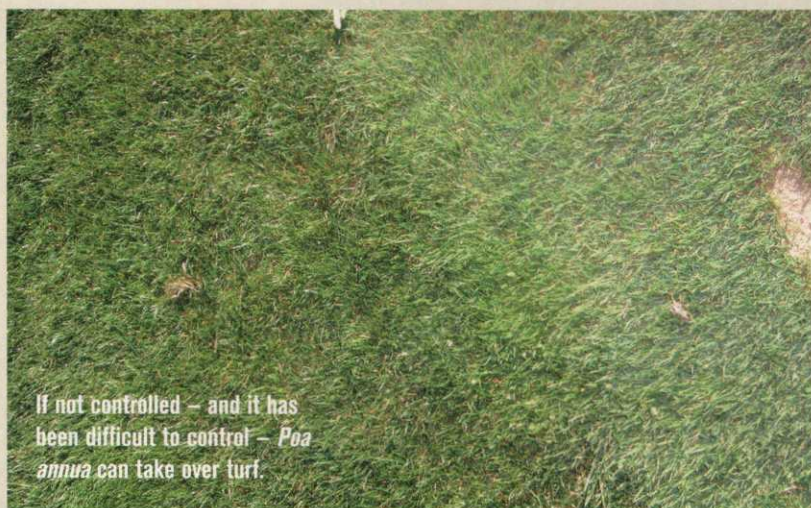


Nipping Poa in the



If not controlled – and it has been difficult to control – *Poa annua* can take over turf.

Alas, there weren't as many workers to pick and pluck the *Poa* by hand.

"We just didn't have the manpower," Boudinot says.

Slowly, the *Poa* began taking over the bentgrass. By the 2005 season, the *Poa* dominated many of the course's greens.

"We had greens that were 50 percent to 70 percent *Poa*," Boudinot says.

But help may arrive in the form of a new herbicide named Velocity. Manufactured by Walnut Creek, Calif.-based Valent Professional Products, Velocity was registered for tees and fairways by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in late 2004. "This new herbicide strongly suppresses production of *Poa annua* and *Poa trivialis* seedheads and can be used to gradually reduce *Poa* infestations," Valent stated at the time.

Boudinot began testing Velocity on his course's chipping green as well as a few tees and fairways in 2005.

"We played around with it to see what it could do," he says.

Boudinot and his crew applied the product at 5 grams per acre once a week for seven weeks beginning in early August. He liked what he saw from the experiments.

"It knocked out the *Poa* hard," he says.

Boudinot knew he had to do something to rid the *Poa* from the greens. Seedheads were affecting ball roll and playability. Most of the club's members supported Boudinot's decision to test with the herbicide, even though it turned the turf a slight shade of yellow.

"We informed the golfers what we wanted to accomplish," Boudinot says. "We explained to them that the turf would

Herbicide proves promising for control of troublesome variety

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

Problem

The troublesome *Poa annua*, which sticks out on turf with its light-green color, has been the bane of superintendents because it is difficult to manage.

Solution

A herbicide, although not a panacea to rid turf of *Poa annua*, proves promising in controlling it.

They picked and plucked the pecks of pesky *Poa* persistently.

For years, superintendent Randy Boudinot and his crew at the Country Club of the North in Beavercreek, Ohio, were able to keep *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) from invading the course's bentgrass greens by removing it manually.

But that tide began to turn in 2000, 2001 and 2002. That's when Boudinot, who began at the club in 1991 when it was constructed, was forced to lay off several of his crew members because of budget cuts.

Bud

thin [after being treated] and the turf wouldn't be as good as it was the month before. There were a few grumbles, but most of them understood [our goal]."

Boudinot estimates that 40 percent to 50 percent of the *Poa* was killed in the treatment area after the seven-week treatment.

Because the turf was heavily *Poa*-infested, there was noticeable turf thinning after it began dying off. So Boudinot and his crew began "pumping the turf with fertilizer" to get the bentgrass to grow in, which it did in the late summer and fall.

There were still a few bare spots early this spring, but a warm spell in late March and more fertilizer applications spurred most of the bentgrass to fill in within 10 days, Boudinot says.

While there is still *Poa* on the turf, Boudinot says he has it under control now, and the ball roll is noticeably smoother and more consistent.

Certified superintendent Dean Graves is also using Velocity to control *Poa annua* at the Chevy Chase Club in Chevy Chase, Md. Graves worked with Valent to test the herbicide on one-half acre in 2004.

Graves began treating his bentgrass fairways with the product — every two weeks at 15 grams an acre for five weeks — the following year beginning in late May shortly after the product became labeled for fairway use.

"It did quite well," Graves says. "It killed the *Poa*." He estimates the *Poa* population decreased from 20 percent to 5 percent on fairways after the treatment. The product did damage some ryegrass, so Graves stopped using it on that variety.



"But it did not hurt the bentgrass," he stresses.

Graves learned that while Velocity eradicated turf of *Poa*, it would germinate and return a few months later to the voided areas that hadn't grown back with bentgrass. Hence, he incorporated a few other products into the *Poa*-control program.

"I realized we had to go out with a pre-emergent to help prevent the *Poa annua* from filling in those voids that had been created by the *Poa* dying," Graves says, noting that the measure would allow the bentgrass more time to creep over.

Graves also learned it was best to spot-treat *Poa* that germinated in divots and other wear areas with Trimmit 2SC, a plant growth regulator manufactured by Syngenta Professional Products, that Graves says is "very effective in killing *Poa* at the seedling stage."

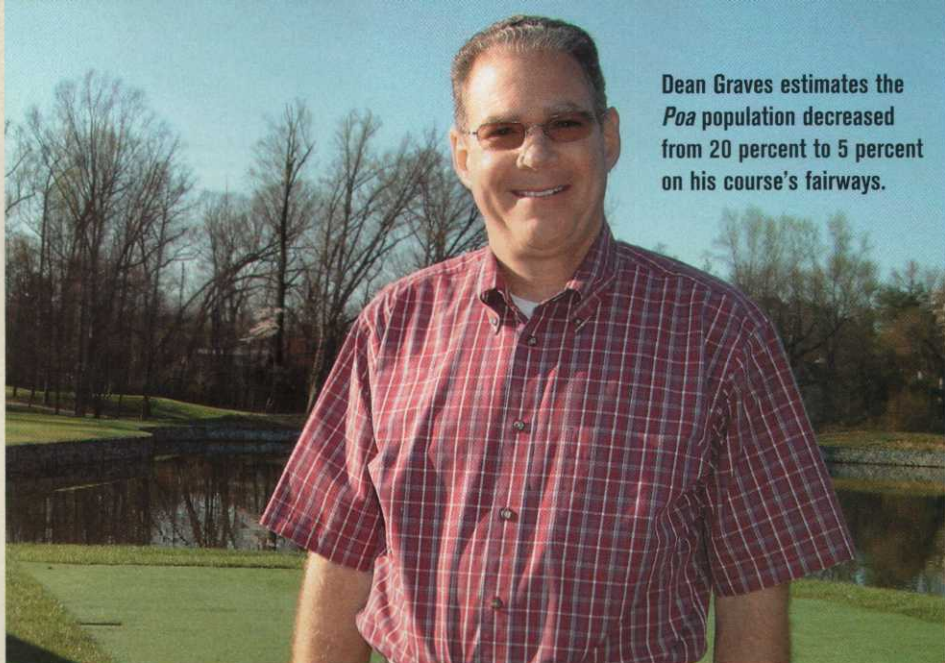
Graves says he plans to treat his fairways for *Poa* every three years. "When the *Poa* population begins going back up, we'll

Continued on page 70

Michigan State University turf specialist Ron Calhoun discovered that Velocity was effective in controlling the light-green colored *Poa annua*.

Real-Life Solutions

The treated areas greened up quickly after being treated with iron.



Dean Graves estimates the *Poa* population decreased from 20 percent to 5 percent on his course's fairways.

Continued from page 69
spray it again," he says.

Like Boudinot, Graves noticed a slight yellowing or "yellow flash" of the turf after it was sprayed with Velocity.

When he tested it in 2004, Graves says he noticed a distinct difference between treated and untreated turf areas. But the

treated areas greened up quickly after being treated with iron, Graves notes, downplaying the issue.

"When we sprayed all of our fairways in 2005, I took our green committee out to the middle of the first fairway," he says. "They said, 'The fairways are beautiful.' I said, 'Remember me talking about the yellow flash? Well, we're standing in the middle of it.' They said, 'The fairways look fine to us.'"

Graves says he and his crew also sprayed the club's tees with Velocity.

"It knocked the *Poa* out completely," he says. "We won't have to spray our tees again for a couple of years because it was so effective the first time out."

Before Velocity, Graves relied mostly on plant growth regulators to battle *Poa*. He says Velocity is not a panacea for superintendents in their battle to rid turf of *Poa*, but it's a good weapon to go in the arsenal.

"It's a product that does what it says it's going to do," Graves says.

Jason Fausey, research and development specialist for Valent, credits Michigan State University turf specialist Ron Calhoun for discovering that Velocity was effective in controlling *Poa*.

"Since the summer of 1999, when Ron tested it in the field and saw the activity, we knew it was something that could battle *Poa*," Fausey says.

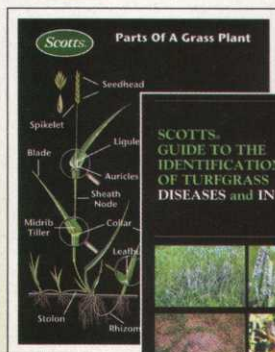
Fausey says researchers continue to evaluate the potential for using Velocity on greens. ■

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