



# Red, Orange and White

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

It seemed like late summer in Wisconsin up through mid-October. And then it snowed. The northern half of our state especially experienced heavy snow - four inches to a foot. We all knew it would melt, but golf course superintendents found it unnerving in light of the low temperature fungi prevention not yet applied and irrigation winterization not even considered.

Although the window of opportunity opened again, winter weather in the midst of autumn can be a powerful catalyst to move up winter preparation plans.

It seemed to me our fall season was all too short. The colors were more subdued and somber with the time of dominant green color to leaf drop shortened. Unless, of course, you were lucky to find that pocket of color on a country road. I visited Andy Kronwall at the beautiful Lake Geneva CC, and arrived and departed along South Shore Drive. It was breathtaking - bright colors on tree trunks and limbs made nearly black from the rain that day. The road could have been in New England.

The 2002 season is nearly over. It will be remembered by many of us as a difficult year. The weather had extremes that were punishing for golf turf. New problems - pests - are emerging and causing troubles on our courses. The economy was very tough on golf - it represents discretionary spending and some who love the game simply couldn't play or play as often this year. Whether daily fee players, club members or outings, business was a challenge in many quarters this year. Some among us were forced into new career situations, rarely a pleasant experience.

Yet in this fast approaching holiday season of Thanksgiving and Christmas, it is good to make an inventory of the good things in our lives, and to balance our disappointments and losses against the pleasure and successes we have had. Thanksgiving was a stroke of genius by our ancestors, giving us a reason to gather as friends and family and commemorate all we have to be thankful for in this world. It gives us a time to enjoy our triumphs and look forward with optimism.

It is the opportunity to gather around that favorite traditional meal of turkey and gravy, mashed potatoes and stuffing, and to be grateful for those who have left us and to also welcome the little ones who have joined us.

Memorial Day, July Fourth and Labor Day all are celebrated at a time when golf course superintendents cannot celebrate them. It doesn't matter that the rest of the country basks in the pleasure of these holidays. But Thanksgiving and Christmas, on the other hand, come at a time when golf courses lie frozen and, hopefully, under snow. Life is more normal now and these two great holidays have more meaning to us than most.

Gathered here are stats about the moisture status in the state of Wisconsin. The June through August period was the driest since the 1930s and drought affected about half the country. Although hard for us in the southern part of the state to believe - we are still 4" - 5" below normal in precipitation - Wisconsin was one of a handful of states wetter than normal this past summer.

Thanks again to the capable

staff at the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service for their good work this past year.

Congratulations to Mike Lee for the work involved in organizing the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association fundraiser at Blackwolf Run in October. And thanks also to the generous people at Kohler Company for giving us the chance to raise money for our Wisconsin Distinguished Graduate Fellowships.

That's it. Relax and let this be what it should be - the best time of the year. 🌿

