

2013

Coming off the drought of 2012, there was anticipation for much needed precipitation. January through March brought temperatures below average and 7.3 inches of precipitation, which is two inches above average for the first four months of the year. April showed no slowdown of rainfall. Oak Grove received 8.36 inches of rain in April. The rain was needed to replenish depleted soils, but it was deterring golfers from playing. The scenario of 14 out of 30 days with rain made play difficult. By the end of the month, the saturated ground began to dry up. April 30th was 86 degrees, representing the first 80-plus-degree day of the year. Conditions in May were finally favorable for golfing. Temperatures warmed up and the rain subsided. Unfortunately the rain machine started up again in June. June received over 7.25" of rain. Father's Day is the busiest golfing day of the year and weather cooperated. July through October were drier than average. August 27th was the hottest day of year as the temperature reached 98 degrees with heat index over 105 degrees. This stretch of weather is what Oak Grove needed help with to recover lost play from rain days. On October 22nd we had a killing frost with the temperature dropping to 22 degrees. From this point until the end of the year, the temperatures and precipitation ran below-average. Precipitation was well above-average the first six months of the year and below-average for the second half of the year. We finished the year with 38 inches of precipitation, which is only one inch over the 37-inch annual average. A precipitation deficit still remained from 2012.

Wetlands that were empty in 2012 were now full. Plants that were not seen last year, were present. Phlox bloomed in early May, coneflowers bloomed in June and July, and the fall asters and daisies blossomed. Irises along water edges flourished. The wet beginning of the year saw the willows growing at rapid rates. Despite the work we did the previous year removing them, this evasive plant persisted. Native areas in front of 14 tee, 13 tee and 11 tee had to be mowed down in August because the willows were obstructing and interfering with golfers' view of the hole. Yarrow filled many native areas in September. In the fall, there was much work to do cutting back willow saplings and cutting native areas.

Animals that left Oak Grove in 2012 in search of water and food returned in 2013. The sandhill cranes returned in April along with the other migratory birds. A pair of orioles took up residence by 16 tee, and the turkey population has been increasing. Our neighborhood bird-watcher installed two new birdhouses, one on the east side of #4 fairway and the other on the northwest side of the clubhouse. One particular animal that has taken up residency at Oak Grove is a beaver. Periodically it is necessary for the maintenance staff to knock down his dam to keep water from backing up on the south side of Oak Grove Road.

The cool wet spring created a shortened root system on the turf. When the turf was exposed to the heat, it showed stress immediately. Much of the weather from July to September was ideal for dollar spot. The end of August brought prime conditions for pythium blight. High temperatures coupled with high humidity made development possible. Watering programs were adjusted to alleviate onset of disease. In October, we aerified the greens. The greens started to develop an undesirable thatch layer. Large cores were pulled, removed and the holes were filled with mason sand. This aggressive aerification had long-term benefits that outweighed short-term issues of slightly bumpy putting surface for one week.

