



March Roars Out Like A Lion

By David Oatis, agronomist, Northeast Region

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A recent cold spell and snowstorms in various parts of the Northeast have people thinking anything but spring. Nonetheless, golfers are waiting with eager anticipation for the grass to begin growing and for the greens to be opened. Unfortunately, plenty of golfers now are learning that their greens will not be open and that winter injury is the cause. Although some courses have suffered extensive damage, and may be considering regrassing, plenty of other courses experienced damage in isolated areas. In some of these areas, the annual bluegrass does not appear to have been killed outright. Green shoots are now appearing in plenty of affected areas, thereby promising faster recovery.

The bottom line - winter injury is usually difficult to predict and often impossible to prevent. Recovery time can be equally difficult to predict. Keep in mind that opening your greens too soon will slow the recovery dramatically, and will promote annual bluegrass at the expense of potential gains in creeping bentgrass. If there is a silver lining in the winter injury cloud, it is that it almost always translates to increased bentgrass populations.

Now for some more “good” news: adult annual bluegrass weevils (ABW) already are being picked up in pitfall traps at one course in southern Connecticut. With luck, you have already taken the time to install pitfall traps to detect their presence earlier, but if not, do so without delay. Based on research and observation, the emergence window of ABW seems to be much wider now than once thought, and missing some of the earlier emerging adults would explain why control measures applied later have not worked as well as superintendents would have liked. Even though it is early April and still quite chilly, begin monitoring immediately if you have not done so, as this may help avoid some unwelcome surprises later this spring.

We already have made a number of visits this spring, helping courses to assess the extent of their winter damage and to help develop a plan of action for recovery. If we can help you in this or any other way, give us a call. Also note that for the first time, GCSAA Education Points are now available for Turf Advisory Service visits.

The early season payment discount for 2011 Turf Advisory Service visits of May 15 is approaching. Significant savings can be had by paying for visits before May 15, regardless of when they are actually made.

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