Sincerbeau believes, "too much winter cultural practices can impede mother nature's natural process". This is why Sincerbeau's basic concept of summer preparation for a warm season turf is to prepare the plant to as durable as possible.

We like to think of south Florida as being within the subtropical region and dream of warm, frost-free mornings. Waking up to reality, the warm season grass optimal temperatures do not fall below 80°. This causes a difficult comparison to make for the northern golfer who ventures to the south. They often do not honestly consider the difference of the optimal growing temperature for their homeland cool season grasses of optimally withstanding 65°. In other words, they can boast of northern cool season color, but let's be fair in regard to climate and conditions.

Even though we work extra long and hard during the summer to ready ourselves for the winter battle, we still must use reserve powers to overcome the winter hardships.

Certified golf course superintendent Scott Sincerbeau of Royal Palm Yacht and Country Club begins his winter hardiness preparation during the month of May. Sincerbeau believes, "Get the turf as healthy as possible as soon as you can for the winter. You have to have it there by November 1st. There is no way you can get the turf much stronger through the winter".

One of the major problems of winter is the decrease of light duration, decreasing the ability of the plant to overcome stress. Producing turf buildup of quality levels off to simply trying to combat the hardships from play during the season.

Sincerbeau's first cultural practice is to aerify wall-to-wall. That's right, aerify the rough, fairways, tees, green slopes, collars and greens. With aerifying finished by July, a nematicide is injected wall-to-wall at an approximate cost of $100/A over 100 acres of the course. Nemacure is then applied, accounting for 20 acres of either greens, collars or slopes. Within four weeks, scalping is performed on the fairways, tees and slopes, while a slightly less thinning is performed on the rough. Within three weeks, during the month of August, a 15-0-15 fertilizer at 375 lbs/A is applied, followed by a lesser application again in mid October. A fertilization system based on an analysis of a 12-0-6 is applied through the season. The greens receive supplemental fertilizing of Milorganite or a 15-0-15 blend until late November, whereupon the blend is changed to a 18-4-10 UF of 3 to 4 lbs of N/1000/month. His changing of fertilizer material reduces the possibility of burn or the invitation of host organisms during moist weather conditions.

Sincerbeau believes, "too much winter cultural practices..." (Continued on Page 33)
permit deeper perculation, thereby inducing a deeper root system. Bill Kreigel, C.G.C.S., of Delray Beach Country Club believes this practice can support a healthier plant for the cold winter stresses. Tests have concluded for him that he is producing deeper, heartier roots that are less dependent upon water while nutrient availability has improved. Another beneficial practice in relation to irrigation can be the use of wetting agent penetrants. Kreigel has found the alcohol base wetting agents more beneficial to irrigation efficiency. Kreigel has been using less fertilizer, less electrical needs for irrigation while producing a turf of better color and increased durability.

Another important aspect of the wetting agent’s surface is during the threat of frosts. By reducing the quantity of leaf exudation and retaining moisture within the colloidal material, frost occurrence can be greatly reduced.

The agronomic situation becomes more specific when Kreigel applies his micronutrients. The concept is not so much retaining color and growth during the severest times, but to allow the turf to have greater recovery potential. Agronomically, this boils down to achieving an equally balanced nutrient available soil.

The whole general concept of cold winter hardiness preparation never ends, but is always beginning with more new concepts to contend with an unnatural situation. The next time one asks you why the greens are off color in the dead of winter, you can always be glad to remember that dead translates to totally no growth forever, and after all, you probably will only skip mowing for a day.