

United States Golf Association
Green Section Southwest Region
3677 E Turnberry Court
Gilbert AZ 85298-4199



December 5, 2014

Golf course owners, managers, course officials, course superintendents and golfers:

Recent golf course visits in southern Arizona have revealed that the overseeded ryegrass density and quality is less than desirable at many courses that initiated overseeding in September. Ideally, overseeding is timed when bermudagrass growth slows due to cooler nighttime temperatures (<70 degrees F) and soil temperatures (<70 degrees F). These temperatures typically occur in mid-October at the lower elevations in Arizona. This year, the average low (as reported by AZMET at the Encanto station) in September was 73 degrees and the average soil temperature was 84 degrees. By comparison, the average low in September of 2013 was 70 degrees and the average soil temperature was 72 degrees. Overseeding in September is risky, and clearly was problematic this year.

In addition, October 2013 was much cooler than this year. The average low temperature in October 2013 was 53 degrees compared to 60 degrees in 2014. The average soil temperature was 68 degrees in October 2013 and 74 degrees this year. Clearly, the overseeding success at courses that seeded prior to October 1st in 2014 was compromised due to bermudagrass competition that was invigorated by warm temperatures and substantial rainfall. Those courses that overseeded within the ideal date range (October 7-20th at lower elevations in southern AZ), may have been closed in October, but now enjoy better overseed density and aesthetics due to cooler temperatures and less bermudagrass competition.

If your course does not have flexible overseeding dates and must close in September, then plan on multiple chemical applications to slow bermudagrass growth, plan on the probability of diseases such as pythium and plan to accept a thinner ryegrass stand than courses overseeding in the ideal time window, especially during a warm fall such as this year.

Sincerely,

Brian Whitlark, Agronomist
USGA Green Section
Southwest Region