

I Keep Sneezing, So It Must Be Spring

By David Oatis, regional director, Northeast Region

April 26, 2016

Allergy season is upon us and so are *Poa annua* seedheads and annual bluegrass weevils. Ah, such a joyous time.

Freshly washed automobiles turn green overnight with pollen and allergy medication intake is at its peak for the year. Many are looking forward to the end of allergy season with great anticipation. The golfers at some courses feel the same way toward the end of the *Poa annua* seeding cycle. Seedhead production varies from year to year and from course to course. Fortunately, seedhead production only seems to be moderate in the Northeast Region so far this spring. In general, seedhead-suppression programs seem to be working reasonably well, but the only way to actually evaluate the effectiveness of your program is to include check plots. If you did not include check plots this season, strongly consider doing so next year because they can provide invaluable information about your seedhead-suppression strategy. Some courses opted for a late fall or midwinter treatment of Proxy® and have followed up this spring with multiple, lighter applications of a Primo MAXX® and Proxy® combination. Anecdotal observations regarding this strategy seem positive, but without check plots there is no way to tell for certain.

On a larger scale, take a hard look at your programs and grass populations to decide whether seedhead suppression is needed or appropriate. Suppressing



*Despite their diminutive size, annual bluegrass weevils can wreak havoc on golf courses that have significant *Poa annua* populations.*

seedhead formation strengthens annual bluegrass plants and reduces the threat of anthracnose later in the year. If you are committed to growing annual bluegrass, suppressing seedheads may be an excellent strategy. If you are trying to grow creeping bentgrass, seedhead suppression may help playability in the short term but could be counterproductive in the long run. Turf managers have become proficient at keeping weaker grasses alive, but over time these efforts can produce larger populations of *Poa annua*. Generally, more *Poa annua* translates to elevated costs and reduced overall reliability. Tracking grass populations at your facility will provide you with a better understanding of how much *Poa annua* is present and help you decide if seedhead suppression is a tactic worth pursuing. If you are unsure about the best strategy for your course, contact the USGA Green Section or discuss it with a USGA agronomist during your next Course Consulting Service visit.

Adult annual bluegrass weevils (ABWs) are out in force at many courses in the Northeast Region. If you are planning to target adult ABWs, an application should have been made by now in the southern portion of the region. However, be sure to carefully consider whether ABW control applications are warranted. If you have a history of products providing marginal or poor ABW control, it is very possible that your ABW population has developed some level of resistance to the products you are applying. Pesticide resistance is a serious issue that should not be taken lightly. If it is possible that the ABW populations at your facility have developed pesticide resistance, the best option may be to focus on controlling ABW larvae when they develop in May. Along the same lines, do not try to achieve 100-percent control of your ABW population. Complete control of ABW is impossible to achieve and making additional control applications drives up costs and increases the likelihood of ABWs developing pesticide resistance.

The May 15 deadline for scheduling a discounted Course Consulting Service visit is rapidly approaching, so be sure to take advantage of the preseason discount by scheduling your visit soon. You can now sign up for a Course Consulting Service visit online using the following link to get started: [Course Consulting Service visit signup](#).

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