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lets on flagsticks or special color flags to show where the hole is cut, front to back. Might as well start renting or selling lasers, since some high-end public operations sell books showing distance of every tree, bunker, stream, pond, outhouse and beer garden on the course. The days of the purists are over.

Is verticutting greens outmoded and behind the times? Is spiking of putting surfaces passe? (Monroe County)

Verticutting is far from outmoded. Along with brushing, it is the best procedure to minimize spike snags on closely mowed greens and helps keep grain under control. Groomers do not substitute because they do not cut as deep (or better not).

Once a week or twice before every (frequent) topdressing are the norms.

Spiking is also helpful, but isn't used as much now that sand topdressing is a common practice. Spiking does benefit those who interseed just before topdressing. It may also help develop better sod density by cutting stolons to generate new growth at the nodes. Spiking is also helpful in perforating shallow stratifications and when changing topdressing materials, in an effort to blur the sharp interface between materials into a "transition zone."

How are PGR's working in Wisconsin? Under what circumstances do you recommend their use? (La Crosse County)

PGR's are difficult to evaluate since results in the field have been inconsistent from course to course. They have discolored *Poa annua* but haven't eliminated it or reduced seed-

head production. They do, however, slow all growth and help retain putting speed through the day. This is important on courses with a great deal of late afternoon play. Application must be precise and frequency must be judged on performance.

They should be helpful in inter-seeding projects, to help the non-competitive bentgrass and bluegrass seedlings get started before being overgrown by *Poa annua*.

PGR's have also reduced the mowing frequency but any large-scale use deserves some cost accounting. Difficult-to-mow areas should be considered for potential use.

What is the best method you've seen for keeping grass trimmed around trees? We've gone the herbicide route and seen soil slough from the bases of larger trees. We've used mulch, but removed it for safety (concern for eyes) and rulings (free lift?). Gang mowers cause a lot of damage, and riding rotaries aren't a lot better. Two seasons' use of string trimmers show potential girdling damage to trees. We're back to Lawnboys and hand shears (and the resulting time commitment).

There has to be a better answer out there. What is it? (Sheboygan County)

See above, last sentence. There's no universal, "best method." Around greens and tees I'd rather remove those trees which are too close and require manicuring. We see all kinds of operations with none having a distinct advantage over others. Some old timers would use rotaries around trees, but only if the blades were very

dull. They felt that hammered grass blades regrew more slowly than cut blades. (Sorta like string trimmers do today.)

How serious was turf loss last winter, in Wisconsin and surrounding states? (Brown County)

Central Wisconsin was the epicenter of *Poa annua* and ryegrass winterkill, 1991-92. Greens, tees and fairway losses occurred from Green Bay to Madison. Fall plantings of bluegrass, ryegrass and bent were also lost at courses in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. The best prevention is to provide better conditions for the desired grasses during the growing season, by drainage improvements, shade reduction, tree root pruning and minimizing traffic-induced soil compaction by feet, golf cars and maintenance equipment.

How serious has the drought been for golf courses in your Region? (Grant County)

Dry weather has not been considered to be damaging—yet, because the prolonged cool weather has cushioned the stress on plants. The availability of water is "under study" in some areas, but negative actions by bureaucrats have not been destructive—yet. The roughs in several courses have cut seedstalks still visible in July, indicating that little growth has occurred, but as long as the irrigation systems function, the primary playing areas are OK. This would be a good time to point out the deficiencies in irrigation systems, especially the scallops along edges of fairways, the wilted donuts around sprinklers and/or the overwatering in mid-fairways caused by trying to get water to the edges.

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