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ABOUT THE COVER

GRASS ROOTS portraitist Jennifer Sammerdyke has created an excellent portraiture of Dr. Chris Williamson. Chris is an assistant professor of entomology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His many responsibilities include turf and ornamentals. You heard him speak at our April meeting; get to know Chris even better by reading Lori Bocher's story about him. You'll conclude that we are very fortunate to have Dr. Williamson on the Wisconsin turf team; he will be helping make golf turf better for decades to come.

*The spring is gone - light, genial-hearted spring!
 Whose breath gives order to the violet,
 Crimson the wild rose, tints the black-bird's wing,
 Unfolds the buttercup. Spring that has set to music the laughter of the rivulet,
 Sent warm pulsations through the hearts of the hills,
 Reclothed the forests, made the valleys wet with pearly dew...*

*Charles Sangster
 Canadian Poet (1822-1893)*

THE GRASS ROOTS

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CRUNCH TIME !!!



By **Scott Schaller**, Golf Course Superintendent, North Shore Golf Club



This is a phrase that usually is heard around the North Shore Golf Club Greens and Grounds Maintenance Shop each year when we open the golf course. I tell my employees that we spent all winter preparing for the 1999 golf season. The winter brings to us no shotgun starts, no weather delays or no deadlines, but that all changes as soon as we stick the flagsticks in the greens for the

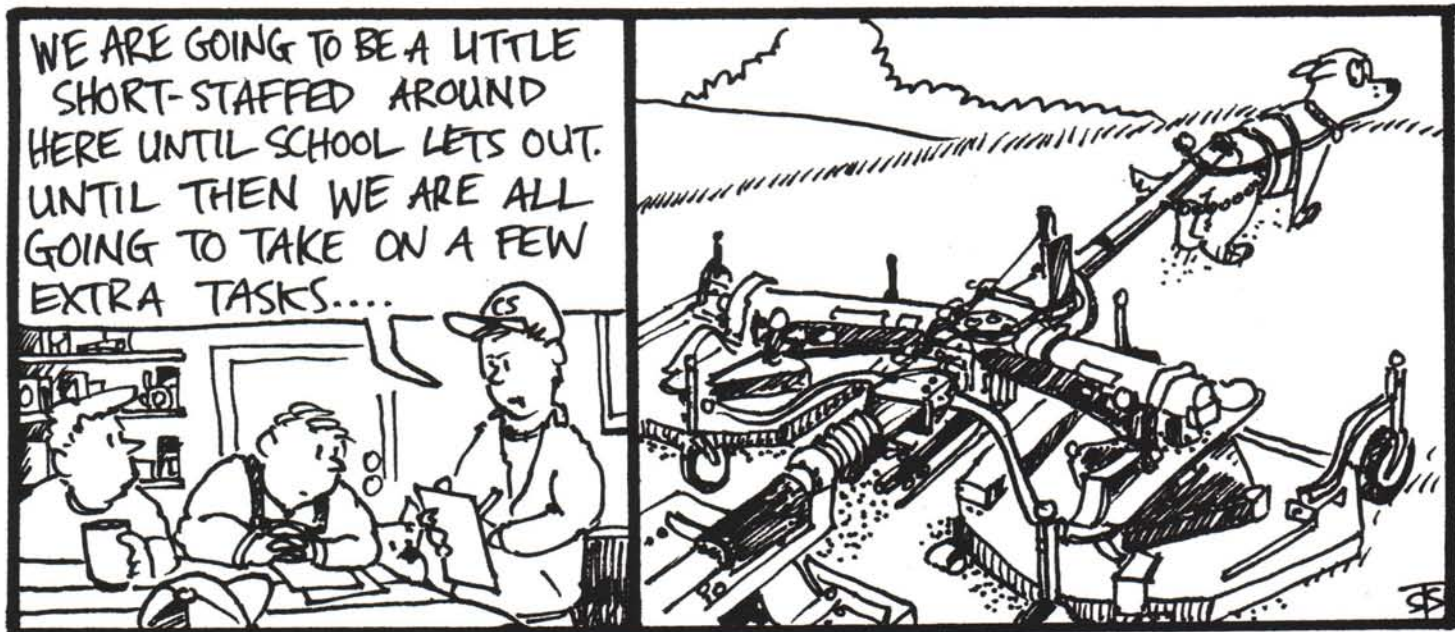
first time in spring. Now the shotgun starts, the weather delays and those deadlines all bring a new sense of urgency to the golf course maintenance staff, because we are now open for play. This is what I call CRUNCH TIME!! This usually lingers on until about mid-May to early June, then those college and high school summer seasonal employees arrive. That's always a nice feeling for me and my full time staff. I'm sure many of us share this same feeling.

Mother Nature has again been kind to all the golf

courses in Wisconsin this past winter. From what I can gather, many of our state's superintendents have been talking about another year of early openings and being able to offer their golfing clientele some excellent golfing conditions. It seems all the golf courses are off to another great start.

Lastly, I would like to recognize three very important people who have been associated with the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association for the past sixteen years. The WGCSA could not function without these people. They work behind the scenes and are truly the backbone of our association. They help us all to promote, recruit and improve the WGCSA. These people are Gene Haas, Diane Haas and Marilyn Gaffney. My words cannot describe all the things they do for our chapter. I'm sure all of us have interacted with these people in the past. With your next opportunity, take the time to thank them personally. I'm sure it would make their day. They sure deserve it!

The waiting game for spring is over and the 1999 golf season is well underway. I'm hoping each and every member of the WGCSA gets off to a good start and ends with a great golf season. Take care and I hope to see you at one of our monthly meetings. ♻



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Another "Mild" Winter: What Should We Expect?



By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Turfgrass and Ornamental Entomologist, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Relatively speaking, the past two years in Wisconsin have been "mild" winters compared to "normal" years; so I've been told. So what's a normal year anyway? For those of you who are natives of Wisconsin, no further explanation is needed. However, a normal winter in Wisconsin (depending on what part of the state you are from) typically consists of what appears to be endless days and/or weeks of frigid temperatures (below zero) and periodic snowfall events that provide continuous snow cover.

Whenever we experience such atypical winters, people frequently ask the question: how will the mild winter affect or have an impact on (if any) insect populations? The logical response to this question is that insect populations will most likely be higher than normal. Unfortunately, the answer to this question is not so simple. There are numerous abiotic (non-living) and biotic (living) factors that affect an insect's ability to survive. The obvious abiotic factors include temperature, humidity, and light intensity. Other abiotic factors such as precipitation (rainfall/snow), wind, barometric pressure, and even altitude can affect insects. Since insects are cold-blooded, they physiologically react or respond with great sensitivity to temperature. Biotic factors can also affect insect populations. Such biotic factors are often affected and even dependent on abiotic factors such as weather. These biotic factors include: diseases, natural enemies, and food shortage.

So, the question still remains, based on past, present, and anticipated weather conditions, will there be an increase in subsequent insect populations? The "bottom line" is that it is relatively impossible to predict the abundance of insects. However, one can predict the occurrence or anticipated presence of insects, not abundance. There are three primary means by which entomologists can use to predict insect occurrence. One way is to simply rely upon **calendar dates**, whereby populations of a specific insect occur approximately at the same time each year. This method can be highly variable since weather conditions are often different from year to year. Another method is to use a **degree-day model** to predict insect occurrences. Degree-days models are a method of accounting for heat units. Since insects physiological development is dependent upon temperature (the higher the temperature, the faster the development and visa-versa), a prediction of insect development or

activity can be made. The third method relies upon plant **phenology**, or plant development in relation to the season. This method correlates certain plant developmental characteristics of specific plants with the activity of specific insects. Although no one method is foolproof, certain methods are better than others; however, each method has its own strengths and weaknesses.

As for predicting insect populations for the 1999-growing season, based on experience and data from comparable winters of previous years, it is anticipated that insect population may be up as much as 20% from "normal" years. However, factors such as rainfall, or the lack of, spring and summer temperatures (low or high, including an always possible late spring frost), humidity, abundance of natural enemies and diseases, and availability of food sources can all significantly influence subsequent insect populations. ♣

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Fee Changes for the TDDL for the 1999 Season

By Jeffrey S. Gregos and Dr. Douglas P. Maxwell, Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin—Madison

In the early days of a new season, the TDDL is revising the charges for services provided. These changes are the result of increased involvement of lab personnel in research activities, but will not affect the quality of service. Over the past couple of years it has become evident that a majority of the commercial clients of the lab only require a verbal diagnosis. Without a written diagnosis, several hours a week can be redirected to the research efforts. Several options were discussed and the following fee structure was recommended by the Board of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association at

their February meeting. In the following we hope to explain why these changes are coming about and what they will be.

Why are research efforts important to the lab?

As you may or may not know, the Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab is a self-supporting entity. This means that we are responsible for generating funding to operate the lab (e.g., general supplies, postage, telephones, transportation, etc.), half of Jeffrey Gregos' salary and benefits, student hourly wages, and any other activities such as

snow mold field days, construction of greens, attendance at meetings, fungicide evaluations, etc. Currently the lab generates around \$23,000 from contracts and diagnosis fees; however this is not enough to operate the lab. Over half of our funding is generated through research gifts and grants.

Not only does research provide funding, but it is also important in helping us formulate our recommendations after completing a diagnosis. One prime example of this is the extensive snow mold control research that we conduct. Many of the turf managers in our state have



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been looking for the ideal replacement for mercury based products for snow mold control. Our program has provided some alternatives that perform even better than mercury fungicides.

Another important reason for research is the evaluation of new methods or chemicals for disease control. It is better that our turf is used as the "guinea pig" than one of your greens or fairways. For example, we are testing spray volume rates for applications of several fungicides, and also times of applications of fungicides and mixtures of fungicides.

What services will the lab offer for non-contract holders, and what will the new fees be?

- Turfgrass disease sample diagnosis with verbal confirmation and recommendations, \$50.00.
- Turfgrass disease sample diagnosis with verbal confirmation and recommendations plus a written report, \$75.00.
- Site visit following sample submission, \$150.00.
- Out-of-state processing fee, \$15.00.

Sample Submission for Diagnosis:

To help facilitate prompt turn-around on samples submitted to the lab, we recommend that you notify us when a sample has been sent. This will help us schedule appropriately. Also, any walk-in samples should be preceded with a phone call (phone: 608-845-2535; pager: 608-550-3888). This ensures that someone will be present at the lab when the sample arrives. NO DIAGNOSIS WILL BE PROVIDED VIA TELEPHONE WITHOUT SEEING A SAMPLE FIRST.

Site Visits:

Site visits will be conducted only after a sample has been submitted. A site visit will consist of a 4-hour visit and written report.

These visits will only concentrate on disease related problems.

Out-of-state Processing Fee:

This \$15 fee is additional to the other fees.

How will this new structure affect services for contract holders?

As a contract holder you will still receive the same number of samples diagnosed per contract level (1 @ \$100, 2 @ \$200, 5 @ \$500, and 10 @ \$1000). Written reports will be done on an as need basis, so be sure to request one if desired. There will be no additional charge for written reports.

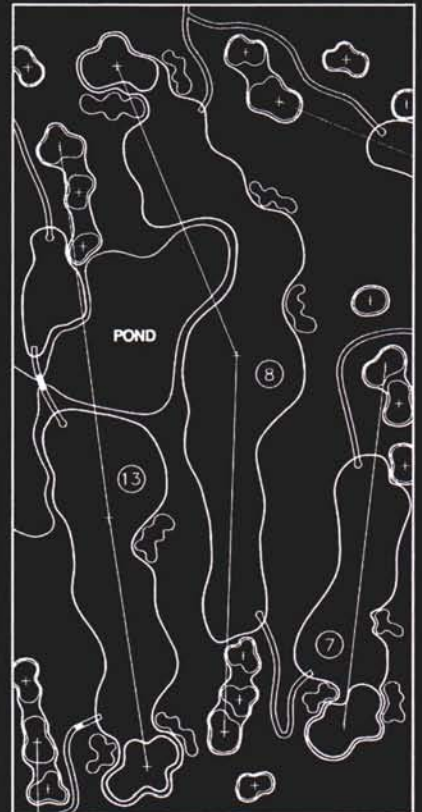
Site visits will be provided at \$100 for contract holders of less than \$1000. For non-contract holders, a sample must be submitted prior to site visit. As in the past, site visits are provided free of charge to \$1,000 contract holders.

These new adjustments should have no affect on the quality of service that you have come to expect from the TDDL. These changes were brought about due to the demands of our clientele for a fast "turn around time" and after a review of the available time for our lab personnel. If you have any questions pertaining to these changes or any of the services that the lab provides, please feel free to give the TDDL a call and talk with Jeff Gregos or Douglas Maxwell (phone: 608-845-2535 or email: jsg@plantpath.wisc.edu; dum@plantpath.wisc.edu).

We appreciate the feed back that we have received about the TDDL's operation this past season and look forward to serving you for another year.

Editor's note: Both the author and the editor let a mis-spelled word get into this feature in the Mar/April 1999 issue of The Grass Roots. The word is "Strobilurin," not Stobilurin. Regrets. ♣

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Noernet: Time to Get Linked

By Tom Schwab, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison



Are you ready for a quick and easy communication network linking you with many other local turf professionals? Noernet is that network — and the best things about it are it's fast, valuable, and free. Noernet is an automated electronic list that serves as an "electronic discussion group." The way it works is anyone in the group can email a question, concern, or comment to the discussion group's email address. Everyone in the group will see that email and may reply back. Likewise all Noernetters will see the reply and may have some additional knowledge to add. This Noernet sounds similar to an ordinary discussion situation where a group of peers sit around a room talking about common concerns. It is about the same except that "Noernetting" can be done anytime and without the need to travel to a common meeting place to have the discussion.

The Noernet discussion group was started two years ago. Currently there are 52 subscribers from many walks of turfgrass management. Most are from golf courses, but there are also members from sports turf management, sod production, agriculture and consumer protection, university faculty and staff, and turf industry suppliers. In these two years, discussions have involved many interesting subjects. They include turfgrass selection, solutions to pest problems, reporting pest outbreaks, selecting plant management tools, human relations in the green industry, reporting turfgrass educational meetings, selection and care of ornamentals, tips on landscape construction, sale of used turf equipment, and other topics. Just last week a Badger Turf and Grounds student used Noernet with great success. He wanted to borrow a triplex greensmower for one of his engineering classes this spring. So he asked if anyone on Noernet had a spare mower to lend the class. The next day a superintendent wrote back offering the class a mower.

Noernet is meant for local use and concerns. There are many national discussion groups, but by keeping our Noernet local for Wisconsin and neighboring state turf professionals we are able to voice regional dealings unique to the upper Midwest. Likewise there is plenty of local expertise right here to answer questions posed by other Noernetters. Presently most subscribers are from Wisconsin, but there are also some from Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa.

The University of Wisconsin - Madison, sponsors this discussion group. They have set an appropriate use policy for this ListProcessor:

- You may not use email for uses that are forbidden by UW campus telephone or the campus paper mail system.
- This email is not intended to be used for personal purposes or gain.
- Do not send abusive, vulgar, harassing or bigoted messages.
- It is the policy of the University of Wisconsin - Madison Board of Regents that the facilities (this ListProcessor) are to be used primarily for purposes of fulfilling the University's mission of teaching, research and public service.
- Content of all postings are that of the contributing author and not necessarily of the Noernet list owner, moderator, or of the University of Wisconsin - Madison, Division of Information Technology.

If you believe sharing of information is an important tool for turf management, then Noernet is one more tool available to you. Let other peers know about this service if you feel they could benefit from it. Some subscribers are extremely active with the service and respond to every message. Other people never write. Some only use the service to monitor what is happening around the region. Most subscribers use the service to keep track of happenings and respond occasionally. You can participate as much as you would like. You can also participate across professions. Sport field managers and sod producers have good informa-



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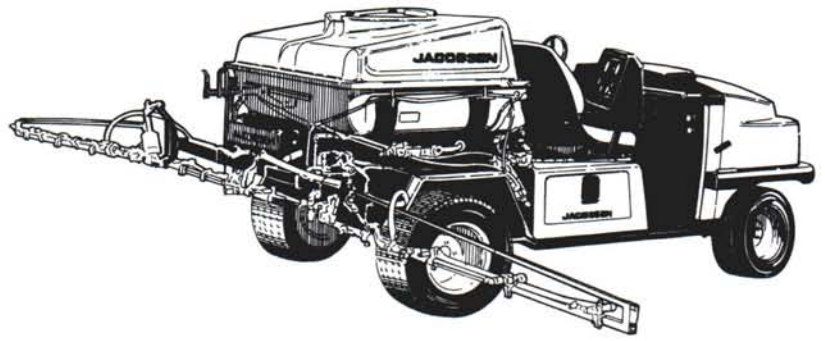
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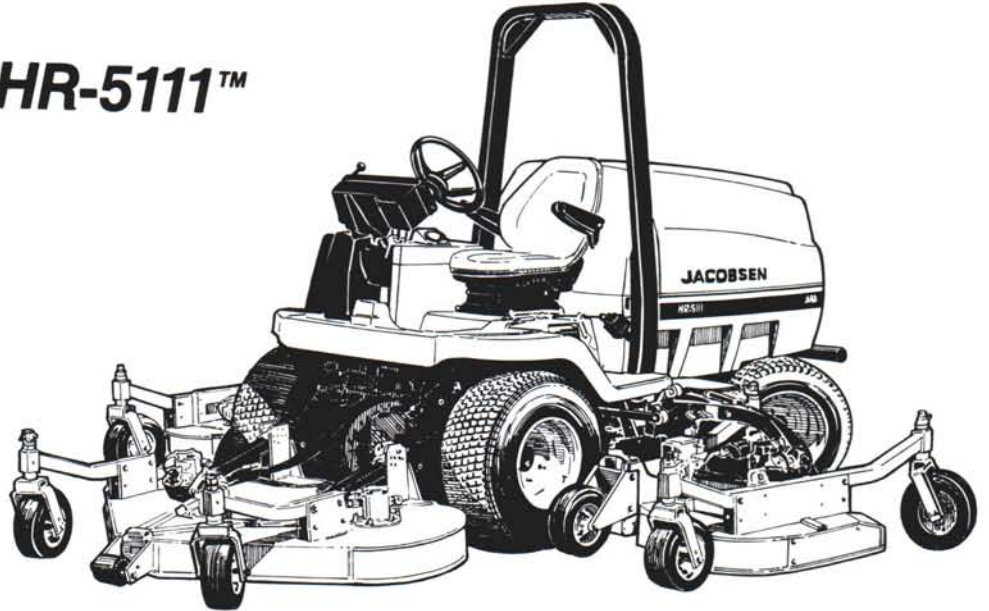
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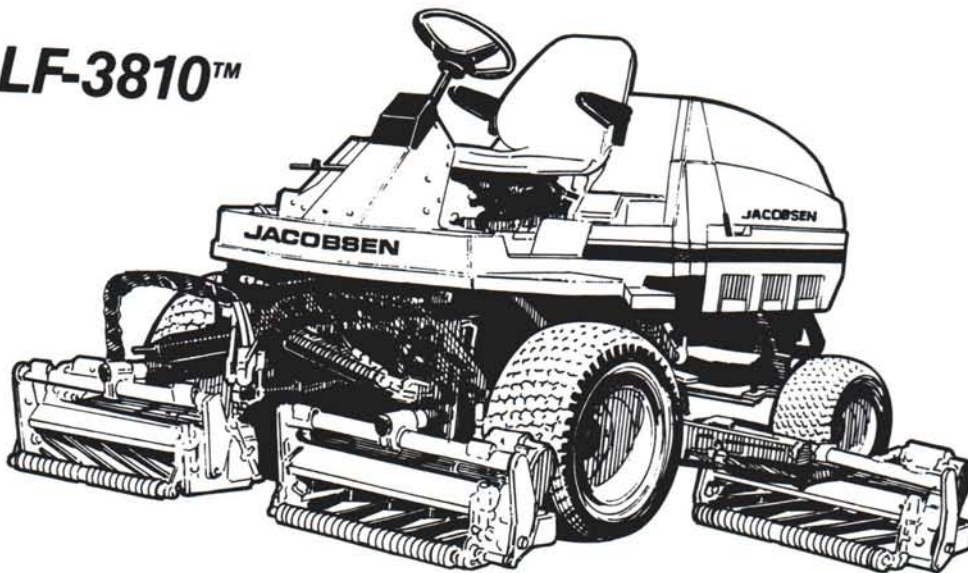
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