

THE TURF YEAR IN REVIEW

Turf damage during the winter of 1968-69 was one of the most extensive of the past fifteen years. Bentgrass and Poa annua greens were severely damaged by winter desiccation. The desiccation injury was most severe on greens which were heavily thatched or which had been aerified in late fall with the holes left open. Kentucky bluegrass sod on poorly drained areas was severely injured in late March due to low temperature kill of the turf which was in a high state of hydration. The desiccation and low temperature injury problems were concentrated primarily in the lower-eastern half of the lower peninsula. Snow mold was common throughout northern Michigan but not particularly severe.

The spring of 1969 was characterized by relatively low temperatures. Soil temperatures below 50° were quite common well into late spring which resulted in a minimum amount of turfgrass growth. As a result, recovery from the winter damage was quite slow. Turfgrass response to spring nitrogen fertilization was relatively slow due to the limited growth. Soluble nitrogen fertilizers gave the best early spring response.

The 1969 summer has been characterized by frequent precipitation. The large amount of precipitation has increased leaching which has resulted in a greater nitrogen requirement. During periods of higher temperatures, brown patch has been quite active and some loss of turf occurred due to wet wilt, particularly Poa annua.

Helminthosporium leafspot disease (Melting out) caused extensive damage to fescue and Kentucky bluegrass turfgrass areas this spring and summer. The cool, moist spring was ideal for rapid disease development. The same cool, moist conditions were also responsible for heavy outbreaks of dollar spot on greens & fairways.

Fusarium blight was very widespread in Michigan this summer, especially on Merion lawns. The disease first appeared extensively around the end of July which is about one month later than normal. This lateness was caused by the abnormal amounts of moisture received in the spring and early summer.