

Pigments are one of the “hot” new products out there for use on turf. They can be used as a spray indicator, mask *Poa annua* and colorize dormant turf. They function by absorbing, transmitting and reflecting specific light wave lengths. They can be used as an anti-transparent to reduce water use. The darker color of the pigment can also increase the temperature and raise the canopy temperature. Zinc oxide in the pigments can act as a “sunscreen” and protect the plant from excessive ultra violet rays from the sun. Past research has shown benefits from pigments in specific products and current research hopes to explain more of the things we are seeing in practice.

The difference between dyes and pigments is that dyes are water-soluble. An easy way to tell if you are using a pigment is that it must remain agitated to stay in suspension in the spray tank.

Pigments are mostly copper based. Copper does not readily break down in the soil. Does a copper build up in the soil hurt the plants? Does the pigment reduce the active ingredient in the spray formulation? Does it decrease the photosynthetic ability of the plant? We don't know. It is not always clear what pigments are doing to the plant. Dr. Danneberger will be conducting research this summer to further answer some of the pertinent questions regarding pigment use. Stay tuned.

Notes from the Shade Talk

Shade influences the overall look, agronomics and playability of golf course. Shade can potentially create a 90% drop in light quality. Not good for grass. Bentgrass needs at least six hours of sunlight per day to sustain quality. Shade alters light quality which can influence and modify plant growth.

Plants with adequate sunlight = short, prostrate, thick, wide leaves, deep roots. Plants with shade issues = tall, elongated, thin leaves, more succulent, less tillering, fewer roots. This can lead to scalping problems when too much foliage is removed from cutting greens in the shade.

Green management in a shady location requires a different plan than for a green in the sun.


- Walk mow instead of ride
- Roll instead of mow
- Use Signature or like product
- Growth regulators can mitigate Etiolation
- Use .10 lb./N per week during growing season
- Avoid large nitrogen applications
- Increase height of cut. Fractional changes can make a big difference
- 0.141" to .156" creates a 12% increase in photosynthetic potential.
- 0.125" to .156" creates a 25% increase in photosynthetic potential.

Airflow is a very important component of shade sites. With no transpiration, shaded site stays wet because water applied goes nowhere. Low sun exposure + Low air movement = bad ending.

To reduce potential for problems:

- Trim trees and remove underbrush
- Don't over water

- Increase H.O.C.
- Decrease nitrogen applications by 50% versus a sunny site
- Fertilize when trees do not have leaves (early spring or late fall)
- Start early with disease prevention/control.
- Fans can be very helpful to increase transpiration. Install as close to green as possible. Grow lights have a minimal impact

Thanks to the MAGCS Education Committee and our hosts at Royal Melbourne for providing a great day of education. 



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Tweaking the Turf

Winter is a great time to look back and reflect on the previous growing season successes and failures of our turf maintenance practices. We are always trying to figure out how to “tweak” agronomic programs and “dial in” the tactics to try to get a little more high performance out of our golf course turf.

Superintendents like to attend some of the outstanding local and national education offerings for updated research and the introduction of new products that may be presented. We like to reach out into our networks and rub elbows with our peers and share information about what we learned from the previous season.

It's all about “how are we going to get better.”

So I asked some of the superintendents who I bumped into during my winter travels, “What are you going to do different this year to improve the performance of your golf course turf?”

Bob Kohlstedt, Fox Bend Golf Course: “I’m excited. We are purchasing some new mowing equipment. We are getting Toro 3300 Riding Flex Mowers for the greens. 2 new Jacobsen fairway mowers and a Procore 648. We have also removed (20) 40 year-old willow trees from the course.”

Scott Witte CGCS, Cantigny Golf Club: “We had good success with the use of pigments on our greens last year. I plan on expanding the use of the pigments onto our fairways. We will use the moisture sensor more and establish thresholds to tighten up our water use on greens and tees. We will also be looking to get better organic management with the use of sugars on our greens.”

Andy Dauksas, Glen Oak Country Club: “I’m looking at using some of the new product chemistry for use on our greens.”

Justin VanLanduit, Briarwood Country Club: We have new greens so we will eliminate core removal to minimize Poa annua encroachment. I plan on using dry-ject applications as needed.”

John Gurke, CGCS Aurora Country Club: “I will be going to all contact fungicide applications for our fairways, all season long.”

Steve Van Aker, CGCS Crystal Lake Country Club: “We’re going to make an effort to cut back on water use. We are also going to try to reduce the number of plant protectant

applications.”

Brian Bossert, CGCS, Bryn Mawr Country Club: “We are planning to increase the use of Turfscreen for our greens. I liked the results we had in 2012. We will also increase our fertility in the rough.”

Charles Anfield, CGCS, Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club: “We have our biggest problem with thatch on our approaches. I believe this is because we restrict cart traffic there and we are mowing with light weight units. I plan on mowing these areas with fairway units and allowing more cart access. We’re also going back to core aerifying our greens twice a year.”

Tim Scott, Stony Creek Golf Course: “We are going to increase our cultural inputs to our greens. We will increase vertical mowing frequency and incorporate a monthly solid tine venting treatment. We are also drilling a new well to try to reduce our water bill.”

Dan Tully, Kemper Lakes Golf Club: “We are going to monitor our water use more by utilizing soil moisture sensors. We will be switching back to using Embark for seed head suppression. We have seen great success with water infiltration on our greens with our spring core aerification using one inch tines and we will continue with that process.”

Steven Biehl, Naperville Country Club: “We are going to try some different fertilizer products on our greens. We plan on doing more vertical mowing on fairways to manage thatch accumulations and we are adding in a spring core aerification.”

What are you going to do? Have an idea for a Breeze?
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A MELTING ART FORM


As a sales representative you're probably expecting me to tell you about the low river levels and the way the drought is affecting urea prices, and how you should all buy up as much fertilizer as you can to avoid the huge price increases this year!

Well I won't be doom and gloom in this article. I would however like to talk about how the mild winters have had an impact on something I enjoy in the winter months.

Most of us enjoy taking some time in the winter to hit the slopes or jump on a sled to take our minds off the stressful summer we've just gone through. I myself enjoy sculpting snow! Did I just say sculpting snow? Yes, sculpting snow. I'm not talking about building a snow man in my front yard, but something more. For the past 13 years I've sculpted snow professionally in Illinois on both the State and National levels. I've also done a few exhibition pieces along the way. However, the mild winters have hurt the competitions and events that draw tourists from all over the state and bring thousands of dollars to the local businesses. The State of Illinois competition held at Sinnissippi Park in Rockford. It is one of the few events that rely on natural snowfall in order to build these snow blocks that sculptors use for their craft. This event has been cancelled twice and postponed 3 times in the past 10 years!

How Does it Work?

Most competitions start from an 8'x 8' x 10' block that is filled and packed with either manmade or natural snow that is wrapped in a tarp to protect it from the sun. From there our team of three (The Kilted Snow Weasels) have a certain amount of time to sculpt. In a regular competition we will start on a Wednesday morning and sculpt until ten o'clock on Saturday to create our masterpiece. We can only use hand tools; this includes shovels, buck saws, chisels, and many other homemade tools for our craft. The first three days are used to get the block down to the general shape for our predetermined sculpture. On Friday evening we will start really sculpting and work all through the night until judging begins adding detail and finishing touches. A typical sculpture takes around 50 man-hours and many shots of 5 Hour Energy!

If you have not been out to see a snow sculpting competition, I encourage you to do so. It is a great family activity to get out and enjoy the outdoors in winter. So next time your kids think they have the best snowman in town, bring them out and show them a true work of art made of snow! For more information visit: www.ilsnowsculpting.com, www.navypier.com/snowdays, www.usnationals.org, www.kiltedsnowweasels.com 



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