

TDL Year in Review and Upcoming Changes for 2005



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TDL Year in Review

With another growing season behind us, it is time to look back at the samples that the TDL received over the past year. As most golf course superintendents already know, the arrival and departure of diseases that you see on your courses is heavily dependent on weather conditions. Consequently, the amount and type of samples that I receive in the lab often closely reflect the current weather cycles.

The year started off pretty quietly with near average rainfall and temperatures slightly above average. There was a marked increase in samples submitted in May when more than double the statewide average of rain fell. With the rainfall came a host of problems for many superintendents including flooding, reduced play, and difficulty keeping up with mowing the rapidly growing grass. To add insult to injury, several pathogens were taking advantage of the cool, wet weather by feasting on the succulent grasses.

The main disease problems during the late spring were foliar diseases such as *Microdochium* patch, *Rhizoctonia* yellow patch, and *Drechslera* blight of bentgrasses. The number of samples of these diseases

increased from last year. Last year also had a wet spring, although not for as long as 2004.

Microdochium patch, also known as "pink snow mold" was the most common diagnosis in the spring and early summer with a sample increase of 1000% over the previous year (Table 1). Pink snow mold is a poor common name for this disease because snow is not necessary for disease development; in fact, the TDL received a sample with active *Microdochium* patch on July 14th this year!

The cool, wet soils during the spring were also very favorable for root diseases such as necrotic ring spot and take-all patch. Both of these diseases colonize and rot crown and root tissue of the host during these weather conditions. Because of the saturated soil conditions in May and June, we expected to see a lot of samples with these diseases when warmer, dryer weather caused the plants to wilt.

2004 TDL Diagnoses

Diagnosis	Professional*	Homeowner*
Take-All Patch	17 (18)	0 (0)
Microdochium Patch	13 (2)	7 (0)
Abiotic	10 (20)	20 (22)
Rough Bluegrass (<i>Poa trivialis</i>)	8 (6)	5 (10)
Summer Patch	8 (6)	0 (0)
Weed ID	8 (5)	12 (12)
Necrotic Ring Spot	7 (5)	19 (34)
Rhizoctonia Yellow Patch	6 (4)	0 (0)
Helminthosporium Leaf Spots	5 (2)	1 (3)
Rhizoctonia Brown Patch	3 (2)	1 (3)
Algae	2 (1)	0 (0)
Anaerobiosis	2 (0)	0 (0)
Fusarium Blight	2 (0)	1 (0)
Unknown	2 (0)	0 (0)
Ascochyta Leaf Spot	1 (0)	2 (3)
Cool-Season Pythium Blight	1 (0)	0 (0)
Insufficient Sample	1 (0)	2 (0)
Insects	0 (4)	2 (8)
Rust	0 (0)	2 (1)
Slime Mold	0 (0)	2 (0)
Fairy Rings	0 (3)	1 (1)
Limonomyces Pink Patch	0 (0)	1 (0)
Typhula Blight	0 (0)	1 (1)
TOTAL	96 (82)	79 (103)

Table 1. *Numbers in parentheses are diagnoses in 2003

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2005 Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Services and Fees

TDL Service	Non-Member	TDL Member
Diagnosis With Phone Report	\$100	\$100
Diagnosis With Phone and Written Report	\$125	\$100
Out of State Fee	\$25	\$0
Site Visit	\$250	\$250*
Annual Disease Workshop	not included	included
Disease Alert Emails	not included	included
UW Turfgrass Research Results	not included	included

Table 2. *Contractors at the \$1000 level receive one complimentary site visit.

In reality, we saw the number of take-all patch samples remain steady and the number of necrotic ring spot samples decrease from the previous year even though the spring was more conducive for disease development this year. This discrepancy is attributed to the fact that the cool weather in July and August did not cause enough stress on the damaged plants to cause them to wilt. In contrast, the wet spring of 2003 was followed by hot and dry weather which quickly caused damaged plants to wilt.

This summer was ideal for growing grass in much of the state with cool temperatures and well spaced rain showers. Because of this, incidence of hot weather problems such as *Pythium* blight, *Rhizoctonia* blight (brown patch) and anthracnose were minimal and superintendents got a break from all of the problems associated with the spring weather. As of December 1st, the lab had received 175 samples, which was ten less than 2003. It is interesting to note that there were a higher proportion of professional samples this year (55%) than last year (44%). I suspect this is because of the decrease in homeowner samples with insect damage, dying rough bluegrass, and drought stress which are associated with hot summer weather.

TDL Changes for 2005

There is going to be a significant change in the fee schedule for the TDL starting in 2005. The fee for professional samples from non-contractors of the lab is increasing; however the fee for TDL contractors will remain unchanged (Table 2). The reason for this change is due to the fact that the lab does not receive any state or university support, and does not generate nearly enough money to pay basic lab expenses. This puts a strain on plant pathology research funds and grants which are used to cover the difference. Furthermore, a survey of other turfgrass labs has shown that the new fees are comparable with the prices already charged by most other states. This means that there has never been a better time to support the TDL by becoming a contractor. The benefits include reduced rates on diagnoses with written reports and added features such as free annual disease workshops, disease alerts via email, and University of Wisconsin turfgrass research results. If you have any questions about the new fees schedule or want information on how to become a contractor please contact the TDL at (608) 845-2535 or swa@plantpath.wisc.edu. ♣



golf industry show

The inaugural **Golf Industry Show**, which combines the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and the National Golf Course Owners Association trade shows, will be conducted **Feb. 10-12, 2005** at the **Orange County Convention Center** in Orlando, Fla.

