

Palm Beach Pesticide Report

The last issue of this publication had an excellent article by Dr. Roy A. Bair, "Jimmy Blackledge Motivated Turfgrass Research in Florida," a fitting tribute to early pioneers of our industry. Numerous superintendents with courses built in the 1960's were amused by the closing comments "one regret" about Ormond Bermuda — it was released!

The comment referred to the disadvantage of its vitality and invasion from green slopes to putting surface. Many superintendents rate Ormond Bermuda's mite problem as its main drawback. Was this year's mite attack the worst on record? Is this a different mite than in the early 1970's? Is this a mite at all? These questions are asked when several "Ormond" superintendents get together.

Carl McKinney, superintendent of the prestigious JDM Country Club, says, "The mite problem was the worst we have had in the 17 years I have been at this club. We used many different chemicals with little success. We even did one fairway in test plots with different materials, rates, and just topdressing with no true conclusion."

All superintendents with the problem report the mites peaked in late August and early September at a critical time. Herbicide programs with Sencor emphasis were drawing to a successful close at the time of the mite invasion. Thus stressed turf areas were devastated and the final outcome was a larger weed population than before the program started. One fertilizer salesman referred to his September orders as "mite food".

Atlantis Country Club superintendent David Bailey said, "I do not see the same early symptoms of mites as I noticed five or six years ago. The witchbroom effect where the grass curls into a clump was not there this year. I challenge the university for a cure and if the species are the same as before. Now the only early sign is a yellow chloric color and in 24 hours it is past tense. When we saw the old witchbroom effect we had some reaction lead time and a fifty-fifty positive result, but not now. We applied four different products with little positive result. The mites drank the Diazinon Ag 500 and little was achieved with Furadan by FMC. More results were visible with Vydate L a DuPont product and best results were achieved with liquid Nema-cur."

None of the Palm Beach superintendents with the mite problem like to think of it on a dollar basis since inflation already ruined the budgets. But a general answer ranges from \$6,000 to \$9,000 per 18 holes for the chemicals and additional fertilizer. That does not include labor costs. As

one superintendent said, when people pay a quarter million dollars or more for a lot and home overlooking the golf course they want results only. People do not know or care why you do not have Tifway 419, a more mite resistant turf. If you have Ormond count on some hand weeding and spot fertilizing at any cost.

The past herbicide season saw great results with Sencor, a product of Mobay Chemical Company. Weed populations of goosegrass and crowfoot are under control for the first time. One wonders why Dupont Chemical Company which also researched the active ingredient of Sencor does not enter the market. A little "competitive pressure would be welcomed! Sencor will be remembered as "the chemical of the 70's." Used in rates of 1/4 pound per acre with MSMA at 1-2 quarts per acre, it produced excellent results. Several applications are needed at weekly to 10 day intervals. Two and three generations of weeds will appear. Again the Tifway 419 courses have a tremendous advantage because of their growth density. Ormond and Common Bermuda applications must be done with extreme care.

New courses grassed in Tifway 419 were able to open in a clean weedfree condition. Under the heavy fertilizer rates of the growing-in process, control was achieved with nearly no bermuda discoloration. Basagram by BASF has been very popular on sedges. Label rates have been slightly increased with good control at your own risk.

Fungicide programs are at a peak right now. Superintendents with overseeded courses are keeping a watchful eye for pythium. Koban, the most popular treatment, is being joined by other economical controls with Terrazole and Demosan. Most rye overseeded greens have Koban treated seed, a wise investment for the additional nickle per pound seed price. Courses overseeded with Penncross Bent are applying phythium control measures to the soil with Dexon and Lesan and then normal control after germination. The more expensive phythium control of bent grass overseed is the reason many courses do not use this superior putting turfgrass. Said one superintendent, do not plan to overseed with bent in the Palm Beaches and take any weekend trips.

Rumor has reached the Palm Beaches of west coast courses using an unusual economical method for control of black algae. It's good old Clorox at one gallon per acre. Now stop, before you rush to Publix grocery for this 90-cent per acre control. You know what it does to your jeans! What is the long term effect on your soil and root system? Remember the bottom line is not going to be 90-cent per acre control unless you and your club are equal to the control cost.