

# Disease control for golf course greens and tees



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—Doug Petersan  
Hutchinson, Kan.

The maintenance of disease-free greens and tees is critical in order to provide a high quality playing surface for the golfer. Preventative measures are the best method for keeping greens and tees disease-free and of high quality.

This allows the turf manager to control the turf pathogens before they reach the vital symptom state, when control measures become more costly, not to mention the fact that the damage is already evident, unsightly and detrimental to the health of the overall turf.

The golf course superintendent can choose from several common fungicides when developing his disease control program. However, one special fungicide, Rubigan 50W, has been proven especially effective for disease control programs.

Rubigan has the three key features superintendents are looking for in a fungicide: (1) a broad spectrum of diseases controlled that includes dollar spot, copper spot, large brown patch, pink and gray snow mold, stripe smut, red thread, and pink patch; (2) 14 to 21 days of dependable dollar spot control for as low as 10 cents per 1,000 sq. ft. per day of control; and (3) tank mix flexibility with common fungicides like



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Daconil 2787, which can expand the spectrum of control and enhance control of large brown patch.

An East Coast superintendent who has had success with Rubigan is Brian Cowan of Eastward Ho Country Club in Harwich, Mass., on Cape Cod. Cowan uses Rubigan mainly for poa control on his Seaside bentgrass greens.

"I've used it for four years now on six greens," Cowan says. "They're doing very well. The percentage of poa on them is less than the others."

Cowan usually makes three applications, in early July, early August, and late August or early September at a rate of  $\frac{3}{10}$  oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. This season he will make four applications since he began in early June.

Cowan also plans to expand his use of Rubigan to six more greens. "It works well on dollar spot and fusarium, although we only get a little brown patch in the Cape," he says. "I've been very happy with it. I haven't seen any drawbacks."

Experience from regular use by superintendents shows Rubigan to be an important addition to a rotational disease program. With its multi sites of inhibition, Rubigan also helps reduce the worry of pathogens developing

resistance to fungicide treatments.

An extra benefit of Rubigan to golf course superintendents in cool-season and transition zone areas is the gradual reduction of poa annua, reduction that can only be achieved with cumulative rates of 2-3 oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. combined with proper management practices. Depending on personal preference, disease-free poa can be maintained, or it can be gradually reduced.

Doug Petersan of Prairie Dunes Country Club in Hutchinson, Kan., enters his third year of Rubigan use. He looks for two-fold control on his bentgrass greens.

"The thing that impresses me about Rubigan is the poa annua control besides its fungicidal quality," he says. "It does a good job retarding the poa annua without retarding the growth of the bentgrass (greens)."

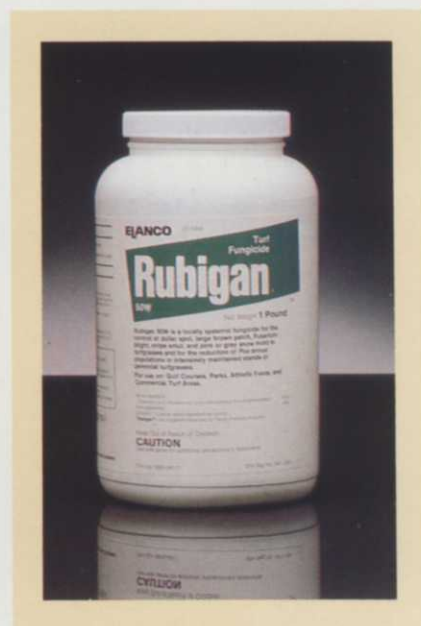
Petersan has used Rubigan on tees and says he is considering spot treatments in some fairway areas.

Petersan uses Rubigan at  $\frac{1}{4}$  oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. around May 15. By July 15, four applications bring the total to 1 oz.

On July 15, Aug. 1, and Aug. 15, Petersan uses  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. per 1,000 sq. ft.,



Prairie Dunes Country Club, Hutchinson, Kansas



bringing the total to 2½ oz. After Labor Day, he aerates and topdresses his greens and then fills the aerator holes with sand three to four days after the initial topdressing.

He then seeds his Pennncross bentgrass seed at ½ lb. per 1,000 sq. ft. Three weeks later, Petersan uses Rubigan at ½ oz. per 1,000 sq. ft.

"In the spring we can see almost every aerator hole with a plug of healthy-appearing bentgrass," he says.

Fellow Kansas superintendent Neil DeWerff of Smokey Hill Country Club in Hays began using Rubigan two years ago. At the time, his Pennncross greens were approximately 35 percent poa annua. Now he says the percentage is down to

10 percent or less on the 13 greens he treats with Rubigan.

"On the 13 greens we've treated with Rubigan, we've never used another product (fungicide)," says DeWerff.

He uses a ½ oz. application per 1,000 sq. ft. every three weeks in the spring and then switches to ¼ oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. in the summer months.

"I'm a true believer in this product," says DeWerff, noting that he hasn't had dollar spot problems on his course since he moved to Rubigan.

Given its dependable and economical disease control, Rubigan 50W is, indeed, an important weapon in the wise superintendent's arsenal of maintenance products.

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—Brian Cowan  
Harwich, Mass.