



The Surrounds

By Wayne G. Horman



What a year! The season started with the grass not growing at all in April or May. Then in July and early August you couldn't slow down the growth with growth regulators! They say you can hear corn growing in the summer; well, bluegrasses and bentgrasses were screaming with growth this season.

That excessive growth led to severe outbreaks of brown patch and Pythium. The last few weeks of July were really hard on many superintendents. Many of the plant protectants that weren't used earlier in the season were used extensively during this short period of summer.

This doesn't appear to be the year for summer patch. Not many cases have been seen, but take-all has been reported during July and early August. Dollar spot hasn't been a big problem up to this point in time. Some dollar spot has been reported on tees, roughs and in some cases fairways — generally higher cut turf. The low number of cases reported may be related to the moon not being full enough this summer!

When you hear the meteorologist forecast scattered showers, the summer of 1997 could be the forecast they are discussing. Over the last few months, portions of the Fox Valley and Milwaukee area hadn't received rain in weeks. Yet, in the Madison area, measurable amounts of rainfall occurred 22 out of 28 days. Can you say mosquitoes!!

Speaking of those blood sucking insects, there is plenty of discussion on how to reduce their population on golf courses. The use of voodoo sprays or garlic remedies haven't stopped the pests on golf courses I visited, with one exception—The Springs in Spring Green.

Brad Wagner, the superintendent at the Springs, claims they treated for mosquitoes last summer, and it appears that it reduced their numbers. The Springs in the past has always had a problem with mosquitoes. I am not sure of the product Wagner used, but if anyone has had any success battling mosquitoes, please give me a call to pass it on for next season.

The heavy rainfall in parts of southern Wisconsin during late June and July caused more than a few headaches for superintendents along streams or rivers. Courses were flooded in southern Wisconsin and turf damage was still evident weeks after water receded.

Blackwolf Run in Kohler was once again the host for the Anderson International Golf Tournament. The likes of Norman, Elkington, Els and Price played the River course in late July. The Wisconsin State Journal reported that when a couple of international golfers were asked their impression of the River course, the reviews were mixed.

One golfer in particular stated the lack of pin placements would make Blackwolf Run an unlikely candidate for the U.S. Open. However, the same golfer, who recently got into golf course design, said he could make the River course one of the best courses in the United States, with a few of his changes! Of course Ernie Els and Steve Elkington, who played in the final, didn't seem to complain about pin placements.

On the job front, Chad Johnson, superintendent at the Coachman's Inn and Golf Resort in Edgerton, has taken a new sales position with JW Turf, the John Deere distributor in

Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Johnson has been the superintendent at his family owned course since he graduated from the turfgrass management program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Johnson will be handling the Milwaukee area.

At Deer Valley GC in Barneveld, Dave Walter has filled the superintendent position. Walter moves up from the assistant position he took earlier this spring. Deer Valley is a new course still in the construction phase.

One other employment change took place that may effect our industry. Dr. Roger Wyse, the Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, resigned this summer. The University of Wisconsin-Madison hopes to have someone in place by fall. Maybe there is still hope for a new plant pathologist for the turf program.

Chris Roth, assistant superintendent at Pine Hills, CC, and his wife Tracy had a son in May, Tyson Michael. Congratulations!

As the end of another growing season soon approaches, superintendents start to determine what course of action they will choose for snowmold control. In northern and central Wisconsin, snowmold was very severe in places. Now, you would think superintendents may look for another alternative to what they used last year. However, one superintendent made a very good point. "I have used the same two or three fungicide combinations for the last 10 to 15 years, and with the exception of last year's results, I have had very good control. So, do I throw out all those years of results for one bad year?" 