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By REED LeFEBVRE
Pines & Palms Management Corp.

CREW TURNOVER AND PERSONNEL RELATIONS

Crew turnover and personnel relations are synonymous with business. To be successful and to maintain future projected goals your employees have to be content in their jobs. They should be proud of what they accomplish and they should share a vision of the future with their employer.

I have found that the primary pre-requisite is adequate monetary remuneration. No matter how much a person enjoys his or her job, at some point if they are not able to make ends meet, they will be off looking for another job. Adequate pay in our industry varies with the location. A general outside laborer in north Florida for instance may not make as much as someone doing the same job on the east coast. The cost of living does vary in our state. For example the lower paid employee, doing the same work in north Florida will be able to maintain the same standard of living as the worker on the east coast who possibly makes several dollars more an hour. In other words we have no set standard to go by so the available local workforce and the economic conditions of an area determine pay scales.

When you reach the point where your employees feel that they are being adequately paid for the job they perform, then it becomes your duty as a supervisor to have your employees work in harmony, not only with each other, but with you and the supervisory staff, all being funneled toward the goals set by your particular club.

The employee who gets a "job well done" from his boss

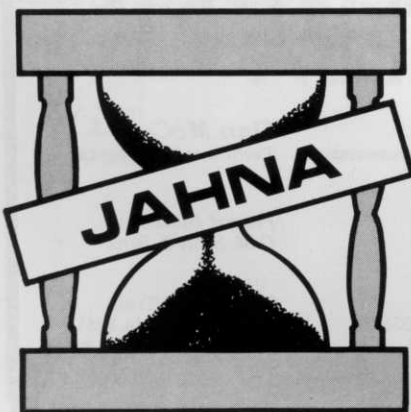
and from the club members, is the employee who will probably be with you a long time.

Ideal working conditions are almost impossible to attain because what one person likes, another dislikes. All we can do as managers is try to meet a happy medium and "go with the flow."

I think we all appreciate the employee who, with a minimum of supervision carries out his or her job to the best of their ability and then comes to you and says, "I'm finished, what else do you have for me to do?"

One thing we must realize is that each individual has different capabilities and we as managers must be able to co-ordinate these abilities in the most efficient manner. The most valuable employee is the one who workd to the best of his/her ability and one who has an ever growing sense of responsibility. The primary responsibility being that they show up for work on time and be ready and willing to go right to work. The second is the efficient use of their time all during the day.

I prefer to have my employees work with me, not for me. I'm fortunate that I do have several employees who fit into this category. On the other hand, there are those who you just have to give a list of things to do, and then you must check on them periodically to be sure that they're doing what they're supposed to be doing. This takes the fun out of life but that's also what we are being paid for. ■



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The Bermudagrass Stunt Mite

By DR. JAMES A REINERT
Professor of Entomology
University of Florida, IFAS
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

Bermudagrass, *Cynodon* spp. is widely used for sport turf throughout the southern half of the United States and much of the tropical and subtropical regions of the world. In Florida alone, the 728 golf courses in 1982 maintained approximately 69,200 acres according to current University of Florida estimates.

The bermudagrass stunt mite, *Aceria cynodeniensis* (Hasan) Kiefer, (Fig. 1) is an important pest of bermudagrass. It is particularly a problem on golf turf in Florida and recreational turf throughout the southern states. This mite is probably native to Australia, where bermudagrass has become a naturalized plant; but now is widespread, occurring in New Zealand, North Africa, and North America (14). The host-specific eriophyrid mite was first found infesting bermudagrass lawns in Phoenix, Arizona in 1959 (22) and soon spread to California, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Georgia, Alabama, and Florida (8). It was first reported in Florida in 1962 at Patrick Air Force Base, Cocoa Beach, and Opa Locka (13). Now the Mite has been found throughout Florida.

DESCRIPTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Bermudagrass stunt mites are whitish-cream in color, wormlike in shape (Fig. 1) and 165-210 μ (about 1/125 inch) in length. A 10-power hand lens is inadequate to see this mite without a vivid imagination. Microscopic examination at 30-50 power is needed.

The eggs are laid under the leaf sheath. After hatching they pass through two larval stages before molting as adults. All life stages are found together under the leaf sheath, and there may be a few to a hundred or more mites with numerous eggs under a single leaf sheath. Butler (8) observed the period required for development from egg hatching to adults to take 5-6 days. The life cycle is probably within the range of 7-10 days, depending upon the temperature.

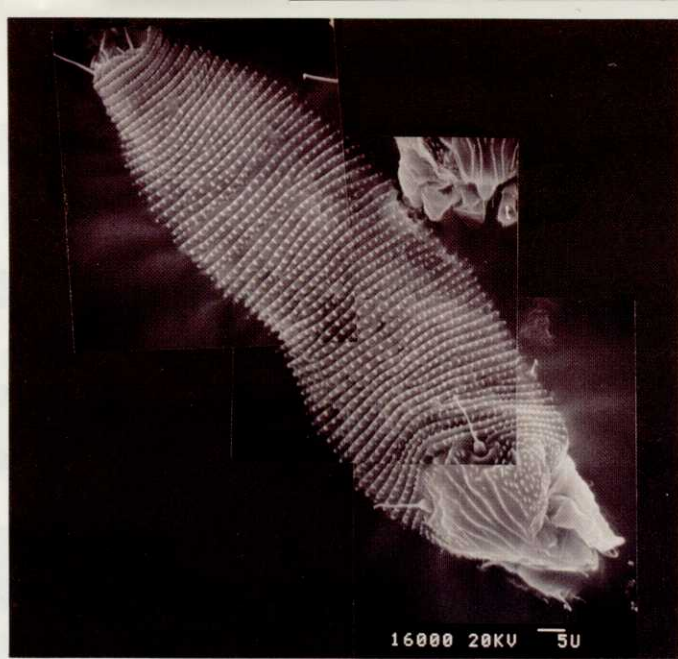


Figure 1. The bermudagrass stunt mite at extremely high magnification with the scanning electron microscope. (Photo courtesy of Dr. H. L. Cromroy, University of Florida, Gainesville.)

DAMAGE

Bermudagrass damaged by this host-specific eriophyrid mite first exhibits a slight yellowing of the tips of the grass blades followed by a shortening of the internodes producing a rosetted and tufted growth or witch's-broom effect (Fig. 2) When an infestation is severe, there is almost no green growth from the grass and the tufts become a mass of large knots which die causing brown, thin areas in the turf (Fig. 3). These dead or heavily damaged areas often become infested with weeds, thus creating other management problems.

CHEMICAL CONTROL

Over 49 intoxicants (insecticides and miticides) have been evaluated in field experiments for control of the bermudagrass stunt mite. Experiments were conducted in Arizona by Dr. George Butler and associates (3, 5, 7, 9, 11,) from 1961 through 1965 and more recently in Florida from 1971 to the present by Dr. James Reinert and Dr. Harvey Cromroy (17, 18, 19). The chemicals evaluated and their level of effectiveness are given in Table 1. Only nine intoxicants have provided any control in these tests. In recent field experiments (1981-1982) UC-55248 and Vydate[®] have provided excellent results in Florida (Fig. 4). Vydate may be the only new candidate for EPA labeling, however, since development of UC-55248 has been terminated by the manufacturer. The addition of a wetting agent to the spray tank mix has improved the level of control produced in these field experiments.

Diazinon is the standard recommended treatment for this eriophyid mite (21). A treatment rate of 4 lb. active ingredient per acre (4.8g/ha) with a second application at the same rate applied 7-10 days later is required for control. One golf course in Miami, Florida spent \$25,000 for bermudagrass stunt mite control in 1974 and an additional \$17,000 the following year. Several golf course superin-

(continued on page 36)



Figure 2. Bermudagrass injured by bermudagrass stunt mite. A. (above) Early infestation. B. (below) Early damage showing shortened leaves and reduced internode length. C. (bottom) Late stage damage.



The Florida Green



Figure 4. Test plots on an "Ormond" bermudagrass tee severely infested with bermudagrass stunt mites.

Figure 3. Apron and slopes of a green showing bermudagrass stunt mite injury.





Figure 5. (Left) Greenhouse experiment to evaluate several bermudagrass genotypes for resistance to the bermudagrass stunt mite.

Figure 6. (Below) Bermudagrass stunt mite damage around base of tree. Areas around trees, shrubs and other obstacles on the golf course are often missed when pesticides are used.



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tendents in south Florida estimated a cost of \$6,000 to \$9,000 per 18-hole golf course for chemicals and additional fertilizer (no labor or equipment costs included) to control bermudagrass stunt mite damage in 1981 (1).

Diazinon cannot be depended upon solely, since repeat applications are required, yearly treatment costs are high, pesticide resistant mite populations may develop, and poor control with diazinon is often reported. Alternate means of control must be considered including the use of host resistant cultivars and proper selection of cultural practices.

HOST RESISTANT CULTIVARS

A good alternative to chemical control is to develop varieties of bermudagrass that are resistant to the bermudagrass stunt mite. Cultivars have been evaluated for mite susceptibility under field conditions by Baltensperger (2) and Butler (4, 6, 9) in Arizona, and in the greenhouse by Johnson (15) and Reinert et al. (20) in Florida. Of the 108 genotypes evaluated most were severely damaged, but several appeared to be resistant while others showed some damage. Cultivars and their response to this mite are presented in Table 2. Most of the commonly grown cultivars are susceptible to damage; 'Tifdwarf' and 'Midiron' are the only two cultivars which did not show mite damage in lab and field experiments. FB-119, a mite resistant "common" type bermudagrass selection is being developed for release by the Florida Agriculture Experiment Station. In laboratory and field tests, FB-119 was completely resistant to the bermudagrass stunt mite (Fig. 5).

HOST-RESISTANT cultivars should be used whenever possible and practical, not only for this pest, but for other insects, mites, plant pathogens, and nematodes. All major turfgrasses lack certain desirable characteristics, including pest resistance, and breeding for insect resistance is impeded by the lack of research funds, personnel, and adequate methods of screening germplasm. Entomologists, nematologists, plant pathologists, and turfgrass breeders need to join forces in developing new varieties of turfgrass resistant to one or more of the major pest problems.

Damage by the bermudagrass stunt mite can best be prevented by several management practices. First, correct identification of the pest is necessary. Quite often the turf damage is the result of combined infestations of several turf pests. Nematodes and bermudagrass scale are often present in bermudagrass that has been damaged by stunt mites, and they may have contributed significantly to the turf damage. Moreover, when bermudagrass is under stress from either lack of water, nematodes, bermudagrass scale, or other turf pests, it is less able to withstand the mites and, therefore, more vulnerable. Soil with poor water-holding capacity may also be a contributing factor.

When bermudagrass is treated with insecticides to control this mite, the second application 7-10 days later is very important to control the young mites which hatch from eggs present during the first treatment. Thorough treatment of the whole infested area is important. Often turf areas around trees, shrubbery, and other obstructions, around sand traps and bunkers, or along canals and lakes are not treated. These areas that are missed will act as reservoir areas for mites to reinfest the whole golf course. Treatment with hand equipment or a spray hose attachment may be necessary for these areas. Fig. 6 shows an area around the base of a tree on a golf course where the bermudagrass has been severely damaged approximately a year after the 'Ormond' bermudagrass on the course has been treated with diazinon. Damage showed up here first because of the added water stress due to the shallow roots of the tree and the residual population of mites that were left in the untreated oval area around the base of the tree. Canal, stream, and lake banks also harbor residual mite populations but the damage does not show up as well since there is no added water stress in these areas (Fig. 7).

Mites can easily spread from an infested area. Like most eriophyid mites, the bermudagrass stunt mite can be carried by the wind. They are also capable of hitching a ride on other insects present in the bermudagrass. They can probably be moved by armyworms, webworms, and leafhoppers, and have been observed attached to more crickets that have recently flown from an infested area (Reinert, unpublished data). They are also easily

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dispersed in grass clippings. Mowers cut the rosettes and scatter the infested grass over wide areas of healthy turf. The infested grass springs can also be blown by the wind. Tires on equipment, even golf carts and golf shoes, may serve as a vehicle of spread since the infested grass would drop off from time to time.

Proper fertilization and even high rates of fertilizer applied with ample water can allow the bermudagrass to out-grow bermudagrass stunt mites. Rosettes and other symptoms will be present but no loss of stand will occur because the grass apparently is growing faster than the mites can kill it.

Host resistant cultivars should be used whenever possible to eliminate or at least lessen the potential of injury.

In conclusion, the turf manager can, through good management practices and the use of host resistant cultivars, reduce the potential of injury by the bermudagrass stunt mite. When populations reach damaging levels, they can be controlled with chemical treatment.

Toxicants evaluated for bermudagrass stunt mite control and their effectiveness(a).

Toxicant (b)	Response in field test (c).	
	Arizona	Florida
Diazinon	+++	+++
UC-55248d		+++
Vydate® (oxamyl)		+++
Temik® (aldicarb)		+++
Baygon® (propoxur)	++	---
Banol® (carbanolate)	+	
Dursban® (chlorpyrifos)	++	---
Nemacur® (phenamiphos)		+
Trithion®		+
Acaraben®		---
Acarol® (bromopropylate)		---
Akton®		---
Aspon® (propyl thiopyrophate)		---
Azodrin® (monocrotophos)		---
Brofene®		---
Bux® (metalkamate)		---
Captan	---	
Carzol® (formetanate)		---
Cygon® (dimethoate)	---	
Dasanit® (fensulfothion)		---
DDT	---	
Delnav®		---
Dibrome® (naled)	---	
Dimilin® (diflubenzuron)		---
Di-Syston® (disulfoton)	---	---
Dyfonate® (fonofos)		---
Dylox®		---
Ethion	---	
Eradex® (thioquinox)	---	
Folcid® (captafol)	---	

Toxicant (b)	Response in field test (c).	
	Arizona	Florida
GS13005 (methidathion)	---	
Kelthane® (dicofol)	---	---
Korlan®	---	
Lindane	---	
Malathion	---	
Metasystox-R®		
Mocap®		---
Morestan® (quinomethionate)	---	
Omite® (propargite)		---
Orthene® (acephate)		---
Phostex®	---	
Phictran® (cyhexatin)		---
Sulfur	---	
Tedion® (tetradifon)	---	
Thiodan® (endosulfan)	---	
Tirpate®		---
Torak® (dialifor)		---
Vendex® (fenbutatin-oxide)		---
Zectran® (mexacarbate)	---	

a) A summary of published papers by Butler (3, 5, 7, 9); Butler et al. (10, 11, 12); Johnson (15); Reinert (17); and Reinert and Cromroy (18, 19).

b) Trade name (common name).

c) (+++) = good control; (++) = control, but not in all tests; (+) = poor control; (-) = no control.

d) UC-55248, 3-(2-ethylhexanoyloxy) - 5, 5-dimethyl-2 (2-methylthienyl)-2-cyclohexen-1-one.

e) Akton®, 0, 0-diethyl 0-[2-chloro-1-(2, 5-dichlorophenyl) vinyl] phosphorothioate.

f) Phostex®, mixture of bis (dialkylxyphosphinothioyl) disulfides (alkyl ratios 75% ethyl, 25% isopropyl).

g) Tirpate®, 2, 4-dimethyl-1, 3-dithiolane-2-carboxaldehyde 0-(methylcarbamoxy) oxime.

Response of bermudagrass cultivars to bermudagrass stunt mite (a).

Cultivar	Response (b)
'Bayshore' (Gene Tift)	SS
'Everglades No. 1'	SS
FB-119(c) (Franklin)	R
FB 137 (No Mow)	SS
'Midiron' (P16)	R
'Midmo' (S-16)	S
'Midway' (E1)	S
'Oklan'	U
'Ormond'	SS
'Pee Dee'	U
'Royal Cape'	S
'Santa Ana'	U
'St. Lucie'	SS
'Sunturf'	SS
'Texturf 1F'	SS
'Texturf 10'	SS

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Cultivar	Response (b)
'Tifdwarf'	R
'Tiffine'	SS
'Tifgreen'	SS
'Tiflawn'	SS
'Tifway'	S
'Tifway II'	U
'Tufcote'	SS
'U-3'	S
Uganda	S
'Vamont'	U
Common	SS

- a) Summary of published papers by Blatensperger (2), Butler (4, 6, 9), Johnson (15), Juska and Hanson (16), and Reinert et al. (20).
- b) R = resistant, S = susceptible and showing some damage, SS = very susceptible with rosetting and severe damage, U = unevaluated, cultivar has not been tested.
- c) FB-119, a cultivar soon to be released by the Florida Agriculture Experiment Station.

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By JAMES P. CALLAGHAN
Rio Mar Country Club

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS TOP PRIORITY AT RIVERBEND

During the last decade, one of the most frustrating facets of golf course management has been attempting to lure and retain good personnel for the maintenance operations of the golf course. Tremendous competition with the construction trades and clubs' commitment to low wages has made it difficult to attract labor into our field of endeavor. Recently, the situation has eased somewhat due to the high unemployment and more realistic compensation being offered by more golfing facilities.

Joe Snook has experienced periods of high turnover during his eight year tenure at Riverbend Country Club in Tequesta. In addition to maintaining his George Fazio designed executive properties, Joe is also responsible for the maintenance of the condominium properties. Since his labor force contains over 15 individuals, Joe has become very keen on employee relations over the years.

Joe has found that one key factor in hiring a new employee is impressing upon him the importance of punctuality. This point is brought up several times during the interview. If a newly hired employee arrives one minute late at Riverbend on the first day, he is immediately sent down the road. Joe has found that an employee who is not punctual will fail in other aspects of his job and by "nipping it in the bud", future problems will be avoided.

After years of hard work, Joe contends that he has a fairly stable crew. He strives to maintain their interest and desire to stay with the club in many ways. Of course, wages play an important part but can only add resolution to the total picture. Enjoyment of work, understanding of the individual, diversification of jobs and compliments have produced a unique give-take situation that has developed into a happy picture for all.

Snook stated, "I have found that diversification of their routine duties is of great importance to my crew. Regardless of seniority, all must take turns at the unpleasant and menial tasks. Weeding, raking and edging of sand traps are shared by all."

The Greens Chairman at Riverbend has become part of Joe's employee relations program especially when a compliment is in order. When they are touring the golf course together and Joe receives a compliment for a particular job, Joe automatically drives his Greens Chairman to the employee or employees responsible. The Greens Chairman is made aware of the fact that this particular employee was responsible for that particular job. It always ends up with a direct compliment to the crew member and a smile on his face. Joe feels that with many of his employees, that is worth more than money.

Known as "pop" to many, Joe is always there when one of his crew members is having a personal problem. He commented, "Employees are not robots and as all humans, they have personal problems. If an employee should tell me in confidence of a problem, I make a concerted effort to listen and from time to time inquire to how things are going. By showing my genuine interest and concern, I feel that there is a closer relationship and loyalty that would not exist otherwise." Joe continued. "I am not an advocate of loaning money or socializing with the crew, but if a little of my time or encouragement is needed, it pays big dividends. I feel better inside and the employee is more apt than not to have it show in his performance on the job."

As we all know, one of the greatest assets on the golf course is an alert and aware employee. In striving for this, Joe tries to answer any questions of an employee in detail

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regardless of the significance to him at the time. He says that it most always pays off. "If a superintendent fails to notice such problems as webs on a green, a missing trap rake, or a ball washer empty, he is most appreciative when an employee notices and advises him," he stated. Joe added, "When an employee advises me of any problem whether it be of priority or not, I make it a point to jot it down in front of him and to thank him for his expertise. In writing it down, he is sure to know that it was important and will continue to keep me informed. If practical at the time, I may ask him to drop what he is doing and takes care of the problem right away. That shows the person how important it is to bring problems to my attention."

Rescheduling working hours has been another way to make the job attractive at Riverbend. The crew works nine hours a day Monday thru Thursday and only four hours on Friday. They then alternate weekends for the work dictated by our profession. This gives the employee a 2½ day weekend every other week and Joe says that they love it.

In closing our interview, Joe commented, "As all golf course superintendents are aware, our finished product on the course is a reflection on us as an individual. However, the results cannot be attained alone. The golf course crew does it as a team effort. And only through our guidance can we obtain the desired result. If we are going to succeed in this profession, we must master the art of human relations." ■

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