



## Early Spring Impact On Maintenance Budget

*April 2012*

It has been years since I have seen our golf course this busy this early in spring. Are there any concerns with such an early start to the golfing season?

Golf facilities across much of the U.S. have experienced a boon in play and enjoyed early season revenues given the unseasonably warm weather this winter and spring. Depending on region of the country, the turf growing season is anywhere from three to six weeks ahead of schedule. In regards to golf course management, this certainly impacts course conditioning, maintenance programs and budget.

An early start to the golfing season generally will lead to an extended golfing season, and naturally this requires more labor and resources for course conditioning and management. After all, actively growing turf requires regular mowing and other routine maintenance in addition to inputs such as water, fertilizer and pesticides.

To accommodate for the early start to the golf season some golf facilities have elected to bring seasonal employees back early in an attempt to prepare the course for daily play while still completing off-season projects. For those that pay a steep price for water, an extended growing season could have a huge impact on the budget come year end. To account for increased early season play, additional aeration, topdressing and fertilizer may be necessary to sustain turf health on important playing areas that receive heavy traffic. Insect, disease and weed activity is occurring earlier than normal and this means that pesticide treatment schedules require adjustments. Not only will pesticides be needed sooner than normal but greater pest pressure over an extended season will likely warrant additional or repeat applications as well.

As the season progresses and turf performance and budget are evaluated, keep increased play and early-season expenses in mind because there are season-long implications for both. Whereas more resources may be needed to account for the extended golfing season, fortunately revenues should be up as well.

### **Useful Resources:**

[Warm Spring Good For Golf, But...](#)