

## Spring Planning

By Darin Bevard, director, Championship Agronomy

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In spite of cool, below-normal temperatures, our typical early-season pests are starting to emerge. In recent travels on golf courses, annual bluegrass weevil (ABW) adults have been easy to find. Applications of insecticides to kill adult weevils before they can lay eggs will need to be made soon. The half-green/half-gold stage of forsythia is a good phenological indicator for these applications, but maintain regular scouting for weevils on your property if they have been a problem in the past. For those who have not been affected by ABW, aggressive scouting is recommended for this insect pest, as new golf courses are impacted every growing season.

Initial applications for *Poa annua* seedhead control have been performed in most of the region, although northern areas have yet to reach the necessary growth stage of *Poa annua* for these applications. Remember, when timing your applications, the goal is not to control the first seedheads that emerge. Rather, the goal is to control as many seedheads as possible with the applications. Timing is essential. If there are any questions about timing of application, do not hesitate to contact our office.

Preemergent crabgrass and goosegrass applications should be made soon if they have not already been made. While cold temperatures have been an issue, crabgrass germination will occur as soon as warmer temperatures persist. Do not be lulled to sleep by this period of cold temperatures.

Every spring we hear the debate about putting green aeration timing. Should we aerate in late winter/early spring or wait until later in the spring when warmer temperatures are more likely? Each spring, the results are different. In 2010, it was very warm in the early spring. This allowed for rapid healing from core aeration in spite of the early timing of this program. Fast forward to 2011, and

those courses that aerated early are suffering through very slow healing because of cold temperatures. With all of the technology and products that are available, it's still tough to overcome cold temperatures when trying to get the grass to grow aggressively. Thus, in 2010, the “early birds” made out very well, and the golfers benefited. In 2011, those with later aeration dates will probably subject their golfers to less inconvenience because warmer temperatures should reduce the length of time required for the greens to heal from aeration. The moral of the story is that a superintendent can do the exact same programs at the exact same time each growing season, and weather conditions lead to a completely different result!

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