



Anthracnose infecting Poa annua in a predominantly bentgrass turf is free Poa control!

ONE DOOR CLOSSES

BY DAVID OATIS | REGIONAL DIRECTOR, NORTHEAST REGION

The “agronomic season” for 2019 is over even though there is plenty of golf yet to be played. Agronomic programs in the Northeast will now be shifting some of their focus to set the turf up for a successful season in 2020. Many courses have already performed their late summer or early fall cultivation work, and it is vitally important not to shortchange these important programs. For most golfers there is no good time to aerate, but cultivation is essential to produce healthy turf and topnotch playing conditions. 2019 brought tremendous agronomic challenges and the turf at many courses in the Northeast is showing the effects. Now is the season for healing and setting the turf up for next year.

Recently, anthracnose has been the most commonly observed malady. However, anthracnose can be your friend or foe depending on what grass species you’re promoting. For courses with plenty of bentgrass, anthracnose can be used as a biological control of *Poa annua*. For courses where *Poa annua* is the desired species, controlling the disease is imperative. Just realize that



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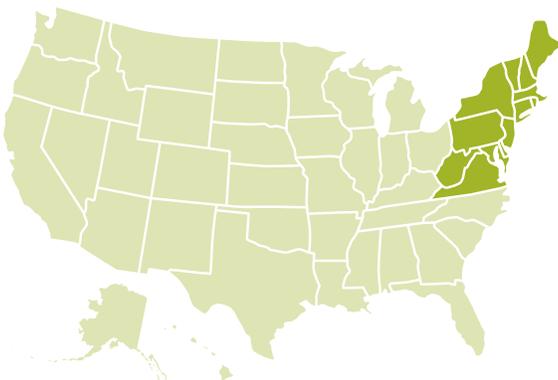
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despite our extensive understanding of the disease, recent outbreaks are a reminder that even the best disease control programs are not always successful.

It has been a rollercoaster of a season for golf course superintendents this year and also for many of us at the USGA. As my time with the Green Section comes to a close, I'd like to thank the hundreds of golf course superintendents, course officials and golf association officials that I've had the privilege to work with for the last 32 seasons. What I've learned from you would fill volumes, and I thank you sincerely for your friendship and support. Most of all, thank you for sharing and trusting me with your problems, concerns, challenges and successes. We learn more from the mistakes and the challenges but sharing and celebrating the successes has given me tremendous satisfaction and kept me motivated. I wish I could pass on everything I've learned, but time will not permit. So, I'll leave you with a couple of important thoughts:

- [Occam's razor](#) pertains directly to turfgrass management! The science of golf course turfgrass management is complicated, and successful superintendents have a special blend of experience, knowledge, touch and feel. However, it is easy to overcomplicate things. Don't fall into the trap of looking for a complicated solution when the simplest answer is more often the right one.
- The environments we grow turf in, both above and below ground, have more of an impact on turf performance than anything else. It is imperative to control what you can control. Focus efforts on improving the above- and below-ground growing environments and you will be more successful, guaranteed. Boring, but true!

Lastly, I'd like to thank my colleagues and the volunteers at the USGA, both past and present. I have appreciated your friendship and valued your support more than you'll ever know. As this door in my life closes, I'm heading to the next phase with a smile, knowing that it's been a great ride.



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