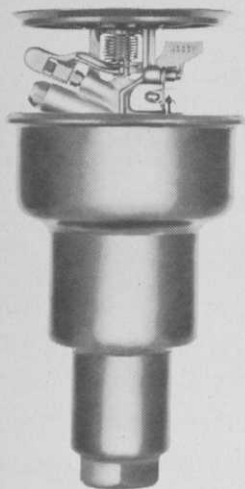


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DR. JAMES B. BEARD

TURFGRASS RESEARCH REVIEW

ZONATE EYESPOT ON BENTGRASS: A FUTURE PROBLEM?

A patch disease of two bentgrasses caused by Drechslera Gigantea. N. Jackson and J. M. Fenstermacher. 1973. Plant Disease Reporter 57(1): 84-85. (from the Department of Plant Pathology-Entomology, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I. 02881).

The occurrence of a zonate eyespot type of disease on Kingston velvet bentgrass and Exeter Colonial bentgrass was reported by the authors. The turfs on which the disease developed were mowed at a cutting height of 0.25 inch and were located on the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station at Kingston. The disease was first observed during August and September of 1972.

The general symptoms of this disease involve irregularly shaped patches ranging in size from two to nine inches in diameter. The initial symptoms on leaf blades appear as small, yellow lesions, which rapidly develop into a complete yellowing of the entire blade, followed by withering and browning symptoms. The blighted patches were composed of high concentrations of these affected leaves. The symptoms were comparable on both the Kingston velvet bentgrass and the Exeter colonial bentgrass plots.

The typical zonate eyespot lesions previously observed on creeping bentgrass were observed only occasionally on the individual leaves of these two bentgrass species. The causal organism of this disease was confirmed by laboratory cultures.

Comments: Zonate eyespot has been most widely reported to cause disease problems in bermudagrass turfs. It has also been reported to occur on creeping bentgrass turfs, particularly in the

midwestern United States, although it is much less of a problem than on bermudagrass. Zonate eyespot is most common during warm, wet weather.

This paper gives the first report of this disease and its associated causal organism on colonial bentgrass, cultivar Exeter. It also produced serious disease injury on adjacent turfgrass areas of Kingston velvet bentgrass.

Zonate eyespot has usually only occurred in limited, localized outbreaks on the bentgrasses. Whether it will become a more serious problem on these two new cultivars, Kingston velvet bentgrass and Exeter colonial bentgrass, remains to be seen.

The chances of a turfgrass breeder developing a cultivar that is resistant to all known diseases is very unlikely. Frequently, a newly-released cultivar will have improved resistance to one or more of the more serious diseases on that species. After the newly-released cultivar is in use over a wide range of conditions for an extended period of time, it may prove susceptible to (a) a new disease(s) or (b) a different strain(s) of a disease-causing organism that has not been a problem in the past on other cultivars of that species. The chance of this occurring is less or at least it will be less likely to be a serious problem, if a number of different cultivars and species are used in a specific region rather than only one. For this reason, it is advantageous to have a number of improved cultivars being developed and used.

The best procedure for the golf course superintendent to follow is to keep up-to-date and knowledgeable on the performance of newly released cultivars. By doing this, he will be better able to select a cultivar or blend of cultivars that will have the least disease problems for the specific turfgrass area to be established. □