



# SMUTGRASS

(*Sporobolus indicus* (L.) R. Br.)

By STEVE BATTEN

**Smutgrass is a perennial weed introduced into the United States from Asia. It is commonly found in rough areas on golf courses in the Southern United States from Virginia to Texas. It is also common to South America as far south as Argentina. Smutgrass has even been found on a ship's ballast in Oregon.**

**The black smut on smutgrass is the result of a fungus which is often present on the seed head. If golf players rub their slacks or equipment against the seed head, a black streak will occur which of course makes the weed extremely objectionable. Since it is a bunch type of grass with wiry thin leaves, then it also becomes an unfortunate natural hazard if a golf ball were to come to rest next to it.**

**A vigorous seed producer, Smutgrass can bloom all year in South Florida. If it is allowed to grow without mowing, it is less likely to form a branched growth habit. Close mowing at frequent intervals is one method of control.**

**The most common methods of control in the temperate climatic regions of the United States are fall applied applications of Dowpon or Atrazine over bermudagrass turf at higher mowing heights such as golf course roughs. It has been reported that metribuzin (Sencor) at labeled rates for bermudagrass will provide some control.**

**One of the most effective controls is the application of non selective herbicides such as glyphosate (Roundup) with a sponge or rope wick applicators. Many golf course superintendents have designed their own applicators with wick booms on wheels 3-5 inches above the soil surface. This allows selective placement of the herbicide onto the Smutgrass and off of the surrounding bermudagrass.**