

**Regional Turfgrass Report
Twin Cities Region
Fall 2012 (authored 10.16.12)**

There is no question that this fall has been exceptionally challenging for golf course superintendents in the Twin Cities region. Following the second hottest July on record, the fall drought has left many of us playing catch up on a concluding growing season. Here are the precipitation (or lack of precipitation) statistics provided by the Minnesota Climatology Working Group:

August: -2.92 inch rainfall deficit.

September: -2.78 inch rainfall deficit.

October: -1.27 inch rainfall deficit to date.

The golfing public demanding firm and fast playing conditions were certainly pleased with the firmness of playing surfaces this fall, however our concerns relate to effect this drought will have on our turfgrass quality and irrigation system down the road. For those with less than adequate irrigation availability, greens have been given the highest priority and rightfully so. This means that we need to create a plan of attack for the areas that have been a low priority during the drought. In many cases the dormancy mechanisms of our turf will ensure its survival over extended periods of dryness, but what's the cutoff? This fall has pushed these rough areas to the limits and we need to prepare for the worst. Unfortunately that's the truth.

Dormant seeding in November will be a good option for areas that might not recover next spring, and should be something you consider in addition to your timely irrigation blow out and snow mold applications. Speaking of snow mold applications, how many of you consulted the August issue of Hole Notes for purchasing your fungicides? We encourage you to use this valuable research whenever possible. Also consider leaving a small test area untreated to demonstrate the effectiveness of these costly (but critical) applications to yourself and your club's management.

The lack of rainfall has certainly tested the limits of our irrigation systems. The good news is it provided some perspective on the moisture distribution and the quality of our system components. The bad news, we might be in worse situation than we previously thought. Remember to take photos and document areas with less than adequate irrigation coverage. Making notations on as-builts might be a good idea as well. This information will be useful for implementing irrigation upgrades and adjustments in the future.

As another golfing season comes to an end, it is important to reflect on the struggles of 2012 as a reminder that we can weather the storm. And what a storm it was. The optimist in each of us knows that 2013 will be a stellar year for turf. Still, be sure to prepare for battle as always with the proper planning to ensure a quick spring recovery and successful golfing season in 2013.

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