



# The Mountain State Greenletter

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West Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association

## Board of Director's Message

**As the leaves and deer fall, you can tell it's fall in West Virginia! I hope you and your crew are wrapping up another successful season and planning for great things in 2024.**

**I was saddened to hear about the passing of Charles Curtis "CC" Brooks, the owner of Motive Power Inc. CC was my Club Car rep and worked in the golf industry for over 40 years and gave multiple donations to the West Virginia Golf Association throughout his life. He was a genuine, kind-hearted human who always cared for us at Riverside. Our condolences go out to his friends, family, and anyone who had the pleasure of knowing CC. The link to his obituary is below:**

**[https://www.peerystclairfuneralhome.com/obituaries/print?o\\_id=8756337](https://www.peerystclairfuneralhome.com/obituaries/print?o_id=8756337)**

**As we come upon this holiday season, I wish you all the best. We have much to be thankful for, and I hope you enjoy time and fellowship with your family and friends!**

**Mitch Roush  
President, Riverside Golf Course**



*Happy  
Thanksgiving*





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# But There's No Frost at My House

By Elliott L. Dowling, regional director, East Region

Just about every golf course that has ever had a frost delay has probably had to deal with comments from golfers about there being no frost at their house. The explanation is pretty simple, weather conditions that affect one location might not have the same impact in another location nearby. Beyond that basic fact, there are some specific reasons why golf courses may be more vulnerable to frost than your front yard.

Frost lingers longer in a shaded environment than one that is more open. On a golf course with trees lining fairways or surrounding greens, sunlight is slower to penetrate leaves and branches so turf will hold on to frost later in the morning. Compare that to a home where there might be fewer trees. Sun gets to the grass shortly after sunrise and “burns off” the frost earlier than it might at the nearby golf course.

Orientation to the sun, prevailing wind and topography also play a role in frost severity and duration. Golf courses generally wind through a landscape with holes going in many directions. Holes also go up, down and over hills and valleys. The front half of a fairway could be north facing and lose frost later than the second half that turns to the south. Golf holes also play into low-lying valleys where cold air can settle, causing frost to linger. If your front yard is facing the morning sun and gets plenty of air movement, you can expect frost to melt sooner than it would on that drop-shot par 3 surrounded by trees.

I'm going to assume most homeowners wouldn't remove a level from their house or cut down all the trees in their yard to lessen frost, but there are some options on a golf course to help reduce frost delays. Tree spacing and location are important for several reasons on a course, but their impact on frost is certainly a consideration. Too many trees planted too close to a fairway or green are going to cause shade that may extend frost delays. The longevity of the frost could be reduced if the trees were removed or at minimum thinned out to allow shafts of light to reach the ground.

The important thing is that you don't make assumptions on frost delay length or how much rain fell at the course from your home. There are too many variables to think that what you see out your front window is what you should expect at the course. When in doubt, call the golf shop for an update before heading over.

Northeast Region Agronomists

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Topography and trees are two of the main reasons why there may be



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# The Leaf Burden

By Brian Gietka, agronomist, East Region

The days are shorter, temperatures are cooling off and many areas have experienced their first frost, with more on the way. With the beauty of fall foliage comes the ensuing leaf cleanup. Leaves are rapidly changing color throughout the Northeast and dropping at a steady rate. While the brilliant colors provide a nice backdrop to a golf course, once leaves fall the pleasantries are over.

During recent Course Consulting Service visits, the question was asked: “What is the best way to manage leaves?” The answer begins with moving the leaves for golf. The putting greens, tees, fairways and bunkers should be prioritized. However, maintaining leaf-free playing surfaces all day long is usually not feasible. Keep in mind that the wear from frequent blowing with large equipment can deteriorate turf quality at a time when we should be favoring recovery. In many instances, leaves are mulched with rough mowers to keep conditions playable, but continually mulching leaves causes more traffic wear and can smother turf canopies, which is especially problematic in newly seeded or recovering areas. Turf needs sunlight to build up energy for winter, so collecting and removing leaves is often a better option. Beyond leaves, there are other hidden costs of trees that impact turf health and playability year round and should be tracked since they’re not the same for every golf course.

The extra expense of gathering and removing leaves on a daily basis needs to be balanced against the positive effect on turf quality and playability. Avoiding pace of play issues and making sure the turf is getting as much sunlight as possible before winter probably makes it worth staying on top of leaf removal. Near primary playing areas like greens and tees, removing trees to reduce leaf litter and other issues might be better for long-term sustainability.

## Northeast Region Agronomists

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The brilliant colors of fall are here and so are the hassles of leaf cleanup.





As we celebrate Thanksgiving with all of our friends and family, we wanted to take a minute to thank you.

We sincerely hope that you enjoy the holiday and take this time to relax and be thankful.

Your Harrell's representatives,



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