

TURF TWISTERS

NITROGEN LEVELS

Question: Recently we had soil samples from our putting greens tested. We have been fertilizing regularly with an inorganic fertilizer and the grass has been growing well, but tests indicated that the nitrogen content is low. Should we use larger quantities of nitrogen? (NEW MEXICO)

Answer: Soil tests are almost worthless with respect to nitrogen levels in the soil. Nitrogen from organic matter or from forms other than nitrate becomes "nitrified" by bacterial action. Nitrate is quickly taken up by the plant or leached out. Therefore the amount measured is in a rather transient state. A soil may have a relatively high nitrogen supplying ability but give a low test.

The quantity of grass clippings taken from greens and the color of the turf are better indications of nitrogen supply than are soil tests.

This is not true with respect to tests for other elements. Some of them are excellent indicators of the nutrient status of your soil.

GREENS BURNED

Question: We sprayed our Tifgreen greens with a mixture of chlor-dane (wetttable powder), disodium methyl arsonate, and a fungicide (Kromad). All these were used at recommended rates. We have used all the materials before at these rates and experienced no trouble. No response was evident for approximately 10 days after the spray was applied, but weather was damp and cool during this period. Then we had two warm November days and the greens burned badly. Some spots appear dead. What went wrong? (LOUISIANA)

Answer: We don't know. However, we suspect that the materials (or their carriers) were incompatible and that a toxic product was formed. While many insecticides, and fungicides may be used in mixtures, most manufacturers urge that their products be used alone.