



Give It a Tug... It Might Be a Bug

By Bob Vavrek, regional director, Central Region

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It happens just often enough this time of the year to keep me humble. We drive past a crispy bunker bank or a dry, off-color spot in the rough and make smug assumptions. Obviously, the bunker bank faces south and is too steep to receive adequate irrigation coverage, or there is too much cart traffic and too little irrigation coverage to keep the grass in the rough happy. Make a note and drive on because there is plenty to observe and discuss on today's Course Consulting Service visit.

The same pattern is repeated a few holes later and it still makes good sense. Heavy rainfall during June hindered turfgrass root development and the grass wilted during the past week of unseasonably hot weather. Then, maybe just out of habit, you finally bend down and give the weak turf a firm tug and find absolutely no resistance. The grass peels back and you find enough grubs to feed a family of skunks for a week.

Turf managers are focusing their attention on preparing for late-season events, aeration, and the start of fall projects, so a little off-color turf can easily go unnoticed as the season begins to wind down. Be vigilant and always on the lookout for signs of wilt, especially in areas that appear to have adequate irrigation coverage.



It's easy to assume that turf loss on a steep bunker face was caused by a lack of irrigation coverage, but during September take the extra time to check for grub activity.

This is the time of the year when high populations of grubs can cause plenty of problems. Grubs are big, hidden and have nothing else on their mind other than feeding on turf roots. The grub problems you identify and address now will not return to haunt you next spring when grubs return to the surface for a few final meals before their next stage of development. Plus, it's always gratifying to know you denied some raccoons, skunks or armadillos a free meal of land shrimp. So don't just drive by that ugly rough, bend down and give it a tug, because it just might be a bug.

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