

MARCH 2011

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## A for anthracnose

Dr Terry Mabbett continues his examination of the country's most common turf diseases by looking at anthracnose.

**A** is for anthracnose in its distinctive dark-coloured basal (lower) part of Poa annua (annual meadow grass) as long shadows and leaves begin fall across the greens.

The first (and most common) anthracnose fungus to be identified by rain and drought with an average summer returned growth in autumn.

During October that we did the anthracnose fungus having been dormant in the beds during the dry summer months.

Anthracnose was a collection of disease of different though to report with one mostly identified from plants in dry and compacted summer months but has more become a real concern. A form of anthracnose distinguished by different symptoms, and called blue light, now previously appears to be more of a much wider range of turf grass species.

The fungus responsible (*Colletotrichum graminicola*) has suffered a recent diploid genetic cross change. More than two dozen different species occur with one more like coal) on everything from emergence to biomass but half are not associated with anthracnose in the North American species and cereals.

The last species are distinguished by small but distinct in several different and different physiological differences which determine how they emerge.

*C. graminicola* was associated with anthracnose in a broad range of grasses and cereals but more recent findings indicate *C. graminicola* exclusively attacks cereals and mycelium now say the species affecting turf grass is *Colletotrichum cereale*. It is known to be more and understanding *C. graminicola* and

*C. cereale* are for all intents and purposes more temperate. Anthracnose is no longer common to other temperate cool nights and morning mists of late autumn but already up and running as blue light during the warm and The Day of August and often October. Based on cover not removal closely associated with late autumn and is still extremely confined to the annual meadow grass but has been seen on Agrostis. The blue light form of anthracnose is much less damaging and does not root season turf grass species.

Anthracnose disease first established as the second most important disease of UK turf after Fusarium patch (*Fusarium patch*), mainly. Contemporary anthracnose infection is a hazard and active over a larger part of the season on a much wider range of turf grasses. Its recent rise up UK







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