

SPORTS TURF MANAGER

... for safe, natural sports turf

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SPRING PLANTING PREP...

Every two years, the Sports Turf Association compiles a table of grass seed types available from major seed companies around the province. This year, we've also included a handy chart listing the most common characteristics of cool season turf grasses. Which will do best in shade, tolerate wear and have the lowest mowing frequency? See pages 17 and 18 for further details.

Controlling Turf Diseases Daniel Tremblay

THE ROLE OF SILICA IN IMPROVING TURF'S NATURAL DEFENSES

Fungal diseases are a regular turf problem for golf course superintendents. And the problem is made even worse by often appearing during the summer season when the course is at its busiest. Control methods are presently few in number, basically boiling down to the use of fungicides. Studies presently underway at Laval University's Horticultural Research Centre, however, are working on alternatives to pesticide use.

In spite of all the money and effort invested over the last few years in research into the biological control of turf diseases, few new solutions are presently available that golf course superintendents could actually use. Improved turf care and the use of new disease-resistant cultivars can help prevent the appearance of diseases, but are not always sufficient.

During the summer, heat and humidity stimulate the growth of several fungi capable of attacking turf grasses. At the same time, golf turf is undergoing intense maintenance and suffers from several forms of

severe stress. Among them, heat, drought, predatory insects, foot traffic from golfers, and frequent low mowings not only make turf more vulnerable to various infestations, but also wound the plants leaving the door wide open to pathogens. It is the combination of these factors that explains why diseases are so common during the summer months. → page 9

Below: Plants were sown in University of Guelph greenhouses. Half were given fertilizer without silica while the other half received fertilizer with silica. Results obtained were conclusive. See page 9 for more...



DANIEL TREMBLAY