

**USGA**

**Be Forewarned — Gray Leaf Spot May Be Moving West**

By: Mike Huck - USGA Green Section

At our annual fall staff meeting a topic of discussion was the increasing spread of Gray Leaf Spot (*Pyricularia grisea*) disease on perennial ryegrass fairways and roughs. Severe damage from this disease was first noted three years ago in the Mid-Atlantic Region. This past summer the occurrence spread as far west as Illinois. In some cases, the disease pressure was nothing more than a nuisance, while in other situations major areas of fairways and roughs were destroyed.

The question now becomes "Will the spread continue farther west into overseeding and high desert climates where perennial ryegrass is commonly cultured?" It seems it may be possible since disease occurrence has been noted where extreme heat, drought stress, and dryness are occurring in combination. Humidity enhances disease development and spread but may not be a requirement for infection to take place.

This disease has the potential to affect stands grown perennially or as winter overseedings. It can be perceived as

helpful at the time of bermudagrass transition by knocking out then unwanted rye with the arrival of heat. However, seedling injury has been noted at infected sites as late as October during reestablishment of damaged areas. This could potentially raise havoc during the fall overseeding or reestablishment where perennial rye is the primary turf.

The Mid-Atlantic Green Section office describes the progression of damage as follows:

- The symptoms begin as reddish-brown spots or wilted turf, which easily can be confused with brown patch or Pythium, but no mycelium will be present.
- Leaf lesions can be brown and resemble *Helminthosporium sp.*
- The turf appears to be under wilt stress, but does not respond to water.
- Characteristics of gray leaf spot include a distinct twisting of the leaf tip often resembling the shape of a fishhook.
- The disease initially (but not always) begins in the rough, or intermediate rough and progresses to fairways.

Gray leaf spot can be controlled with fungicides. However, spray intervals need to be compressed and/or longer lasting, more expensive systemic fungicides must be used. It is expensive to control this disease with some programs costing upwards of \$50,000 this past year. Not a great amount of information is available regarding cultural practices recommended to avoid leaf spot development other than:

- Watering deeply and infrequently during the daytime since spores are blown by wind and splashed by water with disease development primarily occurring during evening.
- Avoid soluble nitrogen applications or excessive nitrogen applications.

A few perennial ryegrass varieties offering some gray leaf spot resistance have been identified by the University of Maryland and if you are interested in this information, please contact our office.

Hopefully, the western states will not have to contend with this disease, but just in case, be forewarned. ↗

**Naumann's NorCal News**

**Forrest Arthur** has left the Links at Spanish Bay to become the Superintendent at the Preserve in Carmel Valley. It is a new course in the hills above Carmel designed by Tom Fazio . . . **Frank Zamazal** has left Oakhurst Country Club to become the Superintendent at Eagle Ridge G C. It is a new golf course in Gilroy and is being managed by Crown Golf . . . **Simon Summerville** has accepted the Superintendent position at Mountain Shadows Golf Resort in Rhonert Park. He is replacing **Tom Brower** who has moved back to Washington. Simon was the superintendent at Lake Sherwood C C in Thousand Oaks . . . **Cliff Rourke** is the new superintendent at La Contenta C C. Cliff was the Superintendent at Summitpointe GC in Milpitas prior to his move . . . **Bob Franchine** is back in Northern California and has accepted the Superintendent position at San Geronimo G C . . . **Mark Bunte** is the new Director of Golf Course Maintenance at Somoma Golf Club. Mark was the superintendent at Lake Wildwood C C in Penn Valley. Replacing Mark is **Ken Wolford**. Ken has been the assistant at Palo Alto Muni Golf Course before making the move to the Gold Country.