Superintendent Andy Brennan of Springhouse Golf Course at the Opryland Hotel. "Wherever traffic is funnelled, it's dead," he said.

"I was so surprised to see our Vamont Bermudagrass winter-killed. After our TAV visit, our green committee decided to row-killed. After our TAV, it was decided to sod those fairways to Meyer zoysiagrass to minimize future winter-injury problems. We will convert the other fairways to zoysiagrass over the next two years. I'm switching to a better horse."

— Frank Turner of Cherokee Country Club in Knoxville, Tenn.

"I have already worked with several clubs that have elected to switch horses from Bermudagrass to zoysia. They are taking a long-term approach."

— Patrick O’Brien

Superintendent Doug Ward at Belle Meade Country Club added, "If it [Bermudagrass] was mowed under an inch, you had some damage problems."

"I saw clubs with very little damage and others with 70 acres," O’Brien said.

Dan Gibson, superintendent of golf operations for the Metro Board of Parks and Recreation, said he lost 70 acres on the city's seven courses.

"Most everybody still looks bad because we haven't had warm weather," O'Brien said in early June. "If you are sprigging, the sprigs are sitting there doing nothing because of the mild weather. If you resodded, you're looking pretty good."

A number of superintendents have sodded over tees and around greens. The cold-hardy bentgrass greens are "some of the best greens ever," O’Brien said. "They're beautiful."

Meanwhile, superintendents who lost fall overseeded with ryegrass face a unique struggle.

"It's a Catch-22 situation," said Brennan, who wanted to keep the ryegrass alive through the PGA Senior Tour event at Springhouse, June 13-19.

Unseasonably cool weather in late May and early June helped the ryegrass fairways. But the Bermudagrass roughs, which were weakened but alive, "needed to be kicked a little bit, and the temperatures aren't cooperating," Brennan said. "What's good for the ryegrass isn't good for the Bermuda, and vice versa."

He said he would be sprigging his course with Bermudagrass if he didn't have to keep the ryegrass alive for the Tour event.

The ryegrass in the region was thriving in the cool weather, and that was inhibiting recovery of any damaged Bermudagrass areas, O’Brien said. "Those guys should, if possible, do practices to discourage the ryegrass so they can evaluate their situations," he said.

"Courses with ryegrass in the fairways can play to the hills," Gibson said. "But it’s camouflaging, and in July they will have to spray, too."

Making the best of a bad situation, many superintendents are experimenting.

Overseeding would make little difference — Carrow

By PATRICK O'BRIEN

Many golfers mistakenly feel the past winter's Bermudagrass injury could have been prevented by overseeding affected sites in the fall with perennial ryegrass.

Overseeding may offer minor protection against extracellular injury during normal winters, but most likely makes no difference during winters with large-scale Bermudagrass kill caused by extracellular death.

"It is true, overseeding affords a small degree of protection," said turf physiologist Dr. Bob Carrow of the University of Georgia at Griffin. "The overseeding helps to insulate the Bermudagrass, providing some extracellular protection."

The extra irrigation, fertilization and better routine care applied to the overseeding is enough to again indi-rectly maintain adequate moisture for the Bermudagrass, further reducing extracellular injury.

"Unfortunately, overseeding provides practically no protection against extracellular injury," Carrow said.

Carrow said that even in winter with partial kill, overseeding always slows down the recovery of the remaining Bermudagrass. In historically weak Bermudagrass areas — such as shade lines, high-traffic tees and fairways, etc. — overseeding is another factor for inhibiting recovery of the Bermudagrass the next spring, he said. For these reasons, fairway overseeding should be used mainly at resort courses in the warmer areas of the Southeast.

Patrick O’Brien is director of the Southeast Region of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section.

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