INDUSTRY NEWS

USGA UPDATE
Overseeding Irregularities and Diseases Continue

By Todd Lowe

Warm temperatures in early winter have had a significant impact on golf course playability. As mentioned in previous updates, increased disease activity on putting greens and the need for increased cultivation occurred in early winter. Overseeding consistency is an additional factor that the odd weather pattern affected.

Some golf courses in our region overseed playing surfaces with cool-season grasses to improve color. Certain factors dictate overseeding success, and one of the most important of these is temperature. Ideally, seeds are applied as soil temperature decreases and bermudagrass becomes dormant or semi-dormant. Increased soil temperatures occurred this past fall, which encouraged prolonged bermudagrass growth during the overseeding establishment period. As a result, the bermudagrass turf became more competitive creating spotty overseed establishment.

Overseeding irregularities were less obvious when the bermudagrass turf was green, and were not observed until frosts occurred in January and February. Low temperatures caused the bermudagrass to temporarily lose its color, accentuating non-uniform overseed establishment and causing numerous golfer complaints. Winters like these have certainly caused clubs to take a long, hard look at whether the practice of overseeding is worth the aggravation and increased resources necessary for good overseed quality, particularly in southern Florida.

Some disease pressure continues to plague golf course putting greens throughout the region. In particular, Pythium was observed on several courses in South Florida during recent visits. Temperature fluctuations have, at times, been conducive for Pythium outbreaks and it is important to scout, observe weather patterns, and utilize reliable products for Pythium control as needed. Just because a product is labeled for the control of a particular...
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The pathogen does not necessarily ensure that it provides the best control.

The University of Florida produces an excellent pest control manual for turfgrass managers, with a list of recommended pesticides for common turfgrass pests at the Web site shown on the opposite page.

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The University also has a Rapid Turfgrass Diagnostics Service which provides accurate disease diagnosis within 24-48 hours. See IFAS form in this section for more information.