



Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*

Turf Clinic - Wrap Up

(Part 2) - Turf Topics



Dr. Nangle started the turf discussion highlighting the growing conditions of the 2013 season.

The MAGCS Members met at the venerated Medinah Country Club for the 61st Midwest Turf Clinic and Annual Meeting. Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS MG and Staff were the hosts for the day. Turf topics ruled the day.

Dr. Ed Nangle, Director of Turfgrass Programs for the CDGA made his presentation, "2013 A Year in Review." His mission is threefold: to help the CDGA golf course superintendents through diagnostics, research and education. Diagnostic visits to member clubs are helpful to help golf course superintendents identify and control turfgrass disease issues. He conducts field research and product tests with help of the turfgrass program staff to determine current best practices for healthy turf management. Reaching out and helping turf professionals has been a focus of Dr. Nangle since he started this spring with the CDGA. He publishes and distributes approximately 40 weekly scouting reports to more than 400 superintendents, university colleagues and turf industry professionals within the region. His education includes: Post Doctorate Plant Physiology, University of Florida, 2012-2103, Ph.D. Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University 2012, M.S. Horticulture and Crop Science, The Ohio State University, 2008, B.S. Turfgrass Science and Golf Course Management, Myerscough College, Preston, United Kingdom.

Nangle didn't spend too much time jumping into the year, or spending too much time on covering the spring: The year started out with a cold and wet spring, which was not good for bentgrass. There were small outbreaks of *Microdochium* and *Waitea* patch.

Summer's number one challenge was the management of dollar spot and Nangle chalked up this summer as being the worst in the last 15 years as far as this malady. Rust also became an issue once it warmed and the turf dried out. Rust is not a typical disease that we treat but it did become problematic on newly seeded areas, something the sod industry fights quite a bit. Because most of the summer was dry and we were able to

control how much water we put down it wasn't a "big year" for *Pythium*, brown or summer patch. Nor was summer statistically hot or humid at the previous two summers.

Nangle explained, "The climate was comfortable and the rainfall was scattered and mostly bookended." He credited the phosphite programs as a deterrent to *Pythium* outbreaks.

Nangle went on to list a few do's and don'ts to turf under stress:

1. Do maintain fertility with nitrogen being the most valuable
2. Do maintain moisture, stressed turf more susceptible to disease and injury
3. Do increase mowing heights when plants are under stress
4. Do poke holes for root growth and air exchange
5. Don't do the opposite of any of the above

Nangle then went through a few other items that he encountered throughout the summer and through interaction with superintendents.

Weeds: Crabgrass became an issue as early season rains held up applications or were washed away. Knotweed is a growing issue in low-cutting height areas and low fertility turf. Fall herbicide control programs are very important for next season weed control strategies.

Insects: Though dry, insects did not seem to migrate into irrigated areas this summer. Cutworms were a minor problem. Cicada killers were somewhat problematic. They tend to be territorial and can do damage. Control methods have been spotty. Nangle reminded everyone to rotate insect control chemistries to prevent resistance.

Abiotic Factors: There was a lack of intense heat this summer, therefore turfgrass stress was not high. Many courses have had good success with the use of moisture meters. Dr. Nangle

reminded everyone to use 1.5" probes for predominantly *Poa annua* turf and 3" probes for bentgrass turf. He feels best practices are an irrigation program that replace 60-80% of ET and use hoses to supplement weak coverage areas. Nangle cautioned the attendees to be wary of heavy irrigation settings on high temperature and high humidity situations.

Shade continues to be a problem on some courses. His recommendations include:

- Decrease nitrogen applications
- Remove dew in the morning
- Use of fans have proven to be very effective
- Growth regulator applications will help with tightening up the canopy.

Nangle briefly covered his plans for the CDGA Turfgrass Program. Plans include:

1. continue with the Scouting Report Newsletter,
2. continue diagnostic visits,
3. collaborate with regional universities and exchange data and information,
4. collaborate with international universities, especially phosphite studies,
5. create a CDGA *Poa*/bent management on-line education program for Hispanic staff and prospective incoming Green committee members,
6. continue to publish in an array of peer review journals,
7. bring back the Turf Field Day at the Sunshine Course.

Nangle has been a great addition to the CDGA Turfgrass Program. He has brought new energy and a new direction to the program. He may be a little hard to understand at times with his native dialect but I think we are in good hands. Give him a call and invite him to lunch. I've heard the best way to a turfgrass pathologist's heart is through his stomach...or something like that.



*Because *Poa* is so adaptable Dr. Zac Reicher believes it will be around for a long time no matter what we throw at it.*

Dr. Zac Reicher, Professor of Turfgrass Science at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln made the next presentation, "Practical *Poa* Management." Dr. Reicher primarily works with professionals in on-going education and troubleshooting. He teaches sophomore and senior level turfgrass classes at the U of N. He conducts research in turfgrass management, establishment and weed control. His education: B.S. from Iowa State University in 1986. M.S. from

Iowa State University in 1988 and a Ph.D. from Purdue University in 1993.

His main theme through his talk is "We can't get rid of *Poa annua* so we just manage it."

Poa has lots of negatives that make it tough to manage and actually the weakest plant we grow.

1. The apple green color is not desirable
2. It is a bunch type grass.
3. It grows very prolific seed heads which can affect ball roll
4. Very susceptible to disease.
5. Has limited environmental tolerances that don't do well in our growing zone

However *Poa* also has some factors that are positive, if you are a plant.

1. Very adaptable plant. It exists from the equator to the Arctic Circle.
2. There are perhaps millions of biotypes.
3. Each location exerts selection pressure to determine current populations
4. Weather extremes are not relative to adapted biotype.
5. Heat, cold, water, TGR's and environment can influence populations of biotypes.

Reicher went on to discuss many of the reasons *Poa annua* controls are effective or don't work at all. Questions he raised include:

- Is it application timing and rates?
- Are the rates high enough?
- Is it the weather?
- Is the plant too stressed to respond to treatments?
- Is the product not effective?
- Are the genetics of the plant not receptive to the product?

Reicher says, "*Poa annua* is a moving target because of its adaptability. There are no silver bullets to treat it." He feels that even with the one new product (*PoaCure*) that shows tremendous promise, this plant will eventually adapt to it and be able to resist its formulation. Reicher shared some tactics you can employ to reduce the *Poa* population:

- Limit phosphorous applications
- Limit nitrogen applications in the fall
- Reduce water use
- Remove clippings
- Avoid fall core aerification when *Poa* is germinating
- Overseed bentgrass in mid to late August

There have been challenges with products applied to control *Poa annua*. Some of the product label rates are too low to be effective. Some of the products might actually damage *Poa* plants and compromise putting green quality. Products can vary in effectiveness from location to location. Reicher went on to describe some of the products that we currently have:

- Velocity has proven to be effective on fairways. He recommends two June applications and two September applications at 4oz/A.
- Prograss is effective for *Poa annua* control in stands of perennial ryegrass.
- Tenacity and Xonerate have been effective in Kentucky Bluegrass turf.

Studies of *Poa annua* control on greens have shown to be inconsistent. Data from these studies vary and results have not been conclusive. The use of multiple approaches and tactics over

many years has been the only formula for success in managing *Poa annua* populations

The final education for the day was a panel discussion on Poa Management, Pigments and Turf Screen, New Technology, Labor Force Finding, Training and Retaining. This panel was moderated by Chuck Barber of St. Charles Country Club. The panel included:

Scott Bordner, Chicago Golf Club
 Dave Radaj, CGCS Green Acres Country Club
 Justin VanLanduit, Briarwood Country Club
 Dr. Zach Reicher, University of Nebraska-Lincoln
 Dr. Ed Nangle, Chicago District Golf Association

These panel discussions are always loaded with “tons” of information. This discussion format has been the foundation of the Chicagoland Golf Course Superintendents. Put two or three or more Superintendents in a room and the topics will “fly”. This is what we do best. The information exchange between the panel and the attendees was free flowing with questions and answers. Any question asked was answered by the panel in a very frank manner. This is no nonsense education that cuts right to the point. Every topic that was brought up was addressed. There is way too much information exchanged in a short amount of time to even try to take accurate notes. This is a format that you really need to be there to get the full effect.

Some of the topics the panel discussed were:

- Pigments and their history, what do they do? effectiveness, turf benefits, rates, frequency of applications
- Re-grassing greens- varieties, timing, process
- *Poa annua* population discussion
- Current Poa Cure programs in the Chicago area
- *Poa annua* management programs at specific clubs and courses
- New technology use- TDR's, smart phone apps, mower technology
- Water reduction techniques using TDR's
- Irrigation techniques- timing, rates, ET use, flushing
- Disease models
- Rolling- timing and techniques
- Sprayer GPS systems- feedback, cost savings, efficiency, reduced product use

This was another great day of education put on the MAGCS Education Committee and is the cornerstone of the Midwest meeting calendar. If you only go to one MAGCS meeting a year, this one should be it. Make a new year's resolution to put it on your calendar for next year. You won't be disappointed. @

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