



*Cooler weather has slowed bermudagrass growth but has also allowed winter weeds, like *Poa annua*, to flourish.*

COOL, BEAUTIFUL WEATHER IS A WELCOME REPRIEVE

BY ADDISON BARDEN | AGRONOMIST, SOUTHEAST REGION

As many golf course superintendents navigate maintaining their golf course with staffing or budget reductions, the recent cool weather has slowed warm-season turf growth and helped many remain on top of mowing. Here are several observations and considerations regarding this cool weather and its impact on golf courses in the Southeast:

- The nice weather and easing of state and local restrictions has many courses reporting full tee sheets. Golfers are enjoying a beautiful spring!
- Various turfgrass species are greening up at different times. Even an entirely bermudagrass golf course has different varieties that green up at different temperatures. The cool weather this spring has prolonged this process, making differences in color and texture among turf species and varieties more pronounced until warmer temperatures arrive.

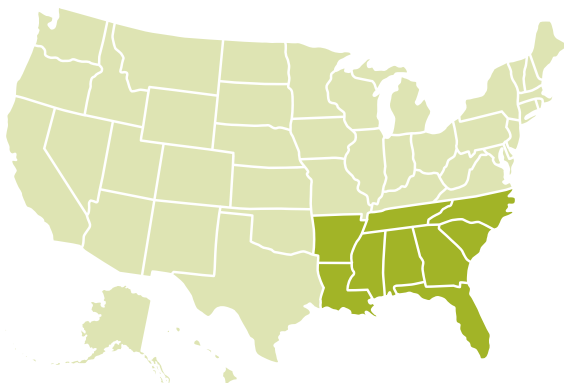
- Slowed bermudagrass growth helps overall maintenance productivity but increases traffic stress for courses with high play volume. Without knowing how work protocols will develop in response to COVID-19, it may be best to refrain from applying additional fertilizer to promote growth.
- Social distancing has led to single riders in carts. While a required safety measure, increased traffic stress due to more carts and slow bermudagrass growth is common. Site-specific applications of supplemental fertilizer in high-traffic areas is the best way to aid recovery without creating an unmanageable flush of growth when warmer temperatures arrive.
- Many courses have reported a secondary flush of *Poa annua* growth in April. This is likely due to lack of competition from bermudagrass and the fact that slower bermudagrass growth makes *Poa annua* more noticeable.

Golf course superintendents have done an amazing job at finding novel solutions to keep golfers and staff safe while also maintaining courses under difficult circumstances. Thank you to all our golf course superintendents and their staffs!



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

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