

The Heat is On

June 8, 2015

The hot weather is a sign that summer is here. The warm and humid conditions make cool-season turf management more challenging. Here are a couple of things to watch for:

- Irrigation** Minor drought stress in early June can be a good thing because it increases tolerance to summer stress. For lawns, avoid irrigation until drought symptoms are obvious. Irrigate deeply when leaves develop a blue-gray color and footprints linger following light foot-traffic. For highly maintained turf, consider deficit irrigation techniques. This saves water, hardens the turf going into summer and promotes firm playing conditions. Try irrigating to 80 to 50% of pET and allow for natural precipitation to refill the soil profile. Irrigating a sand-based root zone daily with deficit irrigation will still promote deep rooting and maximizes soil aeration. In any case, irrigate in the morning as afternoon irrigation increases soil temperatures and is less efficient. Click here for a map or daily and weekly pET across much of the Northern Great Plains: <http://goo.gl/RCUh3y>
- Cultural Practices** Avoid aggressive cultivation such as aeration, deep vertical mowing, and heavy sand topdressing. While these practices are important to maintain turf health, they can be hard on cool-season turf during hot and sunny conditions. Consider small, solid tine aeration to promote soil aeration and water infiltration.
- Weeds** Warming temperatures enhance crabgrass and nutsedge germination and development. A second application of preemergence herbicides may be required in high-pressure areas. Be careful with postemergence control products when the temperature is hot.
- PGRs** Plant growth regulators (PGRs) breakdown faster during hot weather. For example, trinexapac-ethyl (Primo Maxx) will need to be re-applied to golf putting greens every 7 to 8 days when high temperatures average 90°F with nighttime lows in the mid-60s. It's essential to ensure uniform growth suppression to maximize PGR benefits. Use our GDD Tracker to dial-in those re-application intervals. Get it here: <http://goo.gl/zORgm3>
- Diseases** The warm humid conditions can promote diseases such as dollar spot and brown patch. Be vigilant in disease scouting. Systemic (penetrant) fungicides are traditionally more effective than contact fungicides for curative disease control. Turf injured by root diseases such as take-all, summer patch, and necrotic ring spot (NRS) will become obvious with the weather. Fungicide applications for NRS and take-all will offer little control as those pathogens damaged the roots earlier this spring. Summer patch primarily affects annual bluegrass and fine fescue and is still active. Azoxystrobin provides good curative control when it's watered into the root zone.

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