

Three Reasons To Pay Attention To Winter Water

By Pat Gross, regional director, West Region | January 19, 2018



The use of moisture meters and soil probes should continue throughout the winter to make sure a baseline of moisture is maintained in the soil.

It's been a dry winter in many parts of the West Region. Although water requirements are relatively low during winter when turfgrass is dormant, a baseline of soil moisture is still needed to maintain turf health and quality playing conditions. Here are three important reasons to pay attention to winter water:

1. Even if dormant, the grass is still alive and growing – albeit very slowly. A baseline of soil moisture is necessary to keep the turf healthy. It also helps avoid the desiccation of root and shoot tissue.
2. If water is withheld for too long, turf can become dry and crispy on the surface. Add cart traffic and the brittle turf can thin out quickly.
3. As soil moisture is drawn down, soluble salts are left behind that can damage turf. While salinity damage is most typical during summer, it can happen in winter too. It is important to measure soil salinity throughout the winter to determine if heavy watering – i.e., flushing – is necessary on putting greens or other sensitive turf areas.

Hopefully, the dry conditions are only temporary, and a good winter rainy season will kick in soon.

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