



Problems Caused By Hurricane Matthew

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Hurricane Matthew caused catastrophic damage in the Caribbean and Carolinas. Fortunately, Florida was spared from the worst of the hurricane and most areas only received minor damage. While high winds knocked over trees and scattered debris throughout much of the Southeast Region, several coastal areas also received damage from storm surge flooding and salt injury.

Salt injury from sea spray or flooding is generally short-lived and can be mitigated by leaching or flushing. Rainfall does the best job of flushing salts from soil, but high rates of irrigation water can be just as effective. As much as 6 inches of fresh water may be needed to reduce soil salinity by 50 percent in a sandy, well-drained soil. Gypsum can also be applied at a rate of 500 to 1,000 pounds per acre to help move salts, particularly sodium, deeper into the soil.



Salt water from storm surge flooding caused turf injury on coastal golf courses. It also washed debris and golf balls out of adjacent palmettos.

Soil cultivation practices – such as core aeration, venting and slicing – are also recommended to help improve the leaching process. Deep-tine aeration is particularly beneficial in areas with heavy soil.

In a perfect world, warm nights and increased sunlight over the next few weeks will help hasten recovery before the chill of winter sets in. Otherwise, turf recovery may be much slower and more aggressive measures might be needed to make it through the upcoming winter play season.

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