

Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab 2003 Season Report



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As I sit down to write this article, the snow has begun to fall in Madison for the first time this year. Most of the golf course superintendents have applied their preventive snow mold treatments, and the samples coming into the lab have become few and far between. It is a good time for me to reflect on the last seven months.

It is hard to believe that seven months ago I was living in Virginia and was preparing to move back to my home state of Wisconsin. I was excited and nervous at the same time. I did not know if I had made the right decision to take the position at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and be separated from my wife for up to a full year (my wife, Rebecca, is finishing up her Ph.D. in mycology at Virginia Tech). I didn't know how I would be received by the superintendents or if the Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab (TDL) was even a priority to them.

When I began my work at the TDL on May 1st, which seems like years ago, I very quickly came to the realization that I had overwhelming support from the golf course superintendents and the turfgrass industry as well. Wherever I went, superintendents told me how important the lab was to them and that they would help me any way that they could. Additionally, industry representatives often bridged the gap between the TDL and superintendents by hand carrying many samples to the lab. When several samples started to roll into the lab in the early summer, I soon learned that I have a lot of help within the university as well. Whenever I had a tough weed or

insect sample, I could always count on Dr. Stier, Dr. Williamson, Dr. Kussow or Phil Pellitteri to steer me in the right direction. It is amazing how much I have learned from them as well as from talking with superintendents about their management techniques and what products work well on their courses.

I appreciate the warm welcome that I have received and I strive to be dependable when anyone needs a quick, accurate diagnosis of their problem as well as the most effective treatment options available. The diagnoses for the samples received so far this year are listed in the table and are split into professional (golf course, sod farm, athletic field, lawn and landscape, nursery) and homeowner categories.

As we all have experienced, the growing season for 2003 was unusual. At first glance, the cool wet spring followed by a mild, dry summer seemed like ideal conditions for growing grass. This is not entirely true because these conditions were very suitable for root pathogens that are active during the cool, wet weather of the spring and are exacerbated by dry summers. The samples received at the Turfgrass Diagnosis Lab reflected this trend well because the diseases that were diagnosed with the highest frequency from professional samples and homeowner samples were take-all patch and necrotic ring spot respectively. Both of these root-infecting diseases are enhanced by cool, wet springs and dry summers. If you are not familiar with take-all



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patch, I discussed the nature and control of this disease in the SEP/OCT edition of *The Grass Roots* from this year.

Two other diseases that were predominant this year were summer patch and Rhizoctonia yellow patch. Summer patch is common in dry years on annual bluegrass greens and Kentucky bluegrass, annual bluegrass and rough bluegrass fairways. The disease usually becomes evident when there is a heavy downpour following a dry period and when temperatures are in the 80s and 90s.

Rhizoctonia yellow patch is a wet weather, spring and fall disease that usually only results in rings of yellow turfgrass which quickly recover with the onset of either warmer or much colder temperatures. As for the non-disease samples, rough bluegrass (*Poa trivialis*) that died from heat stress and drought in August comprised the majority of the weed samples, while black turfgrass ateniensis accounted for three of the four insect samples.

Even though the weather kept the most destructive diseases in check, the TDL received 185 disease samples, which is an increase from the 2002 total of 156. I am encouraged that the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association feels that the TDL is a valuable resource and is worth supporting. I hope that you consider contracting with the TDL for 2004 if you have not done so in the past. If you would like to know more about the benefits of becoming a contract member of the TDL or have any questions regarding diseases, please contact me at (608)845-2535 or swa@plantpath.wisc.edu. You can also find all of this information as well as disease keys, disease alerts, sample submission instructions, forms, and much more at the TDL website (<http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/tddl/>).

2003 TDL Diagnoses

<u>Diagnosis</u>	<u>Professional</u>	<u>Homeowner</u>
Abiotic	20	22
Take-All Patch	18	0
Weed ID	11	22
Summer Patch	6	0
Necrotic Ring Spot	5	34
Rhizoctonia Yellow Patch	4	0
Insect	4	8
Fairy Ring	3	1
Leaf Spot	2	3
Sclerotinia Dollar Spot	2	0
Rhizoctonia Brown Patch	2	3
Microdochium Patch	2	0
Pythium Blight	1	2
Algae	1	0
Moss	1	0
Ascochyta Leaf Spot	0	3
Septoria Leaf Spot	0	2
Corticium Red Thread	0	1
Rust	0	1
Typhula Blight	0	1
TOTAL	82	103

EQUIPMENT FOR SALE

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- (2) **1999 John Deere 2653A Diesel Banks Mower** - 84" cut and 3 wheel drive - mint condition with low hours - **\$7,500** each.
- 1997 **Smithco Sand Star E Bunker Rake** - Plow blade, new batteries and tournament rake - excellent condition - **\$1,850**.
- 1994 **Toro 216 Banks Mower** - 84" cut and 3 wheel drive - good condition - **\$1,600**.
- 1989 **Cushman Truckster** - hydraulic dump box - New 20 hp Kohler retrofit engine - good condition - **\$2,300**.
- 2002 **T.I.P. 3 Point Spiker Overseeder** - Brand new, used twice excellent condition - **\$2,500**.
- (3) **Greens Groomer Brushes** - excellent condition - includes a three gang attachment - **\$750** each or **\$1,800** for the three gang.

Terra 320 Fairway Aerifier - good condition - new tines - **\$1,200**

For more information contact Scott Schaller
North Shore Golf Club
920-739-6729