

## Dr. Tom's Corner

How different a winter this past one was compared to the previous two! In central PA, we had the warmest December in nearly a 100 years and, some places in Southeastern PA were mowing almost to Christmas day. Now, all that being said, one had to wonder whether we were being 'set up' for a nasty ending, particularly since the normal hardening process for cool season grasses had not really occurred at a time that it should have happened.

Clearly, hardening was not required.

The Degree Day Models that have been wide spread have not been much help, except to spend dollars that did not need to be spent. The soil temperatures, at least in most of Pa, do not indicate that crabgrass is about to emerge. There was a bit of emergence along sidewalks and heated areas, but the cold weather that has come in nuked those seedlings.

All in all, we in the NE had a very grass friendly winter, which, was a nice change.

There have been snow mold issues on un-treated places, but nothing all that serious.

Those that were pro-active in applying nutritional supplements last fall have had a specular winter and spring at this point.

All that being said, everyone should be on board with their plan with pre-stress conditioning moving forward this year. Who knows what will come, but for the most part is that you are prepared, because the grass really does not have a clue what is coming.

My recommendation is, that you continue to provide the turf with the nutrients that are needed to maintain health. A lot of that can be, easily taken care of by foliar applications of products that are quickly absorbed and utilized.

As the spring continues to evolve, in it's yo-yo fashion, what is next? Those that do all the tracking, here are my observations....

Degree Day Models are, at best a global warming issue

Go with your experience and best mind set

Soil temps in Central Pa are still in the upper forties

This week will also bring BIG changes as the radiant heat load gets stronger.

Spraying for seedhead suppression early this spring could have been a mistake, but who knows whether that pans out or not...

The next BIG ISSUE, is where do we all go from here?

The most important thing to consider is that, we had one of the best winters in a while, most people did not lose grass, regardless of what they were trying to manage. So, sit back and appreciate that experience!

Again, I think that is important...

Next, everyone needs to anticipate what could be coming the rest of the growing season. My advice is to be prepared, be pro-active in your turfgrass management approach to all potential issues, and stay positive.

Being pro-active means to be in front of the curve that you might be thrown. All that you have to do is, be observant, diligent, and react in the right way.

What it boils down to, is simply this:

Plant nutrition is completely linked to plant health.

Therefore, if nutrients of all kinds, are available to the plant, it will be better able to deal with disease, insects, and weed invasions...

Therefore, if the plant is supplied with the nutrients that it needs in an efficient and quickly available form (nutrients applied foliarly), It will be much more solidly positioned to be in a more healthy circumstance going into the summer months.