

Sulfur Reduces Fusarium Patch in Practice

by Roy L. Goss

A number of golf course superintendents have reported a significant reduction in the use of fungicides after 2 to 3 years or more on slightly accelerated sulfur programs. The superintendents reporting success have applied 3-6 lb. of elemental sulfur per 1000 ft² per year in addition to some other sources of sulfate sulfur.

Your major sulfur applications should be made between April and October when soil temperatures can be expected to be high enough for bacterial activity. It is not advisable to apply significant amounts of sulfur when soil temperatures are below 45 °F, and especially if soils are poorly drained. It is possible that phytotoxic by-products can be formed due to incomplete conversion of elemental sulfur to the sulfate ion form.

Sulfur is an extremely useful tool in our turf management programs, but like any other nutrient, we need to use good judgment in its application.

Credit: Northwest Turfgrass Topics

Gypsy Moth Damage Unlikely This Year

By James A. Fizzell

In spite of all the publicity about Gypsy moth in Chicagoland you won't need to spray your trees this spring. Entomologists have found too few caterpillars to cause much damage, so homeowner control measures are not needed.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has located a few scattered Gypsy moth infestations in northeastern Illinois. Efforts to eradicate the small infestations last year alerted the public to the damaging potential of these insects. Area wide control efforts last year resulted in only a few adult male moths being caught from those infestations. They represent a relatively small number of insects compared to outbreaks in other parts of the U.S. In the northeastern U.S., Gypsy moths are present in high enough numbers to quickly eat all of the leaves off of the trees. Evergreens are killed by a single defoliation. Deciduous trees will usually put out new leaves, but several years of damage weaken the trees so that they are killed by borers or diseases.

There are two other kinds of caterpillars feeding in trees right now. They are the inchworm (cankerworms) and the Eastern tent caterpillars which makes the triangular webs in trees.

Gypsy moths feed in large groups but do not live in the silk tents. The caterpillars are hairy and have two rows of conspicuous red and blue dots on their backs. They eat the leaves of most trees, particularly oaks.

Homeowners in infested areas here are concerned that their trees will become harmed by these insects. Although the Gypsy moth may be present, its numbers are not large enough to cause severe feeding damage. So you will not need to use insecticide sprays or other control measures to protect your trees this summer.

New infestations of Gypsy moth are usually carried into Illinois from infested areas in the northeastern U.S. by way of household moves. If new residents in your area are from New England or other infested parts of the Northeast, notify the Illinois Department of Agriculture at Oak Brook. Their inspections of outdoor furniture, firewood, and vehicles are likely to find and eliminate new infestations before they get established.

Leaf Scorch on Trees and Shrubs

James A. Fizzell, Sr. Extension Adviser

Horticulture

According to Lori Wesley, Summer Assistant in Horticulture with the University of Illinois in Cook County, leaf scorch is a problem which frequently develops on trees and shrubs in July and August. Leaves dry and turn brown at the margins, progressing inward toward the midvein. Leaf scorch is commonly seen on sugar and Norway maples, ash, elm and oak.

Scorch occurs in hot, dry weather particularly if it is windy. Under these conditions, large amounts of water evaporate from the leaf surface and the roots are unable to supply enough water to compensate for this loss. As a result, some leaf tissue dies to protect the plant from excess water loss.

Trees under stress or trees that have been newly transplanted are more likely to be affected by scorch than vigorously growing trees.

Adverse environmental conditions such as a dry, windy exposure, previous disease or insect damage, excessive fill over the roots and injury due to construction, predispose the trees to leaf scorch. Often scorch only occurs on the south or west side of the tree where wind and light intensity are the greatest.

In abnormally wet springs, trees produce an unusually large number of leaves. Leaf scorch is most severe during those summers following wet springs.

Trees affected by scorch may drop leaves in late summer or early fall, but they rarely die.

During dry periods, trees should be watered every 4 - 6 weeks. Let the hose trickle at the base of the tree until the soil is well soaked. This is particularly important for newly planted trees. It may be helpful to prune weak branches to obtain a better balance between top and root growth.

Guidelines Available for Selecting Grasses for Golf Course Use

Dr. Richard Hurley, Director of Research for Lofts Inc., Bound Brook, New Jersey has compiled an informative paper entitled "Selecting Grasses for Golf Course Use in Cool Season Climates." Included are guidelines for the selection of turf grasses for putting greens, roughs, fairways, tees, etc. on municipal or resort courses. A section on the use of ornamental grasses is also included. Please contact Karen Ciosek for free copies: Lofts Inc., P. O. Box 146, Bound Brook, NJ 08805 (201) 560-1590.

"Fire Cracker Time"

Kenneth R. Zanzig

The Fourth of July and Fire Cracker Time,
Are always synonymous.

Summer conditions, Heat, Humidity, Insects, and Fungi,
Sometimes set Fire Cracker Greens, in spite of Us.

While We enjoy Summer's charade, with vigor,

We hope Our expertise, prevents setting off,
Nature's hair trigger.