

Reacting to Mother Nature

Obviously weather plays a big part in a turf manager's working life. Here's a report from some STMA members on what they're doing to combat what Mother Nature dealt them last summer:

Carey See, Emory University — [She] was more kind to Atlanta. We received much needed rain and less extreme temperatures. Although we still have watering restrictions, our bermudagrass fields have recovered and are doing well. We are continuing to monitor field moisture and will irrigate only if player safety becomes an issue.

Rick Newville, Oklahoma City — The weather was pretty cooperative until late summer. Our transition months (mid-April through mid-July) went very smoothly, but August was a different story. Mother Nature dropped just under 10 inches of rain on us that month, the most in more than 100 years. Consequently we had to adjust our herbicide program to control the weed populations; this involved post emergent as well as pre-emergent applications. A contact fungicide was applied to one of our fields due to the appearance of leaf spot. We have also had to be very diligent in getting the height of cut back down to our desired height.

Thom White, Bozeman (MT) Parks — Mother Nature was good to us this summer in that we had a higher than average rainfall consistently throughout the playing seasons. The flip-side though was some overly wet playing areas that were susceptible to compaction. This fall we will pull cores in the trouble spots with a deep tine aerator and use an Aerway on the other fields.

Deanna McAtamney, Ft. Lauderdale Parks & Rec — Our Tifway 419 fields held up well in the sub-tropics this year! We aerified once a month through the summer. We spot sprayed for goosegrass and crabgrass when necessary, and applied Top Choice for mole crickets and ants. We were able to close a field and rotate every 6-8 weeks with the cooperation of the rec programmers.

John Fik, Springwater, NY — Generally areas above the Mass Pike and NYS Thruway received ample amounts of rain this summer and it was tough NOT to be able to grow grass. However, most areas south of that took another beating with extreme heat and drought, though there were no watering restrictions. There were definitely two germinations of crabgrass again this year as I suspect the barriers broke down again with the drought. Poa was a bit of an issue to the north with all the wet weather. We have had one situation where a field was sprayed for nut sedge and someone from the school turned the irrigation off and the fields were smoked to the point a complete renovation was required. All in all, Mother Nature was a blessing or a problem depending on where in the country you were, but is that unusual?



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