

Watching Your Tees & Q's

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Don't Bury Your Head in the Sand

Excessive rain and above average soil temperatures have caused a loss of overseeded turfgrasses late this fall in South Florida. Many golf course superintendents have been victims of weather conditions that have been more favorable to the optimal growth of the bermudagrass than to the establishment of overseeded turfgrasses. Natural conditions such as these can often make growing turfgrass difficult. A few golf courses were having problems with Pythium on overseeded grasses during the warm weather period in December. Like so many disease and insect problems, the Pythium was observed on different golf courses during the same week when environmental conditions were favorable for its appearance. One golf course superintendent who had a Pythium problem ordered additional seed the last of December and was told by the seed supplier that he was the tenth person to order additional ryegrass seed that particular week.

This means that there were a lot of untold problems with overseeded greens at approximately the same time. The superintendent that is referred to in this story was able to detect the disease problem in time to correct it before all of his overseeded ryegrass was lost to disease. He enlisted the help of two turfgrass consultants, a professional diagnostic laboratory, and a Florida Turfgrass research pathologist. But what about the other untold stories? Did they correct their overseeding loses in time? How many golf course superintendents buried

their heads in the sand?

Growing turfgrass under warm humid conditions can often present more questions than there are answers. In Florida there are over 750 golf courses with many of these concentrated into small areas. There is a wealth of information available about local turfgrass conditions at any one time from neighboring golf course superintendents. Sharing this information over a telephone or a neighborly cup of coffee can put out a large amount of these daily fires.

Anytime a turfgrass pest problem exists, the superintendent should try to enlist the help of an outside professional. Documentation of these problems on paper whether they are nematodes, insects, or disease can help to explain the problems to the owners and or membership of a golf course. The hardest problems for the membership to understand are the unseen turfgrass pests such as nematodes or soil born disease.

There are many sources of help available. One of the best sources is through the County Horticulture Extension Agent. The County Horticulture Extension Agents have access to professional non bias research and extension turfgrass personnel who need to know the scope of any present turfgrass pest problem in existence during any one period of the year. Turfgrass consultants, such as the USGA Green Section can provide a consultation service

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have proper storage requirements and should be read when received. Pesticide poisoning is one of the worst safety hazards that can occur in golf course maintenance. Maintenance facilities should always have on hand current first-aid supplies which are properly stored and approved by a physician. Any pesticide applicator should tell his doctor which chemicals the individual uses; the doctor can study the symptoms, and treatment with antidotes can be readily available.

CHEMICAL AWARENESS AND USE

When a chemical contains ingredients that can cause injury, labels are attached to the container to provide information on toxic levels and designate safety measures to prevent poisoning. Special labels indicate the level of safety to be taken. DANGER and POISON on the label indicate the highest degree of toxic material, WARNING indicates a moderate toxic level, and CAUTION has a slightly toxic level which still should be treated with utmost care.

All accidental pesticide contamination is contracted by consuming the product, inhaling, or poisoning through the skin. There are many state and federal laws regarding restricted pesticide safety and use. That is the reason why golf course applicators have to be certified. Applicators learn safety measures used by the Environmental Protection Agency and to recognize symptoms of chemical poisoning. Preventive safety measures such as checking for the smallest hole in rubber gloves can prevent contamination. The following list of safety equipment should be readily available

for pesticide applicators.

1. Coveralls
2. Hat
3. Rubber Gloves
4. Goggles
5. Respirator
6. Rubber Boots

Caring and safety ride very close together in golf course maintenance and every crew member should take pride in his job performance. ■

Tees & Q's

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that will provide a program to help avoid these problems in the future. Neighboring golf clubs have a local common interest in the sharing of any turfgrass information. The entire turfgrass industry in Florida can use any segment of turfgrass pest management to help assemble much needed information on turfgrass management.

An example of sharing information is the cooperative efforts of the University of Florida Turfgrass Research Personnel, turfgrass consultants, equipment and turfgrass suppliers, the FTGA, the FGCSA, and concerned golf course superintendents to try to assemble more facts about Bermudagrass Decline. This particular disease problem has enlisted more friendship and cooperation among industry leaders than any one turfgrass management item within the last couple of years. So be a leader and don't be afraid to discuss local problems experienced on your golf course. Just remember that we are all in the information sharing business. ■

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