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ABOUT THE COVER

Danny H. Quast and Monroe S. Miller are featured on the cover of this issue. Quast received the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award at the GCSAA Conference in San Diego. Miller was presented the USGA Green Section Award at the same meeting.

*"The dreariest Winter must pass
And the sternest of trials depart;
The green must come back to the grass
And peace must return to the heart.
What matters the snow that we've known,
Or the drifts that about us were whirled?
Contentment some day we shall own;
Spring always come back to the world."*

- Author Unknown

THE GRASS ROOTS

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EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

Monroe S. Miller
Blackhawk Country Club
P.O. Box 5129
Madison, WI 53705
groots@globaldialog.com

EDITORIAL STAFF AND BUSINESS AFFAIRS

Dave Brandenburg
P.O. Box 314
Theresa, WI 53091



Front Row: L-R: Dustin Riley, Mike Lyons, Marc Davison, Brian Zimmerman. Back Row: L-R: Dave Brandenburg, Pat Sisk, Jeff Millies, Eric Jasin, Dave Van Auken

2004-2005 WGCSA OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Marc Davison
Green Bay CC
2400 Klondike Rd.
Green Bay, WI 54311
E-mail: mdavison@usxchange.net

DIRECTORS

Jeff Millies
Edgewood GC
W238 S9560 Kuzendorf Ct.
Big Bend, WI 53103
E-mail: jmillies@wi.r.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Mike Lyons
Old Hickory CC
316 Grove Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
E-mail: mlyons@powerweb.net

Pat Sisk

Milwaukee CC
8000 N. Range Line Rd.
River Hills, WI 53217
E-mail: milwaukeecc@aol.com

TREASURER

Dustin Riley
Oconomowoc GC
W35235 Delafield Rd.
Oconomowoc, WI 53966
E-mail: ogriley@voyager.net

Eric Jasin
Lake Arrowhead GC
426 St. Andrews Trail
Nekoosa, WI 54457
E-mail:
arrowheadlakes@hotmail.com

SECRETARY

Brian Zimmerman
Milwaukee Co. Parks
9480 Watertown Plank Rd.
Wauwatosa, WI 53226
E-mail:
bzimmerman@milwenty.com

Dave Van Auken
Royal St. Patrick's
428 Longwood Lane
Wrightstown, WI 54180
E-mail:
dave@royalstpatricks.com

PAST PRESIDENT

David Brandenburg
Rolling Meadows GC
P.O. Box 314
Theresa, WI 53091
E-mail: rmeadows@dotnet.com

Visit our web site at:
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Spring is in the Air?

By Marc Davison, Golf Course Superintendent, Green Bay Country Club

Is spring in the air? Doesn't it always seem to take spring a long time to arrive? It can begin in mid-March or the end of April. The long winter tends to grow on most people and the longing for spring seems to drag on and on forever. Hopefully everyone is ready and anxious to get going with another golf season.

All the winter repair work is completed or better be by now. The smell of fresh cut grass will soon to be back in the air. Has your "off season" been productive? I am sure most of us had a long list of projects or tasks that we hoped to accomplish during the winter months. The busy time in our season is nearly here; are you ready?

In my first President's Message I thanked our departing board members. Now I would like to welcome our new board members. New to our board of directors is Pat Sisk from Milwaukee CC, Eric Jasin from Lake Arrowhead GC and David Van Auken from Royal St. Patrick's GC. Pat is chairing the education committee, David will be chairing the golf and arrangement committee and Eric is responsible for the membership committee. Be sure and thank these three new board members as well as all of our board members for their dedication and time commitment to run the association.

Congratulations go out to two of our members who were selected to receive national awards recently. Danny Quast and Monroe Miller were chosen to receive two very prestigious awards which they accepted at the GCSAA Conference in San Diego. Monroe was awarded the Green Section Award by the United States Golf Association Green Section. Danny is the proud recipient of a GCSAA Distinguished Service Award. Both of these are very high honors in our profession and are going to outstanding individuals. We are very proud to have them in our association and also very thankful for all the contributions they have made and continue to make to the industry.

Most of you have heard by now that we have a web site. The address is www.wgcsa.com. Many thanks go to WGCSA director Jeff Millies for his efforts to get this site developed and running. There are many useful areas to explore and participate in. There is an employment area that contains job postings just like we receive in the mail. The used equipment section will be useful for those trying to sell or purchase used turf equipment. A listing of all our association's meetings and events is also included, as well as a forum. The forum is an area where



one can read and or participate in discussions. Our goal is to continually expand the web site, making it more and more useful to members. Please share your ideas on features you would like to see added with Jeff. Many other chapter associations also have web sites. Do a search and explore some of them to see what's out there. In order for our site to be a success, we need participation and input from you the user.

At the WTA Conference in Madison on January 7, scholarships were distributed to some very fortunate students enrolled in the turf program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The WGCSA funds the J.R. Love Scholarship, which was increased this year to \$1,500. This year's recipient is Benjamin Pease. Ben is from Plymouth (a western suburb of Minneapolis) and is a junior in the turf program at Madison. He has been cutting grass since he was in the 6th grade. He had a profitable lawn service business until he was 16 when he became a grounds worker at a local golf course. Ben worked last summer on the Wayzata Country Club's grounds crew and plans to return again this summer. Ben is very thankful to our association for the scholarship he received. If you run into him, be sure to congratulate him on his award.

Former WGCSA president David Brandenburg continues to volunteer to our organization. David is now chairing the relatively new club relations committee. This committee was formed about a year ago in an attempt to help golf courses that may not currently employ a golf course superintendent. The role of the committee is to assist a golf course that may desire to hire a superintendent by educating decision-makers of typical superintendent duties, responsibilities, expectations, etc. The committee may be a club put together a job notice, write a job description, develop a maintenance budget or aid in solving golf course maintenance issues. This whole concept is in its initial stages of development. I know David will do a great job with this. If you know of a golf course that could benefit from any of these services, please contact David.

Spring will be here before you know it. I hope you all have a very productive and enjoyable golf season. I am looking forward to seeing many of you at our monthly meetings this season. On April 26 we will be meeting at Hawk's View Golf Club in Lake Geneva. See you there! ♣

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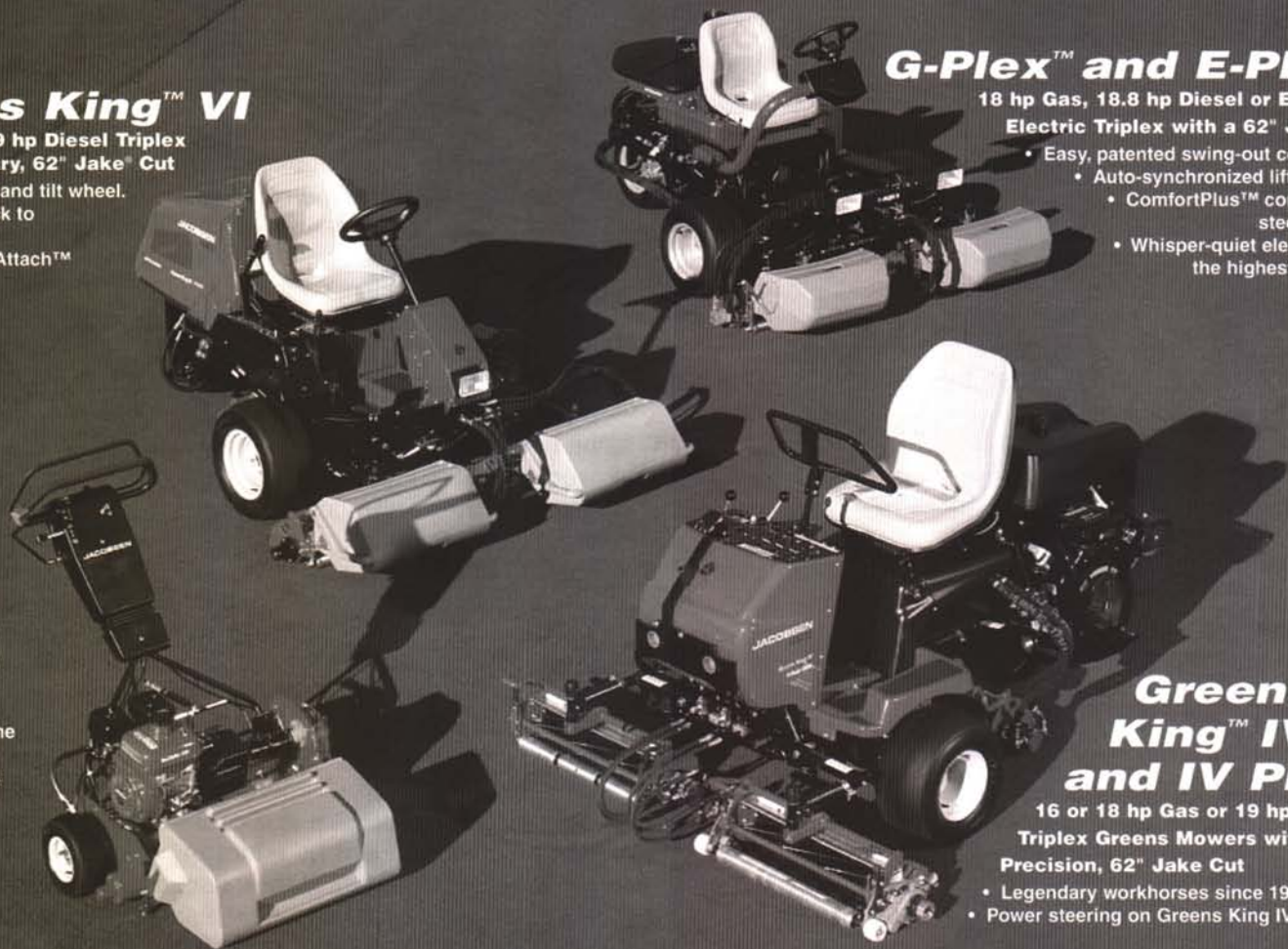
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Is Perception Reality?

By **Tony Rzdzki**, Golf Course Superintendent, Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin

As many of you, happen to be employed in an industry that serves millions of people annually. It can be a very rewarding career, when everything goes right and all is well in the universe. Unfortunately, this cosmic alignment rarely happens. The problem is that for many of us this is expected. Everything going right and perfect conditions are expected daily. Why does this happen? Why are we subject to such scrutiny?

Recently I attended the 38th Annual Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. Some of the top turfgrass experts in the country were featured speakers. Dr. Joe Vargas and Dr. Ron Calhoun travelled from Michigan State University. Dr. Frank Rossi from Cornell University and Craig Currier from Bethpage State Park flew in all the way from New York. Dr. Bruce Clarke from Rutgers University, Mike Morris from Crystal Downs Country Club and Michael McNulty from the Philadelphia Country Club also came to share their thoughts on this year's topic; *POA: Twenty Years Later*.

When asked to share his local opinion on *Poa* control, the venerable Monroe Miller of Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wisconsin, who only missed two of these events in his career stated, "This is the best one yet!" Bob Vavrek our local USGA Agronomist echoed his words as he rounded up the day and a half event.

While I listened to everyone's discussions, especially while Craig Currier was speaking, I was really taken aback. Craig said something that most of us know, but very few of our customers understand. **"It took six years to prepare for one week of golf!"** Yes I know that this was one the 'major tournaments' that seldom come along to almost all of us. But that is the point. What the golfing public 'sees' weekly on television, especially for a major tournament, definitely is not the reality that they can or should expect at their local country club. Their perception is flawed into thinking that if the turf at Bethpage, Olympia Fields, Medinah, or Oak Hill looks so great, so *perfect*, why can't we have it here?



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Take the major tournaments out of the picture. What of the weekly tour events? With the advent of television taping *everything*, these events must portray 'grainless' greens or be subject to the scorn of Johnny Miller. The perception must be perfect. And even with millions of dollars and hundreds of volunteers, often times the reality is that these fabulous swards of pristine turf are pushed to near death. And if Mother Nature deems it...turfgrass dies.

So what can we do? When handed a handful of lemons, how do we make lemonade? This is a challenge that we are all faced with, especially now with our slower economy and golf rounds spiraling down the stairs. Mike Morris from Crystal Downs Country Club in Frankfort, Michigan had some interesting comments. Mike took the offensive approach. No, he didn't take a week off to go fishing or tell his members to all take a hike. Mike realized, as we all should, that this is 'the information age'. He talked to his clients, his members, and asked them what their expectations were. He took the initiative and collected data to determine what his daily green speeds were. He surveyed his golfers and asked them what 'target' green speeds they would accept. Surprisingly, when he sped them up for a club event and tried to main-

tain those speeds afterwards, the members asked him to get them back to 'normal.' Lastly Mike evaluated his maintenance practices. He evaluated what he was doing to reach his 'target expectations.'

If you haven't heard Bruce Williams of Los Angeles Country Club speak about communication and time management, you have missed something. And if you have heard him speak...then practice what he is preaching. That is where I, and many others, fail.

I believe that at times, we are our own worst enemies. One of our greatest detriments is our lack of communication. I know for a fact that we preach to the choir in triumphant choruses, but are loath to carry the message to our employers. How well do we know that the squeakiest wheel gets the grease. Well, why not intelligently gather some data as Mike did and start squeaking?

Our livelihood demands the best of our abilities. Most of us strive well beyond the expectations of our clientele, but at what cost? Maybe we could all save a few gray hairs or losing them, and our employers some money on the way, if we took the initiative to assess the expectations of our customers. Maybe that is the reality of our careers and our lives. ♣

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Deciphering Helminthosporium Diseases

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

What Are Helminthosporium Diseases?

Most of the serious leaf-spotting fungi belong to a group collectively termed the Helminthosporium diseases. The word "Helminthosporium" is rooted in Greek and is translated to mean "worm spore". Anyone who has looked at the spores of these fungi under a microscope will quickly notice that they closely resemble fat, segmented worms (Figure 1). These diseases are so named because all of the pathogens used to be classified in the genus *Helminthosporium* before being split out into two different genera, *Bipolaris* and *Drechslera*. Because of similarities in symptoms and overlap in periods of occurrence, there is often a great deal of confusion when trying to determine which Helminthosporium disease is active on your course. Compounding this confusion is the fact that there are numerous species of fungi with spores that have only subtle morphological difference causing these diseases. There are over twenty species of *Drechslera* and *Bipolaris* that cause damage to warm and cool season turfgrasses. (Couch, 1995, Smiley et al., 1992, Smith et al., 1989). I will cover the symptoms and control of the five most devastating Helminthosporium diseases in Wisconsin.

Melting-Out of Kentucky Bluegrass

The first report and description of melting-out of Kentucky bluegrass in the United States was made by Dr. Charles Drechsler (a distinguished 1914 graduate of the UW-Madison, Department of Plant Pathology and USDA scientist for whom the genus *Drechslera* was

named) from collections in Wisconsin and seven other states (Drechsler, 1922; 1930). The disease is incited by *Drechslera poae* and is most severe on Kentucky bluegrass and other bluegrass species (see table below). During cool, wet weather, this disease is characterized by dark purple lesions that often have a light brown or bleached center as they expand. The pathogen often colonizes the entire leaf sheath, girdling the blade and causing it to wither. The girdled leaves fall off the plant and give the turf stand a thin or bare appearance (Figure 2). During periods of warmer weather in the early summer, plants colonized by the pathogen develop a crown and root rot. Melting-out is a well studied disease, and many factors that enhance disease development have been identified and used as models for other Helminthosporium diseases. Environmental conditions and agronomic practices that increase disease severity include low clipping height, shade, and high

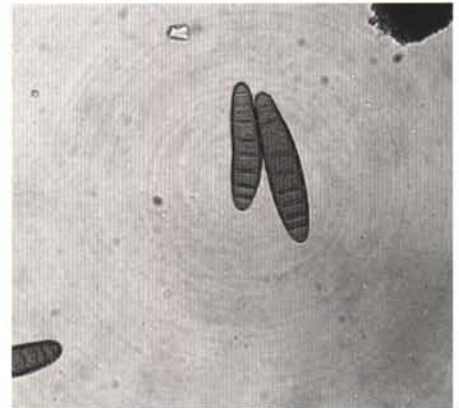


Figure 1. Worm-like spores of *Bipolaris sorokiniana*.



Figure 2. Two Kentucky bluegrass breeding plots severely diseased by melting-out.

Five Important Helminthosporium Diseases and Their Turfgrass Hosts

| Disease | Kentucky Bluegrass | Annual Bluegrass | Creeping Bentgrass | Colonial Bentgrass | Velvet Bentgrass | Perennial Ryegrass | Annual Ryegrass | Tall Fescue | Fine Fescue |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Melting-Out | •• | •• | | | | • | • | • | |
| Drechslera Leaf Blight | • | | •• | •• | •• | • | | • | • |
| Helminthosporium Blight | • | | | | • | • | •• | •• | •• |
| Helminthosporium Leaf Spot | •• | •• | •• | •• | •• | • | • | •• | •• |
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