

Lab Updates and Projects

By **Bruce Schweiger**, Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Manager, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility

By the time this article is read I will have celebrated my one-year anniversary as your Turfgrass Diagnostics Lab Manager. Yes one year in and hopefully all prepared for the next one. I am constantly asked what I do in the winter, this is a question I have been answering my entire career, as all of you have. After snow mold trail applications were finished I was looking forward to the coasting season, winter.

My thoughts leaned toward no disease samples maybe I could talk Paul into sending me to Florida to recruit for new contract members. This did not happen, so what was I going to do. My new boss, Dr. Koch, started his new position January 1, congratulations to him. I wondered what that would mean in my world. As I expected Dr. Koch came out of the gates swinging with some fresh new ideas and projects.

The biggest project of the winter was re-modeling to lab. With a little help from my friends we removed virtually everything in the lab and had the floors re-finished. As this was happening

Dr. Koch and I began re-designing the lab and our office space and adding ergonomics to the equation. I encourage anyone that may be in the area to stop by our lab and see our new set-up. Change can be good and from what I remember the lab has been the same since before Steve Abler was here. Time will tell but so far the lab is functioning very efficiently.

The next big project was to re-build the tdl.wisc.edu website. With the help of Dixie in the IT Department there have been many changes. The new website is much easier to manage than the old site. To make changes to the old website we had to actually go down to campus and Russell Labs to get access through a secured

server.

The new website allows us to make changes remotely. This will allow us to post updates and keep everything very current. All of the research will continue to be posted, that will not change. With the more user friendly access Dr. Koch is looking at adding some new additions to the site, more on those at a later time. I feel the biggest upgrade is that all the sample submission forms are available online. You can now open the forms from a computer, tablet or your smartphone and fill them out. Once filled out they will be automatically sent to me. This alerts me that a sample is coming to the lab.

My request is when you fill out the form please fill them out completely so when the samples arrive I can match the proper form to the proper sample, we do receive

DATCP. These training sessions are team taught by Dr. Koch, PJ Liesch and me. In January prepping for these classes started in earnest. Even though I have been a Certified Applicator for many years, I had much to learn. With the guidance of Dr. Koch and PJ Leisch (Phil Pelliteri's temporary replacement) I was able to be ready for our first class in late January in Madison. The day arrived and I was a little nervous to get up in front of the huge crowd and give my sections of the training. As usual with winter classes the snow came and attendance dwindled to 12 attendees. The day went well and I was ready for the next 5 classes over the next 2 months all over the state. Many of our training sites had 100+ attendees. There were a few of you at the trainings and to date I was never booed or had any rotten

fruit thrown at me, so for year one I consider that a huge accomplishment.

Spring has been slow to come to Wisconsin and as I wrote this I was in Missouri visiting my new Grandson while Sam Soper and Dr. Koch were

more than one sample in a day. If you have pictures you can send them to me at bschweiger@wisc.edu or text them to me at 608-445-5490. The new system will allow me to know ahead of time when samples are arriving and if for some reason I am out of the office, I can notify you or contact the reserve personnel (Dr. Koch) to have them process your sample. Dr. Koch has some great ideas on how we can utilize the website to enhance our service to homeowners and growers alike. Stay tuned for more on these ideas as he rolls them out.

One of my new assignments is that of the trainer for the Pesticide Application Training class offered over the winter by


traveling in the arrowhead of Minnesota finally doing the last of our snow mold ratings. No we had not just been lazy and not made the trip north, they have been getting snow and every time we planned a trip north they would get 4+ inches of snow. We did however sneak in Snow Mold field Days at Wausau CC April 23rd. The week before even Wausau was covered in snow. The results at Wausau were amazing. The data is posted on the tdl.wisc.edu website. If you want the nickel tour of the results and see the snow mold pressure at Wausau you can go to the tdl.wisc.edu website and on the main page click on the link to GCSAATV.

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TURFGRASS DIAGNOSTIC LAB

This year's Snow Mold Field Day was filmed by Epic Creative and is being hosted on GCSAATV. The video is under 9 minutes and Paul is a natural, we hope Network news never see this video. We know that it is hard for people to take the time early in the season when courses are opening and staff is limited to join for Snow Mold Field Days, so we partnered with GCSAA to have the day filmed and posted on GCSAATV. Please let us know if you found this helpful and

beneficial. Sample submission to the lab this spring have been slow. This I am sure will change with the cool, wet weather, perfect for root pathogens. When the weather breaks I assume to rest of the diseases will begin in earnest. Snow Mold questions have been the most prevalent issues, why did this not work or homeowners curious about Microdochium nivale (pink snow mold) in their yards. The top questions this spring has

been how do I re-seed my lawn, what type of grass do I plant and can I still re-seed after the pre-emergent application has been made? Well that was my winter and early spring. I am ready for warmer weather and the season to start. If you get a chance please remind Paul that we need to find more contract members and Florida is begging for a good Diagnostics Lab. As I always I am willing to sacrifice my time for the success of the program. 



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