



*Daffodils are starting to pop in Pennsylvania and forsythias are beginning to bloom in Virginia, but green turf and smooth surfaces won't arrive for a while.*

## JUST A LITTLE PATIENCE

BY DAVID OATIS | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NORTHEAST REGION

Had Alfred Lord Tennyson been a golfer, he may have written: “In the spring a young man’s fancy lightly turns to thoughts of golf,” rather than love – and he might have changed “lightly” to “obsessively.” Spring means go-time for golfers and superintendents who are often afflicted with a well-known malady, cabin fever. Cabin fever makes golfers impatient to get out and play and it makes superintendents impatient to achieve midseason course conditioning. Patience often is scarce in golf and is almost treated like a four-letter word sometimes. However, there are some areas where patience is important at this point in the golf season:

**Recovering From Winter Injury:** Turf takes much longer to heal from winter injury when it is put in play before it has fully recovered. Few remember a delayed start to the spring golf season when good conditions are experienced in July and August, but no one is happy in July and August when the remnants of winter injury remain. A little patience now will make for better turf and happier golfers later.

**Experiencing Excessive Rainfall:** Wet turf is more prone to mechanical injury from maintenance practices and golfer traffic. Puddles are a sure sign that turf shouldn’t be subjected to traffic, but soils may still be too saturated to support traffic even if no puddles are present.



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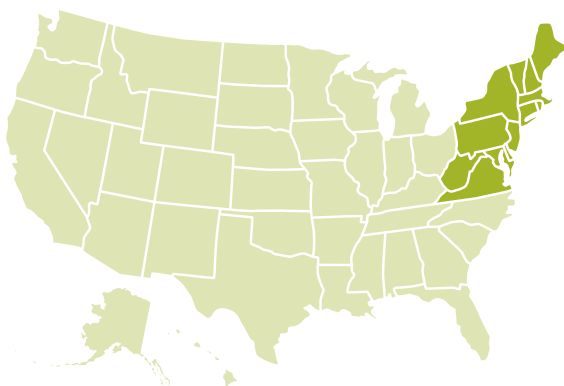
***Cool, wet weather is delaying growth and recovery and promoting mechanical damage in many areas.***

**Waiting On Creeping Bentgrass:** Creeping bentgrass is slower to initiate growth and it is not tolerant of wear in the spring. Even normal maintenance can cause wear injury to bentgrass that is not growing rapidly, so adjust practices to match its growth rate.

**Promoting Root Growth:** Turf root growth is greatest in the spring, but roots die back during the summer as temperatures rise and traffic and stress levels increase. It is important to grow enough roots in the spring to carry turf through the season. Early stress – be it from weather, traffic or stressful maintenance practices like mowing at extremely low heights – can weaken turf before it even gets to the peak stress periods.

For many areas of the Northeast, the spring of 2019 has been a continuation of 2018, when record-setting rainfall was experienced. Consistently warm temperatures have not yet been experienced and the cool, wet weather is delaying growth and contributing to turf injury. The wet weather is also reaffirming the need for better drainage at many golf courses.

Until the weather cooperates, many golfers and superintendents would do well to have a little patience. As Benjamin Franklin once wrote: “He that can have patience can have what he will.” Oh, and while you’re practicing patience, I recommend planning your next round of drainage projects.




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## **NORTHEAST REGION AGRONOMISTS:**

David Oatis, Regional Director, [doatis@usga.org](mailto:doatis@usga.org)

James Skorulski, Agronomist, [jskorulski@usga.org](mailto:jskorulski@usga.org)

Elliott Dowling, Agronomist, [edowling@usga.org](mailto:edowling@usga.org)

Paul Jacobs, Agronomist, [pjacobs@usga.org](mailto:pjacobs@usga.org)

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