

USGA

No More El Niño Please!

By: Mike Huck, Agronomist, Western Region - USGA Green Section

I need to tell no one the El Niño has been affecting much of the country's weather this winter. The Southwest has had lots of rain, floods and mud slides, particularly throughout California. Even normally "sunshiny" Arizona has gotten more than their share of winter rain this season. On a brighter note, northern regions, such as Denver and Salt Lake City, have actually been blessed with unusually warm weather that golfers are enjoying greatly! Many people's lives have been affected by this unusual weather pattern - both positively and negatively. Countless dollars worth of damage and loss have occurred in the hardest hit areas. Those of us unaffected by the floods should all count our blessings.

Those golf courses that flooded will be cleaning up and repairing damage for a long period of time to follow. Direct kill of turf due to submersion is possible, but the outcome of this depends primarily upon six factors:

- (1) Turfgrass species
- (2) Total amount of time submerged
- (3) Depth of the water
- (4) Light intensity
- (5) Physiological condition of the turf
- (6) Temperature

There is also a real potential for problems to develop from silt and soil deposits that may not become noticeable until the stress of summer arrives. Fine soil particles deposited over sand rootzones of putting greens or tees can seal these surfaces and plug vital pore space of not adequately cleaned. Large silt and soil deposits should first be removed by shovel on greens and tees, then washed thoroughly to remove

remainder before play is resumed.

Soil deposits left behind on fairways and roughs will require a lot of time and labor to remove. A tractor with a grading box is the best method to begin the process of removing the bulk of this material. Power bunker rakes equipped with plow blades are excellent for finishing the job without causing too much damage to the turf. Hosing fairways clean after the bulk of the material is removed is not practical, however, remember that at the very least, enough soil must be removed so that a majority of the grass blades are exposed to sunlight.

Silt and soil particles can cause problems in fairways where a layer is left behind in the thatch. Irrigation may become difficult with localized dry spots surfacing that were not formerly a problem. About all that can be done in these cases would be to aerate the fairways often and pulverize the cores. This will blend native soil with the silt deposits and homogenize the layers over time. Slicing fairways is a quick way to open up problem dry spots as they develop. During the coming summer slicing may become a nonstop program in worst case scenarios.

Replanting may be required of some areas and at this time of year you may be forced to use some grass varieties you would normally not consider. Perennial ryegrass will make a relatively quick, playable fairway, but if your desire is to return to bermudagrass, the transition may be painful and slow. You may want to consider using a fine fescue or redtop as a nurse crop and then begin overseeding

common Bermuda back into the stand when soil temperatures begin to reach the mid-sixties. These two grasses will not provide the quality of fairway in the short term that ryegrass will, but over the long run, the bermudagrass will reestablish more rapidly within either of these turfs.

Finally, communicate to your golfers what they can expect this coming season. It would be a great idea to begin this process now. If you feel posting this article where golfers can read it would be beneficial, please feel free to do so.

Good luck to all of you in your golf course recovery efforts. /

Salary Survey Released

The results of the salary survey were recently released to all Class A and B Members, with the Annual Meeting notice. A total of over one hundred members responded to the survey, representing every major facet of golf course operations. "The numbers were fairly consistent with what we saw in the previous survey," reported Forrest Arthur who compiled the results. Additional copies may be obtained by request to the GCSANC office.

Quick Quote

Success with honor is like an unseasoned dish; it will satisfy your hunger but it won't taste very good.

- Joe Paterno -

ROYAL
Turf Services, Inc.
Get The Royal Treatment
Custom Turf Care

Timothy L. King

(800) 505-TURF

Aerification • Fertilizing • Spray Apps.



Fully Insured  Free Estimates

A Cut Above

G R A H A M
REE SERVICE

Tree Surgeons and Consultants
(510) 843-1789

2735 San Pablo Ave., Berkeley, CA 94702
State License #689022

