



Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*

## Another Poa Cure?



Edgewood Valley Country Club and Superintendent Ron McCarthy hosted the July Meeting in LaGrange, Illinois. Of course it was sunny, humid, and hot. A typical July day. The education for the day featured Dr. Bruce Branham from the University of Illinois.

He revealed some incredible breakthrough technology on the horizon for the elimination of *Poa annua* on greens. Really?? Research and technology has finally found an herbicide that can kill the “uber grass?” This is BIG NEWS. Grass growers and scientists have been searching for the “magic bullet” that will kill the *Poa* without hurting the bentgrass since the dawn of greenkeeping. Please tell us more.

The product is called Poa Cure. The active ingredient is methiozolin. The product was “discovered” in Korea by a scientist who was looking at herbicides for control of weeds in rice patties. The research using Poa Cure for *Poa annua* control has been conducted for the last three years. The product works. Dr. Branham believes it to have “a very good margin of safety” on cool season turf varieties. His trials began in 2011 and on course testing began in 2012 at North Shore Country Club.

Dr. Branham has tested the product on USGA and push up greens. He still has questions regarding different effectiveness on different soil types and if frost conditions have an impact.

The product works by inhibiting *Poa annua*'s root growth. Applications are made in the spring and fall. It will be marketed and sold as a two year program to minimize voids by slowly removing the unwanted *Poa* and allow the existing bentgrass to slowly fill in. “It just melts away.” Hmmm.

Dr. Branham has not seen any injuries on the 21 different bentgrass cultivars at the University of Illinois field turf plots. Dr. Branham's commented further:

- Control is gradual but very evident.
- Certain *Poa* biotypes appear to be more injured than others.

- Spring applications have shown to be “safer”, displaying less overall visual injury.

Dr. Branham cautions that resistance may be inevitable for any single use herbicide control product. This product may work well in conjunction with other *Poa* control products already on the market. Despite any potential injury this product is a “game changer.”

The program as you can guess will not be cheap. The projected cost for applications to cover 3 acres of putting green turf over the two year period is expected to around \$7,500.

Currently the product is only labeled in Korea. It is owned by a private owner and is labeled specifically for putting greens. At this time, this is the only intention for the product usage. As you know most of the previous *Poa* control products were never labeled for putting greens. The liability is too high. Expect to see the product released in the United States in 2015.

Dr. Branham concluded his day with a discussion on climate change. He cautioned for the skeptics that the data is proving the warming trend to be REAL. The planet is getting warmer. The ice in Antarctica and the Arctic is melting, just ask the Polar bears.

He recommends that all golf courses have a “plan.” We can become leaders in the environmental movement educating on the benefits of green grass and golf courses as beneficial assets. He recommends you think longer term. Think about how we can become more efficient as energy and water will become expensive in the future. Increase solar energy use, use recycled products, decrease our carbon foot print and decrease overall water usage. Thanks Dr. Branham for the update, always good stuff. ☺