CORNELL Turfgrass
Your Weekly Link to Turfgrass Information!
Short CUTT

Gazing in the Grass

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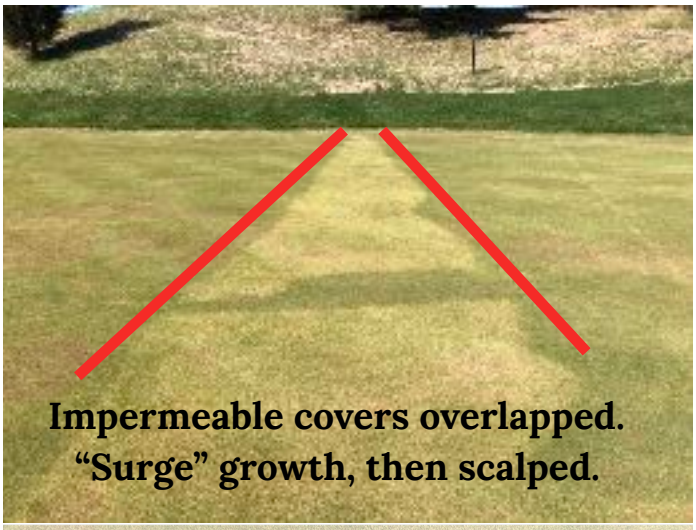
A surge of "warm" temperatures is expected to jump start the growing season this week, following a well below normal weekend. As a result of this shift in temperature the biological activity that would normally take a few days or a week to develop could start moving in a day! Expect temps this week to be well above normal with highs reaching into the 80's! The message for this week is to watch the surge and scout!



Impermeable covers overlapped. "Surge" growth, then scalped.

The "March of the Weevils" has begun! The Adult annual bluegrass weevils are being observed in low populations at the southern end of the region as reported by a number of sources. The recipe and procedure for soap flushes to scout for ABW adults can be found with access to informative video @ http://www.greencastonline.com/techarticle.aspx?gcaid=180388. One ounce of lemon-scented dish soap (yes the lemon scent acts as an irritant) per 1 gallon of water over 10 sq ft. after shaking vigorously. In a few minutes adults will begin to emerge from the canopy. Watch for phenological indicators such as *Forsythia* spp., look in mower baskets, insert some pitfall traps made from small PVC pipe, and use a leaf blower converted into vacuum to monitor populations. Successful and responsible ABW management is dependent on accurate sampling to optimize the timing of intervention, chemical or mechanical. Additionally with the prevalence of insecticide resistance in ABW populations, timing more vulnerable stages with the right chemistry is more dependent on solid scouting information. Finally, the concern for pollinators among the public also demands the highest level of attention when making large scale insecticide applications.

East to west gradient setting up this week...warm and dry to the east of Catskills, cool and wet to the west

Soil temperatures will begin to rise well into the 50's this coming week and that means its time to start keeping track to optimize timing of early season fungicide drench applications for root pathogens such as summer patch, take-all and fairy ring. Preliminary research was reported last season from NC State University that indicated less than 20 percent of a soil applied material went past the top 1" of a sand based putting surface when less than 0.5" of water was applied. When using fungicides for soil borne pathogens keep in mind these materials only move upward (acropetally) and therefore can only protect the plant tissue they are below. To maximize root protection, especially those deep roots consider timing with a needle tine cultivation, planet air, etc., and apply with a soil penetrant in high volumes of water followed by a significant irrigation event.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ): *My Spring sports season is very compressed. Our fields are hosting an event every day without rain and multiple events on weekends. Any suggestions for keeping up with the wear?*

This has certainly been a good Spring to have access to synthetic turf surfaces in much of the Northeast US. Synthetic surfaces not only provide a safe playing surface for the athletes in marginal weather, it keeps the traffic off the natural turf surfaces that have yet to fully break dormancy and have saturated soil conditions. The natural turf surfaces under the compressed Spring conditions will require as much rotation of the traffic as possible. If a field can have goal mouths or focused traffic areas moved that is the best option. Next best option, apply between 2-4 lbs of perennial ryegrass seed every week during the next several weeks of the season. This will allow the athletes to cleat the seed into the soil and when the Spring use ends, "peach-fuzz-like" seedlings will begin to cover the bare areas before weeds get a chance. The focused areas of traffic around goal mouths require the aforementioned in-season overseeding. Additionally, a light topdressing should be applied to the focused traffic areas to prevent the "bowling-out" of the goal mouth. This lowering of the grade retains water that prevents seed from re-establishing in these areas. Maintaining the grade in these goal mouths is critical to shedding the water that falls as the traffic is imposed.

Proper management of soil physical properties has short and long term aspects. At this point of the season many soils have settled from Winter heaving that was substantial this year due to the cold temperatures during periods of low snow cover. Most soils have benefitted from some light rolling, even native soils but this assumes you have a well thought out soil management program that includes regular cultivation. Short term, if the soils are able to dry over the next week then consider a deep-tine shattering of the soil profile to maintain infiltration. Our Safe Sports Fields website (http://safesportsfields.cals.cornell.edu/cultivating) has an excellent table shown above outlining the various cultivation goals and associated practices for use in-season. This has been a tough Spring for field users and managers alike, intense management will be required to nurse fields through the surge of use about to occur.

Understanding Crabgrass Control

Soil temperatures will begin to rise soon promoting the biological activity of insects, soil borne pathogens and summer annual weeds. The winter annuals that germinated last Autumn are now greening up, especially in bare soil areas. Those same bare areas are excellent places to view the early germination of smooth crabgrass. Crabgrass will germinate when soils average in the upper 50's to low 60's consistently at the 1" depth. This can happen rapidly on bare soil. For more about this common grassy weed Professor Aaron Patten at Purdue University has an excellent primer on crabgrass information. My personal favorite is the images of the various growth stages and how to utilize that information to delay timing of dithiopyr as an Early Post-late Pre control strategy. See the information @ http://purdueturftips.blogspot.com/2015/03/common-questions-about-crabgrass.html