

Guest Editorial

In our profession, problems are often put on the shelf in hopes that they will rectify themselves or simply be forgotten. Fortunately, in many cases this is true. But when a problem occurs time after time and it appears that nothing is being done about it, it is time to look for an answer. This problem is unique in the golf course superintendents' business in that it is common to us all and occurs regardless of location, budget, expertise, experience, or capital investment. I'm speaking of parts availability.

If anyone in our association has not had a problem in getting urgently needed parts, please let us know. I've heard unbelievable stories from superintendents about delays and snafus. Parts ordered, and two weeks later you may receive a back order notice. Must we buy a new Greensaire to complete our aerification? Is it really an ingenious selling ploy? The cost of parts versus the entire machine can be astronomical. Must we beg as well as pay through the nose for them? I realize turf equipment is "custom made," but with escalating costs wouldn't it be economical to produce an overabundance of parts which could be sold (and quickly) at ever higher prices? According to the computer list of available parts most equipment becomes obsolete in 5 years in Florida. Is this true in the northern states with the short seasons or are all the parts held back for those that have the winter to repair at leisure?

I've had two pieces of equipment in the shop awaiting back ordered parts for over 2 months. Who pays the storage cost? (One more reason parts are more and more expensive). I ordered a new piece of equipment with options. After three weeks it became apparent that the options would be back ordered. The basic item was subsequently delivered and several months later we are still awaiting these options—the total bill has been paid! The situation is so bad that salesmen and partsmen will put us off in hopes that we will forget or make other arrangements. Who pays for the \$6000 machine, idled for weeks by a commonly worn or broken part?

Often we are at fault for expecting the instant communication of television or the simultaneous copy of a teletype. Sometimes we read the wrong part number, or because of incomplete information or not reading the manual, order the wrong part. This editorial does not wish to blame the manufacturer, transporter, distributor, serviceman, or salesman. However, we would like to hear the problem in each area and what can and is being done to alleviate some of the bottlenecks. Can we as superintendents help? How? We would like to see responses from each area (including superintendents) in the newsletter.

George Reid

Florida West Coast Newsletter Editor

Brown Patch

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The Current Situation

As more samples and reports of disease occurrences rolled in, it became apparent that we were not dealing with a curiosity but with a problem of consequence of golf turf. Symptoms have been reported on fairways, greens, tees, and aprons.

We could isolate the *Ceratobasidium* fungus from many of these turf areas; from some we could isolate neither *Ceratobasidium* nor *R. solani* but still other unidentified fungi. At present we believe that the disease is not going to become the scourge of turfgrass but merely another problem to be solved on the way to qualify turf. It would appear that humid, cool weather is most favorable for disease development.

Where did the problem come from: Why *Ceratobasidium* now and not 10 years ago?

Any new problem always stimulates the question of why now? and not before? Answers have ranged from: the discontinuance of growing season use of mercury to the introduction of the benzimidazole systemic fungicides in wide use. Others have blamed shifts in the weather towards cooler, wetter summers. At this point there is not correct answer and there may never be one. The best we can do is speculate based on the facts on hand. Our best estimate is that the same shift towards cooler, wetter summers that has brought on increased

Red Thread prevalence and severity has also brought Cool Weather Brown Patch to prominence. Fungi respond to their environment. Those that are favored by a change in the environment become more common; those that are less favored become less common.

Where do we go from there?

The major practical problem that the turfgrass manager faces is disease control to a level compatible with the uses of the area in question. At present we just do not have enough information about the disease to make clear recommendations for either cultural or fungicide control. Environmental manipulation does not seem to offer promise, especially for the golf course superintendent who is locked into a multitude of other concerns dealing with irrigation and culture. From a fungicide view the best recommendation would be to stick with success. If Cool Weather Brown Patch does appear and your current program is not holding it, then try shifting to other fungicides labeled and registered for Brown Patch until you meet with at least partial success. We are attempting to work out the fungicide situation. Dan Loughner, who is working on his M.S. in Plant Pathology with us, will be evaluating fungicides in the laboratory, green house, and with luck, in the field. We will be screening both the *Rhizoctonia solani* warm temperature Brown Patch group as well as the *Ceratobasidium* cool temperature group of fungi.

From The Keynoter, Penn. Turfgrass Council