

Observation on *Poa annua* Trouble in Fairways

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DURING years of observation I have noted that *poa annua* usually starts to recede and go out in three areas of the fairway; the approach, the tee end and the area where the mowers pull on the fairway. (This may be only two areas if the mowers enter onto a fairway from the tee or tee path.) In bad weather season you might lose *poa* all over the place but these are the key places year in and year out.

Loss of *poa* on the approaches at our club has been reduced considerably by watering the approaches with two settings of a hose and sprinkler to supplement the once-over treatment of the fairway centerline system on the end of the line. All areas of the fairway receive a double application by overlap except the two ends where only single applications are given.

With the hoseless system and the center valve and sod cup in the center of the green only a small amount of the approach gets its water supply from the green.

When *poa* goes out on the approaches it is usually in an area about 15 to 20 ft. out from the green. When *poa* goes out in other areas of the fairway it is generally from too much or too little water along with high temperature and humidity.

What happens in these three areas of most frequent *poa annua* trouble that is different from the rest of the treatment of the whole fairway?

1. Mechanical traffic; resultant compaction increased.
2. Increased foot traffic by players on both ends of fairway, adding to compaction.
3. Weakness in centerline water systems allows only $\frac{1}{2}$ the application on the two ends, which requires additional hose sprinkling if these areas are to get an equal share of water. Here is the place we could use large part-circle sprinklers if they were available.
4. Friction from the turning of the mowers and tractor.

We therefore can state as a fact that these areas receive more traffic and compaction and less water than the rest of the fairway.

With increased control of the water by using supplemental hose sprinklers we can greatly reduce the injury in these areas and we can reduce the compaction by aeration; but water is of the greatest importance.

I have also noted that unless the first (or outside) tracks a tractor makes in mowing a fairway are straddled from time to time the bent will thin out and *poa* will take over completely. Then in the hot weather the *poa* will thin out in these areas.

A great deal of *poa* is lost on fairways by bruising from the fairway mowers if the mowing is done during the heat of the day.

This is caused primarily by the fact that we are short of moisture near the surface where *poa* roots thrive and the grass is near the wilting stage and cannot resist the bruising of the heavy mowers.

Also one of the biggest features causing *poa* to go out on the fairways is that we have limited control of the feeding of the fairways during the summer months. However, this gets into another big subject and one that I hope to do some work on. We are sorely in need of a fertilizer that we can use as a liquid spray on the fairways without washing it in immediately. We can spray our 40 acres of fairways in from 4 to 6 hours but at present have no material that can be used at high concentrations without burning. The material would have to be one that would give about $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of nitrogen to the 1,000 sq. ft. when mixed in about 2 gals. of water, or about 20 lbs. of nitrogen when mixed in 75 to 100 gals. of water. Even $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of nitrogen would do a lot if we could apply it this easy.

Perhaps we are getting too involved for the present but I think this is the path we will eventually wind up on.