

Green Section Record

REGIONAL UPDATE

March 20, 2020



The first cut of the year is an energizing one. It signals the beginning of a new season and all the challenges and excitement that comes with it. (Courtesy T. Kennelly)

TAKING THE FUZZ OFF

BY ELLIOTT DOWLING | AGRONOMIST, NORTHEAST REGION

Mowing the golf course – especially the putting greens – for the first time in the spring is an exciting feeling. For superintendents, it signals the onset of spring and the upcoming season. For golfers, it triggers the feeling that warmer weather and a lot of days on the course are quickly approaching.

That first cut of the year is an excellent opportunity to assess turf health. Taking the fuzz off usually removes a lot of older, brown leaf tissue and reveals a much greener surface underneath. If something doesn't look right – i.e. not the same coloration as the rest of the surface – this is probably your first good look at it. However, don't worry too much if something is off-color because this can happen for several reasons.

Different grasses react to cold, dry weather differently. Some may appear green while others are purple to almost chestnut brown. These color differences have more to do with grass variety than plant stress. Farther south, superintendents will see bermudagrass emerging. They too could see assorted colors or

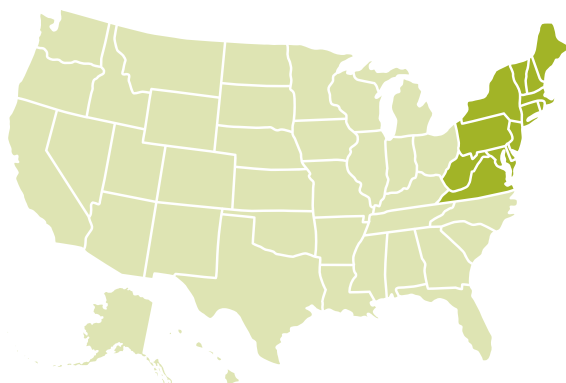
patches. In many cases, the patches are spring dead spot. The bermudagrass will need some time and warmer weather to grow out it.

The first cut in the spring is always an exciting one. It doesn't mean that winter is totally behind us, but it certainly signals the onset of warmer weather. Because of the mild winter throughout the Northeast, I don't anticipate any significant turf loss due to winter injury – although some minor loss is always possible. I hope that everyone has a great season, and that all starts with a great spring. Of course, if you have questions or think something doesn't look right, don't hesitate to reach out to your [regional USGA agronomist](#).



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

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