



Weeds Be Gone!

Weed control is a year-round endeavor for Florida golf course superintendents. The first big push comes in preparing golf courses for control of the overseeding in the fall. The beautiful lush, green ryegrass in the fairways is an unwelcome intruder in the non-overseeded roughs and tee and green slopes for those who don't seed wall-to-wall.

To protect those semi-dormant bermudagrass areas from unsightly patches of ryegrass and the blight of winter annual broadleaf weeds, a wide choice of pre-emergent products can be applied. These application dates are sometimes etched in stone from years of observation or rough estimates that shift with special events. Both scenarios depend on decent weather for success.

After the pre-emergent programs unfold and meet with varying levels of success, superintendents begin search-and-destroy spot-treatment programs to keep the highest-priority areas weed free. The good news is less herbicide is applied in this manner. The bad news is that you can miss some spots sometimes.

There is not a superintendent alive who has not worn out the blade of a pocket knife picking out juvenile goosegrass from his greens as he tours his course. In fact many courses have adopted hand pulling programs to reduce chemical use. It is labor intensive, but it is an environmentally friendly alternative that may become more necessary with time.

Some of the hardes-to-control weed pests we have been dealing with for decades are coming under control with new chemistry in products like Illoxan for goosegrass, Manage for purple nutsedge and Drive for torpedograss. They are more expensive, but the rates are lower per acre.

This is very important because some of the most universal herbicides like MSMA and 2,4,D are under increasing attack — justly or unjustly. Supporting turf research into new controls for weeds is a good investment because slowly but surely, we are losing the products we have been using for so long.

Timing of weed control programs combined with good planning of cultural practices to help maximize turf vigor and recovery is critical for the most efficient use of chemical controls. The following articles will give you some ideas for the timing, products and recommendations for weed control in Y2K.

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Why and How We Apply Pre-emergents to Stay A Step Ahead

Let's face it, this is Florida, greenest place on earth! Just ask the players, particularly our winter visitors, and they'll say, "We're in Florida and by golly we are going to play!" So, overseeding is not an option, it's a must. Here is where a pre-emergent herbicide program becomes important.

Most of us do not have the luxury of closing the golf course for most maintenance procedures. Generally, only hur-

ricanes and monsoons are considered course-closing events. That means that the seed goes down, players play, irrigation runs, and the rye seed is tracked everywhere.

Now you could wait to see where the unwanted seed germinates and treat it with a post-emergent herbicide, such as Kerb or Simazine, but as a wise man once said "Once you've seen the problem, it's too late, because so has everyone else."

With that in mind, let me tell you about our pre-emergent program at the LPGA International Golf Course. Fortunately, pre-emergent chemicals are good for 60-90 days. Depending on the chemi-

cal and the rate we use, we have time to plan, execute, and accomplish this task accordingly. Before we start spraying, there are a few things that must be done.

First, we establish which weeds are the problem and select the appropriate control measure. Then it's time to get the equipment checked out by the mechanic. A weather-worn hose can cause major problems. Once that is done we choose the nozzle best suited for spraying pre-emergent herbicides and calibrate our spray rig.

Because our fairways are contoured and our tee complexes are small we decided to use drop spreaders to make one pass around the fairways and tees and any areas that the spray rig can't spray effectively.

We use two Toro Multi-Pro 150-gallon sprayers with flat fan 8006 nozzles, an SDI 300-gallon sprayer with 8004 nozzles and two 36-inch wide Gandy drop spreaders to apply our pre-emergent products. We began our applications on the Legends during the third week of October and did the Champions course the following week.

This year we drop spread our fairway and tee perimeters with Team 2G at 3½ pounds per acre and sprayed Lesco Pre-M 3.3 EC at the rate of 1¼ gallons per acre on the rest of the non-overseeded areas on both courses. We also have a three-hole practice facility with our driving range. We chose to use Barricade at 1¼ pounds per acre for this area.

It is very important that the irrigation specialist be right behind you watering in the product. This will reduce the risk of golfers tracking product onto the places you want the seed to germinate, and it will wash the chemical down to the soil where it can start creating the pre-emergent barrier.

If you get any lateral movement of product into unwanted areas, a little charcoal and some more seed will take care of it. Unlike Kerb, which can be very mobile, we have experienced very little movement with the Team 2 G or Pre-M 3.3 EC.

Broadleaf weeds, goosegrass, and crabgrass come in 1, 2, 3 in an "ugly" contest in my book. I guess the order