

CUTT

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The Challenge Of Poor Irrigation Water

The recurrent droughts experienced through the US each year have given the turf industry pause. Watershed commissions that cross state lines, water management districts that determine water needs, and municipal water suppliers continue to question the use of potable water for recreational (read nonessential) use.

The Northeast Climate Center reported that the month of April in the Northeast United States was the driest in recorded history. The Southeast United States is in the throes of the most significant drought in the last 100 years. The Florida golf turf industry may soon be facing phased-in restrictions that will allow watering of fairways once per week, and greens and tees twice per week.

The energy debate that is currently raging across the United States—and focused in California—pales in comparison to the volatility and politics of water. “Water rights stir deep emotions in the Western states,” says Bill Bradley, former Senator from New Jersey and member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, in his 1996 memoir *Time Present, Time Past* (Knopf Publishing, NY). “Disputes over water in Western history have affected sovereignty and influenced borders,” Bradley alludes, “where many say whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting.”

With less than 1% of the world’s water available for human consumption and 80% of the fresh water consumed for agriculture, concern is growing over water used for maintaining greenspace, such as golf courses. Jim

Watson, Ph.D., in the opening chapter of the 1994 text *Wastewater Reuse for Golf Course Irrigation* (Lewis Publishers, MI), proposes six areas that will increase water availability. Along with conservation and development of plants that use less water, Watson suggests that the use of wastewater and desalinization of seawater offer two important options. As salt water intrusion into Long Island wells increases, desalinization may soon be required.

Wastewater

With population growth and the demand for potable water expected to increase, the turfgrass industry can no longer take a passive

continued on page 4

This Times

1. *Poor Irrigation Water*
2. *Short Cutts*
 - Villani Fund established
 - Rossi in ON Magazine
3. *Scanning the Journals*
 - Iron influences
 - Bentgrass salt tolerance
6. *Silvery Thread Moss*
10. *Putting Green Nematodes*
14. *The Lawn Reader*
 - Creeping Bentgrass
 - Picture clues guide
 - Lawn care almanac
17. *Turfgrass Field Day*
18. *When the Going Gets Tough*
24. *Creeping Bentgrass Biocontrol*

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