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Spring and Early Summer Problems — A Review of '89 to Date

by Randy Kane, Turfgrass Advisor
Univ. of Illinois and CDGA

July 7, 1989. Guess what?? Another late, cool spring rolled in for 1989, which meant slow green-up and growth of bentgrass and *Poa annua* turf. Especially hard hit were putting greens with older bentgrass varieties such as Washington or South German derivatives. Some regions green-up fairly well early, but were set back by the late, hard frosts in May (remember the snow May 6th?). In some cases, cool soil temperatures slowed the availability of P and K, causing problems with growth and color (purple to orange) well into mid-May.

There were several interesting diseases working in early June, during a wet period with very cool nights. *Fusarium* patch, or pink snow mold was prevalent on greens and tees of several area courses. The causal agent is *Fusarium nivale*, which is favored by cold, wet conditions. The disease appeared as small circular patches or rings — usually appearing in shades of red or orange.

Also in early June, "Helminthosporium" leaf spots and blights, as well as cool temperature *Rhizoctonia* were observed. In one interesting case, a *Dreschlera* fungus was selectively attacking a clone of bentgrass in an old, mixed bent/*Poa* fairway. No disease was observed on other types of bent or on the *Poa annua*, which is disconcerting if you are trying to reduce the population of *Poa* and increase the bentgrass.

Now that it's getting warmer and more humid, are your new bent fairways getting puffy?? If so, slight scalping can occur and cause circular to oval brown or grayish colored patches. Localized dry spots are also quite common on newer bent fairways, probably for several reasons; thatch builds up quickly from fertilization during grow-in; fungi that decay the old mat from renovation causes hydrophobic areas; or, irrigation water is utilized less (underutilized?) in an attempt to reduce the competitive ability of *Poa annua* — the "keep 'em dry" syndrome. One does need to water one's bentgrass, especially when it turns blue ...

Be on the lookout for another patch disease, this one on relatively new stands of Penneagle and Penncross bentgrass. I have found several instances of take-all patch, caused by the fungus *Gaeumannomyces graminis*, on one to three year old bent fairways. The disease was formerly called *Ophiobolus* patch, as the pathogen was named *Ophiobolus graminis* at one time.

(cont'd. next page)

Gaeumannomyces graminis is an ectotrophic root parasite which is very closely related to *Magnaporthe poae* and other fungi with *Phialophora* conidial stages that cause summer patch of bluegrasses. Take-all patch first appears as 4-8 inch or larger circles of turf which wilt under heat stress. Plants in affected patches are stunted and leaves turn grey to yellow to brown, which gives the patch a grayish-brown color not unlike the scalping injury previously discussed. Plant roots are sometimes visibly rotted, especially at later stages of disease development.

Take-all patch is fairly new to Illinois, but is frequently found in New England and the Pacific Northwest. So far, this disease has proved very difficult to control (as with summer patch), probably because the fungi inhabit the soil and plant roots in or below the thatch layer. Even the best fungicides are not very effective when drenched into the rootzone on a curative basis. Future research will center on methods to control this disease, including timing of preventative fungicide treatments, use of acidifying fertilizers, and addition of antagonistic bacteria to soil.

Western Open Pictures

by Tim Kelly



Day 1 — Oscar Miles, Rich Davis, Bob Padula, & Tim Kelly



Day 2 — Tim Kelly, Penny Meyer, Dave Meyer, Dave Blomquist, John Gurke, Tony Meyer



Day 2 — Tony Meyer, Oscar Miles, Sam DiGiovanni (President WGA), Dave Meyer, (President MAGCS), Don Johnson (Ex-Director WGA), Jack Shea, Green Chairman of Butler National. Dave Meyer is presenting a check to Mr. DiGiovanni.



Day 2 — Larry Castle presents a \$1,000.00 check to MAGCS President, Dave Meyer, with Oscar Miles, looking on.



Day 3 — Tim Kelly, Jim Foster, Harry Laovero, Keith Johnson



Day 4 — Jim & Lois Latham, Al Fierst, John Turner, Dan Hill, Dave Schlagetter, Bob Patterson, & Pam Turner

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1989 UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS TURFGRASS, NURSERY,
LANDSCAPE, AND TRIAL GARDEN FIELD DAY!

August 16, 1989

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