Spring Diseases

by Joe Rimelspach
Ohio State University

Red Thread (Laetisaria fuciformis)

Columbus is experiencing seasonably cool weather. Once the hot, dry weather gets here we should see a reduction in the activity of this disease. Turfgrass areas more prone to red thread are low quality, nutrient deficient soils, which can be improved by sound management practices and a balanced fertilizer program. As with any disease, if it occurs every year, a timely preventative fungicide application can be applied. For example, an application of Bayleton, Accost (Triadimefon), Endorse (Polyoxin D zinc salt), or Heritage (Azoxystrobin) made in late March or April may supply spring-long suppression. Once the disease is present, it takes time for turfgrass regrowth to fill in affected or bare areas.

Leaf Spot (Helminthosporium) is Active

Most common leaf spots on fields at this time of year are associated with one of the Bipolaris or Drechslera spp. In the past, these were lumped together and referred to as Helminthosporium leaf spot. This fungal disease of turf is widespread at this time of year on susceptible grasses. Check for brown spots and lesions on the leaf blades. Cool wet weather will keep this disease active and increase severity. Older fields with common Kentucky bluegrass are often the most severely affected. If there are turf areas with a history of this problem, manage to minimize damage.

Proper mowing is important to maintain turf health. If the lawn is cut too short the disease will cause extensive damage and be much more severe than if mowed high. On newer fields, there are usually more resistant grasses and cultivars to this disease.

In extreme cases, consider the use of fungicide application(s). Remember the recent changes in fungicide labels that restrict the use of some fungicides. Some products to consider are Heritage, Mancozeb, and Endorse. The iprodione (Chicco 26GT, Iprodione Pro, and 18 Plus) and vinclozolin (Touche and Curalan) products are the most effective but new products can not be used on residential turf.

April 20, 2004 4th Annual Spring Field Day Recap

Dr. Henry Inkyk, 
SFMANJ Advisor 
and GSI Sports 
Field Consultant 
describes the steps 
in installing 
drainage.

Ken Mathis(left) 
introducing George 
McCarthy(right), 
SFMANJ board of 
director and 
president of Spring 
Irrigation who spoke 
on irrigation systems 
and “How you make 
it work”.

Jim Hermann, 
SFMANJ Vice 
President and 
President of Total 
Control. 
Discussing safety 
issues and getting 
the best out of 
skinned infield 
maintenance.
Brad Park shared his results on using .5 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. (#5) and not using any (#6). The nitrogen was applied March 18th and the pictures were April 20th. Results nitrogen can help jump start your turf in the spring.

Dr. James Murphy (right) describing a spring renovation program: IPM Practices, fertilizing, seeding and weed control (Ken Mathis (left), DPW Supervisor for Brick Twp. to his left)

The drainage ditch clever using pea gravel and perforated pipe. The secret is not using fabric.

A crowd of people listening to the Skinned Infield talk.

Annual Spring Field Day

May/June 2004