

Lejeune (North Carolina). Most of the guys I trained with went to Vietnam.”

Sales career begins...

But Tom started at Agway with a sales territory in the Philadelphia area, southern New Jersey and Delaware. “I was in a specialty group called the Commercial Sales Division. We focused primarily in the golf turf markets at that time, but also did some work in the lawn care market,” Tom explains. “I was in charge of all fertilizer, chemical and seed sales. We even sold golf cart buildings, but we were primarily in the soft goods.”

While working for Agway, Tom met his wife, Pat, who was living in Delaware at the time. “We met through a mutual friend,” Tom recalls. “We were married on a Navy base in Bainbridge, Maryland. I was raised in a Protestant family, and she was raised in a Catholic family, so we had to get married in a place that appealed to both families. We were married in a chapel on the base — her father was a career Navy man. We had a priest and a minister officiate.”

In April of 1973, Tom took a sales position with Scotts. “I was assigned a territory in the eastern part of upstate New York,” he says. “We were called technical representatives, but it was a sales position, primarily in the golf

market. After a couple of years I was also given the state of Vermont. So I had a beautiful area — the northern Catskills to the Adirondack region of New York, and then the Green Mountains of Vermont. We lived in Saratoga Springs.”

Then in the spring of 1982, with his new MBA from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in hand, Tom accepted a promotion to Regional Sales Manager for the Scotts Midwest region; he replaced Jerry O'Donnell who was promoted to Director of Sales for the Professional Division of Scotts. Tom took over Jerry's house in DeForest as well as his job. “I came out to Wisconsin to go over some information with Jerry,” Tom recalls. “We were sitting in his office, the same office I'm in right now. I said, ‘Gee, this house has everything we're looking for — a screened porch, privacy in the back yard, a Scotts lawn. What more could we ask for?’ So we ended up buying his house.”

Hiring superintendents...

Tom inherited a sales force of 12 technical reps. His region included Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Kansas and Missouri. His job was to hire and train reps in both sales and product knowledge. He also managed the marketing and the product line. “Most of the people I hired — 95 percent of them — were former golf course superintendents,” Tom points out. “So I had a chance to hire some really high quality individuals, which I think superintendents are anyway. One ended up being the president of the GCSAA when he went back to being a superintendent — Dave Fearis.

“We really had very little turnover in my region — probably the lowest turnover of any region within the Pro Turf Division of Scotts. I was pretty proud of that,” Tom says. “I always found that the best time to recruit superintendents was in late August when the stresses and strains of managing a golf course operation during a long summer, with pressure from Mother Nature, the golfers and the membership or owners, all add up.”

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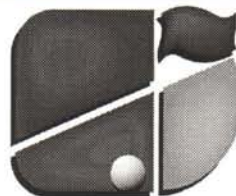
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Tom traveled a lot in this position visiting golf courses with his technical reps. Then in 1999 the Pro Turf Division of Scotts made a major move. Instead of having a field force selling directly to golf course superintendents or other turf managers, they elected to sell their products through distribution channels.

"We ended up having to let go of 65 percent of our sales force as a result," Tom points out. "That was a major shake-up. They moved me into a role as Technical Services Manager. I worked with distributors doing product and technical training with their district sales reps. Two years later, in June of 2000, the Pro Turf Division of Scotts was bought out by the Andersons Company. I went on board with Andersons as a Regional Manager. The last year or so Andersons put me back in the technical service role. So I've gone back and forth between Regional Manager and Technical Services manager with Scotts and then with Andersons."

Going full circle...

All of that stopped in January of 2004 when Tom joined the sales force at Reinders which, by the way, carries Andersons Golf Products. It was a welcome change for this veteran of sales. "In my last job with Andersons I had responsibility for the whole country," he points out. "We

wanted less travel for me, a chance for me to be home every night. When the opportunity to join Reinders came along, I couldn't pass it up."

Now Tom sells turf products in the southern area of Wisconsin, from Dane County to Milwaukee and Fond du Lac to Racine. "I'm a turf products specialist. I'm responsible for about 100 golf courses in that area. We have specifically assigned golf courses here. I'm able to get home every night now, which is nice," Tom says. "It's probably more of an adjustment for my wife than it is for me. She was used to having a couple of nights a week to herself."

Tom also likes being back on the golf course and working directly with superintendents. "I really welcome the change," he says. "I represent Reinders and all of the products that we sell, providing product support and technical advice — advice that I've been giving for 30 years. Only now I can work directly with the superintendent again instead of working through district sales representatives.

"It's fun managing people, but I missed being out there making the sale and helping other people to improve their golf course operations," he continues. "I missed the ebb and flow of writing those orders, making sure the

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product was delivered on time, and dealing with any issues that related to the product — serving the customer's needs. I'm back to what I did originally, my first love. This is really a nice change. I can see doing this for another 10 years or so."

More time to be involved...

Now that he's working a smaller area, Tom plans to become more involved with the WGCSA. "Rather than being involved with so many associations in so many states — I had a chance to travel around and be a part of many — now I can focus on one. I'm looking forward to going to the meetings," Tom says.

He also plans to spend more time with family. Tom and his wife, Pat, have two children living in the Milwaukee area. Their daughter, Tara, will turn 30 his year and lives in Brown Deer with her husband, Dan, and their two children — Alexis, 2 years, and Isaac, born May 27 of this year. "We enjoy spending time with our grandchildren," Tom says.

"Our son, Mark, will turn 26 this year. He works for Wells Fargo in Milwaukee," Tom continues. He's an avid golfer. I tell everyone I taught him everything he knows about golf, and then he had to go to a pro and get everything corrected. He played golf in high school and at

Marquette University, a Division 1 school in the USA Conference. His senior year we went to every tournament, including one in Hawaii. It was a fun way to cap his last year. He's still quite actively involved in amateur golf in Wisconsin."

Remember how the Protestant Tom and Catholic Pat were married at a Navy base? When they moved to Wisconsin they became Lutherans (ELCA). "What else would we be in Wisconsin?" Tom laughs. "Pat likes it because it has a formality closer to the Catholic Church, but yet, for me, it's Protestant. We were quite involved in the church when the kids were growing up — teaching Sunday School, serving on the church council, things like that."

Tom enjoys playing golf. And he and Pat like to travel. "We went to Ireland last May. We plan to do more traveling as the years go along. Maybe we'll move someplace warm for the winter once I decide to take more time off from work," Tom says. "At the same time, wherever our children are, we want to be close to them, too."

Close to family. Working directly with golf course superintendents. Tom is in a good place right now. He's content with the way his life and career have unfolded, and he's looking forward to many more years of the same. ♣



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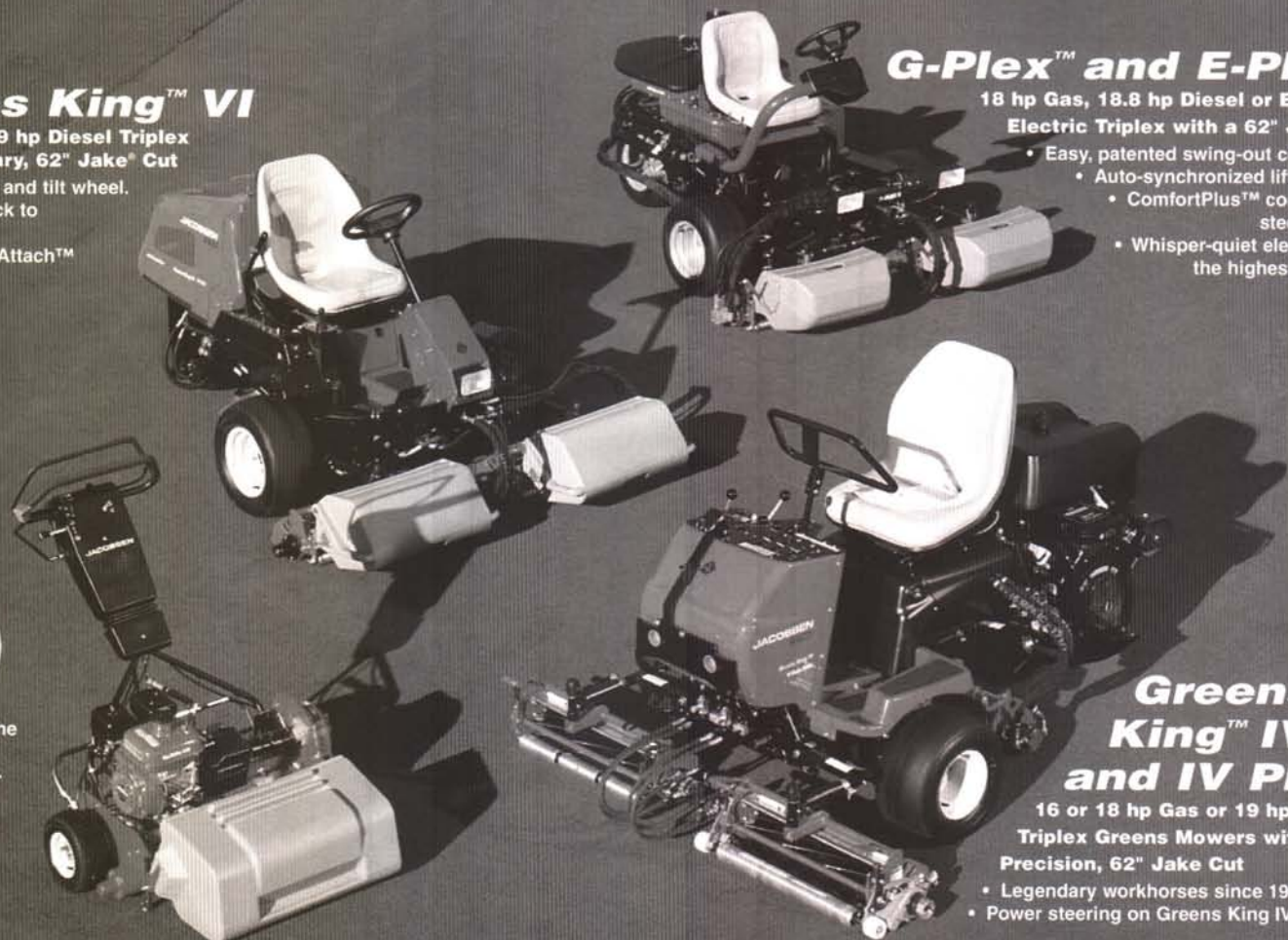
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Leptosphaerulina Leaf Blight of Turfgrasses... Lion or Lamb?



By Steve Abler and Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Leptosphaerulina spp. incite several diseases of legumes and are often found colonizing necrotic creeping bentgrass, perennial ryegrass, and Kentucky bluegrass plants during humid periods of the late spring through fall. The fungus produces conspicuous fruiting bodies (pseudothecia) which release spores in packets referred to as asci (Figures 1 and 2). Controversy exists regarding the ecological relationship between *Leptosphaerulina* and the turfgrass hosts. The fungus has been classified as a saprophyte (colonizes only dead tissue), senecophyte (colonizes dying or senescent tissue), weak pathogen, and pathogen of turfgrasses by various plant pathologists. To complicate matters, there have been three differing classification schemes published in the literature for determining the species within the genus. Because of the frequency with which *Leptosphaerulina* spp. are found on turfgrasses and because of the uncertainty regarding the virulence and classification of the fungus on turfgrasses, this disease was chosen for my Masters Degree project at Virginia Tech (Abler, 2003).

Delineation of *Leptosphaerulina* species

The previous three descriptions for the classification of species in the genus were based mostly on the size and septation of spores. The most thorough work was performed by Graham and Luttrell (1961), who in addition to spore morphology, described ecology, host specificity, and growth characteristics on artificial media of a number of isolates. They described six species of *Leptosphaerulina* that occur on forage plants. The number of species in the genus

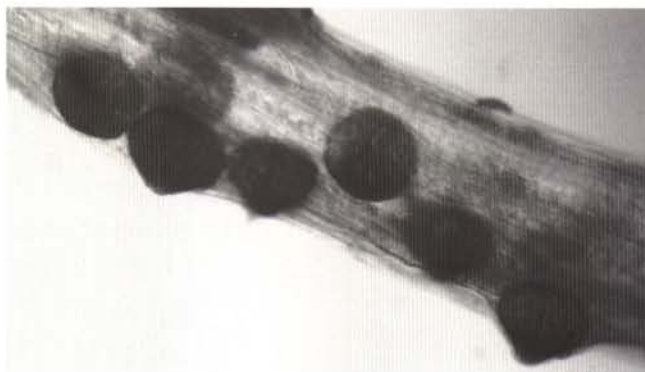


Figure 1. Pseudothecia of *Leptosphaerulina australis* on a necrotic creeping bentgrass leaf

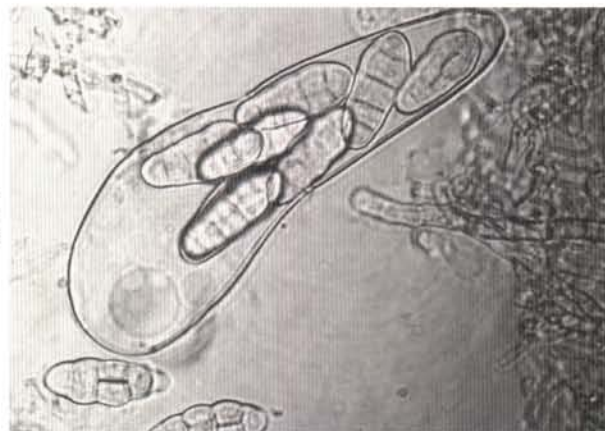


Figure 2. Spores and ascus (pl. asci) of *Leptosphaerulina australis*

was later modified to two by Booth and Pirozynski (1967) and back to four by Irwin and Davis (1985) on the basis of spore morphology alone. Because the delineation of the species was so controversial when based on spore characteristics, more recent molecular approaches and spore morphology were utilized for this study.

As many samples of *Leptosphaerulina* as possible were collected from turfgrasses and other hosts (including original isolates and herbarium material from previous taxonomic studies). Isolates were characterized based on spore morphology and placed into categories based on the six species key of Graham and Luttrell (1961). DNA was extracted from the samples and two different

pieces of the fungal genome were amplified and sequenced using the polymerase chain reaction. By using powerful computer software, the sequences of the DNA were compared and the evolutionary relatedness of each isolate to each other was determined. When the analyses were completed, the molecular and morphological data best supported the six species classification of Graham and Luttrell (1961). Therefore, the species of *Leptosphaerulina* that occur on turfgrasses include *L. australis* (most common) and *L. argentinensis*. Once it was determined which species of *Leptosphaerulina* are found on turfgrasses, experiments to determine their level of virulence could be performed.



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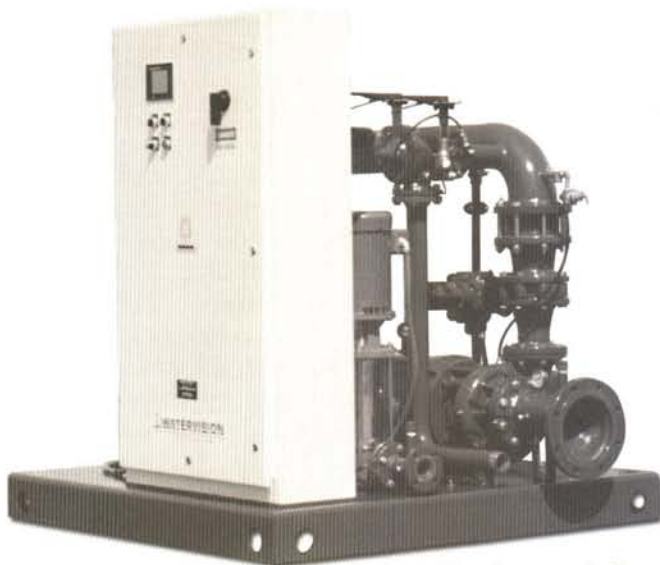
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Figure 3. Germinated spore with appressoria (rounded tip on lowest germ tube) on a creeping bentgrass leaf

Virulence of *Leptosphaerulina* to turfgrasses

To test the virulence of *Leptosphaerulina* to turfgrasses, healthy and stressed perennial ryegrass (cultivars Palmer III and Fiesta II) and creeping bentgrass (cultivar Crenshaw) were inoculated with six turfgrass isolates of *L. australis*. In order to stress the plants and induce senescence, perennial ryegrass plants and creeping bentgrass plants were incubated at 38°C (100°F) with 100% relative humidity in the dark for 48 and 24 hours respectively. These plants were then placed back in the greenhouse for three days before inoculation. The senescent status of the leaves was measured and verified by the significant reduction in the chlorophyll content of the leaves at time of inoculation. After inoculation, both healthy (unstressed) plants and stressed plants were incubated under humidity domes for three days at 22°C (72°F), the optimum temperature for infection and colonization of legume hosts by *Leptosphaerulina* spp. The plants were inspected for symptoms daily for eight days following the inoculation.

None of the inoculated plants showed any noticeable symptoms of disease at any time during six inoculation experiments. Even the stressed plants which showed mean chlorophyll losses of 30-45% were

indistinguishable from control plants. Leaves of inoculated plants were cleared and stained to verify the presence of spores on the leaves. Multiple spores were observed on each leaf, many of which germinated and produced germ tubes and appressoria (specialized structures for penetrating the epidermal cells of plants). These appressoria failed to penetrate the epidermis of the plant (Figure 3). Since *L. australis* was unable to infect and colonize non-stressed and stressed turfgrasses under conditions favorable for disease development on legume hosts, it was determined that *Leptosphaerulina* species are saprophytes of necrotic turfgrasses. The practical implication of these results is that when *Leptosphaerulina* is found on dead turfgrasses, the turfgrass manager must determine the primary cause of the declining turfgrass which could be a multitude of biotic and/or abiotic factors. Determining this underlying cause of the problem may be complicated by the ability of *Leptosphaerulina* spp. to rapidly colonize the moribund turfgrasses.

Although *Leptosphaerulina* leaf blight is no longer even considered a pathogen of stressed grasses, several

turfgrass diseases only appear when abiotic stresses predispose the plants to infection and colonization by fungi that are unable to harm healthy plants. Therefore, it is important for superintendents as well as researchers to use sound cultural techniques in order to maintain healthy turf and reduce the possibility of problems from these stress-induced pathogens.

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BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF LINDEN BORER: RESEARCH UNDERWAY



By Tina A. Johnson and Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Little is known about the biology and management of the linden borer, a serious insect pest of shade trees in nurseries and urban landscapes in Wisconsin. The linden borer is a native species that is common throughout northeastern North America. Over the past decade, an increasing occurrence of damage associated with the linden borer has been reported on city street trees and in nurseries throughout Wisconsin.

Currently, research is being conducted in southeast Wisconsin within the city of Milwaukee to determine the most effective and economical chemical control treatments to reduce larval linden borer infestations on several cultivars and species of *Tilia*. Three systemic insecticide treatments are being evaluated: imidacloprid (Merit™) and thiamethoxam (Meridian™) applied as a soil injection treatments and disulfoton (Di-syston™) applied as a granular soil application. Soil injections were made in November 2002 and November 2003, and the

Di-syston™ applications were made in early June 2003 and April 2004. The number and location of linden borer adult exit holes were recorded, and field cages were constructed and positioned just below the first lateral branches above the ground to capture emerging adults. Trees have been examined regularly throughout the last growing season and the present season. The number of emergence holes will provide the information needed to assess respective treatments. This study should also provide information regarding the seasonal biology and life cycle of this important pest in Wisconsin.

Additional research is underway at a nursery in southeast Wisconsin where susceptible and resistant species and respective cultivars of *Tilia* are being evaluated. Five *Tilia cordata* cultivars, 'Greenspire,' 'Corinthian,' 'Chancellor,' 'Glenleven,' and 'Shamrock,' and two *Tilia americana* cultivars 'Redmond' and 'Lincoln' were planted in the nursery in April 2003. Trees are examined

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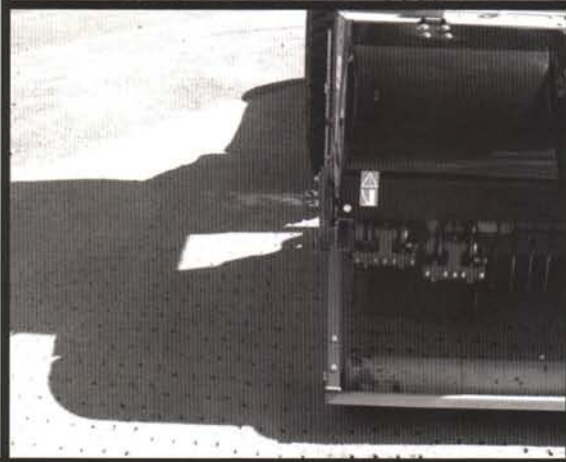
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