

## DEALING WITH INSECT PROBLEMS ON GOLF COURSE TURF<sup>1</sup>

Harry D. Niemczyk  
Professor of Turfgrass Entomology  
OARDC, The Ohio State University  
Wooster, OH

Approaches to dealing with insect problems on golf course turf can be broken down to three basic kinds of programs. The first is the preventive approach in which the Golf Course Superintendent takes no chances, but instead treats to insure that no turf will be lost. The second may be considered a predictive one. In this case, the decision to treat or not treat is based on monitoring insect occurrence, weather and other factors with a view to anticipating infestations. The third approach is the curative one. In this case, insecticides are not applied until the damaging stage of the insect is present or until symptoms of injury appear.

The decision as to the type of approach taken by a Golf Course Superintendent is based on many factors. A dominating factor in this decision is the course budget. The application of insecticides can be costly in terms of material, equipment and man power needed to apply them. A second and closely related factor are the standards of the golf course owner or club membership. In some cases, even a relatively small amount of injury can cause concern among the members and certainly the greens committee. In other situations, except for keeping the green surfaces acceptable for putting purposes, insect injury is generally tolerated. A third and equally important factor is the philosophy of the Superintendent. In many cases, the first two factors will determine what the Golf Course Superintendent's philosophy will be, but there is a great deal of room for independent judgement on his part.

One of the key elements in the matter of program decision has to do with the Superintendent's capability of communicating with the people to whom he is responsible, namely, the Greens Committee. Time taken to explain a situation from a professional and objective point of view will help immeasurably in obtaining that which is necessary to correct an existing or potential problem.

A further and perhaps equally important point is the Superintendent's knowledge of insect problems in general. Many opportunities are provided for him to gain the necessary knowledge and understanding of insects and the principles of their control on a golf course. One of the most important sources of this knowledge is his reference library. This should include subscriptions and file copies of trade publications, books and field guides, and extension publications from the university and industry sources, and finally, slide sets now available from various sources. Such educational materials are not only useful to the Superintendent, but his assistant (s) and other members of the staff involved in the insect

---

<sup>1</sup> Republication of this article in any form, whole or in part, is not permitted without written permission from the author.

control program. Other sources of knowledge include professional conferences and seminars presented at conferences or other times during the year. One need not wait until the university sponsors such seminars. Any of the Golf Course Superintendent's Associations can sponsor a seminar on any subject they wish to be updated on. The use of consultants is, of course, another and very effective way of getting individual knowledge and assistance with a particular problem.

In Michigan, grubs, particularly the Masked Chafer, Japanese Beetle and Black Turfgrass Ataenius, may be considered potential problems of major importance. Cutworms on greens are an annoying annual problem. Among the group of insect pests considered unrecognized problems on golf courses are the Bluegrass Billbug on Kentucky bluegrass, especially in the roughs, and the Winter Grain Mite. Outlined below are some preventive, predictive and curative insecticide programs to control these pests. Again, the specific approach taken by a Golf Course Superintendent is dependent upon many of the factors mentioned above.

### SOME INSECT CONTROL PROGRAMS FOR GOLF COURSE TURF<sup>2</sup>

#### GRUB CONTROL

##### PREVENTION PROGRAM

OFTANOL - 2 lb AI/acre (early spring to early summer)

##### PREDICTION

Black Turfgrass Ataenius

- Look for adults in early spring

Japanese Beetle and Masked Chafer

- Past history of infestations

- Look for adults during July

##### CURATIVE PROGRAM

PROXOL - 8 lb AI/acre

]Irrigate

TURCAM - 2 lb AI/acre

](0.5-1 inch)

Diazinon - 5-6 lb AI/ acre

]or apply just

Insecticide/ Nematicide - 5-10 lb AI/acre

]before rain

#### CUTWORM CONTROL

##### PREVENTION AND CURATIVE PROGRAMS

- Many labeled insecticides effective

- Apply in late afternoon or evening and DO NOT water in liquid treatment

#### BLUEGRASS BILLBUG

##### PREVENTION PROGRAM

OFTANOL - 2 lb AI/acre - (spring)

##### CURATIVE PROGRAM

- Same insecticides and rates as used for grub control

- Irrigate or apply just before rain

---

<sup>2</sup> No endorsement of named products by the author is intended, nor is criticism implied for products not mentioned.

WINTER GRAIN MITE

PREVENTION PROGRAM

- AVOID yearly (regular) use of carbamates

CURATIVE PROGRAM

- Liquid treatments followed by immediate light syringing
  - Diazinon 2-3 lb AI/acre
  - DURSBAN 1 lb AI/ acre
  - PROXOL 6 lb AI/ acre