A Resolution to Find Some Answers

BY KARL DANNEBERGER

By this time, you've read or heard many columnists, celebrities, experts or family members state their New Year's resolutions. Sitting here waiting for a flight connection, I'm contemplating not so much what I will do, but trying more to find answers to some of the agronomic and economic questions that I have come across this past year.

So here goes, with not much thought and worse the potential to look foolish or uninformed.

Why is ghost grass, known as Mad Tiller Disease or Etiolated Tiller Syndrome (ETS), becoming more of a serious problem on *Poa annua* fairways (or bluegrass/ryegrass fairways)? In the past, I've written about this problem, but in general dismissed it as a nuisance that can easily be remedied with mowing. Yet, this phenomenon has grown in severity throughout Pennsylvania and the mid-Atlantic region to a point where it is gaining discussion among many golf course superintendents. A common quote I hear is, "You can't mow frequently enough to eliminate the symptoms." Is the cause a bacterium, a fungus, combination or some environmental factor?

How big a problem will nematodes become on cool-season golf courses in the future? Personally, I have not been involved with that many diagnoses where nematodes were the problem, and in those cases I have blown the diagnosis where samples had not been taken.

Why are nematodes becoming more prevalent in the Northeast and the reason for several high-profile courses in California to renovate? Why is one year worse for nematodes than others? Maybe I should read a text book on nematodes (too many years since I took those classes). If nematodes do become an increasing problem, what do we do without Nemacur?

What is ultradwarf grain? One of the more interesting things that I have observed over the last couple of years is the development of "swirling leaves and plants" that develop into large patches on ultradwarf greens. Given that ultradwarfs are vegetatively propagated, the green should appear uniform. Is its change in growth habit because of genetic makeup, cultural practices, environmental conditions or a combination of these factors or others? And why is there such a difference in opinion whether it impacts ball roll? And if it is truly "grain" in the sense that most of us think of grain, why can't (or maybe you can) management practices like topdressing and brushing remove it?

HOW BIG A PROBLEM WILL NEMATODES BECOME ON COOL-SEASON GOLF COURSES IN THE FUTURE?

In some areas of the world, the availability of any kind of water for golf course development is limited. In some situations, the use of sea water to maintain the golf course has been proposed. My question is not what grass can tolerate seawater, but how long does it take various soils to become degraded by the seawater to the point where any turfgrass can't be sustained? If this information exists, should that information be included in golf course design and construction specifications?

This past year, I've watched companies disappear or go on life support. These companies have survived two world wars, a depression, numerous recessions and decades of competition. This raises the question of what makes a business or industry sustainable? Specifically, what are the factors given the diversity of golf and the golf business that are important for future sustainability?

I could sign up for airport Internet service and maybe find the answers to these questions, but I'm just too cheap. Instead, I will take this coming year and try to find the answers.

Happy New Year.

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