

# Goosegrass woes? Old Waverly's Colloredo balances nature with weed control

By LYNNE VOPAL

WEST POINT, Miss. — It's difficult to control goosegrass outbreaks when some of the primary culprits in the spreading of its seeds — birds and animals — are a vital part of the natural ecosystem.

"In that situation you have to develop a relationship between your weed-control program and

*'We can't discourage the wildlife from the course, because they are one of the reasons visitors come here. The best thing I can do is make smart decisions that are in the best interest of the environment and the players. I don't think it's going to get easier, but it is possible to deliver both.'*

— Bill Colloredo

Lynne Vopal is a writer for Milwaukee-based Nelson & Schmidt, the agency for Sandoz Agro.

nature," explained superintendent Bill Colloredo at Old Waverly Golf Club here, where

the golf course is surrounded by both woods and rural pastures.

"We're in the middle of nowhere," he said, "so, birds, deer, coyotes and foxes are common both on and around the course. Maintaining weed control in this area necessitates a preventive program."

Goosegrass, an annual, bunch-type grass with clumps of course leaves, is noted for seeds which persist for many years once introduced into soil.

To keep the seeds away from desirable turfgrass, Colloredo

worked to eliminate as much goosegrass as possible from neighboring areas during the construction of Old Waverly in 1987.

Colloredo continues those efforts today with stringent cultural practices and a proactive program to achieve the "healthiest and tightest" turf possible.

"It's all about managing what we can for the best health of the turf. Stronger, thicker turf helps prevent germination of goosegrass seeds," he explained.

However, because Colloredo operates under a policy with a minimal tolerance for weeds, healthy turf isn't enough.

"I am very conscious of what pesticides I apply and how they affect the area wildlife," he said. "I use preemergence products with low solubility and a low application rate. But because Old Waverly is located in the southern half of the transition zone, goosegrass seed germination season here lasts longer — creating the need for a longer residual."

To meet those needs, Colloredo uses a preemergence herbicide that provides an effective barrier to emerging goosegrass and annual weeds, without threatening his environmental program.

Its low-water solubility allows it to remain in the upper portion of the soil, where weed seeds, like goosegrass, germinate.

"For three years, we have put Barricade herbicide down in a single application of .75 lbs. of active ingredient per acre by the first of March," said Colloredo. "That rate gives us a full season of control, even in the most difficult conditions."

Colloredo said the applications also work well with his cultural practices.

"We are able to continue vertical mowing and aerification on the course without any effect on the herbicide's performance," Colloredo continued. "We can continue to develop the strength of the turf without interruption."

In addition to the demands of the natural ecosystem, Old Waverly's program and practices have also met the requirements of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. An avid hunter and fisherman, Colloredo sees his efforts as part of the territory.

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