

What's Your Pleasure?

By David Oatis, director, Northeast Region

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Recent mild temperatures and rain are beginning to push growth in some areas, and the onslaught of my allergy symptoms are sure signs that the spring is beginning to spring. So, we wonder, what kind of year will it be, brutally difficult years like 2005 and 2006, or a kinder, gentler year? Will we have a warm spring (finally) or will frosts persist late into May? Will we have snow on our blooming forsythias again, or will we skip spring and go right into high summer temperatures?

Obviously, no one can predict with any accuracy what type of weather we will experience this year, but if past trends are an indication, plan on a cool spring, hot summer, and heavier, but less frequent rain events. In terms of pests and diseases, I'm betting that anthracnose and summer patch will be problematic and, in terms of insect problems, *Hyperodes* weevils will continue to confound.

There is some good news though. Research is continuing to identify new and more effective means of dealing with our pest problems. Anthracnose, though still problematic for many, is much better understood now, and new control measures are increasingly effective. Similarly, new insecticides show promise in controlling the pesky weevils, particularly in light of recent resistance issues. Hopefully, you attended educational programs over the winter and are up-to-date on the latest research.

As for advice, it isn't new or exciting or very profound, but I'd suggest sticking with the basics and keeping things as simple as possible:

- manage water effectively and your turf will probably perform reasonably well;

- provide healthy growing environments, both above and below ground, and your turf will probably perform reasonably well;
- manage fertility with some common sense and make sure the turf has enough nutrients to sustain moderate growth, and your turf will grow out of and recover from pest, disease and wear problems.

Oh, and if you're contemplating a new and really different management strategy, consider the sage advice I once heard from a leading turf expert: when considering some new technology, "don't be the first and don't be the last." Don't get locked in the past relying strictly on older technology. By the same token, don't forget about old technology (that still works) when something new comes along.

What else can you do? Subscribe to the various publications that track pest problems so you can stay abreast of pest and disease activity, and sign up now for a USGA Green Section Turf Advisory Service (TAS) visit. No one sees more turf than we do, and getting a second opinion and different perspective on management practices and turf problems can be invaluable. Budgets are going to be tight at some courses in this economy, but think long and hard before you cut out your TAS visit. One critical observation or recommendation could save you and your course thousands of dollars. It might even save a lot more!

Last, but certainly not least, please welcome Adam Moeller, our newest Green Section agronomist. Adam just came on board and will be working out of the Easton, Pennsylvania office with me, and he will be visiting courses throughout New Jersey, New York, and southern Connecticut. Adam is a graduate of Purdue University with a M. S. Degree from the Department of Agronomy. His graduate research involved evaluating thatch management practices for new bentgrass cultivars grown on sand-based greens. A Wisconsin native, Adam received his B.S. degree in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin. He has gained experience working as a summer intern on several golf courses, and was selected to participate in the USGA Green Section Internship Program in 2007.

We welcome Adam to the staff and wish him a long and successful tenure with the Green Section.

As always, don't hesitate to call our office if you have questions or concerns. We look forward to seeing you soon.

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