



*Reducing the risk of major turf loss will be the focus of many courses this year. Proper timing and execution of preventive plant health treatments is important.*

## KEEP THE MAIN THINGS, THE MAIN THINGS

BY ELLIOTT DOWLING | AGRONOMIST, NORTHEAST REGION

Many golf courses that I've communicated with recently indicate that they are operating with a much-reduced staff and are starting to feel pressure to either eliminate items from the budget or at least to only buy and apply what is absolutely necessary to maintain plant health. If you are faced with tough decisions and budget cuts, place top priority on any application that will reduce the risk of catastrophic turf loss. In my opinion, these applications include insecticide, fungicide and herbicide applications.

Grubs and annual bluegrass weevils can very quickly wreak havoc on turf health, killing large swaths of grass in a relatively brief time. Ensuring preventative products are applied at the appropriate time will help maintain manageable pest levels, just as you would hope to do in any year.

Diseases like *Pythium spp.*, brown patch and summer patch can cause significant turf discoloration and eventually turf loss if left untreated. Some diseases, such as summer patch, fairy ring and take-all patch

require spring applications for preventative control. Despite budget and staffing challenges, well-timed applications to control these diseases should continue to be made this spring and throughout the season to reduce the risk of severe outbreaks.

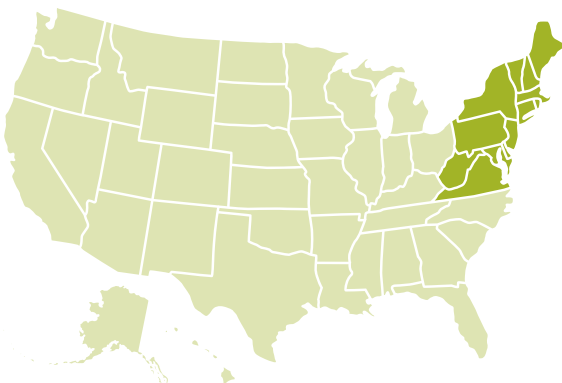
I would also prioritize preemergence herbicide applications this spring without compromising on timing or product cost. Weeds can quickly overrun an area if left untreated. The price of postemergence weed management can ultimately be more than the price of preventative controls. Moreover, allowing the seed bank of weed species to increase in the soil this year could mean more applications are necessary to reduce the population during the coming years.

Because of the season-long ramifications of poor plant health, proper timing and execution of the aforementioned applications is critical this year when there are so many changing variables with course maintenance.



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