

significant water and monetary savings. ET-based irrigation scheduling seeks to prevent overirrigation, which leads to runoff or leaching into potable water resources. The goal is to irrigate plant materials at the recommended percentage of E_t as infrequently as possible.

University research has shown that applying an annual average of 80 percent E_t to tall fescue less frequently (twice per week) can result in improved visual color and quality. Keep in mind that with the longer run times associated with less frequent irrigation, water infiltration becomes a consideration and multiple cycles or lower precipitation rates might need to be used.

Acceptable turf quality and performance can best be maintained when irrigation system uniformity is optimum.

Recommendations for system uniformity include:

- check & adjust operating pressures
- select appropriate heads and nozzles
- check head alignment and operation
- irrigate at times when wind is minimal

Finally, nothing is more important than visual observation. The turf manager should inspect turf areas and irrigation systems on a regular basis. If dry areas are apparent, in spite of proper system operation, controller programs should be adjusted accordingly.

With a proficient irrigation system and frequent controller program updates, golf course superintendents should begin to see improved plant quality and performance with savings in water and energy.

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