

EDUCATION REVIEW

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



Rusty Stachlewitz from ProGro Solutions made a nice spring review presentation on "Coping with Turfgrass Stress".

Ideally cool season turf has the healthiest roots at 50-65°. It has ideal shoot growth at 65-70°. Above or below those temps and the plant is under stress. We know we are not going to keep that temperature range through our typical summer here in the Chicago area. The way a plant "deals" with the stress is through avoidance to injury, tolerance to injury and evasion. Probably the most important type of stress we are looking to prepare for is the heat. Too much heat causes the turf growth processes to slow or even stop. Excess heat causes decreased rooting, increases wilting, increased susceptibility to disease and causes slower recovery time to injury.

Rusty says we can do some things to prepare our turf for stress.

- Some of the newer bent cultivars are more heat tolerant and inter seeding is an option.
- Proper fertilization to grow a healthy plant prior to stress.
- Using smooth rollers instead of grooved can help.
- Increasing the mowing heights.
- Maintain sharp reels.
- Skip mowing or skip the clean up pass.
- Keeping soil on the dry side improves root oxygen



Rusty Stachlewitz

and increases root zone cooling.

- Irrigating deep and infrequently promotes a deeper root system.
- Aerate as frequently as possible.
- Use wetting agents to retain soil moisture.
- Stop grooming, verticutting and topdressing.
- Be careful of fungicides that have growth regulation qualities.
- Use phosphonate fertilizers to improve disease resistance.
- Amino acid applications have shown to improve heat stress.
- A Virginia Tech Study showed a 60-175% increase in rooting with the addition of seaweed extracts.
- Organic fertilizers feed soil microbial populations which can reduce pathogens.
- Watch salts in fertilizer applications.
- Above 95° all root uptake stops. Use foliar applications.
- Syringe or hand water. Do what works for you.

Rusty says test products out. Set up a trial with plywood on your nursery. Use side by side comparisons. Prove it to yourself.

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