

It's What We Do Best

By NATE USELDING

Assistant Superintendent, Dellwood Hills Golf Club

I love this time of year. Finally the gloom of winter is over, temperatures are rising and people are out and about. It's the time of year when we get to see what cards Mother Nature dealt us from the previous winter. Some of us peeked early on and were dreading spring green-up while others were happy it's finally here. If anyone was going to save us it was Mother Nature herself. The early spring time temperatures haven't been this warm since the early 1900s and what a big help it has been.

I was excited to see how our course fared from the winter. We heard the horror stories from many different courses and in the back of my mind I feared the worst for ours. We peeked early on and took samples of our greens. There was death present from the poa plants while the bent was flourishing well. The amount of death was uncertain until the thaw. We knew our course wasn't going

to be perfect this spring, so when the snow melted I was chopping at the bit to get out and do something. Then I remembered seeds don't germinate well in frozen soil. The first thing we did was to document our outcome from winter by taking over 200 pictures. We wanted to share with others our misfortunes and learn about these different areas of our course. This will prove to be a great visual aide in the future by how different areas respond to different treatments.

The sight of death was terrifying, what were we going to do? Nothing looks good when it is brown or white. How were we going to overcome this and turn these fairways back into a plush green carpet? First, you have to set the mood and be happy. Embrace this tragedy because it could be worse. This is our time to shine because it is what we've been hired to do. It's what we studied in school and what we learned from so many years on

the job. It's how to grow grass. Granted it may not be our ideal situation, but who doesn't like a challenge? Many superintendents took this opportunity and discussed their problems with their peers. No one was in this alone and it was great to see people reaching out for help and others receiving it.

My boss continually informed me of how other courses were doing and what they might do for corrective measures. This opened my mind up to many different ideas for our course. We sat down and mapped out our problem areas and our ideas to correct them. Some of our ideas came from past experiences at other courses and others from what we are capable of doing with the equipment we have. This brainstorm session was nothing more than getting us all on the same page and thinking in the right direction. We now have an action plan in place,

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WASTE PESTICIDE COLLECTION FOR BUSINESSES AND FARMERS

June 20, 2005 ~ 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
1400 West 96th Street ~ Bloomington, Minn.

Hennepin County will be holding a Waste Pesticide Collection on June 20, 2005. The hours for collection are 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. The collection site will be located at South Hennepin Recycling and Problem Waste Drop-Off Center located at +1400 West 96th Street in Bloomington.

This collection is similar to the Waste Pesticide Collections that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has held in the past. The only change is that participants must have a county business address or be a resident of Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Ramsey or Scott counties.

The collection is open to farmers, commercial applicators, non-commercial applicators, and structural pest control applicators. Pesticide retailers

and distributors are not qualified participants. Each participant is allowed to bring in a maximum of 300 pounds of waste pesticide.

Participants need to pre-register the Waste Pesticides that they will be bringing to the collection. Waste Pesticide Registration forms are available by calling (612) 348-3777, or on our web site at www.hennepin.us (*keyword search: Waste pesticide collection.*) Complete the forms and return them to the address located on the top of the form. The program will also not accept non-pesticide products such as surfacants, crop oils, adjuvants, tank cleaners, dye markers and empty pesticide containers. Waste pesticides are the only products participants will be allowed to drop off.

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our membership is behind us and we feel good about what we are going to accomplish.

As assistants, many times we are left to carry out the orders to our team and never get the opportunity to experiment with different strategies. If you have problem areas, this is a great opportunity to ask for a small area of your own to practice on. If it is a tee or the beginning of a fairway somewhere, you get the chance to try out different ideas or closely manage the practices in place. It never hurts to try something new and by having ownership of an area and learning from your mistakes, it allows you to see first hand what will work. When you do have success, it gives you confidence with future endeavors.

Spring of 2005 definitely proved to be a challenge for all. We all worked a couple extra hours each day, but that is what it took to get the job done. Looking back, April was a great month for growing grass and it allowed us to successfully do our job. It is only the beginning of our long season and doesn't it feel good to have conquered what Mother Nature dealt us?

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