

Freezing Points



SUPERS SHARE TIPS TO PREVENT, CONTROL WINTER DESICCATION

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Don't look now, but here comes the cold to a considerable part of the country. So, superintendents, get set for snow, ice, teeth-rattling winds and long, dark nights. Oh, yeah, and the threat of desiccation on the golf course.

Recently, we asked some veteran superintendents for some tips on how to prevent or control winter desiccation before it starts. Here's what they had to say:

"The only thing I have ever done to prevent winter desiccation on my greens is to apply a heavier-than-normal layer of topdressing that I do not drag in but allow to stay on top of the greens for the entire winter. Some superintendents will apply an anti-desiccant spray. I have not done that. As far as tees and fairways are concerned, I've never done anything special to prevent desiccation on these areas. Because in a 'normal' winter, anti-desiccation materials are not needed. In a severe winter, they are not going to help. So why spend the money on them?"

— **John Carlone**, *Certified superintendent of the Meadow Brook Club in Jericho, N.Y.*

"We try to make sure our soil moisture level is high prior to freeze. We up the potassium level in the fall while the plant is still growing."

— **Jim Nicol**, *Certified superintendent of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.*

"I will water heavily, if need be, the first week of November. I will run sprinkler heads next to big trees by the greens. We use an anti-transpirant with

our last application of fungicides. I try to break up the winter winds with a snow fence and also try to catch the best cover of all — snow. We put out brush to catch some snow as well on a couple greens. We do not cover greens. Last year we did not topdress the greens, but we have in the past. I'm leaning toward topdressing and dragging it

in to protect the crown, yet light enough that the sand doesn't hold moisture and therefore damage the crown. I find the bentgrasses are very hardy and don't need covers. It's the *Poa annua* we protect to some degree."

— **James Bade**, *Superintendent of Somerset Country Club in South St. Paul, Minn.* ■

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