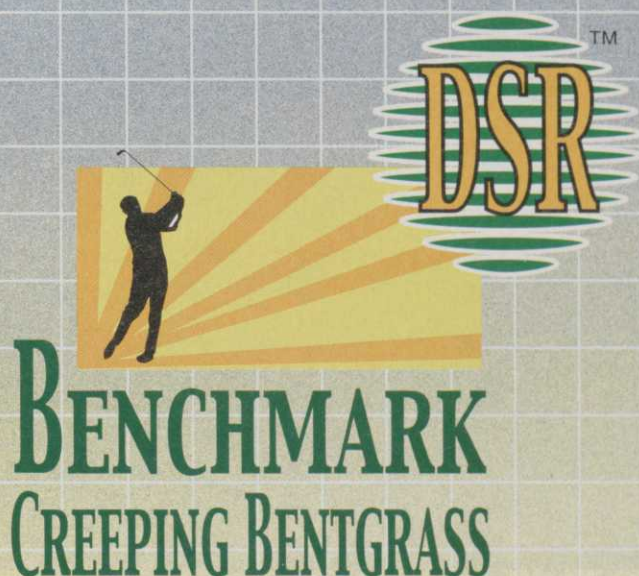
If one were arguing the side of green against brown, perhaps he would present as his visual example the storied grounds of Augusta, nearly as legendary as St. Andrews. Just as it would be hard to argue against those on the side of the browns of St. Andrews, it would be nearly as difficult to deny the perfection of that pristine golf course in Georgia. The very green golf course in Georgia. So who would win the debate? I have no idea, but I think what we're left with is maybe aiming for a bit of both worlds.

It is undeniable that water, pesticide and other restrictions are going to change the way golf courses are managed in the future (it is already happening on many properties), and consequently, the way they look. This decision of choosing brown may be made for us. But

Continued on page 48

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TURFGRASS QUALITY

RATINGS OF BENTGRASS CULTIVARS IN THE
2003 NATIONAL BENTGRASS (GREENS) TEST
AT ITHACA, NY - 2004 DATA - 1-9; 9=BEST

NAME	MEAN
Benchmark DSR	6.9
Penn A-1	6.8
Pennlinks II	6.8
Memorial (AO3-EDI)	6.4
007 (DSB)	6.3
Vesper	6.3
LSD Value	1.5

2003 NATIONAL BENTGRASS (GREENS) TEST AT
DALLAS, TX. - 2004 DATA - 1-9; 9=BEST

NAME	GENETIC COLOR	LEAF TEXTURE	DOLLAR SPOT
Benchmark DSR	7.3	8.0	8.0
T-1	7.3	6.3	7.3
Penn A-1	6.3	6.0	7.0
LS-44	6.3	6.7	6.3
Pennlinks II	6.3	4.3	7.3
Penncross	6.3	4.3	7.0
LSD	0.8	1.6	1.1

TURFGRASS QUALITY

RATINGS OF BENTGRASS CULTIVARS IN
THE 2003 NATIONAL BENTGRASS
(GREENS) TEST AT MEAD, NE
2004 DATA - 1-9; 9= BEST

NAME	MEAN
Benchmark DSR	7.6
Declaration	6.6
Penn A-1	6.3
Pennlinks II	6.3
LS-44	5.7
Vesper	3.4
LSD Value	0.6

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maybe we can choose where our browns and yellows will be. Maybe we can dictate where shortcuts may be made and choose agronomic decisions based on playability concerns as well as environmental concerns.

One obvious choice would be the lessening of irrigation on the fairways and letting them brown a bit. I work at a golf course in western Washington where we actually welcome a color other than green when we can get it. This region is lush and green most of the year. A chance to firm it up and let the ball roll down the fairways is welcome in July and August.

I would also think the wall-to-wall practices many of us implement with regard to water need to be considered and perhaps amended. Do you need to water the rough? If your answer is "yes," OK. Then, do you need to water the secondary rough? Yes? OK, then do you need to water out-of-play areas you are not even mowing? Do you have some? Could you have more? Seasonal wetlands, areas that only hold water for part of the year, are another great way to increase biodiversity.

In consideration of what brown can do for you, and how it might affect what the modern-day golfer perceives as "playability," let me pass along a few words from the one and only Old Tom Morris. Here he is writing about the shameful removal of the whins at St. Andrews a good 100 or so years ago (I have to admit I have no idea what the heck a whin is, but that's beside the point), and a few words on some other hazards there. I must say after reading his words, I have a strong inclination to turn off the fairway irrigation, stop raking the bunkers and try to grow some gorse.

"In St. Andrews the whins have ceased to mark with their golden bloom the heathery boundary of the course. Yet what skill was needed — especially with a side wind — to avoid the seylln of the whins without being caught by the Charybdis of the bunker! It was no joke to extricate the ball from a dour whin; but this has been ruthlessly removed for a different style of play.... The heather at the sixth and ninth holes is scarcely worth calling a difficulty. Where are the rushes at the second hole? Besides



This area of native grasses at Newton Country Club in New Jersey was formerly maintained turf.

these, players have to contend with streams, roads and railways; and in some greens with trees, hedges and walls.... Unplayable snares like rabbit holes should not be called hazards, because no one can remember where those are."

Think about the words Old Tom writes above — "... a different style of play." He is not talking about this different style of play kindly. What do you think Old Tom would think about our "green" mentality today, and the bite we've taken out of the golf courses over the last 20 years? The golf courses look good, and they probably play easier than they did in years past, but is that really where we want to be?

"What skill was needed to avoid the seylln of the whins without being caught by the Charybdis of the bunker!" I don't know what the heck that means, but I agree with it! ■

Ron Furlong is the superintendent of Avalon Golf Club in Burlington, Wash., and a frequent contributor to Golfdom. He can be reached at RF7500@aol.com.



REVEALING THE **SPIN** ON Topdressing

By Thomas Skernivitz Managing Editor

Although fairly simple by nature, topdressing has evolved significantly in recent years.

Not long ago superintendents were setting aside only two days all year to topdress with heavy applications. “They’d aerate the greens and then bury them with sand,” says Kevin Clayton, a regional sales manager with TyCrop.

Later, with the United States Golf Association (USGA) imposing its greens guidelines, the chore became semi-monthly or even weekly, albeit with lighter applications. Meticulous superintendents, to assure that treatments weren’t applied too heavily, would spend

good chunks of time using a walking fertilizer spreader on each green.

Technology soon came to the rescue. Companies such as Dakota Peat and Equipment, Turfco and TyCrop began making topdressers with spinners that guaranteed light but widespread applications. Today superintendents and their greenskeepers can cover one green in just two or three passes and all 18 greens in 90 minutes.

“It’s all about getting it done,” says Scott Kinkead, Turfco’s executive vice president.

Getting it done correctly goes a long way, too. Here are 10 topdressing tips, courtesy of the major manufacturers:

1 Fine-tune the presets: Even light applications can result in the greens

having to be dragged or brushed clean. But if the angle of the spinners and the speed of the belt and spinners are set correctly before hitting the greens, that need is erased.

“You can get it light enough that you can just literally turn on the irrigation for a brief run, and you won’t have to do any dragging,” Kinkead says.

Especially important is the angle of the spinners. Turfco’s products allow a range between 0 degrees and 15 degrees. Set correctly, the spinners can “drive” the topdressing into the turf canopy instead of allowing it to accumulate on the surface.

“The other value is that if it’s a windy day, you can angle the spinners down so you’re not just throwing sand out to the wind,” Kinkead says.

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The Spin on Topdressing

Continued from page 49

2 Pick what works ... and stick with it: Upon determining the correct topdresser settings, maintain them from green to green and don't change "on the fly," Kinkead says.

"If you slow (the spinner speed) down, you've just thickened the application. If you speed it up, you've just thinned out the application," he says.

Likewise, superintendents, once they've picked the topdressing material that best suits their course, should stick with that material and the supplier. "You don't want to have different types of material that you're utilizing," Kinkead says. "You can lock up the greens."

Clayton recommends taking a core sample and having it analyzed in order to develop a proper topdressing program.

"A lot of guys will start topdressing and they won't have any idea why they're doing it; they just heard it's a good idea," he says. "But if you put the wrong type of material down, you can create layers and more of a problem for your roots not being able to penetrate the profile."

3 Pick truck-mount or tow-behind: Each mode of delivery has its positives and negatives. A topdresser that is mounted to the back of a utility vehicle is ideal for maneuvering around courses that feature tight greens. Unfortunately, Kinkead notes, more often than not the utility vehicle becomes "married" to the topdressing machine and remains mounted all year.

What a tow-behind topdresser might lack in maneuverability, it makes up for in simplicity. "All you do is drop the pin in and go," Kinkead says.

4 Floor it: Some topdressing machines — truck-mounted or tow-behind — rely on the hydraulics of a pull-unit such as a Toro Workman or John Deere Pro Gator. So, whoever is operating the pull-unit has to shift down and hold the accelerator to the floor while in the process of topdressing.

"We've got a lot of people that say, 'God, this thing doesn't topdress very

“As soon as you're going to go across the green, you shift down, floor it and go straight.”

RANDY DUFAULT,

SALES MANAGER,
DAKOTA PEAT
AND EQUIPMENT



well,' and we find out they're just idling across the green and their hydraulics don't have enough hydraulic pressure to flow," Randy Dufault, sales manager with Dakota Peat and Equipment, says. "The spinners will be going fast and slow, fast and slow. It won't be a great spread."

5 Kick the tires: As with their personal vehicles, superintendents should occasionally inspect their topdressers. Some of the parts to focus upon, Kinkead says, are the filters, belts and spinner veins. "Just give them a quick visual," he says.

6 Insta-load: The most time-consuming element of topdressing can be the transport and loading of materials. The solution is a loader that shadows the topdressing unit. Whereas a typical topdresser has a capacity of 1 cubic yard, companies offer follow-behind units that can hold up to 4 cubic yards of material.

"That can really decrease the amount of time it takes to topdress," Kinkead says. "Especially if the maintenance shed is far away."

7 Know your routes: In order to prevent overlapped or overlooked areas of turf, a strategy should literally be mapped out in advance. "Look at the greens and

how you want to enter and exit them," Kinkead says.

8 Ride the straight and narrow: It's important to maintain a straight line while traveling on the greens. Wide turns, especially while driving mounted units, can result in tire tracks.

"As soon as you're going to go across the green, you shift down, floor it and go straight," Dufault says. "You can make little turns, but try to keep the lines straight. Turn around (off the green), line it up again and go straight back."

Making tracks is also something to be wary of when topdressing a fairway with a four-wheel-drive tractor. "Always make sure the front wheels are in two-wheel drive," Dufault says. "If you have the front wheels in four-wheel-drive, when you turn it kind of scruffs and tears the turf."

9 Remember to spin: It's a simple mistake, but operators do forget to turn on the spinners. This leaves lines of unscattered sand along the green. "What I like to do is leave the spinners running," Dufault says. "Make sure it's the first thing you turn on and the last thing you turn off."

Doing so has an added benefit. When loading a topdresser, excess sand tends to spill onto the spinners and belt. When the machine is first turned on, there's a "big whoosh of sand," Dufault says, one that you don't want to land on a green.

"So what I like to do is turn the spinners on before I get to the green so that that whoosh just goes out into the fairway and you don't see it," he says.

10 Hold off on the Stimpmeter: It takes some time for topdressing to take effect, so it's best to wait until the material is incorporated into the canopy before re-measuring green speed.

"If they check their speed and then they topdress and then they check their speed right away, most times the speed is actually going to go down right away," Clayton says. "But if they leave it a couple of days to let the material incorporate into the canopy, then all of the sudden the ball speed goes up." ■