BRIEFS

BRANCH GEORGIA'S SUPER OF YEAR

COLUMBUS, Ga. — Don Branch of Green Island Country Club here has been presented the Georgia Golf Course Superintendents Association's 1998 Superintendent of the Year Award. He received the honor at the annual Georgia Golf Hall of Fame banquet.

MAGCS ELECTS MAIBUSCH

BATAVIA, Ill. — The Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents has elected Robert Maibusch president of the association. Maibusch is the superintendent at Hinsdale Golf Club in Clarendon Hills. Maibusch succeeds outgoing President Kevin Czerkies of Sportsman's Country Club in Northbrook. Vice president for 1999 is Don Ferreri, superintendent at Seven Bridges Golf Club. Brian Bossert of Bryn Mawr Country Club was elected secretary-treasurer. Elected to two-year terms as directors were Kevin DeRoo of Bartlett Hills Golf Club and Greg Thalmann of Fox Run. Dan Anderson of Fox Valley Golf Club was elected to a one-year term. Current directors with one year remaining are Luke Strojny of Poplar Creek Golf Club, James McNair of Orchard Valley Golf Club and Fred Behnke of Mount Prospect Golf Club.

CASINO MAGIC IN SILVER PROGRAM

A caption in the November issue of GCN identified Casino Magic in Bat St. Louis, Miss., as being a Audubon Gold Signature project. It is a Silver Signature project.

NO SOLUTION IN SIGHT

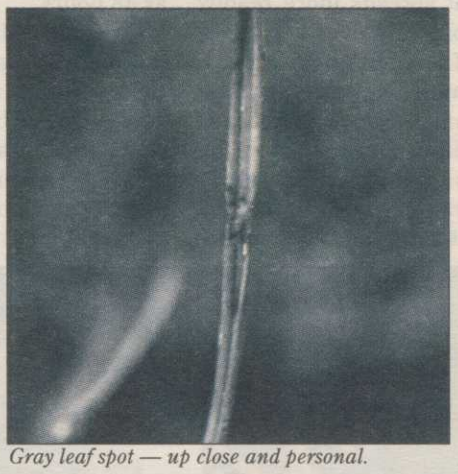
Out of nowhere, gray leaf spot devastates rye, tall fescue

By DR. ERIC K. NELSON

The 1998 gray leaf spot epidemic on perennial ryegrass and tall fescue has raised this previously little-known turf disease to a high level of respect from golf course superintendents and other turfgrass professionals who have witnessed its devastating effects.

Those responsible for developing turfgrass specifications for new golf course construction or renovation projects should be aware of the risk of planting straight perennial ryegrass, or seed mixtures where it predominates, and adjust future recommendations accordingly.

Since "Pennfine" perennial ryegrass was first released under Plant Variety Protection status in the early 1970s and the subsequent proliferation of hundreds of new cultivars, some turf managers have been lulled into believing that perennial ryegrass is easy, inexpensive and invincible as a permanent monostand of turf.



Gray leaf spot — up close and personal.

Bouts with both winter kill and now disease on perennial ryegrass in the 1990s are beginning to change those perceptions.

HISTORY OF PROBLEMS

The fungus responsible for gray leaf spot on perennial ryegrass (*Pyricularia grisea*) also causes blast of annual ryegrass and gray leaf spot on St. Augustine grass. However, since it was first documented on annual ryegrass in Louisiana and Mississippi in the early 1970s, the fungus had been virtually unreported on any ryegrass until Landschoot and Hoyland (1992) of Penn State University first reported it on perennial ryegrass on golf course fairways in Pennsylvania.

Last year, the disease was observed decimating perennial ryegrass and tall

Continued on page 22

A leaf and debris blower can operate for hours with an auxiliary fuel tank. This version is the one put together for Ridgewood Country Club superintendent Todd W. Raisch by equipment manager Ronny Cestaro.

Terry Buchen photo

Leaf blowing all day with auxiliary tank

By TERRY BUCHEN

PARAMUS, N.J. — Faced with the frustration of their leaf blower running out of gas every 1-1/2 hours, superintendent Todd W. Raisch and his crew at The Ridgewood Country Club here found an easy solution.

Equipment manager Ronny Cestaro hooked up a portable six-gallon auxiliary marine fuel tank, similarly used for outboard motors, with a hand-operated bulb-type fuel primer.

The Giant Vac Leaf & Debris Blower, which has its own gasoline-powered engine with an electric start off its own battery, is bolt-mounted to the flatbed attachment on a three-wheel Cushman Turf Truckster.

"We've had great results," said Cestaro.

Continued on page 23

CGCS to honor Gordon Witteveen

MISSISSAUGA, Ontario — The Canadian Golf Superintendents Association (CGSA) has nominated Gord Witteveen for the John B. Steel Distinguished Service Award for 1998. The award is given to those who have made an outstanding contribution to the advancement of the profession of the golf course superintendent.

Gordon Witteveen

Witteveen fits the bill. He was one of the founders of the CGSA and has been active in all facets of the organization for the past 30 years. Witteveen was also one of the first editors of *GreenMaster* magazine and continues to write a column called

Continued on page 23

GOLF AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Traveling the wildlife highways

By RON DODSON

In our daily human lives, we travel to a variety of places for a variety of reasons — to work, the grocery store, meetings and social gatherings, and to and from our homes. Some of us even travel from place to place on a golf course — down the fairways by cart or by foot from tee to green. Depending on the purpose of our travel, we use different modes of transportation and different routes.

Wildlife travels as well. Instead of sidewalks, roads and highways, they use their own network of paths and trails. Like humans, their routes depend on the purpose and destination of their travel. They may travel from a thicket of woods to find a pond or stream for water to drink. They

Continued on page 25

The pond buffer on the 16th hole at River Run Golf Course in Berlin, Md.

N.J. Turf Assn. honors Al's Dodson

SELKIRK, N.Y. — The New Jersey Turfgrass Association's distinguished Environmental Steward Award was presented recently to Ron Dodson, president of Audubon International, in Atlantic City at the Trump Taj Mahal.

This award is presented to people or organizations who have performed distinguished service demonstrating dedication to the protection of the environment and preservation of eco-systems. In addition to the award, Dodson's name will appear on the Master Plaque in the Turf Building at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, among such notable past recipients as Robert Shinn, commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection; Judy Bell, former

Continued on page 25

Gray leaf spot devastates

Continued from page 21

fescue from New York to North Carolina and west through Oklahoma and Nebraska. At the October annual meetings of the American Society of Agronomy and Crop Science Society of America in Baltimore, gray leaf spot was one of the top stories shared by many turfgrass agronomists.

FALLOUT FROM THE EPIDEMIC

The devastation caused by gray leaf spot has now caused many university professors and turfgrass agronomists to avoid recommending straight perennial ryegrass or tall fescue for many turf situations. Unfortunately, the warnings and revelations came too late for several superintendents who reportedly lost their jobs due to extensive damage to their perennial ryegrass fairways.

The crisis will stand as another harsh lesson about long-term reliance on mono-species turf stands. Turfgrass managers should be prepared to rapidly identify gray leaf spot and deal with it appropriately.

SYMPTOMS

The first symptoms of gray leaf spot are small oval leaf lesions that appear "water-soaked" and then turn a grayish tan hue bound by a darker band. Often, the lesions are mistaken for early stages of brown patch or other leaf spot diseases, so microscopic exam or laboratory culture for signs of the fungus may be necessary for confirmation of gray leaf spot.

During humid weather, grayish mycelia and conidia (spores) may be seen on gray leaf spot lesions. Eventually on a larger scale, 2- to 3-inch-diameter patches of chlorotic (light green) and twisted leaves appear in the turf. Whole plants may eventually be killed, leaving dead patches which enlarge and coalesce with additional waves of infection.

DISEASE DEVELOPMENT

Gray leaf spot has the same potential for devastating turf as *Pythium blight*. However, gray leaf spot spreads more readily and apparently over a broader range of conditions. It can strike from May through October. Last year, some courses in Virginia were still seeing secondary infections from gray leaf spot in October. Under the right environmental conditions, including high heat and humidity, this fast-moving disease has been reported to wipe out entire perennial ryegrass fairways in as few as 48 hours.

The gray leaf spot fungus produces microscopic conidia (spores) which are easily spread across the turf by wind currents, water splash, surface drainage patterns, maintenance equipment, or anything else that tracks across the turf. Conidia then germinate where moisture is present on leaves for an extended period. Resulting fungal hyphae then infect the leaves and sheaths of the grass plants. Soon, millions of new conidia may be produced by the fungus and spread further across the golf course or geographic region as they were this year.

TURF SUSCEPTIBILITY & RESISTANCE

Gray leaf spot develops readily on perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), two species which, taxonomically, are closely related. In fact, some of the current turf-type tall fescues had actually been hybridized with perennial ryegrass during their breeding history in efforts to develop their finer leaf texture.

According to University of Maryland ratings of gray leaf spot damage among perennial

Continued on next page

Dr. Eric Nelson is the senior technical agronomist for JacklinGolf. From 1989 to 1996 he was director of turfgrass research for Medalist/Northrup King. A 1981 graduate of the Unviersity of Rhode Island in turfgrass management/plant science, he has taught at Penn State, where he performed his graduate studies, receiving his Ph.D in 1990 in turfgrass breeding, agronomy, and bentgrass tissue culture.

Dr. Eric Nelson

Witteveen honored

Continued from page 21

"Gord Witteveen's Backpage." He has also been involved in promoting the golf superintendent at golfing events and in the media.

Witteveen has served as the superintendent of the Metropolitan Toronto Board of Trade Golf Facility North Toronto for the last 25 years and plans to retire in June of 1999.

Leaf blowing all day

Continued from page 21

"The marine fuel tank is strapped, with a piece of rubber, to the flatbed backrest area, with easy access for fueling at the same time as the Truckster is topped off. But it is easily removed when we remove the blower."

"The gasoline tank is located on the traditional area adjacent to the gasoline engine," Raisch said. "Because of its size and that it is operated at full throttle most of the time, it will only operate for about 1-1/2 hours, tops. To allow for the blower to operate continuously during a morning or after a normal shift, we had two choices: hook up an auxiliary fuel line, fuel filter and fuel pump to the Cushman's fuel tank; or the choice we made."

Cestaro also mounted a yellow-colored flexible rod so the equipment operator knows where the blower shoot is when backing up for safety reasons.

"It provides our employees an easier and more efficient leaf and debris cleanup," said Raisch.

Gray leaf spot

Continued from previous page

ryegrass cultivars, there is a wide range of susceptibility and none were completely resistant.

Rutgers University recently reported that tall fescue cultivars exhibit a range of susceptibility as well. Its researchers also reported that all of the perennial ryegrasses they tested were susceptible (Vaiciunaas and Clarke, 1998).

Jacklin Seed is now screening new germplasm for improved resistance in the hope that we may develop more resistant cultivars. The important message is that all current cultivars of perennial ryegrass appear to be susceptible to one degree or another.

Compounding the gray leaf spot problem, we know that perennial ryegrass and tall fescue recovery from infestation is poor due to the thoroughness of kill and the non-spreading growth habit of both species. Therefore, even with curative fungicide applications, the turf will need to be inter-seeded for rapid recovery, unless there are resistant species such as Kentucky bluegrass or strong creeping red fescue present that can spread and fill the voids.

TURF SOLUTIONS

To our knowledge, there are no field reports of gray leaf spot damage on Kentucky bluegrasses, fine fescues or bentgrasses. Therefore, where they are adapted, these species provide the best recommended alternatives or complements to straight perennial ryegrass or tall fescue. Complete renovation or regular interseeding of existing stands of perennial ryegrass or tall fescue with resistant species are good economic and environmental solutions to the gray leaf spot problem in existing stands.

JacklinGolf has developed protocols to assist in conversion of perennial ryegrass stands to other species. Copies of these recommendations are available on request.

References:

Landschoot, P.J. and F. F. Hoyland, 1992. Gray leaf spot of perennial ryegrass turf in Pennsylvania. *Plant Disease. Vol. 76* (12) p1280-1282.

Vaiciunaas, S. and B. Clarke, 1998. Impact of cultural management practices and genotype on the development of gray leaf spot in cool-season turfgrasses. *Agronomy Abstracts.* 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Agronomy. Baltimore, Md.

1998 Progress Report of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program perennial ryegrass trials. USDA, Beltsville, Md.

Reprinted from JacklinGolf's On the Green, Winter 1998 edition.