

established," Dean points out.

Dean went to work for Reinders in 1993. He works for Reinders now. So you might assume he's been with Reinders the whole time. Wrong. There were a few other jobs in between. In April of 1997, Dean accepted an offer from the Scotts Company to become a technical rep. This allowed him to focus on the soft side of the business, which is his strength. "It was a good fit, a good opportunity," Dean says. "And we could stay in Minocqua, which was a beautiful thing. My geography expanded three to four times."

He was calling on many of the same golf courses, selling different products now; but that wasn't a problem for Dean. "I think you just need to treat customers the way they want to be treated," Dean says. "When I was a superintendent, I did a lot of business with certain companies, and it was because their sales rep did business the way I chose.

"Most superintendents know that there are a lot of product solutions for them," he continues. "It's the sales rep's job to listen to how they want to manage their course and then to find them the products that will help them reach their goal. It's not as much about product as it is about understanding needs, learning how a superintendent wants to manage his or her course, and then offering the product solutions to get them there."

Dean did, however, receive some good-natured ribbing from his colleagues. "When I first started to work for Reinders and sell ParX products, I got hassled because I had used a lot of Scotts products on the golf course," he recalls. "And when I was hired by the Scotts Company, everybody gave me grief again. But I thought it was pretty simple to sell different products."

Downsized...

Dean was with Scotts for less than two years when the company decided that it would no longer market directly to the end user in the professional products division, but to distributors only. Dean was out of a job, but he wasn't bitter. "My experience with Scotts was phenomenal," he says. "I learned so much about not just the product, but about the process of selling and how you become a better sales rep. They supported me very well and were fair. A lot of superintendents were really upset about the change, but Scotts didn't dump on us. We were taken care of."

Bob Reinders knew that Dean would be out of a job, so he gave him a call. "I left Reinders on very good terms. Bob understood why I left at the time," Dean explains. So this is where Dean returns to Reinders, right? Wrong again.

"Scotts went to a system where they had four major distributors in the country," Dean points out, adding that Turf Partners was one of those distributors. "They approached me, too, and it was a perfect fit. The geography of my territory was essentially the same. I

thought it made sense to stay with the product line that I used and knew best. And, once again, Dean's able to stay in Minocqua."

Unfortunately, the company grew too fast. "They had a great business model, but I think they bit off more than they could chew," Dean believes. "I went out and booked a lot of business, and they couldn't get it to the customer in a timely manner. It was crippling my business. By mid summer of 1999, Bob Reinders told me the door was still open. But I wanted to finish the season with Turf Partners first."

Back to Reinders...

"In October of 1999 I met with Bob again," Dean continues. "At that point, I was tired. I wasn't certain what was going on with Turf Products. I had four kids, ages 3 to 12. I was looking for some stability." So this is when he came back to work for Reinders. But it wasn't as a territory sales manager; it was as a turf specialist, which allowed him to focus on the soft side of the business.

"At that time, in the golf side of the business, Reinders had five sales reps," Dean explains. "My job was to support them in the fertilizer, grass seed and turf chemicals side of the business. I worked directly with golf course superintendents to help them with their turf programs." And, once again, he was able to stay in Minocqua.

"When I came back to Reinders, I made a comment to Bob and Craig Reinders that, at some point, I would like an opportunity to manage their business," Dean relates. "I was thinking this could be 10 years down the road. I was in no hurry. I was happy with what I was doing."

But the company was growing. Having one sales manager - the job Ed Devinger held for so many years - was no longer feasible. Dave Berg had replaced Ed when he retired. "Even though Dave had the title of sales manager, he did very little sales management," Dean explains. "With increased business, he was scrambling just to get orders placed, inventories monitored, the nuts and bolts of the business. He didn't have time to work on the sales process - trying to make sales reps better at what they do."

So in 2001, the job was split. Dave became the commercial business manager, and Dean stepped in as sales manager. "People thought I was replacing Dave. Not true," Dean points out. "The job was just too large for one person." So Dave continues to get the orders out, manage the inventory, and be the point man for the leasing business. And Dean concentrates on sales management.

The Reinders sales staff now includes: five full-service reps who work mostly with golf courses; a non-golf rep in southeastern Wisconsin who works with schools, municipalities, corporations, etc.; three reps for the landscape contract side of the business; and four turf specialists.

The sales process...

As the sales manager, it's Dean's job to help the staff

be the best that they can be in their jobs. "That's not just product training," he points out. "It's process. How do you manage a territory? Routing plans, planning your sales calls, prioritizing your customers, and servicing them to the level that's expected."

"The other part of my job is to evaluate our existing product lines and to meet with people who come to us with new products. I'll give them a thumbs up or thumbs down," Dean adds. "And I'm responsible for our custom application truck."

After having five jobs in a row that allowed him to stay in Minocqua, Dean finally made a move in 2001 - back to his home town of Menomonee Falls so that he could work at the Reinders headquarters in Elm Grove. He was glad for the chance to immerse himself at the home office where he could learn the business from the inside out. "It's a complex, labor-intensive business. I needed to understand that," Dean says.

But he was finding himself too immersed in the home office. "One beef I've always had, no matter what company I've worked for, is that the sales manager was not out in the field. I've always said that's a mistake," Dean relates. "How, from an office, do you really understand the needs of your customers? If you truly want to make your sales force the best that it can be, how do you do that from an office? You need to work with them."

"So when I took the sales manager position with Reinders, I really believed that I needed to be in the field 60 percent of the time," he continues. "Unfortunately, in the last year, I've spent only 2 percent of my time in the field. For me, that's unacceptable."

There were some family issues that came up, too; they really missed Minocqua. Dean decided to kill two birds with one stone. If he moved back to Minocqua, his whole family would be happier. And it would force him to be out of the office more. So in August of 2002, he moved back to Minocqua. He has an office in the home and is conducting his job with the aid of modern communications equipment. And he's out on the road more.

Same house three times...

But let's go back to the beginning of this article. We've covered the three generations of golf course superintendents in his family (By the way, his father, Bob, finished his career at Plum Lake Golf Course in Sayner in 1994 after 36 years in the business). We covered the three different companies he's worked for since being a superintendent - Reinders, Scotts and Turf Partners. And we've covered the three jobs he's had at Reinders - territory manager, turf specialist and sales manager. But how on earth has he managed to move into the same house three times?

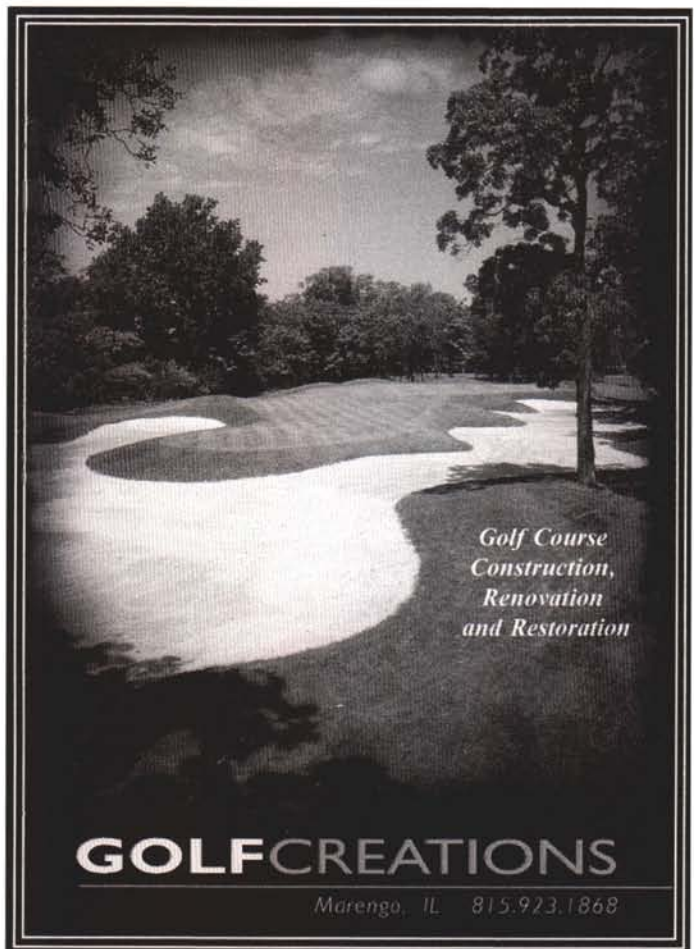
"We moved into it the first time when I took the job at Timber Ridge; it was owned by the course then," Dean explains. "When I left Timber Ridge, we had to move out. But later, when there was a change in the ownership of

the golf course, the new owners wanted to sell it. So we bought it at the same time I accepted my position with Scotts. When we moved to Menomonee Falls last year, we put the house on the market, but it never sold. So we moved in for a third time in August of this year."

Dean and his wife, Margie, have two girls and two boys: Mehgan, 17; Kristin, 14; Marty, 13; and Jordan, 10. Besides taking care of the kids, Margie has worked as a teaching assistant with special needs students and as a nurse's aide. "Our kids are at ages where they're very active," Dean says. "So most of the time, when we're not working, we're involved with our kids and their extracurricular activities. I really enjoy being a part of that."

Professional involvement...

Through the years, Dean has also been active with various professional organizations. He's been a member of the WGCSA for years; his father and grandfather both served as president of the organization. While a superintendent, he was very active with the Northern Great Lakes GCSA, serving as president for three years. He's been a member of the GCSAA and was certified in 1993. And he's currently on the board of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association.



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"My involvement with Monroe and *The Grass Roots* began when I moved to Minocqua and was tired of people telling me that it was so easy to be a superintendent up north where the season is shorter," Dean points out. "My feisty response was to ask Monroe if I could write a column. He loved the idea. So I wrote "Life in the Northwoods for about three years."

He admits that he's a terrible golfer because he's never had much time to play golf. "People are always shocked that I grew up on a golf course and didn't play much golf," Dean says. "I had to work."

Personal accomplishment...

He may not golf, but he has completed a marathon - an accomplishment of which he's very proud. "Back in 1998, I blew out my Achilles tendon. I was also pretty far out of shape," he admits. "As part of the rehab, they said I should walk and run. So I started, and pretty soon I'm running five miles. Some friends encouraged me to run a half marathon in Eagle River. So I trained for that, ran it, and finished the race. I felt like I was on top of the world."

"Then my friends encouraged me to run the Twin Cities Marathon with them in October of 2001," he continues. "Before this, I thought, 'Who in their right mind would run 26 miles?' But I decided to do it to

prove to myself that I could."

On the day of the race he ran 14 miles when an injury started to bother him. But he decided to go as far as he could. He did pretty well from 14 to 20 miles. "Then I hit the wall," Dean reports. "At 20 miles it felt like my legs were the size of tree trunks. My Achilles and ankles and calves were tight. For six miles, it was step by step. I thought it would get easier, but it didn't until those last 300 or 400 yards when I knew I was going to finish."

"It's really personally satisfying to reach a goal like this," Dean says. "It's like anything in life. If you work hard at a goal and achieve it, it's very gratifying."

Dean's positive attitude follows him everywhere. "You have a choice," he says. "I get up every day and make a decision; am I going to have a good day or a bad day? I choose to have a good day. I thoroughly believe in the power of a positive attitude. I'm an optimist. I'll find good in everything. And I gauge a lot of things on the big picture. Yeah, I may have a couple of customers who are upset or something might not be going right. But I look at the big picture. I think about 9-11 and what happened there and, really, how bad are my problems in comparison?"



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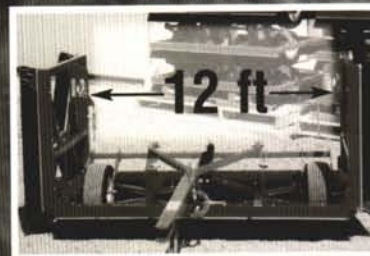


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Black Turfgrass Ataenius (BTA): The Other White Grub

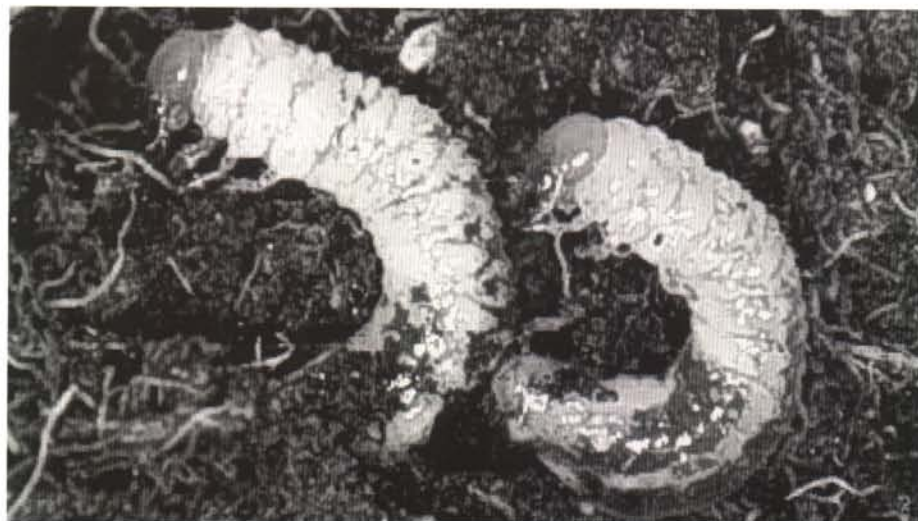


By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Turfgrass and Ornamental Specialist, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

It seems that many of the “larger” white grub species (i.e., Japanese beetle, May/June beetle, etc.) get all the recognition and notoriety. Nonetheless, the black turfgrass ataenius, *Ataenius spretulus* (Haldeman), is of equal importance. BTA can also be a serious pest on golf course greens, fairways, tees, and even turfgrass research farms. However, due to the sporadic nature of the black turfgrass ataenius (BTA), this important turfgrass insect pest is often forgotten, especially since it is quite unpredictable.

Recently, at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Educational Facility, we experienced a serious infestation of BTA grubs. Visual inspections revealed counts greater than 100 BTA grubs per one square foot; populations this high typically result in serious injury to turfgrass. In fact, populations as low as 30-40 grubs per square foot can cause measurable damage to turf. As you are likely aware, this year was anything but “normal.” This holds true for the “outbreaks” of BTA that have occurred in many parts of Wisconsin this year.


Typically, BTA adults begin laying their eggs in the late spring, usually sometime in mid-May. However, this year adult BTA adults were not observed until mid - to - late June. Subsequently, grub activity and damage was not seen until early to mid - July. Damage associated with BTA grubs is quite easy to detect; as a result of the grubs consuming succulent root tissues, the turf (leaves) typically exhibits signs of heat or drought stress. Upon closer inspection, the turf can be literally “rolled-up,” similar to carpet. When the turf gets to this point, the only option is to apply what is known as a curative insecticide treatment, apply an



appropriate level of fertility, and irrigate regularly (i.e., daily) to help aid the turf recover and “mask” any further damage.

Ideally, BTA grubs should be controlled preventatively with either contact insecticide applied to the adults or a soil insecticide designed to control newly hatched grubs. Preventative soil insecticides must be applied prior to egg hatch; thus they are typically applied when BTA adults become active. Should one miss this treatment-timing opportunity, the only option is to apply a

curative control product when the grubs are detected or noticeable feeding damage has occurred. Preventative soil insecticides labeled for BTA include imidacloprid (Merit[®]) and halofenozide (Mach 2[®]). Curative insecticides labeled for control of BTA include carbaryl (Sevin[®]) and trichlofon (Dylox[®]).

Regardless of the treatment approach or product selected, be sure to water the respective insecticide into the turf canopy with an appropriate amount of water (i.e., at least 0.25 inches of water).

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Dissecting the Disease - Dollar Spot



By Nanda Chakraborty, Ph.D. student and Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

When I applied to UW-Madison from India, I wanted to get trained as a plant pathologist with specialization in disease resistance mechanisms. I was specifically interested in studying a disease pathosystem, emphasizing on how some hosts fight back against the pathogen attack with an array of resistance genes, thereby having insignificant damage, whereas others succumb to the pathogen and cause us economic loss in our commercially important plants. I wanted to apply my knowledge of the resistance genes to the development of better plants by classical breeding and molecular biology techniques. These genetically improved plants with introgressed resistance gene/genes will

have a better ability to withstand the disease impact and allow us to reduce the application of costly management practices and chemicals.

So when I learned about Dr. Jung's project of studying the genetic variability of bentgrass resistance to dollar spot using different Vegetative Compatibility Group (VCG) isolates, I was glad to work on it and contribute my understanding of the host and dollar spot pathogen interaction to deciphering the nature of resistance and find the resistance genes. The ultimate goal of my PhD project is to estimate the number and effects of dollar spot resistance genes and to develop resistant cul-

tivars/lines using molecular techniques in creeping bentgrass.

Why are we interested in this disease?

Bentgrass or *Agrostis* is a large genus of over 100 species. Only about four species are used for turfgrass in the US; these are colonial, velvet, highland, and creeping. These species are perennial, outcrossing cool-season grasses and are used for lawns, athletic fields, and golf courses. Currently, the stoloniferous creeping bentgrass is the most adapted species for use on golf course fairways and greens. All modern bentgrass cultivars are susceptible to dollar spot but there are significant differences in their

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susceptibility.

Dollar spot caused by *Sclerotinia homeocarpa* F. T. Bennett is a major disease of turfgrass throughout the world, and is the most prevalent and economically important turf disease in North America, particularly on intensively managed golf course putting greens and closely mown fairways. The disease occurs from spring through fall, but is most active during humid periods of warm days with cool nights in spring, early summer, and fall. The optimum temperature for disease development is 70°-80°F, though the fungus will grow over a wider range, 50°F to 90°F. On low height turf such as greens or fairways, the symptoms appear as round or irregularly shaped, sunken, straw to brown colored patches approximately 3 cm in diameter or about the same size as a silver dollar. When disease pressure is high, isolated spots grow together to form large, irregular patches. Since this fungus is not known to produce conidia or a sexual stage in the U.S., the organism most likely spreads via mycelia or transport of infected leaf tissue by wind, water, machinery such as mowers, or by human traffic.

One of the recent Grass Root articles, written by Kevin L. Hensler in the July/August 2002 issue, discusses the different current research that can be utilized in the management strategies to combat this disease.

Dollar spot management, like most other turf diseases, is highly dependent on chemical fungicide application. The causal fungus has, however, developed resistance to several important classes of fungicides such as benzimidazoles, dicarboximides, and demethylation inhibitors (DMIs). Some fungicides have not been reregistered due to environmental concerns. This has stimulated research into alternative disease management strategies such as host resistance, one of three major components of "Disease Triangle".

How is our work different?

Previous reports indicate variability among bentgrass cultivars in their susceptibility to dollar spot. It has been well known that the colonial bentgrass species is naturally more resistant to dollar spot than creeping bentgrass. Two greenhouse inoculation experiments were performed in our lab using eighty-one clones of ten cultivars of the creeping, colonial, dryland, and velvet bentgrass species. The clones were inoculated with the dollar spot isolate MNI obtained from Dr. Jon Powell, University of Minnesota. Large genetic variation was detected at the species, cultivar, and clone level in bentgrass.

When differential response was noted between the clones using only one isolate, we were interested to determine the disease response which means the ability of causing disease and the amount of disease, caused by different isolates belonging to different VCGs on the creeping bentgrass clones. Information about the genetic similarity and the virulence of the different isolates will further strengthen the program to breed for disease resistant cultivars. The breeder needs to be absolutely certain that the cultivar that he breeds for resistance is able to resist a number of different isolates of the pathogen.

So, seven new fungal isolates were provided to us by Dr. Jon Powell. We studied the genetic relatedness or how the isolates are genetically related to each other to find if there is a correlation between their genetic similarity and their grouping under the different VCGs. We did not find any significant correlation but we found that the isolates under VCG A were genetically closely related to each other than to any other isolates belonging to the other VCGs.

The next step was to find the correlation between VCGs and virulence. We used eight isolates belonging to five VCGs, along with

the two creeping bentgrass clones (372 and 549). The clones were identified from more than 300 clones collected by Dr. Mike Casler, Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison, from fairways and greens in golf courses throughout Wisconsin. There was an overall clone and isolate effect. The clone 372 is highly resistant while 549 is susceptible to dollar spot. Our previous results indicated that the level of resistance detected in the 372 clone was approximately the same as that of cultivars of the colonial species. Some of the isolates did not show significant difference in disease response, that is, they caused almost similar damage to the two clones but two isolates, MN1-VCG A and Les Bolstead -VCG J, did show a significant clone effect. These two isolates caused less damage to 372 but caused more damage to 549. Our results indicated that there was no race specific interaction based on the clones tested. Absence of race specificity means that the clones are either more susceptible to all the isolates studied so far, or they are more resistant to all of them than the other clone. The clone 372 was more resistant than the clone 549 for all the eight isolates. This information can help in judicious management of fungicide application by understanding the amount of fungicides to be applied to the cultivars, depending on their disease response to the isolates. We will further study the race specific interaction and virulence by including sixteen more isolates belonging to eleven VCGs which were grouped recently.

Since we have noticed a significant difference in disease response or disease resistance between the two creeping bentgrass clones 372 and 549, it suggests that progeny individuals created from the cross will segregate or have different levels of resistance for dollar spot disease. So a mapping population was created by crossing clone 372 by 549 this spring of 2002. We will use the

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