



Summertime Disease Observations

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Rhizoctonia — have you seen any of it? We've had very few days of really warm nights so far, which is good news for controlling both Rhizoctonia and Pythium. (This is being written in late July.) Reports of these diseases to date have been very light. And while we've gotten the fungus to grow from our inoculations both with *R. solani* (the brown patch fungus) and *R. zeae* (the sheath and leaf spot fungus) over the surface of Tom Harrison's Maple Bluff nursery turf where we're trying to compare fungicide efficacy on these two different Rhizoctonia diseases, we haven't seen any actual damage from it yet.

But some Rhizoctonia has occurred around Wisconsin. Under conditions like this summer, the symptoms can be much more subtle, and not produce the distinct patches that we normally associate with the disease. Instead, the disease tends to "run" under the upper leaves, killing lower parts and creating a generally thinned out appearance. So if you've had some areas that fit that description, look closely. You may have Rhizoc! While the affected leaves turn red or brown, you should also look for irregular blotches or spots on at least a few otherwise healthy appearing blades of grass.

Also, don't be surprised if it affects one species of grass while leaving another one in your mix totally unaffected. *Poa trivialis* is often first affected, for example. Ryegrass is also more susceptible than some other grasses. We have a summer patch plot with Randy Smith and Chuck Frazier at Nakoma. No summer patch yet, but the bentgrass pockets in some nontreated areas within the plot are showing symptoms like we described above. The *Poa* is unaffected. So no, it's not true — *Poa* is *not* more susceptible to brown patch than bentgrass. It depends upon the strain of the fungus!

Controlling Pythium — Pennsylvania State University results. We mentioned Pythium. I haven't seen any this

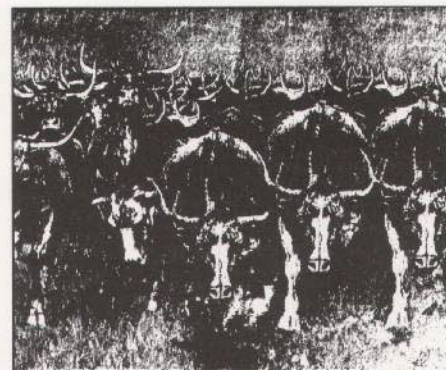
season. But some have asked about the use of tank mixes of fungicides, as described in Penn State tests. I talked with Pat Saunders about it. She has found that using one-third of the high label rate of Aliette (e.g., one-third of eight ounces) with one-third the low rates of each of Subdue and Banol (one-third of two and four ounces, respectively) has given excellent results under severe disease pressure, probably for two to three weeks, and without likelihood of encountering fungicide resistance problems.

That might be a good recipe to try during seasons with sustained Pythium pressure. But during a year like this one, where outbreaks are shortlived, you probably would also be happy with the old contact products like chloroneb (Terraneb) or ethazole (Koban or Terrazole).

A return of some missing diseases. Red thread/pink patch has been vicious in our red fescue variety plots at Yahara this summer. This is after an absence during the dry hot seasons of the last two years. It's also doing some damage in the ryegrass, and to a lesser extent, in the bluegrass varieties. It had become a disease of considerable concern during several years prior to 1988. So far it hasn't shown up yet in our red fescue fungicide trials, though. I hope it does. It's nearby, and we've spread some diseased clippings to encourage it. We really need to find an effective treatment for red thread. For us, we've not had much success with anything since Actidione disappeared, but some of the newer fungicides probably would do the job.

Necrotic ring spot is also appearing modestly in our bluegrass variety transplant study, the first time since it was established four years ago. We've also had a few calls and the diagnostic laboratory has processed a few samples. So NRS is back again, perhaps not as severe as we experienced it during the previous decade. Probably the important key is the cool wet spring we had.

Some of the disease responses we've been discussing should be on display at the WTA Field Day at Yahara Hills.



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