



Putting the Past Behind Us

By Addison Barden, agronomist, Northeast Region

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Spring is in full swing bringing warm temperatures for the month of May and typical wheelhouse pests to the Northeast region. However, it's doubtful that anyone is complaining after last winter. Many are relieved to have adequate soil

temperatures for seed germination at courses recovering from winter injury, bringing them one step closer to full recovery. Unfortunately, the current, abnormally dry conditions in the central and northern areas of the region are

not aiding turf recovery. Farther south, those who converted cool-season turf to cold-tolerant bermudagrass cultivars also are welcoming the past week's warm weather and sunlight for needed green up.

It is exciting to see newer, cold-hardy bermudagrass varieties moving farther north, and some bermudagrass is coming out of winter and performing well in the Northeast Region this spring. Hopefully, the aggressive growth habit of bermudagrass combined with warmer temperatures will facilitate quick recovery in areas that experienced winter damage.

Bermudagrass growth begins when nighttime and soil temperatures are above 50 and 65 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively. Remain patient as temperatures continue to increase, drastically accelerating bermudagrass growth. Also,



Figure 1 - With a harsh winter and cold spring, bermudagrass has been slow to break dormancy throughout the southern and central portions of the region.



aggressive management practices like scalping, vertical mowing and high nitrogen fertility can be counterintuitive to many accustomed to cool-season grasses. However, fight the impulse to treat bermudagrass like bentgrass and implement practices to promote continuous, new bermudagrass growth. Experiment with cultural practices in small areas to test recovery times and determine what best meets player expectations at your facility; you may be pleasantly surprised at the recovery speed of bermudagrass.

Early instar annual bluegrass weevil (ABW) larvae have been found feeding throughout the central portion of the region. It is important to scout for larvae in traditionally damaged areas to time preventative control applications. Because of the high risk of pest resistance, minimizing pyrethroid applications is critical. Even pyrethroid applications targeting pests other than ABW can increase the risk of resistant pest populations. Courses farther south that typically are not concerned with ABW also should be scouting for ABW since many facilities we have visited this spring have reported their presence.

I am very excited to be in such a great region for golf. Over the past four months, I have met many interesting and wonderful people and I am looking forward to meeting and working with more of you throughout my travels. Have a great season.

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