

**B**ob Musbach was up against a wall. As superintendent of North Hills Country Club, Menomonee Fall, WI, he'd observed the spread and summer kill of annual bluegrass. It was an epidemic with no cure.

His course has steep southern-facing slopes that soak up the hot sun. Clay soil prohibits water infiltration, and syringing fairways, up to five times a day in the summer stress period, created unacceptable, mushy playing conditions.

After trying bensulide compounds, maleic hydrazide, chloroflurenol compounds, and arsenicals with limited success, Musbach was up against a wall.

"The members were sick of wet fairways from syringing. My fear was

nomenal success. We overseeded with rye because it only takes three to five days to establish in our clay soil."

Red Roskopf of Wisconsin Turf Equipment Corp., Dick Baade from Elanco, Dr. Gale Worf of Wisconsin Extension Service, and Marc Grundman of Northrup King have been promoting the growth regulator/overseeding concept, along with light-weight fairway mowers and clipping removal, to other Wisconsin superintendents.

Wayne Otto of Ozaukee Country Club, an 18-hole private course in Mequon, WI, has used a program similar to Musbach's with equal success on fairways.

"We used Cutless on our No. 17 fairway which is about 1.2 acres and a

# Poa Gets One-Two Punch with Growth Regulators and Overseeding

to keep the bent wet enough would keep the poa thriving. We had to come up with a witches brew of turf to adapt to the situation," Musbach revealed.

Musbach and his assistant Mark Kienert spent a great deal of time and money trying improved turfgrass cultivars evaluating color, drought/heat resistance and crown depth related to cold and wear tolerance.

But, it seemed the answer was more than just aggressive grasses. Something was needed to stunt the annual bluegrass until the the perennial grasses were established.

What Musbach and Kienert discovered has greatly increased the sales of two products in their area, Rubigan and perennial ryegrass. "The Rubigan suppresses with phe-

50/50 mix of bentgrass and poa annua," says Otto.

His maintenance routine included mowing with a Toro GM3 with bas-

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**"My fear was keeping the bent wet enough would keep the poa thriving."**

**—Musbach**

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kets at 1/2-inch from one to three times a week as needed. He aerified in June and September and overseeded in the same months with Emerald





Perennial ryegrass or bentgrass is seeded into poa-infested areas with a slit seeder.

bentgrass at 20 pounds per acre with each application.

"We had a 4X8 check area on the 178 yard marker," explained Otto. "We had two Cutless applications; in May we applied 1.6 pounds per acre and in August, one pound per acre. The results were dramatic, especially after the spring application."

Otto reports little or no growth of poa for three to six weeks after application. "The bent had good color and there were some stolons in the poa." Otto also reports a 20% reduction of clippings.

Otto thinks he's found an excellent management tool to improve turfgrass hardiness. "This can be accomplished by either letting the existing bent spread or incorporating desirable grass species by overseeding," says Otto.

Otto says he plans to continue his program and use it on other fairways. "Reducing clippings will be a big advantage on fairways where clippings

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**Otto thinks he has found an excellent management tool to improve turfgrass hardiness.**

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are collected."

Grundman, a turf specialist and regional agronomist for Northrup King based in Illinois, told WT&T the need to

The Poa-busters, Dr. Gale Work (kneeling), Bob Musbach (hands on hips), and Dick Baade (bending over), evaluate results of overseeding/growth regulator treatment.



find aggressive type turfgrasses is paramount since more golfers are playing more rounds. "The daily fee and semi-private courses are receiving more play and need turf to withstand that play," says Grundman. "Private courses are looking for more disease resistance."

Grundman is very much in favor of working with Mother Nature and using grasses in a natural selection process. "Knowing what grasses to grow where for the situation that exists is the key," Grundman explains.

Grundman says there is some concern that Rubigan will shorten the root system of other plants. Grundman says he has seen another product, Prograss, kill poa and perennial bluegrass species, but leave rye alone.

**WT&T**

(See related story next page.)