



## Oh Boy, Here Comes The Heat

By David Oatis, regional director, Northeast Region

**July 15, 2016**

Turf survival during periods of intense stress depends on many factors, but effectively managing water is the most important. Make sure your staff knows the difference between hand watering and syringing. Watering turf when all it needs is a light syringe can spell disaster. Likewise, a light syringe when the underlying soils are dry will not delay wilt for long. Continually monitor soil moisture and the weather to determine appropriate irrigation.

Syringing only cools turf for a couple of minutes. However, the cooling effects of syringing can be significantly extended by using fans because evaporation, not the temperature of the water, provides most of the cooling. If water cannot evaporate—either because too much water was applied, humidity levels are too high or there is insufficient air movement—it will not cool turf. If you want to

demonstrate these points to staff or golfers, purchase an infrared thermometer and monitor canopy temperatures while syringing and when fans are used.

If you have fans, make sure they are fully operational and properly adjusted. Fans throw a diffuse swath of air, so set them to oscillate well within the borders of a green to maximize the cooling effect. Setting a fan to oscillate beyond the margins of a green can help the turf in the surrounds, but focusing the beneficial effects on the putting surface should be the highest priority.



*An infrared thermometer is a terrific tool for demonstrating the cooling effects of syringing and fans.*

“When in doubt, don't,” are words to live by when turf is under extreme stress. If you are wavering between single or double cutting greens, go with a single cut. If you are wondering whether to cut and roll, just roll. If you are wondering whether to roll, don't roll at all. Golfers may not be happy with greens that are slower than normal, but they will be much less happy with a bunch of dead grass.

Many courses are more concerned about excessive wetness than dryness. Aeration can help dry out saturated soils, but remember that even nondisruptive aeration treatments can injure weak turf. Once again, knowing when not to do something is just as important as knowing when to do something.

Having the wisdom and fortitude to back off is admirable. Cool-season grasses won't grow much during extreme heat anyway, so leave the mowers in the maintenance facility and don't cause unnecessary bleeding.

#### **Northeast Region Agronomists:**

David A. Oatis, regional director – [doatis@usga.org](mailto:doatis@usga.org)

Adam Moeller, director, Green Section Education – [amoeller@usga.org](mailto:amoeller@usga.org)

James E. Skorulski, agronomist – [jskorulski@usga.org](mailto:jskorulski@usga.org)

Elliott Dowling, agronomist – [edowling@usga.org](mailto:edowling@usga.org)

Addison Barden, agronomist – [abarden@usga.org](mailto:abarden@usga.org)

Paul Jacobs, agronomist – [pjacobs@usga.org](mailto:pjacobs@usga.org)

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

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)