

# Turf nursery provides 'replacement parts'

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I've always suggested that a golf course have at least one turf nursery. The more I'm around bentgrass in the south, the more I'm sure a nursery is absolutely necessary. As we all know, growing bentgrass in a hot, humid climate can be a very tenuous situation. If you haven't seen just how fast bentgrass can die when the conditions are right (or, I should say, "wrong") you're lucky. Poor soil drainage, high temperatures, high humidity, poor air drainage and poor water quality, plus high traffic are some examples of the negatives that can cause bentgrass superin-



This nursery at Sandridge Golf Club, Chardon, Ohio, will provide Superintendent John Zimmers with turfgrass for green or fairway repair. The course opens in 1998.

tends some sleepless night. At times, we're going to lose some bentgrass no matter what we do.

I knew a superintendent who had 17 great bentgrass greens and one that was a real problem. It was at the bottom of a hill and had trees all around it. The result: no air drainage. The trees which should have

been cut down or at least thinned out were on someone else's property. Nearly every summer, that green began to show spike marks, and it would just about stop growing. When the green began to look and play bad, the superintendent simply, overnight, replaced the surface with turf from the nursery. Most years, the newly-sodded green stayed in fair shape until cool weather returned.

Another superintendent had three greens that were in a flood plain. It was just a fact of life that every few years those greens were going to be under water for a week or so. Since these were bentgrass greens, they don't last long under water. Even if they didn't die from the flood, the silt left behind would completely plug up the green.

Since it's nearly impossible to remove silt from a green, the only real answer seems to be to remove the whole turf surface deep enough to get rid of all the silt. Now, the nursery pays for itself. Even though sodding a green may not be the best way to establish a putting surface, if the green is top-dressed after the sod is laid, the putting surface may be acceptable. At least the green is not out of play very long.

The nursery should be constructed from the same material as the green, or it may have even a higher sand content. It should be mowed, fertilized and watered just like the rest of the greens. Consider it an "unused green".

Need to train an employee to mow greens? Why not let them learn to handle a greens mower on the nursery before you turn them loose on one of the real greens? A nursery can also be a great place to make sure the product works the way they say it does. **LM**

## Three groups to test turfgrass

USGA, GCSAA and the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) have combined resources to evaluate grass varieties on golf course settings.

"On-site testing of turfgrass cultivars is not a new concept. However, the joint sponsorship of on-site putting green trials is new," said Dr. Robert C. Shearman, NTEP executive director.

Practice putting greens built to USGA specifications at 16 different golf courses across America, feature bermudagrass and/or bentgrass varieties. They will be monitored to provide data for golf course personnel in the building and maintenance of facilities. Northern locations will integrate bentgrass cultivars; far-south venues will use bermudagrass varieties. Both will be used in transition zone climates.

All putting greens will be used as practice greens at the facilities.

## Penn State takes apps for program

Applications are being accepted for Penn State's two-year Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program for the class beginning in September 1998. There is an application fee of \$35 and the deadline for applications is Dec. 31, 1997. Call 814/863-0129.

## Clarification

A survey appearing in this section in our September issue arose from questions asked of The Pacific Northwest Golf Association and the Washington State Golf Association, reports Keith Ihms, CGCS, with the North Texas GCSA. The short article incorrectly implied that Ihms was reporting the results to California superintendents..