



HOLMES' CORNER

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While visiting in Iowa last week, a number of superintendents informed me that the grass which "desiccated out" last fall was not what they refer to as the Washington strain, but, rather the Metropolitan strain. Regardless of the name of the stuff, I am sure we are all aware of what it looks like. Sure enough, this is the same type of bentgrass which tended to fluff this summer and result in scalping damage, in the few instances where scalping was a problem. Even though soils were opened and overseeded in desiccated locations, the old, established (Metropolitan?) bentgrass gradually recovered.

I heard many people say, in late August and early September, that *Poa annua* simply must go. In fact, in most cases it had already gone. The big point is how do you keep it from coming back? Overseeding with bentgrass and using recognized pre-emergent *Poa annua* chemicals such as arsenicals and bensulfide are the only "chemical" approaches we have to this problem at the present time. It is always interesting to note that most severe damage, or the greatest encroachment of *Poa annua*, results where fairway watering systems have been used for a number of years. It is apparent that most golf course superintendents are watering for *Poa annua*, rather than other types of grass. Even though this may be so, I have yet to hear anyone come up with a solution as to just exactly what we can do about it or how we are going to change our watering programs. Calcium arsenate is being used and being considered by more superintendents all the time. Of extreme importance, if you plan to use this material, it must be an absolute cinch that rapid surface drainage is assured. Further, when a calcium arsenate program is initiated, the chairman of greens committee and the rest of the membership should be made fully aware that turf fade-out and sparsely or thinly-turfed fairways are to be expected for from two to four seasons. Whenever bentgrass is overseeded, open soils as much as possible. There is equipment suitable for this purpose on the market at the present time. As previously stated, the membership had better be aware of what's going on and plan to "stay with the entire program" for as long as necessary. On newly established golf courses which have solid bentgrass on fairways, you might well consider a *Poa annua* control program before this weed becomes a discernable factor.

Circular yellow to deadened spots appeared in bluegrass, both common and the Merion type, practically everywhere where large areas of these grasses were cultured. This disease was more noticeable on Kentucky bluegrass during July, August and early September than I have ever seen it before. With repeated microscopic examinations, the only fungus I could find which appeared to be damaging is known as *Stemphylium* sp. Where diseased samples were submitted to plant pathologists, they invariably reported this disease as being caused by *Fusarium* spp. On diseased leaf blades, the *Stemphylium* fungus could be observed in the yellow to yellowish-green zone immediately adjacent to live tissue or just barely into the yellowish or dead-appearing tissue. It would seem to me, if this fungus were active in this area, it must be doing some damage to growing and healthy tissue. Certainly, as it is always the case, some *Fusarium* spores could be found on the slide, but, as previously stated, if the *Stemphylium* fungi could repeatedly be found in the area adjacent to green tissue and *Fusarium* was not immediately detected in this area, it would appear that *Stemphylium* must be involved in this disease pattern so evident this past season on bluegrasses. Fungicides tried as controls were of limited value.

Most newly introduced fungicides will control brown patch if "brown patch weather" is not severe. If brown patch weather is severe or successive days of high heat and humidity are experienced, these products will give enough check of this disease to keep a smoke ring from forming. But, they **do not** stop the incipient activity of *Rhizoctonia* sp. and it continues to work in the crown area of bentgrass, gradually thinning putting turf. Fungicides used, except those containing mercury, worked in this fashion in July and August. Much putting turf was lost to incipient brown patch without the condition ever being recognized as brown patch as a smoke ring did not form. When brown patch weather is severe, mercury simply must be used. The combination of mercurous and mercuric chloride continues to give the most effective control for brown patch and when brown patch weather continues, by all means use same.

Traffic on most golf courses has reached absolutely unbelievable proportions. Golf cart use is accelerating in leaps and bounds. Even though much has been said in the past and much is being done at present to control, greater controls must be effected. As commented in a past Holmes' Corner, South Bend Country Club is the first private club with which I am familiar in the Midwest, with plans to place cart paths throughout, and insists that carts stay on them. It is my guess that many more private country clubs as well as semi-private daily fee courses will be forced into this arrangement. That is, if they expect to culture suitable playing turf on many areas of their golf courses.

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