

## The Hurrier You Go, The Behinder You Get!

By Derf Soller, agronomist, West Region

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My grandmother used to tell me this comment a long time ago. It should be the mantra of golf courses throughout the region this spring. I use the word spring only because that is what the calendar says, although the weather we all are experiencing is anything but!

Cool temperatures have kept turfgrass at all the facilities that I have been visiting from jump starting any real growth yet this year. Soil temperatures remain low enough that the turf is just not responding. Some golf course superintendents, who usually are mowing, at a minimum, greens by now, are anxious to be doing at least this, if not more as well. The problem is that very little turf growth is actually taking place. As much as you would like to jump start the growth process of the turf, it is just not possible.

### ***The hurrier you go.***

Trying to make it happen is not the correct course of action. Plants will grow when it's time. The fertilizer applied in the fall, and the carbohydrates that the plant has stored will work, once the soil and air temperatures rise. Pay attention to the soil temperatures. Turf growth will start as the soil temperatures reach and remain in the mid 50's. Applying more fertilizer before this time may seem like a good idea, but it is not. As turf managers, we sometimes want to will the turf to grow. Golfers have seen great events on television, held at tremendous southern-climate facilities in recent weeks. This does not help you, the turf professional, in trying to communicate the delay of conditions in our region this year.

### ***The behinder you get.***

Being too aggressive can lead to bigger long-term turf problems. Applying too much fertilizer can result in a growth flush of the turf once the temperatures get to a point where growth begins. This accelerated growth rapidly depletes the stored carbohydrates in the turf plant, requiring an increase in mowing frequency, creating a need to apply more water, and possibly creating extra disease pressures.

Use the time now to communicate with your golfers about how the turf responds. Double check that equipment is ready for the season ahead. Consider additional staff training or team building exercises.

No one wants the golf courses to be growing more than the person in charge. Having patience now will let things happen naturally. Or as my grandmother also used to say, "Hurry up and Wait!"

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