



Poa annua is highly susceptible to injury from cycles of thawing and freezing. Areas where water from melting snow collects and refreezes need to be closely monitored.

WINTER'S LAST GASP

BY BOB VAVREK | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, CENTRAL REGION

A freight train of storms have been racing from the Pacific Northwest to the Eastern Seaboard throughout the past few weeks. As the cars speed by, some bring rain, others ice and heavy snow. The unsettled weather reminds us that turfgrass winterkill is still a possibility for at least a few more weeks.

Poa annua is particularly susceptible to winter injury during early March. Only one or two days of mild weather can cause changes in *Poa annua* that greatly diminish its ability to tolerate freezing temperatures. Temperatures that oscillate from the 40s and 50s during a sunny day then plummet to well below freezing at night may be ideal for maple syrup production, but they are a serious threat to *Poa annua* playing surfaces.

The water from melting ice and snow poses another threat to turf, especially putting greens. It can pool on low areas during the day and refreeze at night. Lingering frost in the soil inhibits the movement of excess water through the

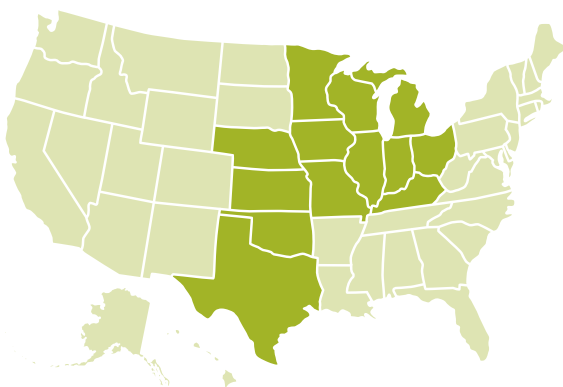


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soil profile, so water tends to puddle on greens during a thaw except where excellent surface drainage exists. However, impediments such as collar dams and accumulations of snow around the perimeter of a putting surface can hinder even the best surface drainage. In fact, keeping the area where water moves off a putting surface as free from ice and snow accumulation as possible is well worth the effort to protect greens that have a history of winterkill.

With the official start of spring only a few days away, let's hope the luck of the Irish shines on your course. Hopefully, the turf will enter the season free from winter stress and ready to accommodate throngs of players eager to enjoy the game they love.



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