



The Marathon Continues

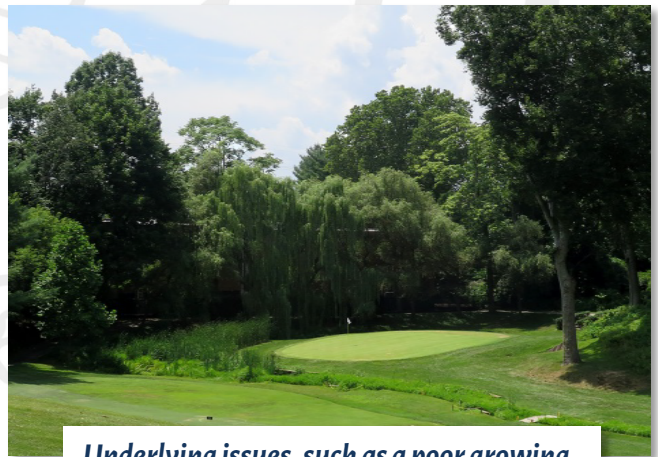
By Addison Barden, agronomist, Northeast Region

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During the recent heat wave that stretched across the entire Northeast Region, golf course superintendents and their staff struggled to maintain healthy turfgrass and good playing conditions. Hopefully the worst is behind us, but now is not the time to let your guard down. The cumulative effects of a long summer are beginning to show, so continuing to [play defense](#) by prioritizing plant health over playing conditions will be more important than ever.

Most of the recent turf damage has been confined to areas with significant underlying problems. Areas with poor growing environments, poor drainage characteristics or poor irrigation coverage are among the most vulnerable to damage. To prevent future issues, identify problem areas now so they can be addressed during the offseason with [tree removal](#), [oscillating fans](#), [drainage](#) or [improved irrigation coverage](#).

This summer, [defensive cultural practices](#) and [proper moisture management](#) have been the keys to successful turf management. Those who made the difficult decision to favor plant health by increasing the height of cut on putting greens, reducing mowing frequency, and performing regular [venting](#) have fared better during the hot, humid weather. Continuing these strategies will help courses begin the fall season without having to repair or regrow significant areas of turf.



Underlying issues, such as a poor growing environment or lack of internal drainage, have caused turf decline this summer.

In some parts of the region, golfers are enjoying firm playing conditions that have come with persistently dry weather. However, dry conditions are creating water supply issues for many superintendents, some of whom have implemented self-imposed water reductions. If your golf course has not already created a [drought-emergency plan](#), now is the time to do so.

Fortunately, while there is still a lot of summer weather left there may be a light at the end of the tunnel. The heat wave has passed for now, but the negative effects of the recent heat wave on cool-season turf have already occurred. Remember, even if the worst is behind us, stressed turfgrass may not tolerate the aggressive maintenance practices that create firm and fast playing conditions. [Fighting the urge to push](#) cool-season turfgrasses to the limit for a few more weeks will set the stage for a great fall golfing season.

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