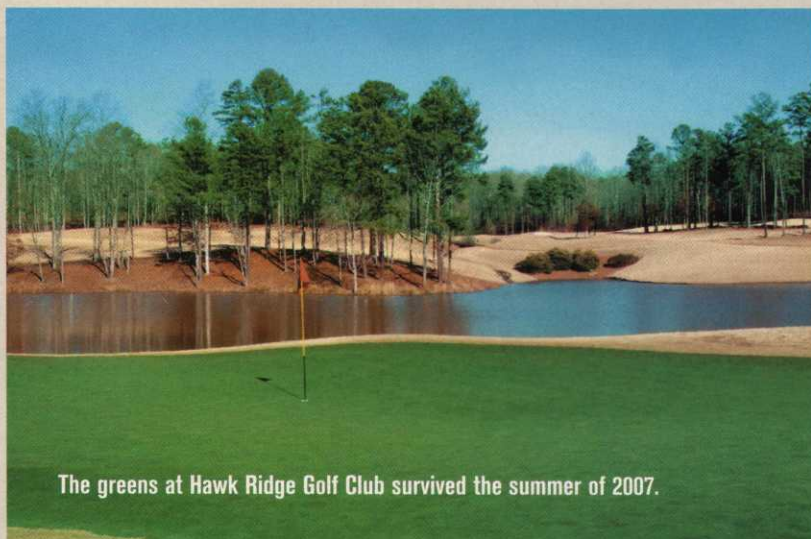


# One-Two Punch

Fungicide fights disease *and* energizes greens **BY LARRY AYLWARD**



The greens at Hawk Ridge Golf Club survived the summer of 2007.

While the fungicide Macdonald used halted the pythium, it was an added ingredient in the product that caused the turf to appear so vigorous. Macdonald was using Tartan, a relatively new fungicide from Bayer Environmental Science. Tartan contains a formulation technology called StressGard, which positively affects plant physiology and helps turf manage the stresses of golf course conditions more effectively, according to Bayer. Turf treated with StressGard develops greater root mass and top growth under heat stress, the company says.

Macdonald had heard about StressGard before from his distributor, who told him about turf trials involving Tartan. He told Macdonald the turf treated without Tartan — and the StressGard — didn't have nearly the same color and texture as turf treated with it.

Macdonald says he began using Tartan in 2006 when turf disease pressure was high

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**I**t was late August near Atlanta and as dry as the Sahara Desert. It was also feverishly hot, as it usually is that time of year in the South.

Hence, it was expected that the bentgrass greens at Hawks Ridge Golf Club in Ball Ground, Ga., would look a little toasty. But to Kyle Macdonald's surprise, the greens looked the same vibrant green in the dead of summer that they did in April.

"The color difference in the turf was amazing," says Macdonald, the club's senior assistant superintendent.

Macdonald couldn't believe that a fungicide he sprayed to control pythium could cause his course's greens to look *that* good at *that* time of the year. Incidentally, Georgia was going through one of its worst droughts ever at that time. Last year was Atlanta's second-driest year on record. The city received only 31.85 inches of rainfall. It receives 50 inches normally.



Kyle Macdonald says the greens at Hawk Ridge Golf Club looked the same vibrant green in August as they did in April.

## Problem

**In two words: heat and dry.** Kyle Macdonald was worried how the Hawks Ridge Golf Club's bentgrass greens would hold up during a long, hot summer that saw very little rain.

## Solution

**A fungicide.** A fungicide? Yes, but this fungicide contains a formulation technology that helps turf manage stress.



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## Real-Life Solutions



Macdonald (left) and his crew sprayed the greens enough that they received a healthy of StressGard. The day after the sprayings, Macdonald says the greens looked like they had been fertilized.

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because of hot temperatures combined with heavy rain. He used Tartan alone and with Signature, another Bayer fungicide that also contains StressGard. Macdonald says he began using both fungicides in the same tank mix — 1.5 ounces of Tartan and 4 ounces of Signature — and spraying the greens every two weeks. Between two of those applications, he sprayed Tartan alone. Needless to say the turf was getting a healthy dose of StressGard.

Three days after the sprayings, Macdonald says the greens looked like they had been fertilized. He believes StressGard helped the turf offset heat stress.

"The past two summers, besides a stretch where we had 100-degree heat every day, were probably two of the best years we've had with bentgrass," Macdonald says of the club, a Bob Cupp design that opened in 2000. "The grass really responded well to what we were doing."

Bill Smith, superintendent of Panther Creek Country Club in Springfield, Ill., also uses Tartan and Signature and attests that it keeps turf healthy when weather conditions are rife for harming turf.

"We first used Tartan in the middle of August in 2006, soon after it came out," Smith says, noting he applied the fungicide to battle dollar spot and brown patch. "That time of year, the weather around here can be tough — 95 degrees during the day and in the 70s at night with high humidity. We face some intense disease pressure."

Smith says Tartan fought back the disease pressure, and the StressGard added more color to the greens, which were already in decent shape. Smith says he has combined Tartan with Signature for preventive control of pythium.

Panther Creek hosted an LPGA tournament last year, and Smith says he banked on Tartan to help him get his greens ready for the tournament. "We applied it to the greens one week before the tournament," he says. "I like the green color that [StressGard] provides. It's a great thing to have in a fungicide."

Macdonald agrees.

"We were just using it for disease control, but we really liked what the StressGard was doing," he says. "I'm not going to say it's a wonder drug, but it really did some neat things for us." ■