



And Here's Your Sign

By Elliott Dowling, agronomist, Northeast Region

December 2, 2014

Irrigation system winterized, check. Preventative snow mold applications applied, check. First snowfall of the year, check. These are all signs that the 2014 growing season in the Mid-Atlantic Region is behind us. Hopefully, everyone is prepared – or in the midst of preparing – for winter.

Preventative snow mold applications need to be made very soon if they have not already been completed. Like most applications to turf, preventative snow mold applications are timing dependent. Ideally, preventative applications are made following the last mowing of the year and prior to the first snowfall. However, this is easier said than done.



No one has the ability to control Mother Nature, the best we can do is deal with her. Extreme winter weather may be a reality this year, so ensure you are prepared in advance.

If applications are made too early, a warm snap in the weather may require some courses to mow, removing some of the disease-control product. For the majority of the mid-Atlantic, I do not foresee this being an issue. In the southern tier of the region, warm winter weather can make snow mold applications especially challenging. If you find yourself in a situation where mowing greens is required, reapplication of a snow mold-control product may be necessary. If the application is made too late, you could miss the window for maximum efficacy, or weather conditions could cause the application to be missed altogether.

Additionally, if you cover your greens, snow mold applications are necessary. Covers provide an excellent environment for snow mold development. Ensure applications for pink and gray snow mold are applied to covered greens, and periodically inspect for disease under the covers throughout the winter. Monitoring under the covers is the best way to confirm an outbreak has not occurred.

Lastly, the million dollar question that everyone wants answered, what does the winter of 2015 have in store for the turf? The truth is that no one knows, but there are indications that this winter will be equal to, if not worse than last winter. The forecast has prompted many phone calls to our office asking the question, “How do I prevent damage this year?” Again, I wish I had a definitive answer. We learned last winter that you can do everything right, and still be wrong. There are many factors that lead to winterkill, many of which are poorly understood. The best way to limit winter damage is to be prepared, but realize that Mother Nature is undefeated and sometimes no amount of preparation can prevent damage. Plan for the worst and hope for the best.

Source: Elliott Dowling (edowling@usga.org)

Northeast Region Agronomists:

David A. Oatis, regional director – doatis@usga.org

James E. Skorulski, senior agronomist – jskorulski@usga.org

Adam Moeller, agronomist – amoeller@usga.org

Elliott Dowling, agronomist – edowling@usga.org

Addison Barden, agronomist – abarden@usga.org

[Information on the USGA’s Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)