

SUPPRESSING POA ANNUA SEEDHEADS WITH EMBARK

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First, I would like to give you some background on why I decided to use Embark to suppress seedheads at Glengary. Then I will show some slides and express some of my personal opinions as to why I feel growth regulators can become one of those extra tools that we as superintendents are always looking for to make our work a little easier.

While attending the 49th Michigan Turf Conference, I listened to a talk given by Dr. Goss on some work he was trying in the area of Poa annua eradication by eliminating the seed. His experiment more or less backfired because there was plenty of seed already in the ground for the next few years, plus he had actually produced a Poa annua with deeper roots which helped the grass plant through the summer stress periods. This rang a bell in my head because deeper roots was something I was trying to achieve at Glengary where the fairways are approximately 80% Poa annua.

On April 23, 1981 on our No. 2 Fairway we used 21 oz. of Embark to the acre and in about 4 days I thought I was going to have a heart attack because No. 2 was no longer green, but a yellow green. Right away we knew we had used too much Embark. It was about late May before No. 2 fairway was back to normal and other than no seedheads I saw no big difference this year.

On May 3, 1982 using the same fairway we went with a 16 oz. to the acre rate and I noticed some yellowing where we had overlapped when we sprayed and also we had a nozzle that was leaking which left yellow lines up and down the fairway. This year the fairway seemed to do better than years before plus in the spring it was cleaner after mowing than the rest of the fairways.

This past year on April 27 we decided to go with just a little less than we had in 1982 and at the same time 3M came out with a recommendation of 1/2 pint to the acre on their Embark label. This is the rate we used on all 18 fairways and it worked beautifully, in fact so good I plan to include it as one of my annual maintenance practices.

Seedhead reduction is not the only positive thing we can gain from using Embark in the spring. A deeper stronger rooting system for summer was accomplished I feel because our fairways looked good in July and August. A report from Ohio State stated that they saw in the rhizotron a 70% decline in rooting when Poa annua was in full seedhead production.

We had a lot of wet weather this past spring, and we were unable to mow some of our poorly drained fairways. I was afraid after two weeks we would have a mess on our hands. It turned out we had very little top growth at all and the fairways looked as they normally do after being mowed.

One of the most visual effects you notice is the deeper green coloring in May and June. Our fairways in May looked like we had put a ton of nitrogen on them, when in fact the only fertilizer they had to this point was a dormant feeding in November of 1982.

In all reports that I read on seedhead suppression with Embark a color enhancement was always found.

I would like to now show some slides that may help show this color enhancement:

- Slide 1. This is by our 9th green; you can visually see the seedheads in the intermediate rough and notice the green line where our spray rig didn't completely shut off.
- Slide 2. This is our 13th hole. Notice the tire tracks through the intermediate rough. This was caused by a build up on the spray rig tires. Remember the two trees for a later slide.
- Slide 3. If you make sure your sprayer puts down just the right amount of chemical and don't overlap too much, you could look like this in the summer. That's brown patch on our 4th tee. Just a reminder of what the summer of '83 was like.
- Slide 4. Just to show you what our fairways looked like in July, this is the No. 13 looking toward the two trees I mentioned before.

In closing let me say that I feel plant growth regulators are going to become and already are another tool that we can use to maintain top quality turf. One should pick the right plant growth regulator for a particular turfgrass situation. In our case it was for seedhead reduction, deeper roots and a greener color. One should I feel avoid their use before expected stress periods and in heavy wear areas.

I'm really excited about what they have done for me and hope they will work equally as good for you.