

**Prepping for winter in early December
December 6, 2019**

While the snow and cold came quickly this fall for much of Nebraska, there has been a nice reprieve over the past week. This has opened a window for many turfgrass professionals to prepare their golf and sports turf for winter. Our biggest winter stresses are winter desiccation, sudden on-set of extremely cold temperatures, and occasionally snow mold.

Dr. Paul Koch at the University of Wisconsin (and snow mold guru) shared some good advice recently. He said that dormant/brown turf can still get snow mold, but only if the conditions are very favorable. Brown turf is not as susceptible to snow mold as green and succulent turfgrass leaves under constant snow cover. Without climate and the current brown leaf color, a snow mold fungicide at this point will probably not be necessary.

The risk of desiccation and cold temperature injury can still be reduced with applications of sand topdressing or protective covers. Winter desiccation risk is also low in December and slowly increases throughout winter if there isn't occasional winter precipitation. Even small amounts of water in winter can help prevent winter desiccation injury. Unfortunately, spray applied products haven't provided significant desiccation in our studies. These research results came from our former MS student, Darrell Michael. They've been recently published in the *Golfdom* article "[Prevent winter desiccation on creeping bentgrass](#)" and in greater detail in *Agronomy Journal* as "[Sand Topdressing and Protective Covers Impact Creeping Bentgrass Crown Moisture During Winter.](#)" This work was made possible by the USGA, Nebraska Turfgrass Association, and the WY and Peaks and Prairie GCSAA chapters. Thanks to all of those groups and their members for supporting this research.

Bill Kreuser, Assistant Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist, wkreuser2@unl.edu