



2008 Northeast News Update

By Jim Skorulski, agronomist, Northeast Region

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Nothing can beat a few mild nights and a warm rain to remedy impatient golfers and superintendents alike. The warmer conditions spell the end of cool season diseases, speed surface recovery, and promote more consistent fertilizer response and growth rates. Mother Nature is finally making hay and let her proceed without interruption. All the clever little tricks we try to accelerate the process help, but there is nothing like the real thing.

The cooler, dry spring weather has not been all bad. In fact, the root development I have observed has been vigorous, and reports from around the New England generally support those observations. A poor root system now is cause for concern and reason to reevaluate your cultural practices and growing systems. It is important not to overlook potential disease pathogens or parasitic nematodes as causes for the weak root system. Although rare, root dysfunction diseases and parasitic nematodes are active and can be devastating. Symptoms of root dysfunction diseases and parasitic nematodes are difficult to detect, and often go unnoticed until it is too late. Utilize a diagnostic lab if rooting is unusually weak and you suspect there may be a biotic agent at work. A positive diagnosis provides an opportunity to correct the situation in a timely fashion and take advantage of the still favorable growing conditions. Those actions may make the difference between a long, hot summer, and a day at the beach.

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