



Purple Nutsedge

(*Cyperus rotundus* L.)
(Coco-Grass)

By STEVE BATTEN

Purple nutsedge is not the most common sedge in golf course course turf in Florida, but it is the most difficult to control. A native of Eurasia, purple nutsedge headed the list of the 10 worst weeds in the world according to Leroy Holm in *Weed Science* in 1969.

The thin 2-6 mm wide flat leaves have a defined rib vein which can be felt by hand on the back of the leaf. Seed stalks are triangular in circumference with seed spiklets varying from 3-9 per plant. The reddish purple to reddish brown seeds give way to the name purple nutsedge.

The nuts or turbers are formed on thin rhizomes. These rhizomes and tubers are the main reason purple nutsedge is difficult to control, but these are also the key to successful control.

Repeated applications of organic arsenical herbicides such as MSMA have been shown to be effective only if continual application is made at bi-weekly intervals. As new shoots reoccur from the tubers, another MSMA application will reduce them. Finally after enough applications are made with MSMA, the total population of purple nutsedge is reduced, but not necessarily killed. Persistence is the answer to control.

Research by southern universities have shown that the early stage of plant development or early in the summer is the best time for successful nutsedge suppression.

Fumigation with methyl bromide is a very effective way to control the tubers of purple nutsedge. This is one more reason why fumigation is important during putting green construction. ■

Illustration by Steve Batten