



MANAGING

BY CHRIS LEWIS

To help superintendents better manage extreme variations in weather conditions and temperatures, BASF has released its most recent lineup of fungicides — Lexicon Intrinsic and Xzemplar.

Let's face it. Golf is an unpredictable game. One moment you may be sinking every putt you look at and then, for no reason, your putter cools off, as you struggle to even make a three-footer. The same can be said of the superintendent profession, particularly concerning two ever-changing variables: weather conditions and temperatures. One week, as the result of a drought, you may have to adjust the timing of your sprinkler systems, and then, suddenly, the floodgates open, forcing you to protect your course from excessive rain showers and saturation.

With regards to extreme variations in weather conditions and temperatures, 2013 may have been the epitome, at least in recent memory. On one hand, approximately 75 percent of the western United States experienced at least a moderate drought last summer, ac-

cording to the Climate Prediction Center. On the other hand, residents of the Northeastern, Southeastern, and Midwestern United States regularly encountered below-average temperatures — and steady rainfall.

In fact, Atlanta reportedly had its fifth wettest year on record in 2013, according to *The Atlanta-Journal Constitution*, while Los Angeles documented its driest year since 1877, when rainfall was first tracked, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. Unfortunately, the unpredictability in weather conditions and temperatures has continued this year, with cities such as Chicago and Detroit reporting near-record snow accumulation in January and February.

Since even short periods of mild stress can affect your turf quality, what can you do to protect your course from Mother Nature's volatility this summer? How can you reduce the impact of extreme variations in weather

From left to right below:
Prestwick CC (first 3),
and Leewood GC.



EXTREME WEATHER

conditions and temperatures so your turfgrass remains healthy all-season long?

"Superintendents need to have a plan," says Kathie Kalmowitz, Ph.D., Market Development Specialist for BASF Professional Turf & Ornamentals. "The weather patterns for the last few years have shown that we do not know exactly when or what will happen, but something will likely occur that negatively affects superintendents' turfgrass."

The solution? Kalmowitz suggests integrating fungicides into your course management regime to ensure you have proper protection prior to unexpected, extreme variations in weather conditions or temperatures.

A new lineup of BASF fungicides

To help ease the burden of turfgrass protection, BASF revealed its two latest fungicide offerings — Lexicon Intrinsic and Xzemplar — this February at the 2014 Golf Industry Show in Orlando. Both fungicides are comprised of fluxapyroxad, an active ingredient that blocks an enzyme complex known as succinate dehydro-

genase. As a result, mitochondrial respiration is inhibited, energy is no longer produced, fungal cells stop growing, and disease development ceases.

Both of the fungicides were registered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in late 2013 and will be available for purchase this year, after state registrations are approved. In the meantime, the fungicides have already been distributed to courses throughout the United States, so that superintendents can conduct trials.

"I recently received some Lexicon Intrinsic test material from BASF and, at their request, have initiated a trial of the material on one of the greens," says Paul Kaufman, superintendent of Myrtle

Beach, S.C.'s Prestwick CC. "My team and I applied the material on February 28th to see how long we could go before we saw any disease pressure. I will say that the green we applied the fungicide to showed a very nice green-up, especially considering it was unoverseeded TifEagle in mid-March."

By combining two renowned fungicides, branded as Xemium and Intrinsic, Lexicon Intrinsic will offer some new



Paul Kaufman

Continued on page 26

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Continued from page 25

benefits that have not been observed to the same degree with BASF's two other Intrinsic fungicides, Honor and Insignia. Featuring the broad spectrum foliar fungicide pyraclostrobin, along with fluxapyroxad, Lexicon Intrinsic will also be able to withstand stresses like extreme temperatures and weather conditions, as it refines the vitality of turfgrass, increases photosynthesis, and strengthens grass roots. In addition, it is labeled for 26 different diseases in all, including brown ring patch, dollar spot and pythium root dysfunction.

"It will be a particularly excellent treatment for dollar spot on cool-season putting greens and fairways, while also protecting against brown patch and anthracnose," says Jim Kerns, Ph.D., Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist for Turfgrass Pathology at N.C. State University.

In the past, Kaufman and his staff have used a variety of fungicides with plant health benefits, as they have improved Prestwick CC's turfgrass appearance and vigor, despite variations in weather conditions. For example, in 2012, he began to apply Honor Intrinsic four days prior to his core aerification of greens, resulting in a near immediate healing of aerification



"I saw an increase in the fibrous roots, leading to deeper root structures," says Van Dunk, New York CC.

WORKING FROM THE ROOTS UP

To protect Sugar Creek CC's bermudagrass from diseases, Chris Lineberger applies a strobe family fungicide

As the superintendent of Sugar Creek CC, Chris Lineberger knows firsthand just how extreme weather conditions can be in Sugar Land, Texas, a city located about 20 miles southwest of Houston. From droughts to torrential downpours, as well as regular variations in temperature, Lineberger never knows what to expect.

"Our weather is so different here, as most years our grasses never go completely dormant," says Lineberger. "We have a lot of highs and lows in the winter where the grass will start to shut down, so to speak. Then the temperatures will suddenly rise, then fall back down, and then rise again."



Chris Lineberger

Consequently, three diseases tend to remain prominent on the course every year — leaf spot in the early spring, fairy ring and bermudagrass decline in the summer.

"Decline usually hits in the heat of the summer when we are doing our most aggressive cultural practices," he says. "The only problem then is that the times in which we have our most extreme, hot temperatures are when our grasses need the most cultural practices."

Luckily, Lineberger has a solution: to apply a strobe family fungicide prior to any aggressive cultural practices. He has found that, whenever he has to be more aggressive with bermudagrass, due to extreme weather conditions and temperatures, fungicides offer additional protection against future pathogens for which ever turf remains and surrounds the diseased grass.

Although he intends to continue to use fungicides in the future, he stresses that any one specific product will not be a "cure all" for diseases.

"I think every situation and every location will vary. What might work for us, might not work for everyone," he says. "I believe it takes a complete package to maintain plant health. You should always know when your stress periods occur and then add in a plant protectant, when necessary."

He adds, "During stress periods, my team and I always work from the roots up. The stronger you are down below, the better you will be up top."

holes. Consequently, he is now intrigued by the potential of Lexicon Intrinsic.

"The effect of the Honor Intrinsic has been so pronounced that it has become 'standard operating procedure' to apply the fungicide prior to core aerification, or at any time we felt the greens could use a little something to get through tough conditions," he says. "However, from everything we have been hearing about Lexicon, it seems it will be like Honor Intrinsic on steroids, in respect to its plant health benefits."

Meanwhile, Xzemplar is also anticipated to offer broad turfgrass benefits. Developed through carboxamide technology,

Xzemplar will provide superintendents a key ingredient that BASF's Emerald did not — the Xemium component, which features the active ingredient fluxapyroxad, to protect turfgrass from susceptible fungi development. By attaching to spores and vegetative mycelia present at the time of application, fluxapyroxad inhibits fungal cell growth during the earliest stages of disease development, so that future infections are avoided.

Preparing for the future

While working as a superintendent at Eastchester, N.Y.'s Leewood GC, Hermen

Continued on page 28



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Continued from page 26

"Trapper" Burgess Van Dunk IV generally used fungicides like Honor Intrinsic one week prior to, as well as one week after, the aeration of tees and greens, with well-evidenced benefits.


"In following this routine over a couple of seasons, I saw an increase in the fibrous roots, leading to deeper root structures," Van Dunk says. "The stronger root structure actually strengthened the plant in the midst of the extreme summer conditions we had last year, and I am confident the greens and tees will remain healthy."



Hermen Van Dunk IV

"I expect New York CC will experience the same results that Leewood did. In fact, I have been working with management personally to ensure fungicides will be available on the property," Van Dunk says.

Kaufman agrees that Prestwick CC will also need to continue utilizing fungicides, especially to defend the course's ultradwarf bermudagrass from extreme weather conditions.

"During periods of stress and various weather conditions, I know the course is holding up well when it is not only surviving, but thriving," says Kaufman. "Prestwick thrives with assistance from fungicides, which control and prevent common diseases. To me, the decision to purchase fungicides has been easy to justify — and will continue to be." 

Michigan-based writer Chris Lewis has written for The Golf Channel, Colorado Golf Magazine and Desert Golf Magazine among many others. Lewis is a member of the Golf Writers Association of America, and this is his fourth article to appear in *Golfdom*.

TRANSITIONING THE EASY WAY

Van Dunk's slam-dunk tips on a successful career transition

The fear of change is simply not an option for Hermen B. Van Dunk IV. It never has been. ¶ Since working under veteran superintendent Ed Walsh, CGCS, as a college intern at Monroe, N.Y.'s Mansion Ridge GC, he has transitioned to a variety of new career opportunities throughout the last 16 years. After graduating from college, he worked as an assistant at Denville, N.J.'s Rockaway CC and then accepted a new offer a couple years later, as an assistant at West Nyack, N.Y.'s Manhattan Woods GC.

Two years later, he was hired as an assistant superintendent at Eastchester, N.Y.'s Leewood GC, where he served for another two years before he was hired as the head superintendent when he was just 29.

So Van Dunk's friends and family were not entirely surprised when he announced he was transitioning to yet another job earlier this year, after working at Leewood for nine years.

"It was time for a new challenge and for a change," Van Dunk says. "I simply needed to move in a different direction."

To continue to grow as a person and as a professional, Van Dunk began working at Spring Valley, N.Y.'s New York CC as its superintendent back in February. Since the transition occurred, he believes he has already grown on multiple levels — personally, socially and professionally.

"I have grown personally because the change in location and job has allowed me to look only to myself, fully trusting in my abilities to succeed at a new course," Van Dunk says. "I have also grown socially, as I have been forced to open up to new people and to set up a new dynamic with new personalities, with hopes of forging new bonds."

He adds, "And professionally I have grown, knowing my successes at Leewood were recognized by my peers in the area, which ultimately led to my new job."

Considering his past successes with career transitions, Van Dunk offers the following tips to superintendents who may also be contemplating a transition in the near future:

Take full advantage of technology. "Try to stay in touch with past — and new — contacts as often as possible through text messages, phone calls, Facebook, e-mail and Twitter," says Van Dunk. "Remember, if you do transition, never shut any doors. I have continued my relationships with many Leewood members and employees by using every technological application I possibly can."

Network at neutral courses. "Attend local networking meetings, and invite fellow superintendents to play golf at neutral golf courses, where you can learn about new career opportunities and potentially meet other contacts who can introduce you to golf course owners and managers," he says.

No fear. "Never be afraid of change, as fear is often people's worst enemy," he says. "Consider your options when deciding on which transition is best for you and your family."