

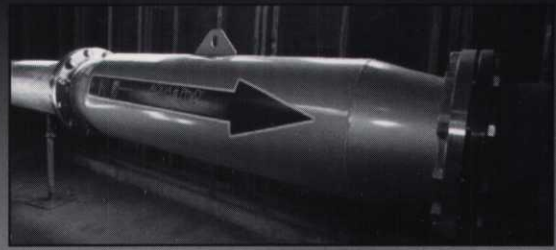
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NEW TURFGRASS DISEASE CULPRITS

Pythium root dysfunction causes the roots and crown of turfgrass to turn brown or black. The symptoms are most visible during the summer, but the disease actually spreads during spring and fall, when it is cool and wet.

Because symptoms are less prevalent on plants with a strong root system, there are several cultural practices superintendents can undertake to minimize damage caused by Pythium root dysfunction. Root enhancement techniques – specifically aerification, nutrition supplements, verticutting and reduced irrigation – are helpful in counteracting symptoms of the disease.

Irrigation management is also extremely important. Clay and compacted soils are more likely to harbor Pythium root dysfunction because of reduced drainage.

It is less difficult and less expensive to prevent Pythium root dysfunction than it is to try to cure it. Fungicides such as pyraclostrobin and triticonazole are two of the most effective at preventing the disease.

Dr. Lane Tredway, turfgrass pathologist at North Carolina State University, is one of the foremost experts on Pythium root dysfunction. To learn more about his research and information on NC State's Center for Turfgrass Environmental Research & Education, visit www.turffiles.ncsu.edu.

Brown Ring Patch

Formerly known as waitea patch, brown ring patch has been reported sporadically throughout the Midwest and is a mounting problem in Southern California. Occurring primarily on greens with high annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) populations, the disease is prevalent in warm and moist conditions.

Initial symptoms of brown ring patch are thin, yellow, concentric rings several inches in diameter that turn brown under hot or wet conditions. Once established, brown ring patch can quickly damage turfgrass. Temperature plays a significant role in regards to whether or not brown ring patch occurs. The disease does not spread in hot or cold conditions, but rather during times of mild (mid-60s to low-80s F) temperature.

Cultural control options of aerification and higher mowing heights are sometimes used to combat brown ring patch. Alternating among several fungicides – pyraclostrobin, propiconazole and triticonazole – has been an effective treatment.

Dr. Frank Wong, assistant plant pathologist at the University of California-Riverside, is considered one of the top brown ring patch researchers. For more information, visit UC Riverside's Department of Plant Pathology and Microbiology at www.plantpathology.ucr.edu.

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Superintendents Institute at the Course at Wente Vineyards

Industry experts gathered at the GCSANC Institute held in cooperation with University of California Cooperative Extension. The timely topic for the 2008 conference was: What is More Important Than Water? The 2-day event which included seminar, golf tournament and trade show was held at The Course at Wente Vineyards (Livermore, CA) and kindly sponsored by John Deere Golf and Reed Equipment Company. Presenters included Mike McCullough- NCGA and California Alliance for Golf, Chris Dundon- Contra Costa Water District, Event Co-chairman Dr. Ali Harivandi- UC Cooperative Extension, David Langridge- East Bay Municipal Utility District, Dr. James Baird- UC Riverside, and Dr. Hossein Ashktorab- Santa Clara Valley Water District.



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GCSANC members serve as panelists at the 2008 Institute.
David Sexton, CGCS, Joe Vallaire, Gary Ingram, CGCS, and Brad Griffing.



Host Superintendent Glenn Matthews of Wente Vineyards provides insight to colleagues at The Institute

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NEW TURFGRASS DISEASE CULPRITS

Rapid Blight

Rapid blight occurs in the fall and winter, affecting several annual winter grasses used to overseed Bermudagrass. Affected species include ryegrass, annual bluegrass and poa trivialis. It is primarily seen in the Southwest, including Nevada, Arizona and Southern California, as well as on coastal areas in the Southeast and Northeast. Perennial grasses are not affected by rapid blight.

The disease is associated with a marine organism and cases of rapid blight rise significantly in areas where superintendents use reclaimed water or water with high salinity for irrigation. The disease can occur on any area that has been overseeded, but is usually treated only on putting greens.

Dr. Mary Olsen, plant pathology specialist for the University of Arizona-Tucson, has confirmed that rapid blight is caused by an obscure microorganism that prior to its discovery in turf was known to infect in marine plants such as seagrass, diatoms and algae.

Rapid blight shows itself as water-soaked, slightly sunken and darker looking turf. It turns yellow and dies in patches.

The primary cultural control option is to use better quality irrigation water, avoiding reclaimed water, if possible. Pyraclostrobin provides the most effective preventative control, with mancozeb as a less effective alternative.

Olsen is a leading rapid blight researcher. The University of Arizona's Division of Plant Pathology and Microbiology is available on the Web at <http://ag.arizona.edu/PLP>.

Prevention, Education Key

To avoid being caught off guard by new diseases, it is important to stay educated on new diseases, be consistent with preventative tactics and devote time to detection efforts.

Part of being proactive is keeping up with the latest research and information about turfgrass disease. Superintendents who collect and absorb background information are better prepared when they encounter a problem – they know what they are dealing with and who can help them.

Some superintendents are quick to write off an undiagnosed problem as being untreatable by a particular fungicide they have already applied, so they simply retreat with a different product. Instead, they should take a turf sample and send it in to a diagnostics lab.

Fungicide manufacturer representatives, university extension personnel and other course superintendents are also good sources of information. It is wise to seek the help of others if they encounter an abnormality they do not recognize.

It may seem like common sense, but it is important for superintendents to walk their courses every day to keep an eye out for abnormalities. New diseases such as pythium root dysfunction, brown ring patch and rapid blight can cause problems quickly if undetected.

Sidebar: Getting to the Root of the Southeast's Pythium Disease

The good news for Charles Sheffield, superintendent at Croasdaile C.C. in Durham, N.C., is that only one disease significantly disturbs his turf. The bad news is that it is Pythium root dysfunction caused by Pythium volutum. Superintendents and pathologists living in the Southeast are learning that Pythium root dysfunction on creeping bentgrass greens is a plague.



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GCSAA'S NEW LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

develop presentations and get important messages out to the public at large.

The meeting's agenda was an even blend of subtle self-promotion and a chance for representatives to give their opinions on the organization's efforts. Concerns were raised about the GCSAA's heavy emphasis on the GIS show and the rising cost of membership dues. Feedback on the website's usefulness and PDI were also given. It became clear that a large, national organization such as the GCSAA will always be challenged with serving a membership with diverse budgets and resources.

To help with these disconnects, we were encouraged to get involved in our local chapters. Whether we chose to serve on the board or just attend meetings, our local chapters are the most effective tool we have collaborate on issues specific to our area. We should feel fortunate to have such a strong chapter here in Northern California. With an experienced Association Manager and Media Consultant like Barbara Mikel and Emmy Moore Minister, we have considerably more resources available to us than most chapters. I left Lawrence impressed by the resources and talent representing us on the national and local levels. Just as impressive, is our potential to do more if we all get involved and use the resources available to us.

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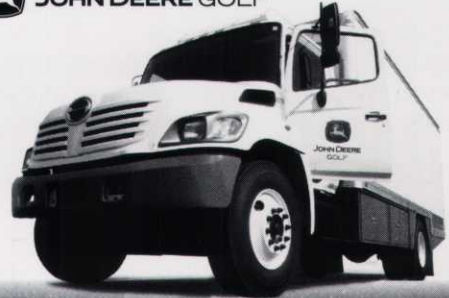
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