



*The emergence of healthy turf is a welcome site when samples are collected to assess winter injury.*

## WHERE TO BEGIN WITH EVALUATING FOR WINTER INJURY?

BY ZACH NICOLUDIS | AGRONOMIST, CENTRAL REGION

Unfavorable winter conditions have raised concern for winter injury for much of the Central Region. Low temperatures in the northern part of transition zone dipped to levels where ultradwarf bermudagrass and zoysiagrass turf health could be in jeopardy while the duration of ice cover in northern locations is concerning for those managing *Poa annua* surfaces. Taking the time to collect samples is the first step to help determine if actions will need to be put in place to promote recovery.

The USGA Article “[How to Sample for Winter Injury on Putting Greens](#)” details the process that should be followed when assessing whether winter injury has occurred. Just because the first round of samples collected reveals viable turf, it does not mean the turf will not suffer from winter injury should unfavorable conditions be experienced in late February or early March. Multiple rounds of sampling may be necessary to assess whether winter injury occurred.



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Removing ice from putting greens is a delicate situation. Winter injury can occur if the turf is encased in ice for too long or injury can occur during the removal process. The Green Section Collection “[Winter Injury](#)” offers resources that detail ice removal as well as other challenges associated with maintaining healthy turf through winter conditions.

For anyone maintaining ultradwarf bermudagrass or zoysiagrass putting greens, covers should be installed before temperatures drop below 25 degrees Fahrenheit- i.e., lethal temperatures. Taking action now to protect warm-season putting greens will go a long way in minimizing winter injury.

A mild, uneventful winter would have been welcomed by all. However, the current and forecasted conditions have the potential to create some challenges as the 2021 golf season approaches. Collecting samples now can help eliminate guesswork on how the turf will break dormancy once warmer temperatures are experienced. If you have concerns about winter injury, [reach out to a USGA agronomist](#) for help developing a recovery plan at your course.



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