

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Florida GCSA helps broker deal for Nematicur

The Florida GCSA helped broker a deal between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Bayer Environmental Science that will allow for a five-year phase-out period for Nematicur nematicide, which Florida superintendents have relied on to control nematodes.

In March, Bayer requested that EPA cancel all uses of fenamiphos, the active ingredient in its nematicide Nematicur, effective May 31, 2005. The company said the action was due to the "escalating costs of defending fenamiphos relative to its limited use." The product was used for turf mostly on golf courses in Florida and a few other southern states.

The revised agreement between Bayer and the EPA allows for the use and formulation for use of Nematicur through May 31, 2007. However, pursuant to the original agreement, use on hydrologic soil group A — soil groups that are excessively drained and have predominately sand or loamy sand with water tables less than 50 feet deep — will be canceled effective May 31, 2005.

"This is a great success for Bayer and our customers who rely on Nematicur," said Mike Daly, Bayer's turf and ornamental brand manager. "The extended phase out allows superintendents to use the trusted nematode control product while we work to develop better alternatives. And we could not have accomplished this without the help of these dedicated superintendents."

Sale approved of National Golf, AGC

Santa Monica, Calif.-based National Golf announced that its board of directors and its

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Going Buggy

PLAGUE OF THE NORTHEAST INVADES MID-ATLANTIC STATES

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

A full-scale invasion may be imminent next year. No, we're not talking about President Bush's plans for Iraq. We're talking about an invasion of the annual bluegrass weevil into Mid-Atlantic states. The forward troops started moving in this year.

Traditionally an insect pest of the Northeast, the weevil entered the Mid-Atlantic region in earnest this year, reaching as far south as Maryland. What makes it doubly alarming is that the weevils have moved on from attacking *Poa annua*, its traditional target, to bentgrass. A few golf courses have lost significant turf to the pest, says Stan Zontek, director of the USGA Green Section's Mid-Atlantic offices.

"It's always been a minor insect pest from Pittsburgh to the Poconos on *Poa*," Zontek says. "This year, however, it moved farther south and attacked bentgrass. That caught us by surprise."

The insect's attack begins when it lays its eggs in the sheath of the turf's leaves. When the eggs hatch, the larvae sever the leaves from the rest of the plant. To kill them, superintendents must first identify the weevils accurately, according to Zontek.



USGA

The annual bluegrass weevil, a traditional pest in the Northeast, invaded the mid-Atlantic region in earnest this year.

Annual bluegrass weevils usually live in the top quarter inch of thatch, says Dave Oatis, director of the Green Section's Northeast offices. Superintendents who want to determine whether weevils have infected their turf should cut a small slice out of their turf with a pocketknife. They'll see the larvae crawling around, he says.

The insects produce three generations per year, which allows their numbers to increase rapidly, Oatis says. Since they can't be controlled when they're pupating, superintendents have to identify them quickly after they've hatched. The problem, however, is that the damage often mirrors some diseases.

"The visible effects on the surface can be mistaken for anthracnose," Oatis says. "Check your clipping baskets before you treat for the disease."

If your clippings are moving, chances are you have a weevil infestation.”

Zontek says superintendents should investigate wilting *Poa* to ensure the weevils aren't lurking. Oatis adds that weevils usually attack *Poa* and eat it before they move on to other turf species.

Tony Gustaitus, certified superintendent at Whitemarsh Valley GC in Eagleville, Pa., says he first noticed the discolored turf on his greens' collars in May.

“I remember talking to a fellow superintendent at a chapter meeting and telling him about the symptoms,” Gustaitus says. “I treated it for anthracnose for a month before the USGA visited my course and diagnosed the weevils.”

Once he got down on his hands and knees and took a closer look, the problem was obvious because he could see the larvae.

“It's just another curveball Mother Nature has thrown at us,” Gustaitus says. “It wasn't something I expected to see.”

Oatis says superintendents in the mid-Atlantic region should scout for the bugs in the spring. He recommends treating with two sprays of a non-thatch penetrating insecticide seven to 10 days apart in May to prevent the problem from spreading.

“They're not a bad pest to have around in small quantities because they can help thin out *Poa* stands in bentgrass greens,” Oatis says. “You can't be too cavalier about treating them, however, because they can do serious damage.”

GCSAA Wants to Increase Dues

Citing a difficult economy and decreased earnings, the GCSAA announced a proposal for a 20-percent dues increase beginning July 1 for fiscal year 2003-2004.

Under the proposal, Class A and superintendent member dues would increase from \$250 to \$300, and Class C assistant superintendent member dues would increase from \$125 to \$150. Members will vote on the proposal at the 2003 annual meeting in Atlanta.

If passed, the board would then approve corresponding increases in the remaining membership classes, including affiliate dues from \$250 to \$300, student and educator



ARTVILLE

Quotable

“I hope Eb will drop us a line with an address. Perhaps Joe Duich will forward him some bentgrass seed to keep him active in his new life.”

—Bob Oechsle on the death of Eberhard “Eb” Steiniger, known as the dean of superintendents, who died last spring (*The Bonnie Greensward*).



“It's the last hurrah. I will never leave Austin — at least alive.”

—Veteran Doug Petersen, affirming that his last job as a superintendent will be at the Austin (Texas) CC.

“Just because grass is grass doesn't mean it can mate. I could compare it to a vegetable garden. Just because you have a row of tomatoes and a row of peppers, that doesn't mean that you'll harvest, in between, a row of salsa.”

—Jim King, a spokesman for *The Scotts Co.*, on the controversy surrounding Scotts' new Roundup-ready bentgrass (*The Baltimore Sun*).

dues from \$55 to \$65, and associate dues from \$125 to \$150. Retired and inactive classes would remain unchanged at \$70 and \$30.

The last increase was in 1997 when Class A dues increased from \$210 to \$250.

The GCSAA said the proposal comes on the heels of the economic downturn the past two years and its negative impact on the association's corporate earnings and related marketing budgets. GCSAA said the negative effect of the down investment markets has resulted in a projection of overall negative earnings for the fiscal year that ended June 30.

The GCSAA also announced increased fees for seminars and the conference and show.