

Cold-Tolerant Bermudagrasses: The Real Winner of 2016

By Addison Barden, agronomist, Northeast Region

December 2, 2016

Many golf course superintendents in the Northeast Region are happy to put the 2016 season in the past. Uniquely challenging weather affected the entire region from early this season until late into the fall. The southern half of the region was hardest hit, with prolonged hot and humid weather that was intermingled with frequent, heavy afternoon thunderstorms. Regardless of budget or the number of rounds played, many facilities experienced some cool-season turf decline because of the harsh weather conditions.

One grass species that had few issues this summer was bermudagrass. Cold-tolerant bermudagrass varieties – e.g., Latitude 36™ and Patriot – performed extremely well this year thanks to normal spring temperatures and the hot summer. Superintendents with cold-tolerant bermudagrass surfaces were able to produce excellent playing conditions with [fewer inputs](#) than courses primarily comprised of cool-season grasses. This allowed much-needed resources to be reallocated to other playing areas such as cool-season putting greens.



Converting to cold-tolerant bermudagrass can help facilities provide excellent playing conditions with fewer inputs during the heat of summer.

Additionally, cold-tolerant bermudagrass fairways and tees were able to quickly recover from the extra traffic and [divots](#) that resulted from the increase in rounds that many facilities reported this year.

Cold-tolerant bermudagrass is becoming a much more viable and affordable alternative to cool-season turfgrasses, especially on tees. However, the growing environment must be appropriate. Cold-tolerant bermudagrass needs a significant amount of direct sunlight, a requirement that prevents some golf courses from growing it successfully. If your facility is interested in converting to cold-tolerant bermudagrass, one of our regional agronomists can conduct a [Course Consulting Service](#) visit to help you determine if cold-tolerant bermudagrass is a viable option for your golf course.

Here is a friendly reminder about upcoming regional continuing education conferences; we hope to see you there:

[Virginia GCSA Conference and Annual Meeting](#): Dec. 5-6, Woodlands Conference Center, Colonial Williamsburg, Va.

[New Jersey Green Expo](#): Dec. 6-8, Borgata Hotel, Atlantic City, N.J.

[New Hampshire GCSA Education Day](#): Dec. 6, Holiday Inn, Concord, N.H.

[Eastern Pennsylvania Turf Conference](#): Jan. 4-5, Valley Forge Casino Resort, King of Prussia, Pa.

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

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