

THE POA SNYDROME

A short while ago I was reading article No. 2001 on Poa annua and whether to fight it or feed it. Somehow, I had the feeling I had read the same articles 1000 times before and 1000 other articles expressing the exact opposite opinion. It was at that time I decided I must have ingested enough expert theories by now, and that I should climb down off the fence and firmly put forth my own side to the story. So what follows is a summary of 12 years hard work, diligent observation, and 2001 "Poa" articles. However, these ideas are subject to change without notice, if I have a bad spring.

Firstly, I would like to say to those who are, as we are, with well established Poa on their greens and tees, live with it. It can be a fine putting surface if treated properly. If your major objections to Poa has been losing it is due to cool temperature diseases, there are new chemicals and some old ones which have proven to be very successful in solving this problem. Of course one major plus in Poa's favor is that in the event you do lose some of it, there is always a nice supply of preplanted seeds waiting below to fill the gap. Also, if your Poa is well established in these areas, to try to eradicate it and replace it with a more desirable turf would probably be extremely difficult, costly, inconvenient and have dubious results. As long as we pamper and intensively maintain these areas as is required for the game, I cannot envision much success in fighting the reality of Poa annua.

However, I do believe that it is possible to be victorious over Poa invading our fairways. What we have to do is deny it what it thrives on i.e. high fertility, close cutting and water. It is not totally unlike winning a football game. If you don't give the other team the ball, they can't score. So don't give Poa the ball.

At my club we have drastically improved our Poa situation on the fairways since installing a few strategic drainage lines and we are installing more. Proper water management would seem to be the most important key to Poa control. That is why I view automatic irrigation as an important asset and not just a labor saving device. Controlling soil moisture levels through drainage and irrigation is the major link in the chain. Without it, we lose.

Poa, of course, prefers high N levels and seeds more prolifically at high phosphorus levels. So frugal and judicious fertilizing will help stem the tide.

What for some of us, has become a serious problem recently, is the increased demands by members for more closely cut fairways. This is a result of more awareness by the general public of golf course conditions worldwide, due to television exposure, increased travel and more outspoken touring pros. I totally agree that a closely cut fairway is more desirable for the game. However, it is unwise to just begin cutting lower to abate golfer pressure without being sure your predominant grasses will tolerate this new condition. A few of the better local clubs with older varieties of bluegrass and fescues have done this in the past few years and have paid dearly with increased Poa invasion. As desirable as short fairways might be, it does not warrant that kind of result. If the club insists, be sure that your views are recorded, those who insisted could either have short memories or have left the Board. Protect your flanks!

Credit - The Greenmaster

EVENT: ILCA's Annual Summer Field Day
PLACE: Kankakee Nursery, Aroma Park, IL
DATE: August 8, 1979

The day will consist of demonstrations by the exhibitors, steak luncheon, sixth annual horseshoe tournament and an auction at the end of the day. Please list our event in your calendar of events or, if you have space, run a small editorial. For further information, call or contact Carole Rache-sky, 665 Forest, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137; phone 312-858-8574.

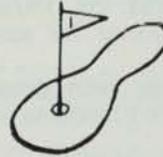
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