

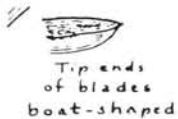
Looking for Poa Annua This Summer

by Howard E. Kaerwer & Donald B. White

Because of close mowing, individual plants on greens may be a bit difficult to recognize. Often we do so based on the belief that Poa annua plants are of a lighter green color than are bentgrass plants. This is not always true. Through closer observation you may find Poa annua plants which are at least as dark as bentgrass. While the miscellaneous Poa annua population tends to bloom over an extended time period, some plants may bloom once or not at all. Many plants are not distinguishable from their neighbors and look similar. Some plants may be identifiable for only a few days or weeks. Others may be recognizable throughout the season.

A short description of those characteristics which will help you distinguish Poa annua from bentgrass growing on greens is covered below:

1) **LEAF TIP.** POA ANNUA leaves have blunt (boat shaped) tips. BENTGRASS leaf tips are tapered and sharply pointed.

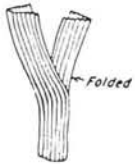


Poa annua

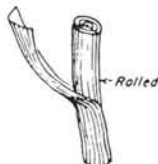


Bentgrass

2) **TOP SIDE OF BLADE AND LEAF SHEATH.** Young POA ANNUA leaves will be folded and V-shaped. The upper leaf sheaths will also be folded and flattish in appearance and feel. BENTGRASS leaves are not folded. The emerging young leaves and the upper sheath will be rolled and round. After emergence from the sheath, the blades are flat.



Poa annua



Bentgrass

3) **VEINATION-TOP OF LEAVES.** POA ANNUA has one prominent midrib running up the center of the leaves. Side veins are not easily distinguished. When held to light you may be able to see a translucent light-line running either side of the midrib. BENTGRASS leaves do not have a noticeable central midrib. Instead you should be able to spot multiple ridges (veins) running lengthwise uniformly across the width of the leaves.



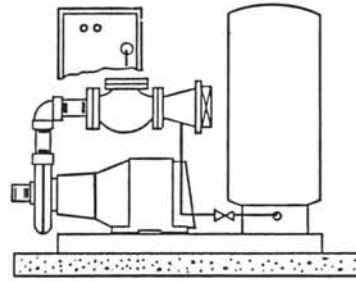
Poa annua



Bentgrass

4) **LEAF COLOR.** POA ANNUA leaves range from light green to dark green. BENTGRASS leaves generally are rather dark green. (cont'd. page 19)

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(Pregermination cont'd.)

the grooves but was broadcast over the area later with a Vicon Spreader. This was done to ensure a more accurate calibration and to more evenly distribute the seed between the grooves and the aerifier holes.

The wet seed, ready for planting, was dumped on a cement floor for drainage and mixed with Milorganite for further drying. The Milorganite also acted as a seed carrier further aiding in the broadcasting of the correct seeding rate. Milorganite was added on a 4-to-1 basis, four pounds of Milorganite to one pound of seed, with the use of an electric cement mixer to ensure a homogeneous mix.

The broadcast seed mixture was dragged with a harrow mat and rolled to enhance seed to soil contact. A high quality starter fertilizer was then applied and the all important irrigation water was started. As with any seeding, the seedbed must be kept moist and watering schedules adjusted accordingly.

Our results were outstanding. Bentgrass plants were identified in a two leaf stage 10 days after seeding, even with soil temperatures of much less than 60°F. Fairways which had been seeded on April 26th healed quickly and were opened for regular membership play one month later. A reasonably mature stand of turf allowed not only good playing conditions but unrestricted golf car movement on Memorial Day weekend.

The efforts of pregerminating on a large scale were well worth the results and would be worthy of your consideration should you be forced with recovering from water damage.

Credit: "The Grass Roots", Vol. XVI, No. 3

(Looking for Poa cont'd.)

5) LEAF SHININESS. POA ANNUA leaves are somewhat shiny. BENTGRASS leaves tend to be somewhat duller in appearance and you may notice a "dusty" look to the top side of the leaf.

6) STOLENS. Stolens are unlikely on POA ANNUA plants growing at greens mowing heights. Spreading occurs through short, near the surface connections which soon rot off leaving each crown as a separate plant throughout most of the year. BENTGRASS plants will usually sprout stolens and spread by this means across the surface of a green.

7) TILLERS PER CROWN. From late spring throughout summer, POA ANNUA plants appear as groups of similar independent tillers growing together in a relatively roundish configuration. During early spring and fall you may find two or more crowns still connected together. However, the connections soon rot off leaving each crowns and tiller independent of the others. Some plants spread more rapidly than do others but not as rapidly as do bent plants. BENTGRASS plants usually will have several tillers growing from a single crown throughout the year.

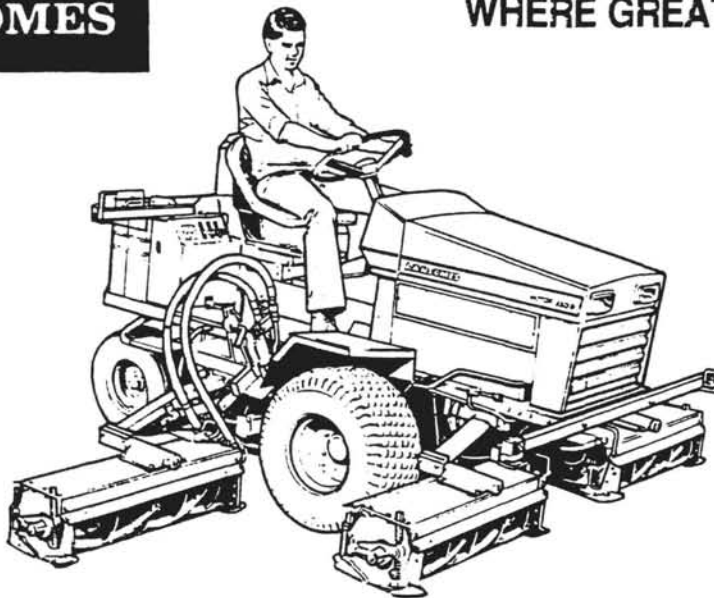
8) SEED HEADS. POA ANNUA plants may or may not have seed heads showing. Many plants bloom most of the spring and into the summer. Others produce seed heads for a short time and may bloom only once during the season. A few will not send up seed heads when mowed at greens height. BENTGRASS does not produce seed heads on greens.

Credit: Northern Michigan Turf Times, Vol. 18, #5

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