



TURFAXTM

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JB COMMENTS:

CONFUSING WORD SELECTION

In discussing the seasonal timing of cultural practices, the terms "fall seeding" or "late-fall fertilization" are frequently used. However, is this really the true intent of such word selection? Fall, or more specifically autumn, is the season between summer and winter extending from approximately the September 23 equinox to the December 22 solstice, in the northern hemisphere. Thus, in discussing the appropriate timing for seeding of cool-season turfgrasses in many cool-climatic regions the appropriate word selection is late summer. Similarly, the term late-fall fertilization specifically would refer to December which is not the intent in most situations. One should keep these specifics in mind when selecting terminology related to seasonal cultural practices and turfgrass pest management.

PHYTOTOXIC IRRIGATION WATER

In the 1960s it was not uncommon to be called out to a golf course where the turfgrass on all putting greens had died essentially overnight. Detailed diagnosis revealed no specific symptoms that suggested a disease, insect or environmental stress as a likely cause. In these cases the irrigation water was obtained from a nearby river. By a process of elimination, the most likely cause of the turf injury symptoms was a toxic chemical in the irrigation water, probably introduced via irregular dumping by an industry upstream from the intake line for the irrigation system. However, since the potential chemical involved was unknown it was very difficult to make specific quantitative analyses in an effort to confirm the phytotoxic chemical. Thus, rarely was a definitive cause or potential source for a phytotoxic chemical specifically determined.

Now times have changed! Rarely do I encounter these types of overnight kill in which the turf dies across a broad area overnight. Most likely this is due to concerted efforts in improving the water quality of rivers, including close monitoring of potential industrial dumping into streams and rivers. This program has been very successful in the United States. However, this has not been the case in a number of countries around the world. Unfortunately, I still encounter overnight turfgrass injury symptoms over a broad area on golf courses in other parts of the world.