Stressed Out!
Superintendents and their turf living too close to the edge, say researchers

By Mark Leslie

Montreal — Declaring that "pre-stress conditioning" will be the new buzz word in turfgrass management, Dr. Joseph DiPaola told Canadian superintendents here they should develop long-term agronomic plans for their golf courses.

Speaking at the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association's International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, DiPaola said: "Our job is very simply to grow tomorrow's turf today. We have to be in a position of putting plants in place for next month, for next summer, well in advance of stress.

"The heads-up is that we are going to be hearing more about pre-stress conditioning. We don't have all the answers right now. But we've got better answers today than we had five or 10 years ago. We can get it all. There are many things we can do to condition turfgrass in a positive manner." He added that it's a "pre-stress" approach that is "preaching to the choir" by some superintendents.

Another point of interest was the "speed bump" on greens, which is "life in the fast lane." He added: "We're not talking about putting speed bumps on the greens for stress, but a little bit of that is going on...a little bit of speed can get us to a point where we can see some results. There is no magic. We have to work at it and we have to do it."

"We have to maintain our stress levels," DiPaola said, "and we have to do it in a positive way. Whenever we're stressed, our plants can't do their job. They're stressed, they're not getting enough water...we're not getting enough nitrogen...our plants can't do their job."

"The stress levels are going up. We have to be prepared for them...it's the speed thing that's really gone wild. It's our job to educate our golfers."

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