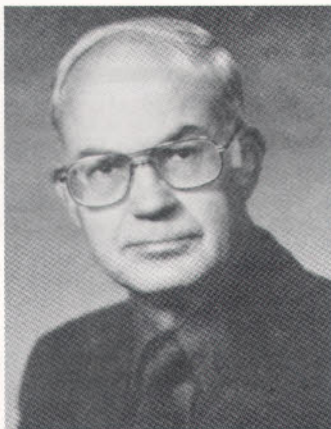


Looking Back

1984 Turf Diseases in Review

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Pythium problems that plagued many courses in 1983 were virtually absent this past growing season. Since weather factors determine, more than any other single factor, what diseases are going to occur, and how bad they are going to be, none of us were probably surprised that this disease which is only periodically epidemic in Wisconsin, took a break this year. But we had a number of other very interesting and significant disease problems to deal with during the season, and we will offer a few observations about them, from our perspective.

Snowmold. Conditions were favorable for snowmold, and some courses had problems. But in most instances the control treatments worked well where they were applied properly, and demonstrated their importance to turf quality in Wisconsin. There's another article dealing with that subject, so we'll not deal further with snowmold here.

Dollar spot. Perhaps the most interesting aspect about this disease is the outbreaks that occurred on many courses in October, during the cool, foggy weather period. This is certainly not the common pattern for that disease. Most courses are not "September-treated," but this disease normally stays quiet anyway. Those observations reminded us of the dollar spot-like symptoms that were evident at snow melt on several courses last April. We've seen that on previous occasions, too, but reports were greater this year. We successfully isolated *Sclerotinia* several times this fall, to confirm the fall infections, but could not do so with the winter attacks. It could be that lower temperature strains exist than we have formerly considered. This question will deserve superintendent observations in the

future. Some concerns have also been expressed about apparent build-up of resistance to Chipco 26019 on occasional courses. We've not verified the reports, but such has been verified in other states. We need to continue with rotational fungicide use patterns and monitoring in order not to lose valuable fungicides.

Bacterial wilt. Several courses reported outbreaks of this disease again on C-15 turfs. Conditions were apparently especially favorable for the bacterium this spring. Though we are no longer surprised when it occurs, there is concern that this bacterium which is essentially restricted in damage to C-15 or Toronto bentgrass, may change sufficiently to infect and damage other grasses. That would be a **very** serious situation, because acceptable bactericides haven't been developed, and control measures other than resistance are not really available. Though the symptoms help in diagnosis, laboratory isolations are also needed. Dr. Dave Roberts, Michigan State University, helped diagnose several Wisconsin infections, and also assisted our laboratory in becoming proficient in its identification.

Patch disease complexes. Turf professionals are becoming aware of the new diseases and organisms that are sometimes referred to as "patch diseases" because of that rather common symptom characteristic. Necrotic ring spot was adopted as the common name for a disease frequently referred to as "Fusarium blight." It has been confirmed in several states from Rhode Island to Washington. In fact, the causal organism (*Leptosphaera korrae*)

was first identified in Australia where it causes "spring dead spot" of bermuda grass. Californians this year confirmed that it was causing "spring dead spot" there, too, and it may ultimately be found to be involved with that disease everywhere. Internationally speaking, that would be a significant step forward, because the southland has struggled with that disease of unknown causation for forty years. For us, it's especially important on bluegrass, but we also isolate it from Poa, and we've killed Poa experimentally with it. At one time we were suspicious that it may be a major factor in our Poa decline. Now we don't know what to think—it isn't in tissue where we think it should be, if it were a major contributor.

Take-all patch (*Gaeumannomyces*) has received a lot of publicity over the past three years. Much of this is because of mistaken confusion with the NRS-causing organism, but we have isolated it for two years off bentgrass on one new course, and have isolated an organism we believe to be *Gaeumannomyces* off some dying Poa patches this summer. There, the bentgrass was not being affected. Strains, plus other factors, are probably at work.

Yellow patch (cool temperature brown patch) was more evident on Wisconsin courses than any year that we've known about to date. Although its damage is usually not as severe as some other problems, we'd better get to knowing more about the "Rhizoctonias" that are beginning to appear in lots of places.

We've looked for, but have not found "summer patch" (*Phialophora graminicola*) which was newly reported by Dr. Smiley at Cornell this year, and which could be causing some of our mysterious disorders.

You aren't alone if all of this is confusing at the moment. But we need to be conversant about them, and know how to watch for and deal with them. We plan to emphasize some aspects about this complex at the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association annual meeting on January 24, 1985.

Other problems. The outbreak of Fusarium patch (pink snow mold) in October was significant. Now we can understand why places like Washington and Oregon, with their

routine cool, wet winters, regard this disease as their number one concern! For us, we should tuck this experience away, and plan on early fall applications of some component of our snowmold control program to prevent future out-

breaks when we begin experiencing such weather patterns again.

And we encountered the usual variety of unusual, localized problems, including some on greens that we will want to examine closely in another year.

Diseases continue to be a problem, and some might be inclined toward pessimism after reading this report. We shouldn't be, for the overall impression of turf health was good. We'll just strive for even better turf in 1985.

RANSOMES INC. CONTINUES EXPANSION

Ransomes Inc., located in Johnson Creek, held ground breaking ceremonies on October 10, 1984 for its third major expansion in the last five years. They are a leading manufacturer of turf care equipment.

In 1979, Ransomes Inc. purchased forty acres of land from the Village of Johnson Creek, Wisconsin and built a factory of 90,000 square feet. A second facility covering 23,000 square feet was erected on the acreage in 1982 to accommodate increased warehousing needs. In October, the ground broken was for an additional 48,000 square feet of manufacturing space.

Ransomes Inc. began in rented facilities in 1972 with three full-time employees. Its growth in the commercial turf care equipment business necessitated a constant increase in employment and facilities. The company is now a



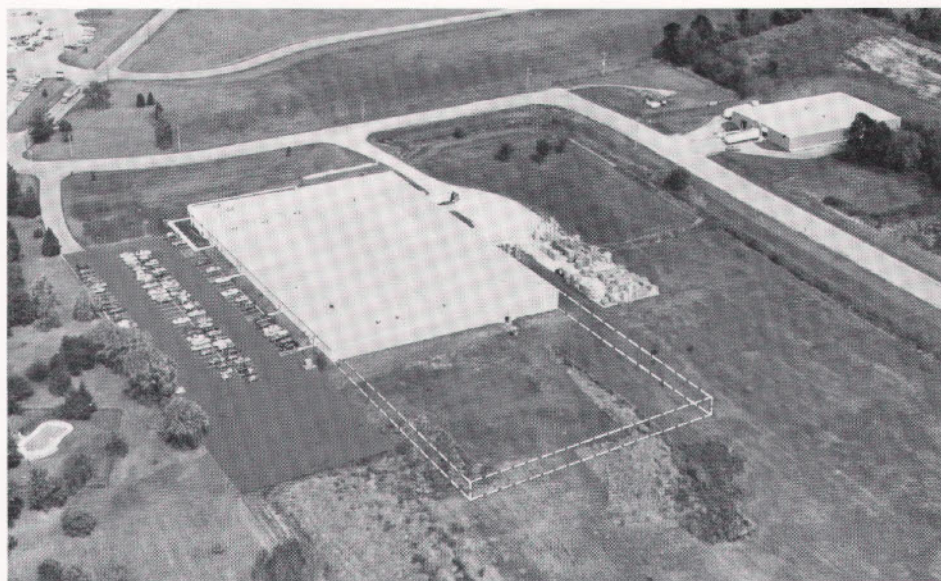
Participating in the ground breaking ceremony are Ransomes' executives Helmut Adam, President; Ron Tvedt, Vice President of Finance and Dick Lehman, Executive Vice President.

leading manufacturer of rotary and reel lawnmowers for golf course, landscape and municipal markets. Products manufactured in Johnson Creek are distributed in all of the U.S. and the provinces of

Canada plus in the Western European and Commonwealth countries.

The new facilities will allow Ransomes to continue its rapid growth in the reel mower market while allowing space for several new products that were developed recently in the rotary mower line. A good portion of the new space will allow housing for a complete inventory of spare parts for both the reel and the rotary units. Expansion will continue to mean more jobs for residents in the Johnson Creek area. In the past year and a half, twenty additional employees have been added to shop and staff positions; and it is expected that upwards of fifty could be utilized under the forward plan for the next four to five years.

The decision to continue the expansion in Wisconsin, despite the very enticing offers of southern states, is based on the very loyal, supportive employees at Ransomes Inc. and the welcome arms of the Johnson Creek community in general.



Aerial view of Ransomes, Inc. facilities at Johnson Creek, Wisconsin. Dotted line indicates the location of the 48,000 square foot manufacturing addition on the south end of the existing plant.