

The Grass Roots



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE "Professionalism"

There is no room in the Golf Course Superintendent's Profession for those who are willing to accept less than perfection. If you can ever say that you have your course, your

staff, and your superiors in complete control, you are either a liar or you have had a dream while you slept.

This field is a constant chal-

lenge. We deal with many contingencies that frequently arise. Hence, decisions have to be made on the spot. Long and short range planning are definitely necessary, but in this business one must adjust to all conditions and be ready for emergencies. If the Golf Superintendent is to be recognized as a professional, he must put much more emphasis on expertise. An old saying is - "If you never do any more than you are paid for, you will never get paid for more than you do."

The following article was taken from the PENNSYLVANIA TURFGRASS COUNCIL "The Keynote"

Update on Cool Weather Brown Patch - A Continuing Problem.

H. Cole Jr., L. L. Burpee and P.O. Sanders

A Brief History

For years Brown Patch has been recognized as a warm temperature, humid weather disease of colonial bents and the older mixed creeping bentgrasses of greens and tees. Typically the disease would smolder causing patches of brownish discolored grasses until the weather became especially "muggy" and warm when smoke rings and active patches would appear overnight.

Older writings about golf course diseases contain references to winter Brown Patch but these brownish rings or patches were little more than curiosities. In mid 1970's, however, persistent reports of brown rings or yellowish brown rings or patches were being made from golf courses throughout the East. Often these symptoms occurred when temperatures were in the 50's, 60's, or 70's. Superficially, they resembled typical Brown Patch, but in many instances symptoms were not controlled by the common Brown Patch fungicides or at best were checked for only a few days. As the reports filtered in, we were about to blame the disease on fungicide resistant low temperatures strains of **Rhizoctonia solani** and we were going to publish a note about the resistance problem. Fortunately, Dr. Robert Sherwood of the U.S.D.A. Pasture Research Laboratory asked a most important question: How do you know the fungus is **Rhizoctonia solani**, the

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Brown Patch cont.

cause of the common warm temperature Brown Patch? To make a long story short, we didn't and it wasn't. The fungus superficially looked like *R. solani*, but there the relationship stopped. After much literature and laboratory searching the fungus turned out to be a *Ceratobasidium* sp., a *Rhizoctonia* relative to *R. Solani* but completely different in temperature requirements and fungicide sensitivity.

The Current Situation

As more samples and reports of disease occurrences rolled in, it became apparent that we were not dealing with a curiosity but with a problem of consequence on golf turf. Symptoms have been reported on fairways, greens, tees and aprons.



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We could isolate the *Ceratobasidium* fungus from many of these turf areas; from some we could isolate neither *Ceratobasidium* nor *R. solani* but still other unidentified fungi. At present we believe that the disease is not going to become the scourge of turfgrass but merely another problem to be solved on the way to quality turf.



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Brown Patch cont.

It would appear that humid, cool weather is most favorable for disease development.

Where did the problem come from: Why *Ceratobasidium* now and not 10 years ago?

Any new problem always stimulates the question of why now? and not before? Answers have ranged from: the discontinuance of growing season use of mercury to the introduction of the benzimidazole systemic fungicides in wide use. Others have blamed shifts in the weather towards cooler, wetter summers. At this point there is no correct answer and there may never be one. The best we can do is speculate based on the facts on hand. Our best estimate is that the same shift towards cooler, wetter summers that has brought on increased Red Thread prevalence and severity has also



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brought Cool Weather Brown Patch to prominence. Fungi respond to their environment. Those that are favored by a change in the environment become more common; those that are less favored become less common.

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Brown Patch cont.

Where do we go from there?

The major practical problem that the turfgrass manager faces is disease control to a level compatible with the uses of the area in question. At present we just do not have enough information about the disease to make clear recommendations for either cultural or fungicide control. Environmental manipulation does not seem to offer promise, especially for the golf course superintendent who is locked into a multitude of other concerns dealing with irrigation and culture. From a fungicide view the best recommendation would be to stick with success. If Cool Weather Brown Patch does appear and your current program is not holding it, then try shifting to other fungicides labeled and registered for Brown Patch until you meet with at least partial success. We are attempting to work out the fungicide situation. Dan Loughner, who is working on his M.S. in Plant Pathology with us, will be evaluating fungicides in the laboratory, greenhouse, and with luck, in the field. We will be screening both the *Rhizoctonia solani* warm temperature Brown Patch group as well as the *Ceratobasidium* cool temperature group of fungi.

Letter to the Editor:

It was brought to our attention recently that several superintendents in Wisconsin do not understand how or why the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission is involved with the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. Perhaps your readers will be interested.

From the dark ages through 1963 it was our custom to host a dinner for the few Wisconsinites attending the G.C.S.A.A. Conference and Show. Facilities at San Diego

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