

To anyone who cared to listen, I have characterized the summer of '94 as being no fun trying to grow grass under water and in the dark! It was a great time to float a loan, but a lousy summer for selling

sunscreen. At one stretch it got so bad they were filming Sea Quest on my 8th fairway, and I kept seeing Lloyd Bridges and Flipper in the parking lot. Golfers, when they could play, had to read a tide chart as well as the sand bars to sink a putt. We were issuing life jackets and paddles with each golf cart. We

used airboats for beverage carts and the rangers had canoes.

I don't know about you, but my growing season started falling apart on May 28th. It is now November the 18th. In these past 171 days, we have had 114 days of recorded rainfall. As bad as that sounds, there were parts of the state that were hit even harder than that. Actually, October and November have been liveable except for tropical storm Gordon's contribution to the misery this week. I was beginning to regret that I had sent \$14.95 to Popular Mechanics for those ark building plans. We had begun to get 4 to 5 day stretches with no rain. And most importantly, we were getting sunny days.

It may be rather academic to report that the average rainfall for the Orlando area is 48 inches per year, and we have recorded 75.96 inches so far at our course. The point is that it obviously hasn't been a normal growing season this year. Besides the record rainfall, it was mostly cloudy and overcast every day. Do you remember junior high biology?

How about the part where plant cells take water and sugar in the presence of sunlight and produce chlorophyll? It is called photosynthesis. Read my lips! Photo equals sunshine. No sunshine . . . no synthesis. No synthesis . . . no healthy green grass. Normally, you'd have hot sunny days with clouds and showers in the late afternoon that would move through quickly. Not this past summer!

This year with saturated root zones and reduced sunlight we were being set up for weak turf conditions. Clubs that tried to maintain aggressive management programs probably ended up with thin areas. I know that was the case for me as we tried to prepare our 1 year old greens for their second PGA event since they were planted. At least in our case, my management was here all summer and they knew the rotten conditions that had existed all season. They were just happy that we caught a break in the weather and could get the tournament completed.

But some courses and superintendents were being put on the rack for poor course conditions as members who spent the summer up north came back to find playing surfaces less than ideal. I just hope enough of them were back for Gordon's little soggy post script on that miserable season. Gordon was a condensed version of our whole summer.

Unfortunately, conditions have not improved dramatically. We can expect to have a tough winter and spring with the usual increased traffic on the already weak turf. If the weather improves, we may be able to grow a good stand of winter grass to hide the weak bermudagrass, but we will have to eventually deal with the thin turf in the spring. Let's hope that next year's summer is a little more normal.

There are a lot of unsolved mysteries in the world. Why you cannot grow turfgrass under water and in the dark is not one of them!

The Summer of My Discontent

Green Side Up



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