



Pink snow mold can cause springtime headaches for turf managers because the fungal pathogen is active over a wide range of temperatures.

CAN'T SPRAY... GO GRANULAR

BY BOB VAVREK | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, CENTRAL REGION

Snow and unseasonably cold temperatures continue to affect golf courses across the northern part of the U.S. Some courses in the Twin Cities have yet to see more than a day or two of snow-free putting greens, which has turf managers very worried about the residual efficacy of fungicide treatments made last fall.

Some playing surfaces may have experienced higher-than-anticipated levels of gray snow mold injury due to an extra month or so of snow cover. Most years, turf affected by gray snow mold is already beginning to recover by mid-April. However, this year damage beneath persistent snow cover may still be occurring.

When snow finally melts, turf is still at risk from pink snow mold injury because the pathogen does not require snow cover and is active over a broad range of temperatures – i.e., 30 to 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Consequently, courses with a history of pink snow mold injury on putting greens often apply an early spring fungicide treatment to protect the facility's most valuable turf.

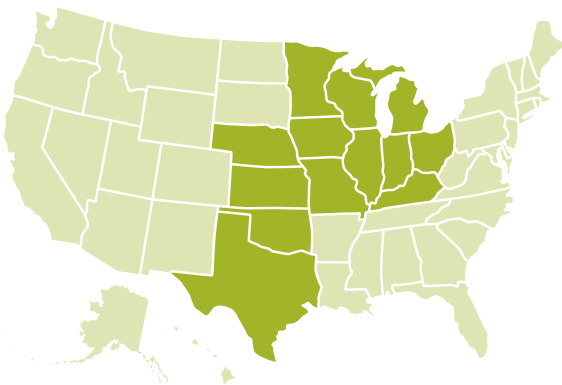
This year, extended snow cover and deep frost in the soil are going keep sprayers off turf for a few more weeks. With golfers chomping at the bit to play, starting the season with putting greens made bumpy and ugly by snow mold is not a prelude to selling more green fees or memberships.

Fortunately, there are a variety of effective granular fungicides that are labeled to control pink snow mold. Some products utilize dispersing granule technology that may not require much more than a heavy dew to move the fungicide into turf. This is a boon to courses that need to protect turf before their irrigation system is up and running. More importantly, a push-behind broadcast spreader can be safely used on soft, wet greens much sooner than a heavy sprayer. Contact your regional USGA agronomist, university turf specialist or plant protectant supplier for specific product recommendations.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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