

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

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Winter shade can be just as damaging to turf as summer shade. Do not put off evaluating shade until summer, by then it might be too late.

CASTING SHADE

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Addressing shade issues is extremely important for both cool- and warm-season grasses. Evaluating shade issues during the summer is simple; all you need to do is make note of the shade cast on the turf. However, while no less important, evaluating shade during winter after all the leaves have fallen is more difficult.

Shade issues are common in the Northeast, and there are ample examples of when shade has caused turf decline. The winter of 2017-2018 was particularly damaging, especially for warm-season grass in the southern part of the region. In many instances, shade was a significant factor in the damage. Whether shade led to prolonged periods of snow or ice cover, exacerbated traffic stress, or made the turf weaker going into winter, there were clear correlations between shade and winter damage.

Fortunately, several tools are great for evaluating shade on a golf course. Google Earth, Google Maps, Bing! Maps and others are free and easy-to-use tools that allow you to evaluate shade issues by using