



Putting greens need every advantage possible for optimal health. Winter shade can be damaging and should be addressed before it becomes an issue.

LET THERE BE LIGHT!

BY ELLIOTT DOWLING | AGRONOMIST, NORTHEAST REGION

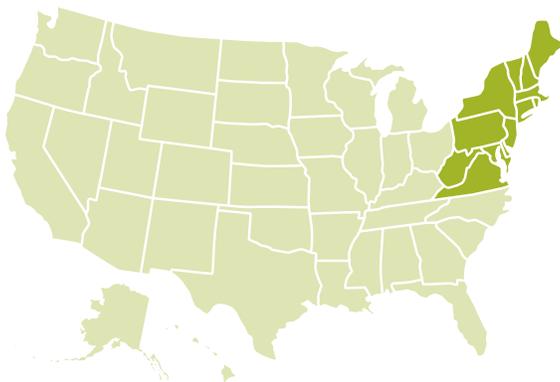
It is not too late to remove trees that could present problems for turf health over the winter. Optimal winter sunlight penetration is equally important for warm-season grasses, like bermudagrass or zoysiagrass, as it is for *Poa annua*.

Exposing turf areas to as much sunlight as possible is best for both winter and summer performance. When evaluating trees on a golf course, we typically try to provide maximum morning sunlight during the growing season. However, when evaluating winter shade, the best option is to remove all trees that block sun and could lead to turf decline. Full sun in the morning followed by midday shade could start the melting process of snow or ice early and then lead to a quick refreeze. An extra few hours of afternoon shade during a rapid freeze event can be the difference between life and death for turf areas.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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