

Debugging Your Golf Course

Because of a warmer-than-normal winter and spring, insect life cycles and your treatment programs probably began a tad earlier than usual this year; of course the drier-than-normal conditions may also have had an effect on program timing as well. That's why it pays to monitor and visit your traditional hot spots for signs of activity. We asked superintendents to respond to an Insect Control Survey for tips and ideas on what they're doing to manage pest pressures. Here are comments by three superintendents: Darren Davis, Bill Tyde and Joe Ondo. There may be a few weed control comments thrown in for good measure.

Survey Responses and Comments

1 Do you make any truly wall-to-wall insecticide applications on your course?

Davis: For the first time in over 10 years, I did a wall-to-wall for mole cricket control. I used a product from DuPont — Provaunt®. I also made my first “almost” wall-to-wall preemergent application in over 10 years this year using Specticle®.

Tyde: No wall-to-wall applications this year. Only treating where hot spots are active.

Ondo: The insect control program that worked for us the last few years is to apply Bifenthrin® and Imidacloprid® with a wetting agent around the end of May through the full moon in June on our greens, tees, slopes and clubhouse area. Most of our roughs are treated with fertilizer plus Talstar® during that same time frame.

2 Do you primarily do spot treatments including selective greens only in treating outbreaks (as opposed to treating all greens if you see signs on a couple of greens?)

Davis: Yes I do primarily, but I will do preventive fungicide application on greens mid-November to mid- February.

Tyde: Yes, but depending on the pest and time of year, aeration schedule determines if we treat all greens or other



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locations, specifically for worms. We pretty much keep a history of the activity locations and expect nature to follow course. There are time windows that we work within. As far as products, we rotate a few different active ingredients depending on the timing of life cycles and degree of activity.

Ondo: If and when any subsequent mole cricket damage starts to occur, we spot-treat those areas with Orthene® or Dursban® Bait. Any worm damage that begins to show up will be treated with Arena®, Orthene or Allectus® on a spot-treatment schedule.

3 Do you rotate pesticides to prevent insects from developing pesticide resistance?

Davis: Yes, always.

Tyde: Yes, Our main pests are mole crickets, grubs and worms but don't forget about nematodes. It's hard to rotate products here, but I have tried everything that comes out as the next latest-and-greatest product.

4 Have you discussed and/or revised your threshold levels for certain pests?

Davis: Not necessarily; we have always been good IPM managers.

Tyde: Yes, but it all depends on the location of the problem.

5 Has the economy affected your chemical budget?

Davis: No.

Tyde: Chemicals and fertilizers are the toughest areas to sacrifice. We have improved practices to keep our costs down but product costs keep going up so we really don't save much money. We try to keep the same budget number and hope to be as efficient as possible.

6 Due to rising costs of products, many people set specific acreages to be treated annually and then rotate treated areas each year. What products are you rotating (Curfew, Chipco Choice, others?) and/or how many acres, or areas (greens, tees, fairways, roughs are you treating and rotating?

Davis: Currently no area rotations.

7 Do you treat for nematodes annually?

Davis: No.

Tyde: Yes approximately 40 acres

8. There is a variety of products on the market for nematode control. What is your main product of choice for nematode control?

Davis: I still have 10-15 bags of NemaCur®. I only use a couple of bags a year.

Tyde: We use Curfew to begin the year in April; this has

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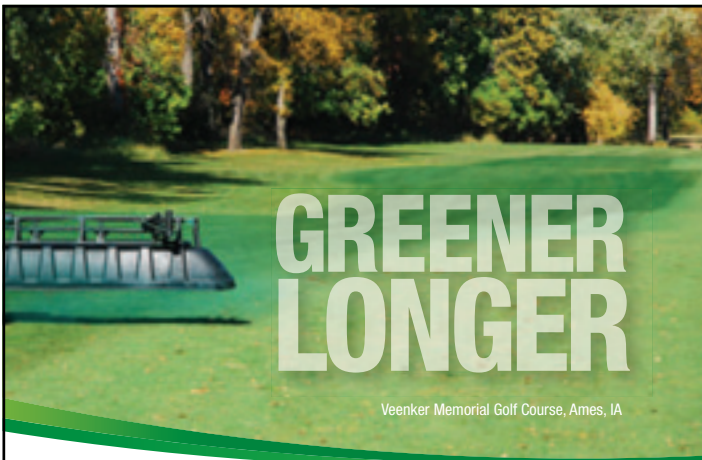
actually saved us on our water consumption going into our dry season. Also, we use mustard seed extract to spot-treat greens and add microbes to help improve roots density. There is a variety of names for those products. We also use wetting agents and even an occasional fungicide application when also dealing with some other non-nematode related issues to reduce the pressure on turf roots.

Ondo: Our nematode control program consists of alternating NeoTec® and Quantum VSC monthly on greens. This year we will be treating one acre with Nortica® and monitoring the results with some nematode sampling later in the year.

9 **New products for nematode control include several bio/organic-based materials and programs. What products and programs including rates, application frequency, etc. are you successfully using to control nematode populations on your course?**

Davis: See No. 8 above.

Tyde: I use microbes supplied from Nutra Turf/Bio Performer on a weekly schedule. We use a one-pound pouch per 50 gallons of water in a 200-gallon solution. I caution against the word “successfully” in your question. It’s still a learning curve!



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