

Southern Discomfort

Sustained warmer weather provides some unique challenges for southern turfheads. by Rob Thomas



PHOTO: LESTER E. DICKENS, BUGWOOD.ORG

Much like sweet tea and hospitality, the South has its own brand of disease pressure. While many northern superintendents will be dealing with ice and snow over the coming months, their southern counterparts will be keeping a close eye on their turf.

Mike Stevens, regional director of agronomy in the Southeast and Ohio Valley for Billy Casper Golf, says his company has 20 courses comprising the Southern Regional team, with turf variety consisting of Champion, TifEagle, TifDwarf, 328, paspalum and zoysia.

According to Stevens, the fall has been going smoothly, with one odd standout.

“This fall has been pretty slow with disease pressure with exception of our paspalum, which has seen a variety of known pathogens up to and including pink snow mold, believe it or not,” he says. “Our guys have been extremely proactive with their cultural practices and focused on basic plant health throughout the summer. With record rainfalls over the spring and mid-summer, they’ve worked hard to keep the canopy open to encourage the necessary gas exchange needed to survive such saturated conditions.

“Consequently, more aerifications and similar cultural practices have been taking place than in normal summers, leading to healthier stands of turf heading into fall, and less need to rely on

chemical means of control,” Stevens adds. “There have been the routine cases of dollar spot and brown patch that you’d expect to see during such expansive times of rain, but overall, it’s been a relatively quiet season.”

In the case of the paspalum greens, the BCG team has been on an extensive recovery grow-in plan on a new property that brought the company on board.

“The plant, being so succulent from the increased levels of fertility, has been more susceptible to diseases during extended periods of rain,” Stevens says. “We’ve monitored conditions to look for times conducive to disease activity and treat preventively according to forecasts, which, unfortunately in Florida and the Southeast, can change at a moment’s notice. In those cases, when disease does break through, tissue samples are sent for testing to verify what we’re seeing and treatment is made accordingly.

“Staying in line with Florida’s BMPs [Best Management Practices] and proper turf management, fungicide class and mode of action are kept in mind and included into a rotation to help avoid potential resistance buildup,” he added. “Systemic strobilurin-based fungicide made up a good base of many of our applications this summer and fall, in combination with a good contact chlorothalonil or mancozeb base.”

The BCG superintendents have seen good control during

“We have been seeing our normal disease pressure increased this fall, thanks to the tropical weather we have experienced thus far, from the usual suspects: Curvularia, leaf spot, fairy ring, algae and dollar spot.”

– Jay Abbott, ClubCorp



There have been the routine cases of dollar spot and brown patch that you’d expect to see as a result of such expansive times of rain.

times of application this fall, Stevens says, speculating the quality of products in the market today played a large part, as well as the company’s continuous effort to improve and reduce its overall environmental footprint across the board.

“We’ve become less chemical dependent through our operations, so when applications are made, the response is greater due to the lesser amounts of resistance existing in the field,” he says.

Jay Abbott, ClubCorp’s regional director of agronomy for Southeast Texas, credits Mother Nature for upping the workload for his superintendents.

“We have been seeing our normal disease pressure increased this fall, thanks to the tropical weather we have experienced thus far, from the usual suspects: Curvularia, leaf spot, fairy ring, algae and dollar spot,” Abbott says.

ClubCorp’s southern superintendents, spread out among 47 clubs between Georgia, Florida, South Carolina and Texas, have used chemical applications where needed and cultural practices on others.

“We have some very strong,

experienced and knowledgeable superintendents who do a great job,” Abbott says of the group’s success in battling turf disease pressure.

Brent McBrayer, CGCS, director of grounds maintenance at Pearl River Resort’s Dancing Rabbit Golf Club in Choctaw, Miss., has been seeing fairy ring and zoysia patch in the fairways as a result of wet conditions over the summer. They’ve also seen some brown patch in the Bermudagrass.

“Pro Star has been applied to some of the worst areas, but costs prohibit our ability to treat all affected areas with this product,” McBrayer says. “We are beginning to utilize Torque and Affirm to treat the rest of the affected areas.

“We have seen some success with all of the products, but the weather has continued to be conducive to the development of disease,” he adds.

Over the coming winter months, McBrayer and his team will keep an eye out for dollar spot on the bent greens and hope that spring dead spot is kept in check in the Bermudagrass.

“We will continue preventive applications with various con-

BUG ALERT

Unfortunately, turf diseases aren't the only challenges facing southern superintendents. Bugs – large and small, seen and unseen – can cause potentially damaging affects to golf courses.

Brent McBrayer, CGCS, director of grounds maintenance at Dancing Rabbit Golf Club in Choctaw, Miss., offered a list of the top five offenders his colleagues should prep for in 2014, based upon what he's seeing at Pearl River Resort:

- Grubs
- Cutworms
- Fire ants
- Mole crickets
- Army worms

Jay Abbott, ClubCorp's Regional Director of Agronomy for Southeast Texas, agrees with mole crickets, grubs, army worms and cutworms, but also adds earwigs and pine bark beetles to the list of possible bug offenders in 2014.

Mike Stevens, Regional Director of Agronomy in the Southeast and Ohio Valley for Billy Casper Golf, narrowed it down to the top three ... if you include the nematode as a bug:

- Nematodes
- Mole crickets
- Army worms

"You could include web worms and fire ants in there to round out the top five, but with the increases in control measures out there for those two, there really isn't the concern in the field that there was, even five years ago," he says. "There are discussions about new nematode suppression coming into the market in 2014, but until that happens, there really isn't an inexpensive option to deal with them."



Two top turf pests – mole crickets and army cutworms.

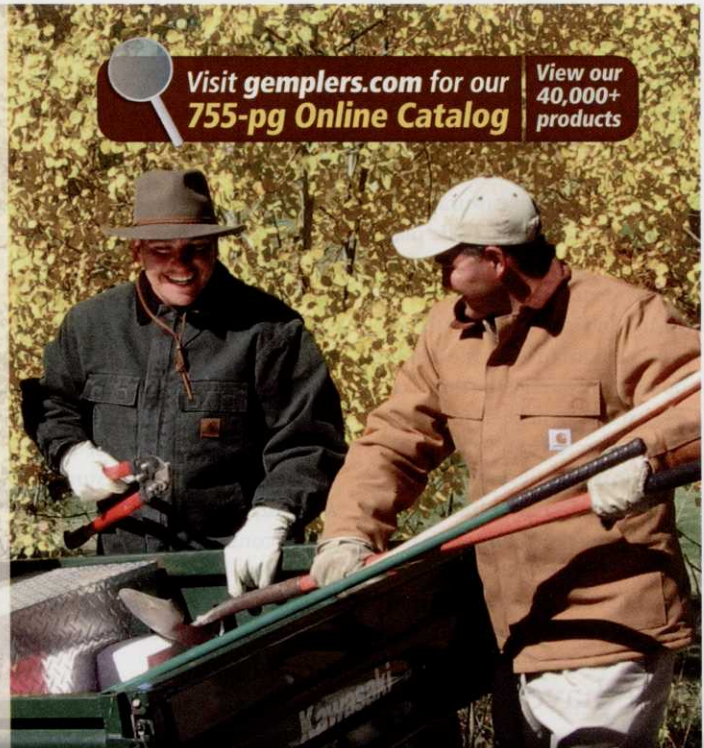
PHOTOS (TOP & BOTTOM): FRANK PEAIRS, COLO. COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY, BUGWOOD.ORG
PHOTO (MIDDLE): CLEMSON UNIVERSITY - USDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SLIDE SERIES, BUGWOOD.ORG

GEMPLER'S®

gemplers.com 1-800-382-8473

**WORKING OUTDOORS
IS HARD –
FINDING WHAT
YOU NEED HERE
IS EASY!**

Visit gemplers.com for our 755-pg Online Catalog View our 40,000+ products



We supply commercial-grade products from brands you trust

tact and systemic fungicides as long as conditions are favorable, and monitor fertilizer applications on the bentgrass," he says. "We are applying Rubigan to the Bermudagrass greens and select areas in the Bermudagrass fairways and roughs at the moment to lessen the impact of spring dead spot. I'm really going to miss being able to use Rubigan."

Abbott's team will keep their eyes on leaf spot, fusarium and spring dead spot throughout the winter. At clubs where they've historically had issues, superintendents will spray a preventative fungicide program, while clubs without a history of issues will treat curatively.

If another "extremely mild" winter unfolds, as it has the last two years, Stevens' superintendents will know what's ahead

of them.

"A stronger strain of leaf spot has been the most widespread disease across the board over the past two seasons, causing the most damage, so we'll look to stay ahead of the curve this year, monitoring weather trends and watching for key indicators, especially as we approach mid to late December," Stevens says.

He stresses that the best treatment is, and always will be, a healthy and strong turfgrass plant.

"Focus will be to establish the strongest coverage of turf as we head into our winter season, ensuring our soil and tissue tests are producing results necessary to fend off the ever-present pathogens that exist in the field, waiting to attack when conditions are conducive," Stevens



Disease pressure hasn't been an issue this fall with the exception of paspalum, which has seen pathogens, including pink snow mold.

says. "If breakthrough does occur, our treatment will be based on proper disease identification, both by our agronomic team and our national lab partners. There are many lines of products to choose from in the market today, but in a case of basic leaf spot,

we'd likely move toward an application of Chlorothalonil to control any activity."

It's impossible to say if spring 2014 will look anything like spring 2013, but it can't hurt

(DISEASE continues on page 52)


United States Postal Service		(Requester Publications Only)	
1. Publication Title: Golf Course Industry			
2. Publication Number: 5836			
3. Filing Date: 10/01/2013			
4. Issue of Frequency: Monthly			
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12			
6. Annual Subscription Price: Free to Qualified			
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not Printer): GIE Media, Inc. 4020 Kinross Lakes Parkway #201 Richfield, OH 44286		Contact Person: Lindsay Betzhold Telephone: 216-236-5679	
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publication (Not Printer): GIE Media, Inc. 4020 Kinross Lakes Parkway #201 Richfield, OH 44286			
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor - Publisher: Pat Jones, 4020 Kinross Lakes Parkway #201 Richfield, OH 44286; Editor: Mike Zawacki, 4020 Kinross Lakes Parkway #201 Richfield, OH 44286; Managing Editor:			
10. Owner - Full name and complete mailing address: Christopher Foster & Richard J.W. Foster, Owner, 4020 Kinross Lakes Parkway #201, Richfield, OH 44286;			
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None			
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: N/A			
13. Publication Title: Golf Course Industry			
14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: Sept 2013		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation		No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date	
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		22,868 21,794	
b. Legitimate Paid and/or Requested Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)			
(1) Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)		16,786 17,967	
(2) In-County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)		0 0	
(3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid or Requested Distribution Outside USPS®		78 75	
(4) Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®)		0 0	
c. Total Paid and/or Requested Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		16,864 18,042	
d. Nonrequested Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)			
(1) Outside County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 (include Sample copies, Requests Over 3 years old, Requests induced by a Premium, Bulk Sales and Requests including Association Requests, Names obtained from Business Directories, Lists, and other sources)		3,723 3,340	
(2) In-County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 (include Sample copies, Requests Over 3 years old, Requests induced by a Premium, Bulk Sales and Requests including Association Requests, Names obtained from Business Directories, Lists, and other sources)		0 0	
(3) Nonrequested Copies Distributed Through the USPS by Other Classes of Mail (e.g. First-Class Mail, Nonrequestor Copies mailed in excess of 10% Limit mailed at Standard Mail® or Package Services Rates)		0 0	
(4) Nonrequested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail (Include Pickup Stands, Trade Shows, Showrooms and Other Sources)		110 0	
e. Total Nonrequested Distribution (sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))		3,833 3,340	
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)		22,697 21,382	
g. Copies not Distributed		171 412	
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)		22,868 21,794	
i. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15f times 100)		83.11% 84.38%	
16. Total circulation includes electronic copies. Report circulation on PS Form 3526-x worksheet			
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership for a Requester Publication is required and will be printed in the issue of this publication.		November 2013	
18. Lindsay Betzhold, Audience Development Director		Date 10/01/2013	

PS Form 3526-R, August 2012

weedalert.com

The Source Professionals Trust for Expert Weed Identification and Control!

- Enhanced Weed ID Search Options
- Weed ID Photos
- Ask the Tech Advisor
- Weed Control Options



Correctly identify the weekly weed for a chance to win this LED flashlight

An industry service brought to you by: **pbi/gordon CORPORATION**
An Employee-Owned Company

weedalert.com is a service mark of PBI-Gordon Corp. 1/13 01250

(DISEASE continued from page 33)

knowing what the past has held when looking to the future.

“It’s hard to predict what activity is coming our way, even with the advances we’ve made as an industry and the technology we have to help predict weather patterns based off of past trends,” Stevens says. “The best we can do is to continue to educate and coach our teams to become the best at monitoring conditions and producing the best products they can in preparation for what nature brings.

“With the changing weather patterns we’ve seen in the Southeast over the past 10 years, there is no ‘normal’ anymore,” he adds. “I think we’ve seen that with the introduction of pink

snow mold in Florida.”

Considering the rate of success experienced this year, Abbott’s team isn’t likely to change its strategy heading into the 2014 season.

“Leaf spot and dollar spot were very active in the spring of 2013, so most of the superintendents will be looking and spraying preventatively for them as we warm up in the spring of 2014,” he says.

McBrayer, who has been at Pearl River Resort for 15 years, is doing his due diligence as he looks to the past to predict the future.

“We experienced a fair amount of dollar spot in the Bermudagrass roughs last spring,

so I would anticipate having to fertilize roughs and fairways a little earlier in the season,” he says. “I also anticipate treating for zoysia patch in the spring again, especially if it is going to be wet.

“I’m talking to other superintendents and studying up on new products before I pull the trigger on new treatments,” McBrayer adds.

As for depending on the accuracy of long-range forecasts for the upcoming winter ... Abbott isn’t convinced.

“I read the Farmers’ Almanac every fall and am an avid follower of the Weather Channel,” he says. “I don’t really rely on the long-range forecast, but am

always paying attention to see what the meteorologists think it might be like.”

The volatility and unpredictability of the weather has Stevens paying attention to the overview provided by local TV weathermen, but seeking greater detailed information.

“We lean heavily on weather forecasts to help us plan our operations,” he says. “Unfortunately, it’s not an exact science, but it’s a crucial part of our operations. We base much of our applications around humidity/moisture levels, soil temps, ambient air temps and extreme weather swings, so even though it’s a moving target, it’s the best we have, so we rely on it and stay abreast of any last-minute changes to adjust accordingly.”

Likewise for McBrayer. “I’m not sure that anyone can put much stock in long-range forecasts,” he says. “I will hope for the best and prepare for the worst.” GCI

Rob Thomas is a Cleveland-based writer and frequent GCI contributor.

“Our guys have been extremely proactive with their cultural practices and **focused on basic plant health** throughout the summer. With record rainfalls over the spring and mid-summer, they’ve worked hard to keep the canopy open to encourage the necessary gas exchange needed to survive such saturated conditions.”

– Mike Stevens, Billy Casper Golf



Many supers will be on the lookout for outbreaks of leaf spot, fusarium and spring dead spot (pictured) this winter.

PHOTO (LEFT): KEVIN MATHIAS, BUGWOOD.ORG
PHOTO (RIGHT): MARY ANN HANSEN, VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY, BUGWOOD.ORG