

# Disease Update — June 1993

by **Randall Kane**

My, what lovely weather we are having!?!? Cool weather diseases are still the main concern, though by now we should be thinking of dollar spot and other warm, humid pathogens/diseases. I just realized that I have seen active Pythium as early as May 26 (1991) and pink snow mold/Fusarium patch as late as July (1992). This year is shaping up much more like '92 than '91 — weatherwise anyway. Blame it on MOUNT PINATUBO.

The prolonged cool, wet weather of '93 may set us up for outbreaks of take-all patch (*Ophiobolus* patch) of bentgrass caused by the fungus *Gaeumannomyces graminis*. Gg attacks bent roots when soils are moist and temps are cool (bent is growing slowly and may be more susceptible). Symptoms usually appear in early June of a normal year, when the first heat of the season sets in. However, this year I have already seen some serious symptoms (and heard of others) even though no heat or moisture stress have been put on the plants. Infected plants that I have observed had extensive rotting of roots with vascular systems totally plugged. Control of take-all patch is very difficult, but several steps can be taken to lessen the symptoms (fertility, aerification, hand watering, overseeding). Also, take-all patch usually becomes less severe on a particular site after a few years of infection. This is usually referred to as take-all decline.

I have also seen some cool temp Pythium activity (root pythium) on some *Poa annua*, some leaf spots of bent and *Poa*, and some obvious injury from cold night temps and frosts. In the latter case, usually it is the bents that are affected (purple to brown leaf discoloration), but I have also seen several times where a type of *Poa* (*annua*?) has turned a deep red to purple color. You can tell this is not a disease because usually it is only the side of the leaf/sheath that is facing the sky that turns red. If you pick up the plant and look at the underside of a leaf, it will still be bright green. Keep an eye out for this.

I was outside today and the wind chill had to be in the forties. It looks like snow ...

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**Editor's comment:** This article was taken from "TURF-TALK", the Computer Bulletin Board service that is now on line and anyone can join. This is the type of material one can pick up if you join. See Roger Stewart's article in the May issue of **The Bull Sheet** to get more information.

## Turf Tip

Just because your flag waves in the breeze doesn't mean your green is getting proper air circulation, possibly due to tree or underbrushing nearby.

If in doubt, try the "ribbon test" to monitor air flow on the green. Simply place five or six small pieces of ribbon on a wire stand approximately 2 or 3 inches off the ground and check the air movement on the putting surface in relation to the green's flag. This can often indicate a problem with air movement on the surface, creating increased humidity and disease.

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