



A Winter's Worth Of Work!

By Bud White, regional director, Mid-Continent Region

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Winter is finally here, but superintendents still have several responsibilities even though almost all varieties of turf are dormant or semi-dormant. Along with the usual winter jobs of tree and drainage work, this also is a good time to educate the Green Committee about winter shade patterns because of the lower angle of the sun during the winter months.

Take the Green Committee on the golf course to the problem shaded greens and tees, and observe shade patterns now versus during the summer months. This activity will help them understand the difference in shade patterns and comprehend how winter shade can be as damaging as summer shade in many respects. Take photos of the shade area in question now and compare them to shade patterns in the early summer. *A picture is worth a 1000 words!*

Winter also is an excellent time for raising tree canopies and root pruning where root competition is a problem. This might include greens, tees, and along tree lined fairways.

For those with non-overseeded ultradwarf bermudagrass greens, remember to train your crew for continual soil moisture monitoring as winter desiccation can easily occur as it goes unnoticed on dormant or semi-dormant turf. During the growing season, the off color of the turf indicates dry conditions, but this visual sign is lost during the winter months.

Another important, yet underutilized tool in today's turf management is dormant feeding of cool season grasses. In the Southern states, bentgrass and tall fescue are usually the two cool season species, and both respond positively from dormant feeding, mainly through an earlier and healthier spring re-growth once soil temperatures allow. This management tool is much more efficient than waiting until the first of March and then making a fertilizer application.

I also would like to remind you of the educational opportunities in the lower half of the Mid-Continent Region this winter.

- The Texas Turfgrass Association Conference and Show is December 8-10, 2008 in Fort Worth, TX.
- The Louisiana Turfgrass Association Annual Conference is January 6, 2009 in Baton Rouge.
- The Arkansas Turfgrass Association Annual Conference is January 21-22, 2009 in Hot Springs.

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