

TALKING

Six of the country's top men give their views on the effects of disease on their course and how they manage the problem

Disease

Compiled by Malcolm Huntington MBE



Name: Paul Murphy
Course: Downfield GC, Dundee
Region: Scotland
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Course Manager, plus six, plus mechanic



Name: Steve Oultram
Course: Wilmslow GC
Region: Northern
Course Type: Parkland
Staff: Course Manager, plus five



Name: Gerald Bruce
Course: Berkhamstead, Herts
Region: Midland
Course Type: Heathland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus five



Name: David Everitt
Course: Bognor Regis, Dorset
Region: South West and South Wales
Course Type: Mixture of downland, parkland and heathland
Staff: Head Greenkeeper, plus four



Name: Ian Willett
Course: Thorpeness GC, Suffolk
Region: South East
Course Type: Maritime heathland
Staff: Course Manager, plus four



Name: Terry Crawford
Course: Clandeboye GC, Bangor, Co Down
Region: Northern Ireland
Course Type: Parkland/Heathland
Staff: Course Manager, plus 12, plus mechanic (36 holes)

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1. Which diseases affect your course to the greatest degree?

1. Fusarium mainly with a touch of anthracnose now and again.

1. Fusarium, but it has become less of a problem in the last two or three years by adopting a policy of minimal watering, aeration, vertidrainage and micro-tining.

1. Fusarium and some anthracnose, but I don't spray for anthracnose.

1. Fusarium. We get it late autumn and early winter and can almost guarantee it as we have moisture caused by heavy mists in September, October and November.

1. Fusarium and anthracnose. I didn't use any fungicide for the anthracnose and put some turf tonic on which which took it away.

1. Fusarium mainly with some anthracnose.

HEADS

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2. Have you noticed any changes in the type of diseases which has affected you in the recent past?

2. Less of a problem over the years. Snow and the fact that we have a lot of trees result in problems, but through good cultural practices we have fewer problems than before.

2. Not really. It's been Fusarium most of the time with the odd Take-All Patch affecting us.

2. I haven't noticed any changes in the time I have been here. Fusarium is the major problem and remains so.

2. No, I can't say I have. Fusarium is the common factor.

2. No. It's been Fusarium in the three years I have been here. I use one spray per season and that does the trick. We are very exposed with a North East wind in winter which cuts you in half, so that helps!

2. Diseases are more frequent although there are more fungicides available than there have ever been. Climatic changes with warmer weather and moist humid conditions are probably the reasons.

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3. What has been the most surprising disease to hit your course in the recent past?

3. We call it St Mark's Fly, but maybe there is another name for it. The grub eats the roots of the grass and makes greens patchy.

3. Take-All Patch, which we have only experienced in the last three or four years.

3. Leaf blight, aschochyta but these are not on-going problems.

3. A few instances of Take-All Patch on newly constructed greens and anthracnose on the older established greens but these have never been real problems.

3. Not really. There's been the odd patch of disease but we have been largely disease free.

3. Anthracnose which is caused by compaction and more golf. We treat this with more aeration.

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4. What policies do you carry out to alleviate or reduce disease?

4. Over the last five years we have adopted a very heavy vertidrainage programme of three times a year. Minimum fertiliser, minimum water, greens are treated separately as certain greens have different conditions. I don't top dress at the end of the year because it encourages disease. We put on potash at the back end.

4. Good regular top dressing, keep moisture away from the surface and in winter keep away from fungicides. I rely on sulphate of iron.

4. Good cultural practice, aeration, removal of thatch, minimum water, preventative spray in September or early October, spray through the winter period. I am reluctant to spray in spring or summer.

4. Summer solid tining and winter slit tining. Aeration. Cultural mechanical practices before applying fungicides. Switch daily if not cutting greens. Raise height of cut from five to seven mil in autumn. Sulphate of iron and liquid potassium helps to minimise problems.

4. Aeration, hollow tining, vertidrainage and iron application. I also use Vitax turf tonic, Rimidin and Rovril and I rotate the remedies all the time.

4. A lot of aeration and I also believe strongly in the quality of cut. We have our machines set up every day and check the height of cut. I use a preventative fungicide before top dressing.

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5. If you had the ability to wipe out a single disease from existence which would it be and why?

5. Fusarium. It hits you quickly overnight and you go from being perfect to having problems. It's always a worry. We now clear greens of snow. We used 200 litres of chemicals every month when I was first here but not it's only 70 litres and we hollow core to get rid of thatch.

5. Take-All Patch because we are defenceless against it. We have cures for the other diseases. I believe some research is being carried out in America, but I haven't heard of any progress over here.

5. Fusarium is the one disease which affects all our courses and gives the most problems so I would gladly see the back of that forever.

5. Fusarium, which is the most common disease. It spoils fine turf and is difficult to treat.

5. Fusarium which seems to affect most courses all over the country.

5. Fusarium, which is so unsightly. If you get it late in the season it is often difficult to get a good covering of grass in the scarred areas.