



Turf Care Department

“Why isn’t the grass growing??”

Turfgrass Growth Potential Percentage		
Average Temp		Cool Season
C	F	%GP
0.0	32	0
0.6	33	0
1.1	34	0
1.7	35	0
2.2	36	1
2.8	37	1
3.3	38	1
3.9	39	1
4.4	40	2
5.0	41	3
5.6	42	3
6.1	43	4
6.7	44	6
7.2	45	7
7.8	46	9
8.3	47	11
8.9	48	14
9.4	49	16
10.0	50	20
10.6	51	24
11.1	52	28
11.7	53	32
12.2	54	38
12.8	55	43
13.3	56	49
13.9	57	55
14.4	58	61
15.0	59	67
15.6	60	73
16.1	61	78
16.7	62	84
17.2	63	88
17.8	64	92
18.3	65	96
18.9	66	98
19.4	67	100
20.0	68	100

You’re probably asking yourself this exact question. Why aren’t the greens growing? Why aren’t they putting as well as they do in the summer? Why aren’t they more consistent? There are many answers to these questions. Let’s start with a quick botany lesson. The four factors that directly influence the growth rates of grass are light, temperature, nitrogen, and water. We can control two of these factors: nitrogen and water. The other two are completely out of our hands. The month of May has had an average temperature of 10 degrees Celsius. If you look at the chart to the left, you’ll see the grass is only growing at 20% of its potential. When you combine that with 150mm of rain and only 8 days of sunlight in May, growing conditions have been poor to say the least. Another factor currently affecting the consistency of the greens can be attributed to the type of grass on our greens, Poa Annua. The diversity in biotypes of Poa Annua causes varying growth rates of the grass. One Poa Annua plant may be growing quickly while it’s neighbor is growing quite slowly. Also, if we look closely at the greens, you’ll notice the Poa has started to go to seed. Seed heads reduce uniformity and adversely affect ball roll. These factors may not be noticeable directly after mowing but later in the day they can cause bumpy greens. A maintenance practice which will affect ball roll speed is the height of cut of the greens. This spring we have left the greens slightly higher (4.37mm) than our summer height of cut (4mm). This may not seem like a big difference but more leaf tissue is better than less. More leaf surface allows the plant to capture more sunlight for photosynthesis and consequently help with growth. We hope this sheds some light on the situation!