

# Clark Talks Turf

■ TIMELY TURF ADVICE



## → It's Time for Snow Mold Control

BY CLARK THROSSELL, PH.D.

Jim Kerns, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of turfgrass pathology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A major portion of Jim's research effort is devoted to snow mold control. Jim can be reached at [jpk@plantpath.wisc.edu](mailto:jpk@plantpath.wisc.edu).

### **Q** What cultural practices can superintendents implement in fall to reduce snow mold damage?

Make sure the turfgrass plants are healthy and have recovered from any stress incurred over summer. There is no secret recipe for this. In extreme northern locations we recommend the last nitrogen fertilizer application be no later than October 31. In northern locations we have seen breakthrough on fungicide applications where the turf was fertilized later than October 31. Based on Frank Rossi's data on late season potassium applications, we advise superintendents to not go overboard on potassium fertilizer late in the season.

### **Q** When is the ideal time to apply fungicides to control snow mold?

Our research and experience have shown that applying fungicides to control snow mold should be done a few days after the last mowing of the year. Our research has shown fungicides applied to control snow mold are removed when the grass is mowed.

We are in the middle of a research project that is investigating different timings of fungicide application to

control snow mold and so far we have found timings from late October to early December have all performed well provided they were applied after the last mowing of the year. It is very helpful to make sure all the leaves have dropped and been cleaned up before making the fungicide application.

**“**Research and experience have shown that applying fungicides to control snow mold should be done a few days after the last mowing of the year.**”**

### **Q** What is your recommendation for one versus two applications of fungicide for snow mold control?

I recommend one application as long as the soil stays frozen all winter. If there is a mid-winter warm spell and the surface of the soil thaws, is the only time a second application is a good idea. For the second application we recommend using a granular fungicide application on greens to prevent surface damage caused by a heavy sprayer driving over turf that is only thawed at the surface.

### **Q** Last year there was a stop sale put on PCNB that left a lot of superintendents looking for alternative products. The stop sale was recently lifted. Do you have insight on the status of PCNB for this winter?

The stop sale order was lifted but it is my understanding that there is not an approved label for PCNB use on golf courses. It is my understanding that superintendents will not be able to buy PCNB in 2011. (*Editor's note:* For more on PCNB's status in 2011, see "PCNB for You and Me?" on Page 24.)

### **Q** What is your advice on selecting fungicides for snow mold control?

The place to start is to determine how many days of continuous snow cover you expect on your golf course. Our recommendation is that if you expect less than 60 days of continuous snow cover, use one active ingredient; if you expect 60 to 90 days of continuous snow cover, use a combination of 2 or 3 different active ingredients; and if you expect more than 90 days of continuous snow cover, use a combination of 3 or 4 different active ingredients.

You can find more complete information and suggestions on fungicide combinations for snow mold control at: [www.tdl.wisc.edu](http://www.tdl.wisc.edu).

### **Q** Anything else you'd like to share with readers before we close?

Snow mold control fungicides have pretty much all degraded by March. Be sure to scout the golf course in March and April for pink snow mold. If you see active pink snow mold, apply a fungicide before things get out of hand.

Clark Throssell, Ph.D., loves to talk turf. He can be reached at [clarkthrossell@bresnan.net](mailto:clarkthrossell@bresnan.net).