

lucked out in mid-April when we experienced a couple of weeks of above (way above!) normal warmth. In our town we had the warmest first half of April since monthly records were first kept in 1948. The first two weeks averaged a high of 67.5 degrees F., warm enough to get at least some seed out of the ground and some grass growing. Ten degrees above normal will do that!

It was a little dry, though, a circumstance that pushed the early filling of golf course irrigation systems. We were putting intake pipes into Lake Mendota two days after the ice left; the men were grateful for the wet suits we use.

It was so dry in parts of Wisconsin that fire dangers were in the extreme and high range. The DNR canceled open burning permits and stopped issuing permits in 37 counties in mid-April. Showers picked up again in mid-May and moved a lot of areas closer to the "normal to date" levels of precipitation.

May is always a delight to outdoor people. You still have that sense of spring fever, brought on by redbuds, apple blossoms and lilacs. We see our first bluebirds and orioles, and watch the slow and steady unfolding of the big exotic shagbark hickory buds. Pine and fir and spruce needles at this time of the year are soft and pleasant to run through your hand. And despite the scars of winter, the grass really gets wound up and growing, keeping the mowing machinery humming and the smell of freshly cut grass in the air.

And soon we will be, as James Whitcomb Riley put it, knee-deep in June. That also can be pure pleasure for Wisconsin golf course superintendents.

The moisture status from around the state appears here, as always, courtesy of the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service.

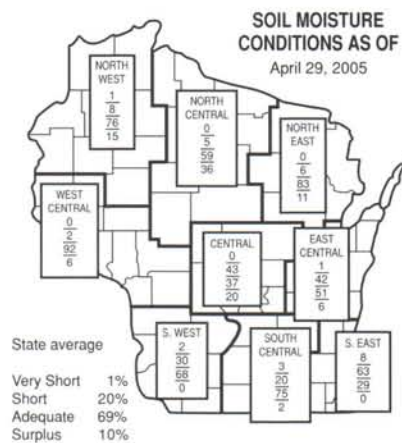
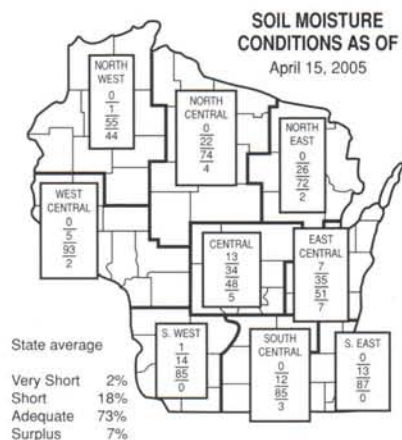
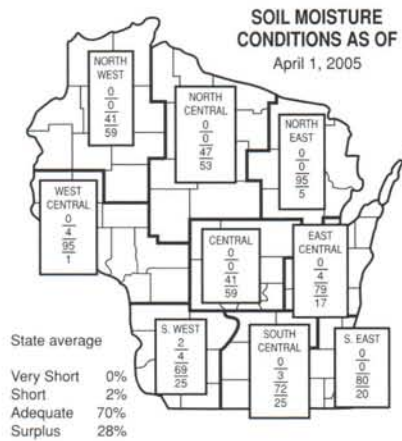
Congratulations to Michael Lee. Dr. Elton Aberle, Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, appointed Mike to the CALS Board of Visitors. Mike accepted.

The invitation to serve on the CALS BOV might be the highest honor one could receive from the

College. The board is made up of leaders from all the major agricultural sectors and commodities in Wisconsin. Many of BOV members are known nationally and all of them are known statewide. The board advises the Dean on agricultural issues, and meets formally in Madison twice a year for two days for each meeting. Assignments and projects require time in the intervening periods.

Dean Aberle has been terrific about maintaining a turfgrass professional on the BOV during his tenure in office. Terry Kurth, Bliss Nicholson and Monroe S. Miller preceded Mike.

There is no doubt Mike will represent us well. Aberle wouldn't have appointed him if anything less was possible.



Along with a lot of others in golf, I applauded the USGA move to slow golf ball technology.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the USGA sent a letter to golf equipment manufacturers in April asking them for prototype golf balls that fly shorter distances than those currently allowed. It asked for two golf ball designs — one that would land 25 yards shorter on average than the USGA's current standard, and another that would fall 15 yards shorter. There was no timetable and participation was voluntary.

Future planning like this only makes sense. Many classic golf courses will be rendered obsolete if something isn't done. None other than Augusta National Golf Club has called for change, and they have been joined by many other traditional golf facilities.

Of course, there is the comment made by a technical guy from one of the manufacturers who said the solution was, "Let the grass grow a little further and you've solved your problem overnight." Spoken like a true idiot, a selfish and ignorant one at that.



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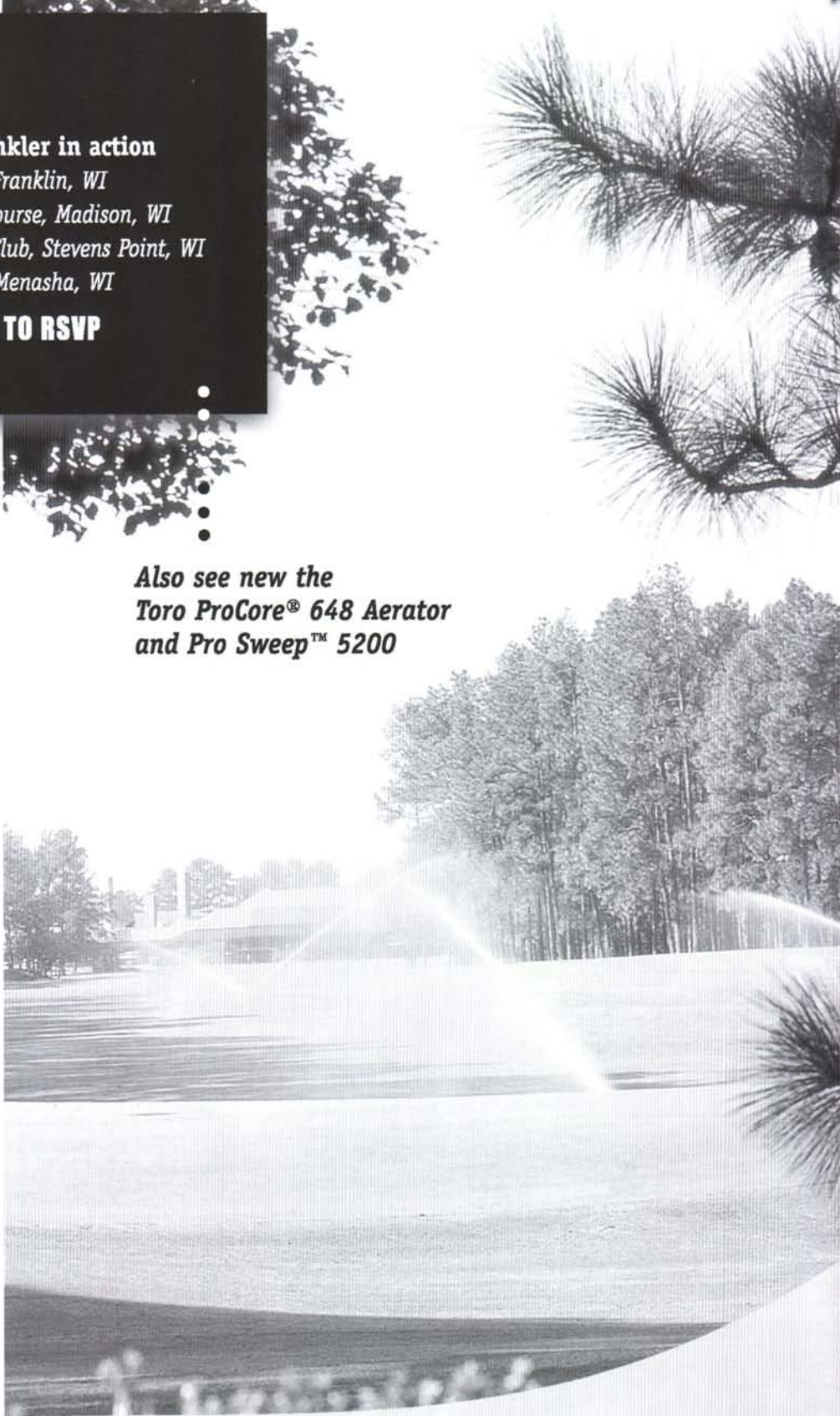
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The USGA needs to be encouraged and complimented for this activist stance they are taking to protect the game.

It is no secret that Steve Abler is leaving the TDL at season's end. His wife Becky has accepted a position at a junior college in Manitowoc and they will be moving to northeast Wisconsin. We'll miss him, although he will remain in our golf turf business somehow, I predict.

Others have noted the talent this young man has in the field of turfgrass pathology. The 2005 GCSAA Conference offered a seminar (2285) "Microscopic Identification of Turfgrass Diseases." There were a number of instructors, and Steve Abler was one of them. The students

attending grade all GCSAA seminars, and this seminar ranked 1st out of 100! The scale ran from 1 - 5, with 5 the highest. The ID class finished with an overall rating of 4.75.

Congratulations to Steve. There may be a few more Badgers in attendance next year in New Orleans.

My experiences and observations this spring have been that Wisconsin golfers have been very understanding and patient about the inconvenience caused by winter injury. Golf writers have been supportive — Rob Schultz and Gary D'Amato merit special thanks.

I believe we owe gratitude to Bob Vavrek and the USGA for answering endless phone calls and emails. Bob has been at the

speaker's podium in Wisconsin and surrounding states, explaining to golf players what likely happened this past winter. Our University of Wisconsin Extension people, especially Dr. John Stier, have done the same. The GCSAA and Jeff Bollig have pitched in to help us.

As I look back over nearly four decades, it is clear that golf course superintendents now more than ever recognize the value of good communication, and have confronted the issue head on at times. It is a bit of a twist on my favorite quote from Gary Player, "The more I practice, the luckier I get."

This improved communication on all fronts may be the good that has come from the bad winter. And that's no small item. ♣

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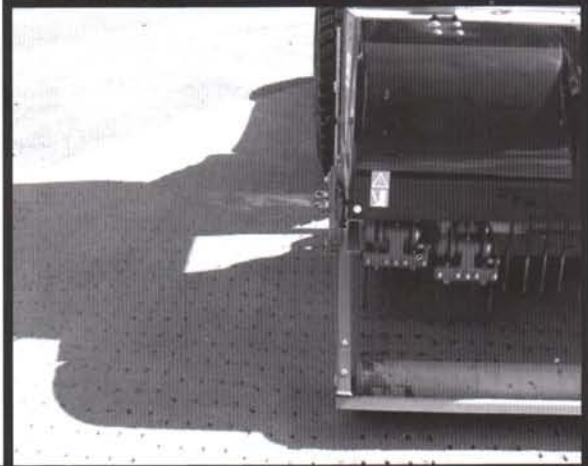
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# New White Grub Chemistry: What Does it Mean for You?



By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The enactment of the Environmental Protection Agency's Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) of 1996 dramatically reduced, and continues to impact, the number of pesticides registered in the turf and ornamental area. As a result, fewer products are currently available; thus choices of products are more limited. Furthermore, only a limited number of turf and ornamental products have been developed and made commercially available by agricultural chemical companies. Of these, only a couple white grub insecticides have been registered and are commercially available; they include halofenozide (Mach 2) and clothianidin (Arena).

Mach 2 is an insect growth regulator (IGR) that controls most white grub species associated with turf. Its mode of action is by means of disrupting the normal molting (growth) process that is regulated by insect growth hormones. Following either contact or ingestion, Mach 2 functions by forcing white grubs to prematurely molt (grow) to the next larval stage before they are physiologically ready (mature). Because water retention is critical to most insects, Mach 2 exploits this critical requirement by making the grubs vulnerable to water loss during the premature molting process. Additionally, Mach 2 also causes the white grubs to stop feeding upon contact or ingestion. Because of its mode of action, mortality typically occurs 7-14 days after contact or ingestion.

Most recently (2005), Arvesta Company introduced the new white grub insecticide Arena. Arena's active ingredient is clothianidin; it is a neonicotinoid (i.e., nicotine analogues) insecticide similar to imidacloprid (Merit). Arena is an acetyl-cholinesterase inhibitor which disrupts the normal neurological processes of an insect. Arena works through contact (absorption) or ingestion; after exposure, the targeted insect stops feeding and dies soon. Arena also works systemically within the plant to provide season-long residual control of certain insects. As a result, it can be applied up to 60 day prior to the pest presence.

Currently, there are a few agricultural chemical companies in the process of developing and testing a number of experimental compounds for control of white grubs. Should the data associated with any of these products prove to be promising and the United States EPA find any of these compounds to be acceptable for registration based on their compound profile criteria, it is plausible that one of these experimental products may be made commercially available in the near future adding to our limited number of white grub control products currently registered. ♣

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# Real-life Mulligan

By Rob Schultz, *The Capital Times*

*Editor's Note: He's back! Former Grass Roots columnist Rob Schultz is returning to our journal to carry on his column, THE SPORTS PAGE. He continues to write great golf stories and articles for The Capital Times, and his beat also covers Wisconsin basketball.*

*Always entertaining, sometimes controversial and never at a loss of words, Rob plays bogey golf or better and has always recognized the role of the superintendent. We are delighted he is back.*

Take a good look at Dan Barrett and you probably won't notice anything wrong.

You won't notice the slight limp, or the oversized shoe he wears on his left foot. You do notice the oversized couch that seems out of place when you follow him into his industrial-looking office inside the Bergamont Golf Club maintenance building, but you'd never guess why it's there.

You also notice the burly, 6-foot-4 Barrett's warm smile and kind words as he greets a stranger. They stick out like Bergamont's perfectly manicured fairways traversing the hilly terrain outside Oregon. He still lives by the golden rule he was taught by his parents while growing up in Monroe.

That's particularly evident during these important days for Barrett, the 43-year-old superintendent at Bergamont. The back nine of the splendid course designed by Andy North opened Saturday, May 14th. By all accounts, it's in spectacular shape. The front nine is expected to open sometime next month.

"Everything's great," said Barrett proudly from his office as Bergamont dried out from a recent rain.

Nobody is disagreeing with him. Even those who know it can't possibly be true. That's because Barrett's definition of great includes overlooking a left ankle and foot that are virtually lifeless because of a freak medical condition that nearly took his life last January.

He spent 43 days in St. Mary's Hospital this winter after developing a blood clot in his left leg while suffering from a rare form of vasculitis called Wegener's granulomatosis.

The former three-sport athlete at Monroe High School spent some of those days wondering if he was going to live, more of them wondering if doctors were going to amputate his leg or his foot, which is still not out of the woods.

His first week in the hospital included three operations in three days. Barrett had four more operations, most of which were conducted to save his leg. Doctors had to

carve out dead muscle from his calf because the clot cut off the circulation of blood to the lower part of his left leg for more than six hours.

Even between surgeries, doctors would stop by and dig around his leg to remove dead muscle tissue. The swelling was so bad that doctors made incisions on both sides of his calf to allow the skin to expand.

Yet Barrett, whose kidneys also nearly shut down during his hospital stay because of the Wegener's granulomatosis, acts today as if nothing has happened.

He doesn't pout about a bad break in his life or whine about a setback at a critical juncture of his career. Instead, Barrett ignores the swelling in his calf and foot and works 14-hour days, seven days a week perfecting Bergamont.

The only breaks he takes are those rare moments when spreads out on his office couch to elevate his leg.

Like all quality golf course superintendents, Barrett knows no other way to work. Or live. He has been treating his medical condition no differently than if he found a rare disease attacking his greens. That means finding a way to live with a problem instead of waiting to die from it.

"I can't dwell on the bad. What happened, happened. We just have to deal with it and move on," explained Barrett, who is buoyed when he feels twinges and shooting pains in his foot. Those are signs of nerves coming to life, signs of recovery.

"My whole attitude in the hospital was that I was going to get better," he added. "I refused to let myself think negatively. Then I would've been depressed or whatever. It's amazing I never felt any of that."

Barrett is getting better by dwelling on the positive, like how the love from his wife, Sherri, helped him pull through. Sherri Barrett never left her husband's side during the worst of it. That meant sleeping for three straight weeks on a cot in his hospital room.

And then there were his friends who found a way to keep a smile on his face. North was a frequent visitor and called when he was out of town.

"He never complained about anything," recalled North, who has formed a strong bond with Barrett. "I called him at the hospital and he was going to find out later that afternoon if he was going to lose his leg. And he was saying, 'Everything looks like it's going OK.'"

Randy Smith, Barrett's mentor at Nakoma Golf Club and his assistant at Bergamont, took care of his house while the childless Barretts were in the hospital. Barrett's sister-in-law took care of their two golden retrievers.

His fellow superintendents helped, too. Area superin-



tendents like Blackhawk's Monroe Miller, Maple Bluff's Tom Harrison and Edelweiss' Jim Scott stayed in touch. So did the O.J. Noer Center's Tom Schwab, who once taught Barrett the business at Monroe Country Club.

Barrett's buddies up north really came to his aid. He came to Bergamont last July after spending 16 years at Trout Lake Golf and Country Club in Arbor Vitae. The Northern Great Lakes Golf Course Superintendents Association, of which he was a vital member while at Trout Lake, created a relief fund to help pay Barrett's medical expenses that his insurance didn't cover.

Finally, Barrett found strength in the knowledge that his father-in-law remained active after losing an arm and a leg in a farming accident about 20 years ago. "He's getting around great," Barrett said. "He was probably good for me to talk to, to learn how he's done since his accident."

There is still a chance Barrett could lose his foot. Doctors are concerned that if he can't regain much feeling in it, he could injure it without realizing it - by stepping on a nail, for instance.

"But right now they're very encouraged by what's happening and we don't think we'll have to do that," said Barrett, who added that he may also consider amputation if a prosthesis can offer more productivity and mobility.

"I know I could do my job either way," he said.

And that's what is most important, although Barrett said his illness taught him that he needs to spend more time with his wife, friends and family. It also taught him to be more patient at work and not expect instant results.

His best therapy will always be Bergamont and making sure it looks its best for golfers playing it.

"I love what I do. For me, being able to get out here and do it, yeah, this is great," Barrett said. "My wife always told me that she has never met anybody who enjoys going to work more than me. I get up in the morning and can't wait to get here... That has helped me gain some of my strength back and my mobility."

You could say Barrett and Bergamont have something in common. Both are in a state of transition but nobody could tell it because they're already looking so good.

"For me, it's important to get it to the level we all want it to be at. So I have that challenge out there that I'm trying to achieve," said Barrett.

He was speaking about Bergamont. But anyone who knows Barrett knows he might as well have been talking about himself and his recovery. ♣



HENRY A. KOSHOLLEK/THE CAPITAL TIMES

Dan Barrett spent 43 straight days in the hospital this winter after developing a blood clot in his leg, but recovered in time to get the Bergamont Golf Club ready for its inaugural season.

## PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR

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# Wonders, Typhula's Basidiocarps and Snow Scald?

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

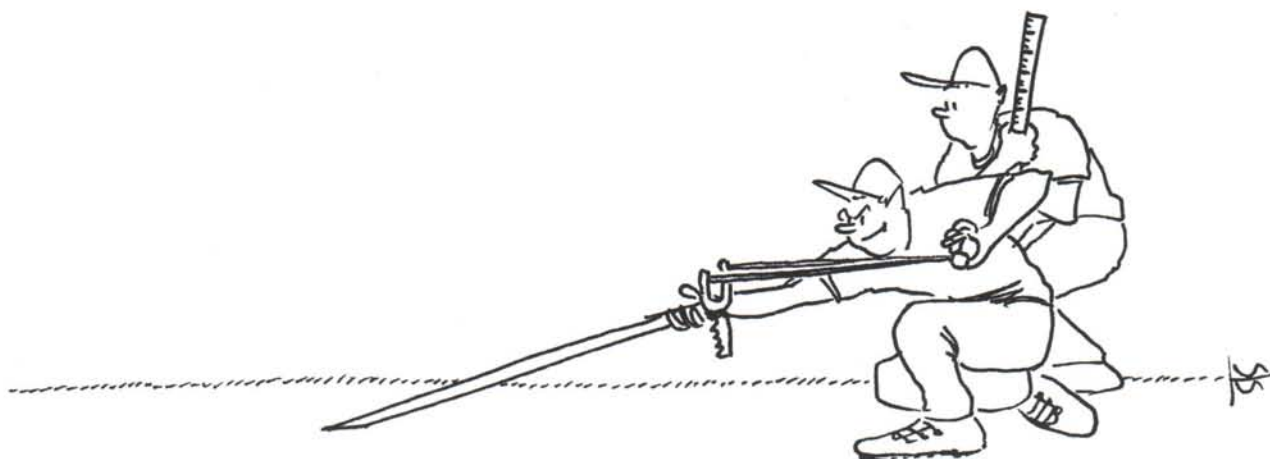
A few weeks ago, Wisconsin/Minnesota snow mold field days, the last of our 2005 activities of the Wisconsin turf pathology program, was very successfully completed. I would like to express my sincere thanks to Steve Abler, who put together all the work on a timely and professional way, and also extend my appreciation to superintendents who provided the research plots and helped with the events. Since we were all overwhelmingly saddened by winter kill of annual bluegrass, ryegrass, and tall fescue throughout Wisconsin, I couldn't talk about the snow mold damages. In fact, it was one of the best years for the snow molds, especially in northern regions for as long as I remember. Our untreated control plots had almost 100% snow mold damage at both sites, Gateway GC in Wisconsin and Giants Ridge GC in Minnesota.

Briefly, 2,895 individual plots were established at four locations in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Fungicide efficacy studies included 88 different fungicide combinations for snow mold. Additionally, studies funded by the GCSAA and WGCSA, which looked at the efficacy of individual labeled fungicides to control multiple isolates of six snow mold pathogens, were carried out at Stevens

Point and Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin.

This year, we had the field days at three sites — Sentryworld GC, Stevens Point and Gateway GC, Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin and The legend at Giants Ridge, Biwabik, Minnesota. Approximately forty-five people (chemical reps, superintendents, and researchers) attended. Some came to one but some came along to all three. Thank you for your participation despite many hours of driving from site to site.

Nature is full of wonders which make scientists spend hundreds of hours to explore and research those wonders. I want to share with you two exciting experiences I had during this past winter. First, it is about basidiocarps (Figure 1A) in nature, a sexual structure of *Typhula* species and secondly is about snow scald caused by *Myriosclerotinia borealis*, one of the snow mold (cold-loving) fungi. *Typhula* species, *T. incarnata*, *T. ishikariensis*, and *T. phacorrhiza* are the most common pathogenic fungal species occurring in Wisconsin as far as I know. In disease cycle, *Typhula* pathogens infect turfgrasses from mycelia germinating either from sclerotia (over-summering structures) (Figure 1C) or from basidiospores produced on the



"YOU READY? WE ARE FINALLY GOING TO GET THAT ELUSIVE TRIPLE-DIGIT STIMPMETER READING."



sporocarps (Figure 1A). Mycelia from germinating sclerotia might be the primary way of infecting the plants because we rarely see sporocarps in nature.

Finally, Steve was able to get a chance to see hundreds of the sporocarps of *T. incarnata* at the Gateway in early November 2004. I have been looking for sporocarps for many years and miserably failed to observe them (even with my attempts to inoculate many hundreds of sclerotia on my own lawn). After I saw the sporocarps brought by Steve, I was so excited that I couldn't resist telling people. I often wonder whether you have the same excitement as I do. Yet, I am still searching for more wonders like why this sexual reproduction portion of the *Typhula* life cycle is so rare in nature, especially in *T. ishikariensis*. In fact, we had worked out a way of producing the sporocarps regardless of *Typhula* species in controlled chamber in my lab. By the way, a million of individual basidiospores produced from the sporocarps (via recombination) are genetically different from each other. Sexual reproduction in most living organisms including fungi can be a most effective way of adapting into adverse environments such as repeated use of same fungicides, turf-grass species, environmental climates, and other stresses and managements. From them, insensitive or more virulent isolates or races can be selected.

The other wonder was to witness snow mold damages due to snow scald (or Sclerotinia snow mold), caused by *Myriosclerotinia borealis* (Bubák. & Vleugel) L.M. Kohn or *Sclerotinia borealis* Bubák & Vleugel, despite fungicide application on a golf course near by our testing site in Minnesota. Unlike the *Typhula* which is a basidiomycete, this pathogen is an ascomycete. As of today, I have not heard of its damage from other pathologists or seen it in Wisconsin despite extensive collections from 100 golf courses in Wisconsin. There are limited reports of this fungus published in North America, mainly from Alaska, Minnesota, Colorado, and Canada. The disease that we saw on the golf course was mostly on high slope areas of fairways and some on greens. This is not a surprise because this pathogen is reported to be most severe on turfs under long snow cover on frozen soils and less severe on water-saturated soils which are conducive for *Typhula* and *Microdochium* snow molds.

The interesting thing is that the superintendent was successfully able to control *Typhula* and *Microdochium* as his course, but was unable to control *Myriosclerotinia* using a combination of two fungicides. In our trials, the mixture did really well for *Typhula* blight and *Microdochium* patch. Water-soaking patches covered with grayish fungal mycelia and tan sclerotia appear as snow melts. Later the infected leaves become bleached to white and the relatively large sclerotia turned black. The optimum temperature for *M. borealis* development is -2°C. Oval or flake-like looking sclerotia



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