



# The Worst Ever??

By Marc Davison, Golf Course Superintendent, Green Bay Country Club

The spring of 2005 may well be remembered by most of us as the worst spring ever. Unfortunately, dead grass is the norm on most golf courses. The question seems to be, "how much dead grass do we have?" As spring moves along more and more golf courses have come to realize everyone is suffering from the same dilemma....dead grass. The amount of dead turf varies from course to course but it sure seems like we all have some areas that remain brown while everything else turns green. Most would agree that it has never been this bad.



Why did this past winter differ so much from all others? Was it the prolonged presence of ice cover, poor drainage, or too much shade? Research shows all grass species have varying tolerances to ice cover. *Poa annua* has the shortest. Why didn't all *Poa annua* die then? Just certain areas seem to have checked out. Did greens with covers perform differently from greens without covers? Did snow removal help or hinder the situation? What about ice removal; was it a good idea or a bad idea? It seems the more I hear how different superintendents dealt with the snow and ice cover of this past winter the more confusing it is.

Regardless of how each one of us dealt with last winter, we are now faced with dead areas on our golf course that need to be repaired. I know the seed companies must be very pleased. Let's hope there is enough seed to supply all our needs. How long will golfers accept temporary greens? How long will golfers play on dead fairways? How do we get new grass established when we are open for play? The prolonged cool temperatures are not helping us out either. This may be a huge set back in the financial plan for many public courses. Remember last year it was the cold wet spring that kept golfers away.

On March 22 at Westmoor Country Club, Jerry Kershasky, Bob Vavrek and Dr. John Steir held a very informative breakfast discussion on winter kill. This discussion was open to golf course owners, club presidents, general managers, green chairmen, golf professionals, club members, media and golf course superintendents. Knowing that we would have widespread winter kill problems in Wisconsin, Jerry took a proactive approach in educating and preparing golfers for what was ahead. Thank you very much Jerry, Bob and John for your foresight of this problem and your

wise thinking to communicate to our golfers what to expect in the months ahead. I know all those who attended had to feel a little relief knowing they were not alone in this adverse situation.

Our first monthly chapter golf meeting is behind us already. A big thank you goes out to Jim Crothers and Grand Geneva. Jim had his golf course in great shape for us. About 75 of our members participated in the day's events. The weather cooperated fairly well, although a bit gusty at times. Grand Geneva is a huge, high-end resort and appears to be expanding. We are thankful to have been invited to such a great facility. I heard they once had a bunny problem there but I didn't see one.

Numerous WGCSA members did not adhere to our dress code. Blue jeans are not allowed at our monthly meetings. Please respect this policy and always wear proper golf attire. We are professionals and we need to portray that image, especially when we gather for an Association event. We are very fortunate to be able to play at some very nice golf facilities. Let's show the host clubs that we are professionals in every way possible. Thank you for your attention to this matter. ♻

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