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LOW TEMPERATURE KILL VARIATIONS

Low temperature kill involves the death of any turfgrass that occurs as a result of interior tissue ice formation at temperatures below 0°C (32°F). The last two years have seen extensive kill by this mechanism, first on the closely mowed perennial ryegrasses (Lolium perenne) in the intermediate cool-humid region and more recently this past year on bermudagrasses (Cynodon spp) in the cooler portion of the warm-humid region. Note that this type of kill should not be confused with chilling injury or low temperature discoloration that occurs at temperatures of 12 to 18°C (54-60°F).

Confusion has arisen in making comparisons among cultivars of warm-season grasses in terms of their hardiness to low temperature kill. The hardiness comparisons normally given relate to low temperature stress that occurs during the winter period and are certainly valid among cultivars such as bermudagrass (Cynodon spp) and St. Augustinegrass (Stenotaphrum secundatum).

However, the confusion arises when low stress temperatures occur after spring greenup has been initiated. In this case, the cultivars most susceptible to low temperature kill would be those that initiate spring greenup the earliest. The warm-season turfgrass

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