



The Mountain State Greenletter

Volume 9, Issue 3
March 2017

WEST VIRGINIA GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear WVGCA Members

Spring is finally upon us with another roller coaster ride in the weather department. The east side of the state had heavy snows while the west and northern panhandle had almost no snow coverage. Trying to predict the poa seed head suppression may be a guessing game. March has proven to be the unpredictable month as we come to know.

The board is going to meet April 25th at Edgewood CC to discuss the annual scholarship fundraiser. We had a few bids come in and will sit down to review the options. After the board meeting, we will be playing golf and I would like to see as many of the members that can, attend and enjoy the day. Remember this Association is for you, the member, and we like to see your participation.

In closing, I would like to send my condolences to Gary Grandstaff and his family on the passing of his wife, Shirley. Gray has been a long-time member of the Association and Shirley always had the best cookies at the Turf Conference. She will be missed by all those who knew her.

Thank you,
Tony Coppa
Superintendent of Golf
Billy Casper Golf at Oglebay Resort

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So, This Is Spring

By David A. Oatis, regional director, Northeast Region

A mild winter and warm February temperatures have been tantalizing golfers with the prospect of an early spring. Bulbs are blooming, trees are budding, and courses in the southern part of the region have already applied preemergence herbicides and annual bluegrass seedhead suppression treatments. However, Mother Nature has reasserted herself in typical fashion. Cold March temperatures chilled bermudagrass back into dormancy and slowed pest development while single-digit temperatures and brisk winds bring an uneasy feeling to turf managers in northern locations. The recent nor'easter brought heavy snowfall, which all but slammed the door on plant growth and pest development. So, what does all this mean for golf courses?

~Bermudagrass was off to a fast start this year, but the recent cold temperatures have stopped it in its tracks. No damage is suspected at this point, but it will take plenty of warm weather and sunshine to get it growing again.

~Northern courses that had nondormant putting green turf and experienced single-digit temperatures should remove and incubate a few plugs from greens to check for winter injury. Widespread damage is not suspected at this point, but some injury may have occurred. Incubating plugs is the most effective way to gauge whether winter injury has occurred.

~Timing seedhead suppression treatments and preemergence herbicide applications has been difficult this year due to fluctuating temperatures; it is not going to get any easier going forward. Courses that made early seedhead suppression treatments may need to make additional applications because the seedhead production window will likely expand.

~Annual bluegrass weevils were active on many southern courses before the last two weeks of cold temperatures. Hopefully the cold will knock back their populations, but that may be hoping for too much. Turf managers should resume monitoring for annual bluegrass weevils once the snow melts.

~Recent high winds combined with heavy snowfall, ice and sleet will undoubtedly leave many courses covered with a layer of debris. More spring cleaning is in order for many.

~Temperatures always fluctuate during spring, but some years are worse than others. Late-winter and early spring temperature fluctuations result in a “start and stop” pattern for turf growth as well as pest and weed development. This makes timing control applications very difficult. It also produces inconsistent turf growth and makes turf more susceptible to wear problems. Don't overdo maintenance practices when turf-grass growth resumes. This is especially important with creeping bentgrass, because it is very susceptible to wear injury during spring.

The return of winter throughout much of the region is having impacts well beyond a deep layer of snow in many areas. Hopefully most courses will come through the cold snap unscathed and spring maintenance will soon fall into a normal routine. However, golfers may see a few more seedheads this spring, and perhaps a little more crabgrass and goosegrass this summer. For now, we will just have to wait out the cold weather and watch our college basketball tournament brackets.

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Cold weather and snow are likely to wreak havoc with flowering plants this spring.



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Ready, Set, Wait

By Paul Jacobs, agronomist, Northeast Region

Above-average temperatures have allowed golfers to start their season earlier than expected this year. A few days of warm weather during late winter can generate unexpected revenue for golf facilities, but superintendents must remain cautious because more cold weather could be on the way. The abnormally high temperatures have presented superintendents with several issues that are not typical for this time of year.

Mowing and rolling — Many courses in the southern portion of the Northeast Region have already mowed or rolled putting greens and courses in northern areas have been removing covers and preparing for play. Although golfers may be enjoying their first rounds of the year, they should be aware that most facilities do not yet have their full maintenance staff and course conditions will reflect that fact. Most labor budgets in the Northeast Region are calculated with a predetermined start date for seasonal staff. Staff cannot be easily added this early in the season, so most facilities are severely understaffed. Limited turf growth and staffing mean that midseason playing conditions should not be expected at this time of year.

Putting green covers — Some courses in northern portions of the Northeast Region have removed putting green covers to help turf retain winter hardiness and prevent early and unwanted growth. If high temperatures are forecast to dip below freezing, putting greens that have been uncovered should be covered again.

Snow mold prevention — Additional fungicide applications to protect against snow mold has been a topic of conversation among many in northern areas. Snow cover is required for *Typhula* blight — i.e., gray snow mold — development, so most facilities should be in the clear. However, if more snowfall is probable in your area and fine turf areas have already been mowed several times, an additional preventative fungicide application may be necessary.

Poa annua seedhead suppression — Research from Virginia Tech shows that an application of ethephon during winter, followed by the conventional trinexapac-ethyl and ethephon seedhead suppression program, can help reduce *Poa annua* seedhead production during spring. The recent stretch of warm weather has provided a great opportunity for superintendents to make a winter application of ethephon if it is part of their plan for 2017.

Traffic — Concentrated traffic on turf when growth is limited can cause thinning and may create other issues later in the season. Courses should continue to monitor turf health and manage traffic to avoid excessive wear. Hitting from nonconventional areas or artificial turf mats on teeing grounds and driving ranges will limit wear on high-priority areas during a period of slow recovery.

February golf in the Northeast Region is an unexpected bonus, but turf conditions for the long season ahead should not be compromised for a few early rounds. For more information regarding warm spring weather and how it affects the golf course, read the article, “A Warm Spring is Good for Golf, But...”



It may feel like spring, but turfgrass recovery is still limited. Take advantage of underutilized areas to avoid damaging high-priority playing surfaces.



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need to keep your course looking its
best. And with our knowledgeable
staff, we can help you make an ace.



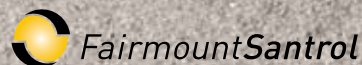
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Spring Meeting

April 25, 2017
Edgewood CC, Sissonville

9:30am - Board Meeting
10:30am - Registration
11:00am - Lunch
12:00pm - Golf

Cost is \$40

Please RSVP by April 17th



JOHN DEERE