SCOTTS TGR

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When I began as Superintendent at Knollwood Country Club two years ago, one of my first goals was to mow and collect the clippings on all of the fairways five days per week, excluding Saturday and Sunday. I desired to collect the clippings to aid in the reduction of Poa annua seed heads and in turn, facilitate creeping bentgrass competition. I wanted to exclude mowing on weekends so that interference with play and overtime were each kept to a minimum.

When all of the options were weighed, the decision to use a plant growth regulator was made. The reasoning behind this decision was twofold. First, plant growth regulators can reduce clipping yields from thirty to fifty percent. To allow for the mowing of all the fairways five days per week, the least amount of top growth and therefore clippings possible would be critical to remain ahead of play. This was also important so that mowing could be excluded on weekends while maintaining a consistent playing surface on each of those days.

Scotts TGR was my product of choice and as far as I can observe after two seasons of its' use, it has achieved what O.M. Scotts Company proclaims it can. Since using this product the clipping yield on our fairways has been reduced measurably. This is important not only for the speed of our mowing operation, but for the disposal of the clippings as well. With the banning of yard wastes from state landfills looming on the horizon, a simple and expedient solution for clipping disposal was required. A clipping spreader was chosen because of its ability to evenly disperse the clippings in outlying rough areas. Since the clipping yield has been reduced, the clipping spreader can easily keep pace with the mowing operation. As you can imagine, this greatly reduces the amount of time needed to mow, not to mention the reduced cost and inconvenience of having the clippings hauled away.

While monitoring the amount of times a mower has to empty its' baskets of clippings on a two acre fairway that is under peak regulation, it has been noted that each of the two mowers in use will empty one to one and a half times. This can be compared to emptying as many as three to four times each when the same fairway is not under growth regulation. Without the use of the plant growth regulator, I seriously doubt we would be able to utilize this same mowing operation and procedure. The second reason the choice was made to use a plant growth regulator was due to the fact that they can reduce the ability of Poa annua to compete with desirable grasses, in my case, creeping bentgrass. A long term conversion to bentgrass was desired so as not to disrupt play and to keep discoloration to a minimum. I chose Scotts TGR because the product is packaged so that it allows for frequent applications at low rates. This insures that the least amount of turf discoloration will be possible while still keeping the Poa annua in check to allow for increased bentgrass competition.

After some experimentation, a rate of two ounces of product (1 oz. a.i.) per acre at three week intervals was proven to produce satisfactory results. Applications begin the first week of May, and continue until the second week of September. An iron and micro-nutrient product is added at the rate of two ounces per 1000 square feet to aid in the reduction of turf discoloration. Fungicides can also be added if needed, or as my spray schedule dictates.

I do feel that Scotts TGR is allowing the creeping bentgrass to evenly compete with the Poa annua. I can note expansion of the bentgrass population in many areas on the fairways that most likely would

not be occurring with the use of clipping removal and cultural practices alone. It also seems to make the grass hardier and more resistant to stress and wilt.

I believe that the use of Scotts TGR has allowed me to provide a consistent and smooth playing surface for my membership while also aiding in the long term conversion to creeping bentgrass. I plan to continue to use this product in the seasons to come and I may experiment with a plant growth regulator on my greens in 1994 as well.