



# When Snow Mold Season Comes Around

By Dr. Julie R. Meyer  
Extension Plant Pathologist  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

It's too early to be thinking of snow drifts and freezing rains, so don't let this article interrupt your enjoyment of our mild sunny mornings. But, inevitably, planning for the winter must be done. When that time comes, here is some information I've gathered on snow mold control this past year that you may find helpful as you plan your snow mold management strategy.

First of all, I'd like to share with you some results of fungicide trials conducted this year in several northern and southern locations in Wisconsin. The purpose of the trials was to evaluate the efficacy of currently labeled and experimental fungicides, and combinations of fungicides, in controlling gray snow mold. Gray snow mold is caused by several species of the *Typhula* fungus, including *Typhula incarnata* and *Typhula ishikariensis*. The freezing rains in early winter, the heavy snowfalls throughout the winter, and the spring that was slow in coming, all contributed to extensive outbreaks of *Typhula* snow mold throughout the state. In plant pathology, we call that disease pressure. Even in southern areas, the snow mold we observed was caused mainly by *Typhula* spp and less by *Microdochium nivale*, the fungus that causes pink snow mold (although this fungus was active, too, especially during our long, cold spring).

Because of the phase-out of mercury fungicides, the trials emphasized fungicides that do not contain mercury. Treatments were applied once in late October in the north and early November in the south to bentgrass putting greens and practice greens and a practice range of about 40% Kentucky bluegrass and 60% fescue. The plots were rated for snow mold injury in mid-April by determining the percent of 6 ft x 9 ft plots that had typical symptoms of snow mold.

Table 1. Effect of fungicides on the severity of gray snow mold on a bentgrass putting green in northern Wisconsin (near Rhinelander, WI).

Treatment	Rate per 1000 sq ft	% plot w/symptoms	Mean	SE
ProStar 70 WDG + PCNB 75W + X-77	4.3 oz + 4.0 oz + .025%	0.25	0.1	
Chipco 26019 50WDG + Terrachlor 75 WP + Daconil 2787 82.5WP	2 oz + 4 oz + 4 oz	1.1	0.3	
Chipco 26019 50WDG + Daconil 82.5WDG	4 oz + 8 oz	1.7	0.8	
ProStar 70 WDG	4.3 oz	1.8	0.8	
Fluazinam F 500 g/L	4 oz	3	2.0	
ProStar 70 WDG + Daconil 2787F	4.3 oz + 8 fl oz	3.3	3.1	
Fluazinam F + Daconil 2787	2 oz + 5 oz	3.8	2.2	
Chipco 26019 50WDG + Terrachlor 75WP	2 oz + 4 oz	8.6	1.9	
ProStar 70 WDG + X-77	4.3 oz + 0.25%	10.6	5.3	
Chipco 26019 50 WDG + Daconil 82.5 WDG	2 oz + 8 oz	10.9	5.7	
Untreated		26.5	9.2	

Four replications per treatment. 38.4 oz water per 150 sq. ft. (256 oz/1000 sq ft)  
SE=standard error of the mean (+/-)

It was good to see that several labeled, nonmercury fungicides gave good control of gray snow mold, even in a severe year. Combinations of fungicides were often especially effective. The results in Table 1 are from a bentgrass green in northern Wisconsin but are typical for what we found in all of the trials, including the bluegrass/fescue site. Several of the experimental compounds also looked promising. Please remember that these are results from a single year and, therefore, the fungicides cannot necessarily be expected to perform in the same way under different conditions. However, we will conduct evaluations of the most promising fungicides every year which will help determine how consistently they are working.

New York state has banned the use of mercury fungicides and I have gathered together their current recommendations for chemical controls. They include anilazine (Dyrene), thiram (Spotrete, Thiramad), chloroneb (Terreneb SP) and quintozone (Turficide, Terrachlor) as contact fungicide options, and chlorothalonil (Daconil 2787), fenarimol (Rubigan), iprodione (Chipco 26019), propiconazole (Banner), and triadimefon (Bayleton) as systemic chemical control options. Remember that systemic fungicides are effective only when the turf is not yet dormant, as they must be taken up by the plant.

Healthy, nonstressed turf which hardens off in a timely manner has the most resistance to snow mold. So our job in research and in turf management is to think of how we can enhance chemical control, and perhaps reduce the amount needed, by getting the turf in a healthy, nonstressed state during the time when the fungus is most active (late fall and early winter). This will reduce the ability of the fungus to get into the leaf and colonize it.

Fertilization and other management practices affect carbohydrate reserves (important because long, deep snow cover subjects the plants to nutrient exhaustion), dormancy, hardening off and subsequent freezing tolerance—all of which play a role in the development of snow mold.

There is some controversy about the effects of fall fertilization on snow mold. I think this stems from the type and timing of fertilization. In general, if the effect of added N is to encourage growth and delay the onset of dormancy, then the turf is likely to be more susceptible to snow mold. However, moderate applications of balanced fertilizer, with special attention to adequate K, applied in the fall when turf is nearly dormant, encourages rapid growth and recovery in the spring. Recovery time is an important part of snow mold management. I do not know yet exactly what role potassium may have in the resistance of turf to snow mold, but I have seen and heard several reports of this.

This year the plots were rated only once at snow melt. This gives us a snapshot of the presence and severity of gray snow mold, but doesn't give us the whole picture. How quickly does the turf recover? How quickly does dead turf fill in? Does

injury to bentgrass result in invasion by *Poa annua*? These aspects are as important, or more important, to you than simply the amount of gray snow mold present after the snow melts. I was often taken by surprise at how quickly some heavily damaged turf was able to recover. In fact, because of a late snowfall, we postponed rating some of the tests and barely made it before the grass had recovered! In the future, I think we should be looking at the dynamics of this disease and how control strategies affect the entire process of getting the turf back in shape after the winter.

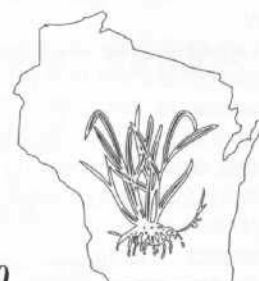
There is much to do in the area of gray snow mold control and it will be challenging from the biological as well as turf management perspective to figure out our most effective

strategies. My new graduate student, Steve Millett, is interested in gray snow mold and will likely be taking up some of this work. Steve just arrived in Madison last month with his wife, Debbie, to join my program for his Ph.D. in turf pathology. Steve is coming to us from Clemson University, where he just completed his Master's degree in Plant Pathology. He worked with turf for his Master's degree and wrote his thesis on the interactions of pre-emergence herbicides and *Rhizoctonia* brown patch—a work that won him an award at the American Phytopathological Society's southern division meetings last February. Steve tells me he is looking forward to his work in Wisconsin and we'll be sure to get him going on some good projects. There is plenty to do! 🌱

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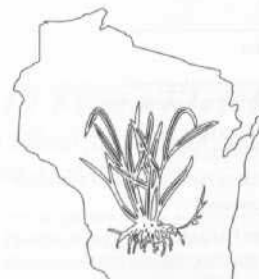
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## BLAME

By Monroe S. Miller

The Field Day crowd was huge and a lot of us who had been involved for what seemed like forever were ebullient.

Or, as Bogey Calhoun said, "Giddy, you could say, except real men don't get giddy."

The event was everything a Field Day should be and was blessed by as beautiful a day as August could provide. A shower the day before had freshened the setting.

Bogey, Tom Morris, Billie Flagstick, Ed Middleton, Sandy Grant and I ended up together in the shade on the north side of the Noer building. We were all nursing a Garten Brau as we sat down and leaned back against the building.

"If heaven is like this," sighed Steady Eddie, "the Lord can take me now."

"Amen," Billie added in agreement.

The sight was inspiring, to say the least: colorful machinery, a large crowd and more turf research and grass plots than a human could observe and study and absorb in a week, let alone in a day. We were thrilled.

"What a job the faculty and the station staff have done," said Billie. "I hope they realize how significant this event has become."

"I think they do," Sandy mused. "The chairmen of Soil Science, Horticulture, Entomology and Plant Path were here by mid-morning. And they are all still here, hob-nobbing with everyone in sight."

"Can't blame 'em," Bogey said. "This is the place to be today. Nowhere else in the universe can top this. Hey, did you guys notice that the CALS Dean has been here most of the day, too?"

We looked out across the Noer farm and saw Dr. Rossi holding court with a crowd of sod producers in the middle of a variety trial. Professor Kussow was center stage, along with his grad students, on the rootzone amendment plots; the soft green of the bentgrass contrasted sharply (and beautifully)

with the dark green, almost black color of the Kentucky bluegrass surrounds.

"I'm really happy for Wayne and Chuck Koval," Tom offered. "They, for years, literally had no resources to work with. And now they have what has to be one of the best turfgrass facilities in the country. It must be fun for them to come to work out here."

"They deserve a lot of credit, too," Steady added. "We couldn't have done it without them. Honestly, I'm inspired by them."

All the guys agreed.

We were somewhat startled when someone rapped on the window next to us from inside the building. It was Scottie Fennimore.

"Mind if I come out and join you?" he asked.

"Yeah, we mind," said Eddie. "Why don't you go home?"

"Get a Garten Brau and join us," Tom invited.

"Be right there," came the eager reply from the Mt. Hope G & CC superintendent.

Scottie was in the Noer Facility lab with Professor Meyer, looking at a sample he'd brought with him under the microscope. He was getting a disease diagnosis as a Field Day bonus. And he was happy about it.

"Dr. Meyer was a great choice as a successor to Dr. Worf, wouldn't you guys agree?" queried Sandy Grant.

"Couldn't have been better," was

the reply in chorus.

"I didn't think anyone could ever replace Gayle," said Tom. "But she surely has. I still miss him, but not as much as I thought I would. Julie has done a superb job. We are lucky she's here."

There was a serenity to the day, I thought. Late summer in Wisconsin always brings a sense of relief for golf course superintendents. The trend toward maturity was unmistakable; we all felt it. The golf tournaments were nearly over for us. Our school-age employees were now talking about school, and some were even excited about it.

The corn fields north and west of the Noer Facility were ripening. The silk on the end of the fat ears was already brown. The cattails rose sharply out of Morris Pond to our south, and the roadside along the research plots, to the east, was colorful with blooming goldenrod and Queen Anne's Lace and milkweed. The black-eyed Susans were at their peak maturity. And the apples on the old tree along the entry road had an unmistakable reddish blush to them.

I was sitting with my knees drawn close up to my chin. As soon as I stretched my legs out in front of me, everybody did the same.

"Can I get anybody another Garten Brau?" asked Sandy. The guys were fine.

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"Ask in another 10 minutes," Bogey finally replied.

A beautiful monarch butterfly lazily floated past us—another sure sign of late summer.

A cicada's shrill drone also signaled the serene August day. It is one of the drowsiest of all late summer sounds. We heard the crickets from all corners of the research station.

"If we sit here long enough, fellas, we'll be hearing the katydids," sighed Tom. There was an unmistakable sense of weariness in his voice.

"What are you thinking about?" I asked the veteran of almost 30 golf seasons, 25 of them at Maple Leaf CC.

"I was just thinking how peaceful this day is, how quiet and mellow. I feel the best I've felt all year.

"It's probably been the toughest year in what has become a long career," he went on. "And the least fun."

"I'll second that," added Bogey Calhoun. He was uncharacteristically serious.

There was unanimous agreement.

"Up until a month ago, work on our course was pure hell," complained Scottie. "I couldn't take another year like this one. I am just glad we had a nice day for Field Day. The way the season's been, one could have expected the worst weather and the smallest crowd in history."

It had been a brutal year all across Wisconsin, one of the worst in memory.

The seasons, at times, were transposed.

It snowed in late October, disrupting the application of snow mold materials. By Thanksgiving we were in short sleeve shirts.

It had snowed for Christmas, much to everyone's relief—this is Wisconsin, after all. But by New Years the snow was gone and it was replaced by rain from thunderstorms. It is Wisconsin, after all.

It rained for days, on frozen soils, and as it ended the temperatures plummeted, freezing everything. Putting greens and tees were turned into skating rinks, fairways looked like frozen rivers. It was scary.

"Do you guys remember sitting together at the GCSAA conference last winter, wondering what all that ice would bring us?" Sandy asked.

"Yeah, I remember," came the reply from Steady. "And I recall Bogey's smart answer was 'no sweat'."

"If memory serves me right, Tom predicted almost exactly what we saw when April arrived," Scottie reminisced.

Heroic efforts were made all over Wisconsin to remove the thick ice cover.

Naturally, as bad luck would have it, heavy snows fell on top of the ice. The resulting complications were enormous and laid waste to many plans for ice removal.

The job of removing snow from golf greens around the state was almost impossible. Thirty inches of the fluffy white stuff, which would be welcome almost any other time, made getting from green to green a chore. All that snow had to be put somewhere that wouldn't cause even more trouble once spring thaws started.

"The blanket of snow caused another problem," Tom said, coming out of deep contemplation. "It hid the real problem from the players. I don't know how many of them said to me 'Gosh, Tom, you must be happy with all this snow.' The few who would listen to my concerns about ice looked confused when I stopped talking."

"Same thing happened to me at Shady Dell CC," Bogey pitched in. "Literally no one believed me when I tried to discuss the subject of winter kill. The deep snow cover gave our players a real sense of well being."

Pumpkin Hollow CC had suffered maybe the most severe damage, and Billie Flagstick had really been under the gun.

"It seems amazing," Bill began slowly, "that so little research has been done on winter injury to turf. Golf is so popular in the upper Midwest and the Northeast, yet essentially no work has been done on the problem. And it is a problem somewhere in the two regions ever year."

"If I were to write a priority agenda for the Noer Facility, it would be low temperature injury to **all** species of turfgrass first, second, third, fourth and fifth."

"It's a natural," Scottie chimed in.

"Jobs are going to depend on it," opined Steady Eddie.

The subject of "jobs" and winter kill caused some uneasiness among the guys. They shifted their weight; one cleared his throat; another looked around somewhat nervously. It was a touchy subject.

It was Tom Morris who finally spoke. The topic clearly irritated him.

"Kussow and Rossi and the rest of the research team might actually define winter injury and lead the way to developing methods to lessen or avoid it," Tom speculated.

"But no amount of research," he continued, "will solve the problem of politics in golf."

He went on.

"Often times, politics and political considerations outweigh agronomy and good judgment in golf clubs. Some call it the requisite public relations."

"And I have no problem with that. Public relations is a part of what goes into managing the golf course at such facilities. It goes on during all seasons, and the experienced, mature golf course superintendent understands that and handles the attending duties with aplomb."

"But when golfers see their course after a long and wicked winter and injury is present, there is an immediate reflex to 'blame' someone. And invariably that someone is the golf course superintendent."

"I tend to agree with you in most instances, but with some very notable exceptions," I was compelled to say.

"I am one of the lucky ones. Our members as a group and as a rule will listen to explanations, accept them and move to help me with the solutions. But, again, I am one of the fortunate. I have seen, far too often, just what you are talking about, Tom."

"Tom is right," Bogey said, "and sadly the Shady Dell members are quick to ask aloud and often 'what did he do wrong?' or 'what didn't he do?'. When there is winter kill, I am assumed guilty. They blame me."

Steady Eddie was impatient for a chance to talk.

"Count me among the unfortunate. Last summer, when a tornado tore through Breezy Hill Country Club and destroyed nearly a hundred trees, the members were great. The board approved extra funds; members in construction businesses offered men and equipment to help put things right; and players were talking about organizing work days to help us. It was so gratifying to me."

"Then, when they saw the winter kill this spring, the reaction was 'what the hell did that mope do to cause this?' They blamed me, just like Tom said."

"In fact, some wanted to make a change. Can you believe it? It has left a real scar, so much so that I often wonder if I want to work for them any longer."

"It's really tough," ventured Bill, "when you are the only one in an area with winter injury. Then the members insist you erred. No questions about it. Guilty without a trial."

"Proving," Tom said with a smile, "that misery really likes company when it comes to winter kill."

Sandy, who had been quiet until now, wanted a turn. "This business of

blame is so peculiar to golf.

"Who does the commercial grower blame when the winter weather kills acres and acres of strawberries?" he asked.

"Who does the DOT blame when a cruel winter kills roadside crownvetch for miles and miles?"

"No one," he said, answering his own question.

"Who does the nurseryman blame when a ten acre block of autumn purple ash is killed after a severe winter? No one. How about the apple orchard in Gays Mills or the cherry orchard in Door County that suffers in the winter and has no fruit crop—who do they blame? No one.

"Or how about the farmer who loses 90 percent of his alfalfa—who is he supposed to blame? Himself? Of course not. No one is to blame."

"It's the breaks," Sandy said. "It's the weather. It's the way things are. It's the way it goes. It happens—always has and always will. No one should be blamed."

Scottie glanced up and gestured with his left hand at the same time he quietly spoke. "Look over there fellas."

He was looking in the direction of the western edge of the Noer Research Facility.

We looked and smiled almost in unison at the sight of seven whitetail deer ambling on the far property line. They ignored the civilization around them, heading for the depths of University Ridge to continue grazing and fattening up for a tough Wisconsin winter that would be here too soon for all of us.

Their presence sort of brought the guys out of the thoughtful mood they (and I) were all in. We realized how late it had gotten.

The crowd was mostly gone. Exhibitors were loading equipment on semi trailers. Grad students were disassembling displays and removing plot stakes. The mood was melancholy, a perfect fit for the late summer season.

"Well," Tom said. "Since somebody has to take the rap for winter kill, I propose we suggest that, henceforth, all golfers put the blame on God, whoever He (or She) might be for each individual. And leave the golf course superintendent alone to repair the damage as quickly as he can.

"In most calamities, people look to God. They should for this one, when it occurs, too. I mean, when push comes to shove, golf course superintendents are absolutely helpless before nature, and so is everyone else. So don't blame us.

"There are limits to everything in nature and we shouldn't forget it. Winter kill every decade or so is just a little reminder from the Big Guy of that. He's in charge; blame him."

"Or blame Frank Rossi," said Steady Eddie as Dr. Rossi walked by.

"The Garten Brau is all gone. I'm surprised you guys are still here," Frank said.

"We are talking about winter kill and how we always get blamed for it," Bogey answered.

"By next year we expect you'll remake the genetic codes of the golf course grasses in Wisconsin, manipulate them and control winter injury. Our lives and our jobs will be easier," he continued.

"And if it doesn't work and we still get winter kill, we'll be able to blame you."

Frank smiled. I think he sensed our frustration and anticipation of the win-

ter now really only a short time away.

"Great Field Day, Frank. You and Wayne and Chuck and Julie did a super job. Everybody was pleased," said Scottie.

"Hey, Frank," Sandy offered, "since there isn't a holiday worth mentioning in August, we think you ought to make the Field Day an official Wisconsin holiday. It sure is worth celebrating."

Frank was pleased with the back door compliment. He moved on into the building.

We stood up, stretched and gathered up our empty Garten Brau bottles and headed for our trucks. We were a little tired but still somehow renewed by the sharing of emotions as only good friends and colleagues can. It was one of the great things about Field Day.

"Hope that Chevy starts," Sandy hollered to Bogey.

With that we waved to one another and headed on home. ♣

## SYMPOSIUM TO EXAMINE WINTER DAMAGE

*By Rod Johnson*

The twenty-eighth annual Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 2 and November 3, 1993. As last year, it will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, 333 Kilbourn Avenue in Milwaukee. The Symposium committee has chosen WINTER DAMAGE as the topic for this year.

One of the frustrations of golf course management in Wisconsin is the fickle nature of winter injury. Everyone seems to take "their turn" at damage caused by low temperatures, ice or low temperature pathogens. Some golf course superintendents in Wisconsin seem to get more than their fair share.

This year the Symposium will take an in-depth look at the physiology of winter damage. How and why damage occurs and why some turf withstands injury better than others will be examined. Attendees of the event are assured of leaving armed with a better understanding of the problems brought on by winter and therefore will be better able to plan for the winter season. The hope is to increase

the odds for survival.

An impressive lineup of speakers includes Dr. Frank Rossi, Dr. Randy Kane and Dr. John Roberts. Speakers from other research institutions will be announced as they confirm their place on the program.

The USGA will lend its customary expertise. Jim Latham and Bob Vavrek will both be on the program. Tom Charnok, a golf course superintendent from Buffalo, New York, will relay his several years of experience in controlling snow mold without the use of mercurial fungicides.

The popularity of panel discussions will be expanded upon with a panel each day. A panel will be held on Tuesday, providing our visiting experts an opportunity to expand on their prepared presentations. On Wednesday a panel of three Wisconsin golf course superintendents will discuss "The Politics of Winter Damage."

Mark your calendars now for November 2 and 3, and take part in a WGCSA tradition. This promises to be another good one! ♣





## Same Old, Same Old

By Robert Vavrek, Jr. — Agronomist  
Great Lakes Region, USGA Green Section

The two most common topics of discussion during Turf Advisory Service visits this season will come as no surprise to anyone: the unreliable nature of *Poa annua* and green speed. If I had a dollar for every green that lost a significant amount of *Poa* from either winter kill or midsummer heat stress, then I could probably afford a new set of Calloway woods.

Last summer, the unusually mild weather caused little if any stress to *Poa annua*. Consequently, many courses in the nine-state Great Lakes Region entered the winter with a "bumper crop" of *Poa* on greens, fairways, etc. In fact, a number of courses in the northern transition zone, central to southern Illinois and Indiana, found that the percentage of *Poa* on greens increased during the winter. This came as an unwelcome surprise to a few superintendents who had made a considerable amount of progress reducing the amount of *Poa* through overseeding programs and the careful use of plant growth regulators.

Courses in the northern portions of the region were the first to experience significant losses of *Poa annua*. "Crown hydration" and to a lesser extent prolonged periods of ice cover caused severe injury in poorly drained, low-lying areas. Perennial ryegrass practice tees were also hard hit. To make matters worse, recovery of damaged areas was very slow this spring because of the cool days and cold nights accompanied by frost — conditions that persisted well into June in some areas.

Many courses throughout Wisconsin, northern Michigan, northwest Illinois and northern Iowa were affected by winter kill. Several very highly regarded golf courses were sodding entire greens this spring. Fortunately (as if there's anything fortunate about winter kill), the damage was so widespread that the superintendents' jobs were not in jeopardy and golfers generally took the damage in stride.

There were, however, several exceptions. For instance, at one city course an old-time golfer started a petition to fire the superintendent because he had obviously poured gasoline on the greens over the winter which killed the turf!

Courses in central to southern Illinois and Indiana were hit next. The mild summer last year left the impression that *Poa annua* wasn't all that bad after all. Many courses entered the summer with a "double dose" of *Poa* in greens and fairways because little turf was lost from heat or drought last season. Well, take all the *Poa* that should have died last summer, add that to the *Poa* that would normally die this summer, and for good measure add a very shallow root system caused by heavy frequent rain this spring and you have a time bomb just ticking away.

The bomb exploded around the end of July. Frequent heavy rainfall saturated soils to a point where they became very slow to accept any more water. A heavy early morning rain followed by a sunny, very hot and humid afternoon pro-

duced ideal conditions for wet wilt in low puddled areas of greens and fairways. If the turf didn't die outright, it became very susceptible to the intense disease pressure from pythium and brown patch.

Many superintendents had already used up their fungicide budget by August and had little to show for it. Active pythium on a perennial ryegrass tee was seen at 11:00 a.m. at one southern Illinois course.

Losses of turf were sometimes blamed on more exotic problems such as "bacterial wilt" or nematodes, when simple heat stress was the more likely explanation for the injury. The take home lesson—when the going really got rough, *Poa annua* died within several days while even the older varieties of bent remained in relatively good condition in spite of the heat and humidity. Often the difference between live and dead *Poa* was adequate surface and subsurface drainage.

In contrast, the summer has been relatively mild in the central part of the region this year. Courses in Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee and Minneapolis/St. Paul have not had the intense stress and severe injury experienced farther north or south. It was difficult shifting gears between visits. After all, how sympathetic could I be to a Green Committee Chairman who is disappointed about having only 9 to 10 feet green speeds after visiting courses for two weeks that would just like to have enough grass on the greens to slow the ball down (pure algae stimps at over 12 feet when dry).

The low handicap golfers tend to judge the quality of all the greens by the conditions on the flattest, easiest green on the course. The playing conditions on the most difficult, contoured green should dictate the speed of the greens if consistent conditions between greens are desired. I know—easy to say, but very difficult to convince the better golfers who constantly compare playing conditions between courses. Of course they are often invited to play other courses when that particular course has been primed for tournament conditions. They come home assuming that all courses should double cut and rolled each day.

Roll? Did I say roll? If the greens still have grass this summer, then the golfers want to know if they can roll them.

Yes, rollers work. The green will be faster and smoother, but what is the price? The long term effects of rolling the variety of greens that exist—sand, soil, USGA, "modified" USGA, etc. etc. are not well known. Will the surface seal over? Will grain become a problem? Time will tell, but the simpler, practical problems are real and must be considered as well.

For example, faster greens have fewer hole locations. So how will concentrating the traffic into a more limited area affect the quality of turf over time? Similarly, pace of play has become a concern at many courses. Perhaps the scratch golfers can handle fast greens. But for the average

golfers, 3 and four putts can quickly transform an enjoyable 4½ hour round of golf into a 6 hour ordeal. As the saying goes, "be careful what you wish for; it may come true."

There will always be a golfer who won't be pleased until his opponent misses that downhill putt and it rolls off the green, down the fairway and out of bounds.

I haven't given up hope because the other day a Green Committee Chairman raised this question during the visit: "Wouldn't the greens be healthier if we raised the height of cut from 1/8" to 5/32" but maintained the speed and smoothness by rolling a few times a week and perhaps rolling instead of mowing on Mondays?"

Sometimes going the extra mile to communicate and educate pays off. 🌱

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## MINNESOTA GCSA ISSUES INVITATION TO THEIR 66th ANNUAL TURF CONFERENCE

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The Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association is moving its 66th annual conference to the Convention Center in downtown Minneapolis and has invited all Wisconsin golf course superintendents to attend.

Their move, much like that of the WGCSA Symposium last year, was made to offer more space and the opportunity for concurrent sessions. Each session will target a particular topic and seek to thoroughly explore it from several angles. The new location also will lend itself to a very moderate fee structure. Conference registration will be on a daily, two or three day basis. The Wednesday luncheon is priced separately and is the only meal offered in an organized fashion.

The MGCSA meeting will be held on November 17, 18 and 19, 1993. Their speaker roster is excellent and includes the likes of Dr. Frank Rossi, Jim Latham, Bob Vavrek and Tom Doak. Dr. Brad Peterson from the University of Minnesota and Dr. Rod Farrentino from Cornell University are included. Others there will be Reed Mackenzie (former U.S. Open chairman), Mike Morley (Wadsworth Construction), George Carroll (Towne and Country Club), Janet Altman (OSHA), Jim Liserud (Ex.Dir., Physically Limited Golfers), Craig Waryan (PGA pro) and the USGA Green Section National Director Jim Snow. Several Minnesota golf course superintendents will discuss hosting a golf tournament. The general manager of the Minnesota Timberwolves will speak at the luncheon on Wednesday, and David McNalley will serve as their keynote speaker.

The conference includes an expanded trade show, a hospitality night at the convention center and the chance to see the Timberwolves play Friday night.

This sounds like it is going to be a great educational opportunity. For more information, call Scott Turtinen of the MGCSA at 612-473-0557. 🌱

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## WGCSA SUMMER MEETING FORMAT DOESN'T PASS MUSTER WITH SOME

By Monroe S. Miller

When I was an undergraduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, I once had the occasion to attend a summer meeting of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. It was a great experience, one I haven't forgotten.

The meeting format was comfortable. Members came to the host golf course for lunch. A business meeting was conducted. A speaker was a key part of the program.

Following the educational presentation, the assembled WGCSA members adjourned to the golf course for a tour. It included a discussion of fertilizer and disease control and overall management objectives. Budgets were discussed. The irrigation system and pump station were demonstrated; the shop was inspected.

After all questions were answered and the conversation dwindled, they went back to their vehicles for the trip home.

My guess is they were all home in time for supper. It seemed all had a very good time and certainly they learned something from the meeting. I didn't hear any one of them gripe about not being able to play golf.

Fast forward now to the summer of 1993. You're at a WGCSA monthly meeting. Ask: "Why do members attend these summer meetings?"

The answer is clear—to play golf. There is no educational offering at all.

Pretty sad, if you ask me.

Oh, I know some will say, "I learned a lot visiting with my partner."

That may or may not be true, but it is a tough sell for me. It is a stretch to take an entire day away from my own golf course to lunch and tromp around someone else's. A day off is a day off. It is even tougher to imagine doing so on the company's or club's expense account.

It has become a nearly impossible sell for me now that we are even paying green fees. That's a whole other issue (and outrage) that merits a lot of discussion. We have had that discussion, by the way, and clear decisions were made. They are now being violated, as near as I can tell.

The 1993 policy implies that "the summer meetings are for golf players only. Non-players or busy superintendents without a day to waste are, practically speaking, excluded. If you aren't playing golf at a summer meeting, there is not a solitary reason to attend. That is sad commentary.

I cannot help but think that during June, July and August the WGCSA is simply a social club. The policy says that. It is disappointing to me that our association, during the summer months, is reduced to golf only.

Gosh, my brain still functions during those months. I always enjoyed hearing a good speaker at those meetings. It actually is stimulating to hear lec-

tures during the golf season when the educational menu has less items on it than during the off season.

While I was interviewing Wayne Otto for **The Wisconsin Golf Course Survey** (found elsewhere in this issue) he reflected on the times when the WGCSA meetings were only educational. He said to me, "I often think we've gone too far the other way."

I agree, and so do a surprising number of others I have visited with about this issue. The experiment of the summer of 1993 should end as that—an experiment. Any thoughts of continuing it next year should be buried and forgotten.

I support myself by providing services to people who enjoy the game of golf, and heaven forbid the day we forget that. Cheers to those who play well enough to enjoy the game. But remember, you can have an educational program AND golf at the same meeting. Everyone is provided a reason to attend one of the summer meetings.

Our overriding purpose for belonging to the WGCSA, indeed the very reason the association was organized in 1930, is for education. When we gather at the exclusion of that goal, we lose sight of the real intent of the group.

The meeting format tried this summer just doesn't pass muster. Let it go. ♣

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## WISCONSIN TURFGRASS and GREEN INDUSTRY EXPO

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# SEEING WAS BELIEVING — WTA FIELD DAY MOVES UP A NOTCH!

By Monroe S. Miller

They'd been talking about it for months—the University of Wisconsin faculty and Wisconsin Turfgrass Association officers especially. "The WTA Field Day this year is going to be big."

Well, turns out they weren't kidding. The O.J. NOER TURFGRASS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FACILITY was the place to be on Tuesday, August 17 for those in the grass business in Wisconsin. Or at least the nearly 500 people who came to Field Day thought so.

It was a great crowd and an excellent summer day. The research station clearly is taking on a more mature look. The research area actually looks crowded, to the point where conversations are taking place about possible expansion. Fortunately, sufficient room was available for displays and equipment demonstration this year.

The Field Day had something for everybody—homeowner to golf course superintendent to sod producer and everyone between.

Of particular interest to WGCSA members I visited with were Dr. Kusow's and Mike Carlson's organic amendments for USGA spec putting green construction. We've all read a lot about that work, and it was a great opportunity to see where that project is to date.

Quite a few members expressed interest in the bentgrass evaluations

for fairway use. As interesting to some was the Penncross study with PGRs.

Winter hardiness, disease control studies, species evaluations, management regime research, insect monitoring and control, environmental work and more were all available for inspection. Faculty were around from the start until early evening to answer the last question of the day.

So extensive was the research that a book was assembled by Dr. Rossi to organize it for participants.

I enjoyed watching, from my place at the registration station, the huge crowd almost religiously follow the research tour. I was envious, and vowed next year I was going to be with them.

It is difficult to imagine anyone leaving the NOER Facility dissatisfied with anything—the food was great, the event was packed with educational information, faculty and grad students were there for consultations, the building was open for a self-guided tour and the tent was a pleasant place to relax and visit with friends. Every successful Field Day needs lots of products and equipment to look at, and this Field Day afforded that, too.

The best summary might be that the 1993 Field Day really gave a glimpse of why the NOER Facility was built in the first place—for the betterment of the turfgrass industry in our state. It also gave us an idea of how this sum-

mer event will look in the future. It was quite a yardstick to measure how far we have come from the first Field Day held at the Arlington Farm over a decade ago.

## Best Innovations

- The FIELD DAY BOOK is worth the price of admission. Detailed results will appear in the upcoming Winter Turf Expo and serve as a nice complement to this publication.

- Reduced registration fee carried a risk of reduced income. But the potential reward was a big jump in attendance. It was gratifying that the risk-taking, at this point anyway, was worth it.

- I like the red golf shirts all faculty, UW staff, grad students and NOER employees wore for the day. They made it easier to find someone for help or to answer a question.

- The auction was OUTSTANDING. It will only grow each year, I'm almost sure. Next year we need to get more involved—the bids were too low!

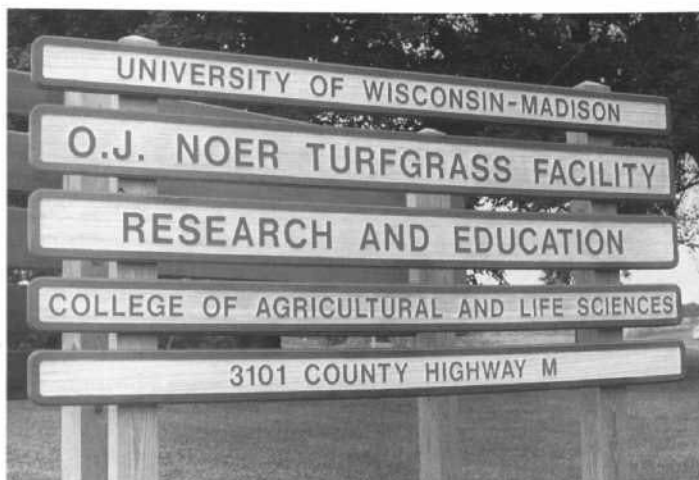
## More Work Needed With...

- Registration remains a problem. We have some ideas for next year that will streamline the process and reduce the aggravation of waiting and alleviate the traffic on County Highway M.

- Parking was greatly improved for attendees, but we have to solve the problem of exhibitor vehicles. The situation at about 8:00 a.m. was chaos—



The auction has the potential to become a big fundraiser at Field Day.



New signage—compliments of Gary Richards and Tom Harrison.