



HOLMES CORNER

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I thought the conference and show in San Francisco was simply great—in the hotel and on the streets. Shades of topless and bottomless.

I learned while attending the Iowa Turf Conference, March 4, 5 and 6, that desiccation has developed into a serious problem throughout Iowa and the Dakotas this past winter. At the present time, most golf course superintendents are applying up to 500 gallons of water per green by tanking it onto the golf course. A few superintendents have actually gambled to the extent of irrigating greens with the watering systems, then draining them back immediately. Without question, many watering systems in this area are going to be placed in operation much sooner than normal. If desiccation continues to be a problem, the practice of placing brush and surrounding greens with snow fence may gradually extend further south than Minnesota where such practices are common.

I have repeatedly observed throughout the Midwest, that a disease condition caused by various species of **Fusarium** can be and usually is excessively damaging in late winter and early spring. I have come to the conclusion that **Fusarium** is the most damaging fungus with which we deal and perhaps kills more grass throughout the Midwest than all other disease-causing fungi put together. It is of extreme importance that a suitable **Fusarium** control fungicide be applied at this time of year. Perhaps, this is one of the key fungicidal applications which can be made. If anyone in the Chicago area or throughout the Midwest omits this treatment, it is probable that turf will be slower to "come in" and form suitable putting conditions. Microscopic examinations repeatedly show the presence of various types of **Fusarium**.

I have received numerous letters regarding play of the golf course in late winter and spring; most such letters from private country club members. Considerable has been written and talked about regarding damage which can result from late winter or early spring play, most of which can be summarized as follows:

1) Do not play when the soil is saturated with water or over-wet. This means that shoes actually sink through the soil or carts leave ruts. Not too often does this condition prevail.

2) Do not, and this is of paramount importance, walk on grass when a "white frost" is visibly present. When this is done, ice crystals in the cell vacuole will cause cell wall rupturing and death to the plant.

3) Never allow traffic on soil, especially putting greens, when the soil is frozen but the upper 1 to 2 inches have thawed. This can cause permanent damage to turf, as well as develop rough, bumpy putting conditions.

During the past week I have observed serious damage to greens on two golf courses where play was allowed and the phenomenon discussed in 3 above was in effect. It seems to me, that "thaw-frost" damage can be as serious as damage resulting from traffic allowed on greens when white frost is visible. One thing that we must remember is that the golf course belongs to the membership and if they insist on playing, I suppose they must be allowed to do so. However, every effort must be made to inform the membership of the damage which will result if greens are allowed to be played when, indeed, they should not be.

I see absolutely no evidence of winterkill or serious damage throughout the greater Chicago area this spring and let's hope we have another good turf spring and summer this season.

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