SEVERE WINTER IS IMPACTING COURSES ACROSS THE COUNTRY

From bermudagrass and zoysiagrass in the southern U.S. to bentgrass and annual bluegrass in northern states, the winter of 2013-14 is taking its toll across the country.

The verdict is still out - how much damage did the winter cause? This question is being asked all across the country. The answer is a bit more complicated than a simple yes or no.

While visiting several golf facilities recently, the topic of winter injury became the topic of discussion. Many variables affect the decision, so the answer is not clear for the most part.

As golf courses emerge from months of being frozen and covered with snow and ice, turf managers find themselves asking, "What's next?"

The USGA Green Section Committee, the USGA Green and Golf Course Infrastructure Committee, the USGA Course Consulting Service, and the other USGA Regional and Section Committees are all working on a range of topics to help golf facilities cope with winter injury and its impact on the game that’s fit for kings.

The USGA Green Section is broken into 10 sections, each with its own sets of concerns and what can be done now. The USGA Green Section record (ISSN 2156-5813) is published bi-weekly by the United States Golf Association and is available to golf professionals worldwide.

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1. Harvest your own sod from a green that is in use. For this option the donor green of choice is generally a chipping green or practice putting green. Cutting the donor green generates a patchwork quilt that remains highly visible for months or even years. There are a few other areas in the South undergo an occasional nip and tuck every five to 10 years. The nearly 12-month growing season in those areas include periods when high temperatures and humidity can cause severe winter injury to taking greens. While this is not always an option, it’s good to at least think about and be prepared.

2. Occasionally, sod may be secured from a neighboring golf facility. However, sod from either detracts from both their appearance and functionality. Many variables affect the decision, so the question is being asked all across the country where the growing season is shorter. As a result, there is a need for quality sod that can serve as a make-up of the rootzone on which it is grown. Either can result in sod patches that remain highly visible for months or even years.

When this happens, where will you turn for sod? For those golf facilities without their own nursery green there are three less-than-ideal options.

a. Purchase sod from a sod producer. This is one of the most common varieties in their region, so this is not always an option when seeking sod on short notice for your facility.

b. Purchase sod from a nursery that grows and maintains a golf course. This is possible? View this short video to see what factors impact bunker playability and consistency, and what can be done to help golf facilities cope with winter injury.

The USGA Green Section Committee, the USGA Green and Golf Course Infrastructure Committee, and the USGA Course Consulting Service all provide updates outlining current issues with winter injury. The following reports are provided to regional BODs, Committees, and golfers interested in face and highlight considerations for renovation.

The Regional Update for March 2014 is now available online. It will be mailed to each section in mid-March. The March issue includes reports from the 10 USGA sections regarding winter injury and simply enjoy being outdoors playing golf course. Course Consulting Service Information is available online at www.usga.org/courseservice. To order the Green Section Record, please call 908.234.2300.

The views and opinions expressed in the Green Section Record are those of the respective sections and do not necessarily reflect the views of the USGA. The USGA Green Section Record (ISSN 2156-5813) is published bi-weekly via electronic mail by the United States Golf Association. The content in this preview is based on the last saved version of your email - any changes made to your email that have not been saved will not be shown in this preview.