

Clark Talks Turf

■ TIMELY TURF ADVICE



→ Goosegrass Management on Putting Greens in the South

Scott McElroy, Ph.D. is an associate professor of turfgrass science at Auburn University, specializing in weed management in turfgrass. He conducts many weed management and control experiments annually. Here he shares with *Golfdom* his experiences controlling goosegrass on putting greens.

My discussion with McElroy focused on goosegrass control in bermudagrass and creeping bentgrass in the transition zone and the warm season grass zone.

Q What is the first step to managing goosegrass on greens? The most important thing to controlling goosegrass on any putting green is to get rid of goosegrass everywhere around the green. Control goosegrass in the fairways, approaches, surrounds and collars. Eliminate the seed source. Until you eliminate the goosegrass seed source, you are wasting your time trying to control goosegrass on the greens.

Q How about cultural practices for goosegrass control? I notice most goosegrass on greens in the clean-up pass. Mow the clean-up pass only two or three times a week. Substitute rolling for mowing to reduce traffic stress when possible on the outer edges of the green.

Implement a vigorous thatch control program. Goosegrass will often grow in thatchy areas because the thatch provides protection for the crown from low mowing heights. Im-

prove drainage. Particularly on bermudagrass greens, I observe goosegrass growing in low, wet areas. I've actually seen goosegrass growing in a patch of moss on greens. Hand removal of goosegrass using a knife or tool is still effective. Since goosegrass grows in a rosette, it is pretty easy to pop the rosette out of the ground.

Q Do you recommend preemergence herbicides for goosegrass control on creeping bentgrass greens? It's a trade-off. A preemergence herbicide containing bensulide will help control goosegrass. No doubt about it. The trade-off is that bensulide could damage the root system of the creeping bentgrass. During hot summers in the South, roots are critical for creeping bentgrass survival. There is no single right answer for everyone. Golfer expectations, the goosegrass population, creeping bentgrass health, your experiences with bensulide and your best guess on summer weather should all factor into your decision whether to apply bensulide.

Q Are there any postemergence herbicide options for goosegrass control on creeping bentgrass greens? None that I am aware of that are labeled for goosegrass control on creeping bentgrass greens. In some of my research I have observed that Acclaim Extra (fenoxaprop-p-ethyl) applied at very low rates every three weeks will control goosegrass without harming the

creeping bentgrass. Unfortunately, Acclaim Extra is not labeled for that use.

Q Let's switch gears to preemergence goosegrass control on bermudagrass greens. What are the options?

Ronstar (oxadiazon), Barricade (prodiamine) and Pendulum (pendimethalin) plus Tower (dimethenamid-P) are all effective for goosegrass control on bermudagrass putting greens. The problem is reading the label and trying to understand if the label supports their use on bermudagrass putting greens. Some of these herbicides directly prohibit their use, while others are vague. In many cases, the labels are open to interpretation. Read the labels carefully and consult with the manufacturer before applying a preemergence herbicide to a bermudagrass green.

Q How about postemergence herbicide control options for bermudagrass greens? Revolver (foramsulfuron) is safe on bermudagrass putting greens. The challenge is getting consistent goosegrass control. Due to low mowing heights used on a green, there isn't much turfgrass canopy to intercept the herbicide. To improve goosegrass control with Revolver, apply the herbicide in 20 to 40 gallons per acre using a nozzle that produces a medium-sized or smaller droplet.

Q What is the outlook for the live oak trees at Toomer's Corner vandalized using an herbicide? Neither tree looks good right now. The long-term prognosis isn't good.

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