

Snow dumped on East: late spring?

by JERRY ROCHE/Editor-in-Chief
and TERRY McIVER/Managing Editor

Some suggestions for our Eastern Seaboard friends, who might be looking a month or two ahead with some trepidation.

Landscapers and golf course superintendents in the East Coast corridor hit hardest by snow this winter aren't expecting an early or an easy spring.

"There will be an awful lot of damage to trees and shrubs, I'm afraid," says Bob DeRosa of DeRosa Landscaping, Montvale, N.J. "We're also preparing to do a lot of turf replacement because of mechanical and salt damage. I'm sure there'll be a lot of snow mold damage, too.

"I'm hoping for an early spring, but I'm not planning on it. We have such a large amount of snow that it probably will take a long time to melt and we'll be forced to start the spring late."

Many plants were weakened by a 1995 summer drought, compounding the possible spring damage.

"A lot of shallow-rooted rhododendrons and azaleas took a real beating last summer," notes Skip Powers of Powers Landscaping, Westwood, N.J. "Then, because the snow came so early, none of us got the leaves off the properties, so we'll have that to do when spring comes, too.

"We have two-and-a-half feet of snow on the ground today [Jan. 16]. There'll be a lot of salt damage come spring, and plant availability could also be a problem."

"A lot of evergreens are bent and separated," says Mark Graser of Custom Landscaping Ser-

vices of Little Ferry, N.J.

"Junipers, arborvitae, anything deciduous is taking a beating. We're hard-pressed to find places to put snow; a lot of backhoe work caused tire damage on lawns."

Graser says moving snow from place to place—not just plowing it—became "a new industry," and says record amounts of salt were used in his state.

If clients resist paying for repair to turf caused by tire damage, try to work out a split with them, as Graser says he does, usually without much hassle. "They pay for materials, I pay for labor," he says.

Plants didn't just enter the winter with drought damage, they entered a *record* winter.

Snow stress, salt damage and vehicle traffic may cause some turf health problems come the spring.

Rich Buckley of Rutgers says increased snow mold is a possibility, especially on turf that has shown susceptibility to that disease in the past.

"Try to dry out the area as much as possible" once the spring thaw arrives, says Buckley, and overseed any

bare spots.

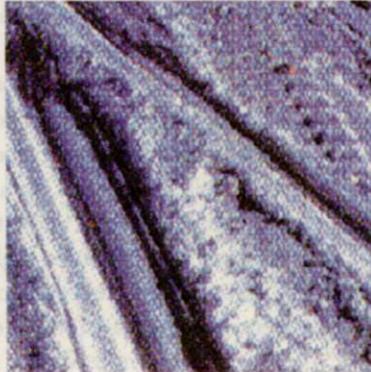
Dr. Joe Rimelspach of Ohio State University suggests the following treatments:

For gray snow molds, use pentachloronitobenzene (PCNB) or iprodione + chlorothalonil. For pink snow molds, use PCNB, iprodione, vinclozolin or thiophanate-methyl. Refer to product labels for accurate rates.

To prevent salt leaching in areas that show salt damage, Buckley suggests rinsing down with as much water as possible.

Low nitrogen-type fertilizers are good substitutes for rock salt as a way to melt snow without damaging turf.

Be on the lookout for canker-causing injuries on tree branches. *Botryosphaeria* and *Cytospora* could form within cracked branches. Prune off all diseased areas.



Research finds new control for summer decline complex

Research conducted in 1995 reveals more good news for landscape managers—especially golf superintendents—who battle summer decline complex, a combination of environmental stress, pythium and rhizoctonia.

As roots and crowns are influenced by summer decline, they die and plants are weakened, leaving them open to further infection. This complex causes large turf areas to become discolored, lose vigor and—if left untreated—to die.

Fungicide treatment with a tank-mix combination of Chipco Aliette WDG and Fore provides excellent control of summer decline complex, according to Dr. Leon Lucas, who conducted the research at North Carolina State University. And even better protection can be achieved by mixing those chemicals with a flowable formulation of Fore. (Mancozeb fungicides other than Fore were not as effective.)

"It is important to note, however, that a compatibility agent such as Blendex must be used with the flowable formulation of Fore [so] that it does not precipitate out of solution."

Fertilizer impact

New research also shows that excessive rates of certain types of fertilizers can play a key role in the onset of diseases. High levels of soluble salt from high-potassium fertilizers cause significant stress and

damage to turf root systems during dry weather.

About 150 to 250 parts per million of soluble salts are sufficient for optimal plant growth. While relatively high levels of soluble salt fertilizers are harmless during wet weather, salt levels of more than 300 parts per million have been associated with increased root rot and bentgrass decline during drier weather, Lucas notes. He recommends applying one-half the recommended rate of fertilizers twice as often to help protect turf from injury and subsequent disease infestation.

The high temperatures, high relative humidity and wet conditions experienced during the summer of 1995 was an example of what summer stress can do in the extreme.

Serious disease problems such as brown patch, pythium blight, summer patch, anthracnose, and take-all patch were reported in high levels throughout the cool-season climate zone.

A report from Ohio State University stresses the importance of correct diagnosis as a key to proper disease management. It is difficult to sort out all the factors resulting in brown grass, says the report, as there are many confusing symptoms. The interaction of disease, weather stress and damage from traffic was extensive. Preventive fungicide treatment can be a key to management.



AAN helps reform immigration laws

A two-pronged grassroots drive to reform immigration legislation has been launched by the American Association of Nurserymen (AAN), according to a press release.

"Congress is debating perhaps the most historic and far-reaching changes ever in our nation's immigration policies," the AAN notes. It expects employee sanctions to be "dramatically increased" as soon as a new immigration bill is passed and enacted by law.

"AAN supports control of our nation's borders and a system of employment eligibility verification that is simple and works," the release notes.

The AAN notes that the current Senate bill (S. 1394) is "outright dangerous and full of anti-employer provisions." The organization suggests that people in the green industry—especially AAN members—write to their U.S. Senators, opposing S. 1394 as written.

As long as you're in the writing mood, AAN recommends that you send letters, too, to your Congressmen "in support of establishing a temporary and seasonal agricultural worker program as a reform of the current, unworkable H-2A agricultural worker program."

For more information, contact Ben Bolusky's office at the AAN: (202) 789-2900.

IPM for biting pests: Is it really practical?

by JAMES E. GUYETTE / Contributing Editor

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans for mosquito control take strong organizational skills, the ability to attract swallows and bats to an area and even woodworking talents.

The bird/bat combination packs a one-two punch for providing chemical-free control of a number of insects, including moths, says Tony

Nesting sites for bats have region-specific variables, such as the size and number of shelves inside the box. These details need to be attended to before grabbing the hammer and nails.

Koch, a retired fruit producer in Stayton, Ore. and a nationally-recognized expert in the field.

"The birds work during the day and then go to bed at dusk, and then comes the night shift: the bats," Koch explains. "They'll work all night long, so you have around-the-clock control."

Koch's recommended program strongly emphasizes the organizational aspects of the venture because numerous customers may be involved, but not too many. Undesirable animals will arrive on the scene if the bird and bat populations exceed acceptable limits.

"If you concentrate them too much, you'll have predators," he explains. "It's better if each individual property owner puts up a few bird houses and bat houses so they're not attracting predators."

You should proceed according to what bird/bat levels the property will bear. "In a city park, you can have a lot more than on an individual property," Koch notes. Municipal contracts are another option.

In Briarwood Beach, Ohio, Mayor Terry Bidle is petitioning the state government for a \$5,000 grant to fund houses for bats and purple martins, a type of swallow. The control program is geared for the entire lakeside village, which has a population of 700 mostly summer residents.

"Purple martins lend themselves to a community project because they live close together," Koch points out, adding that the birds are fun for the public to watch and the houses can be built in architecturally pleasing styles. "They can put up a house with all kinds of holes."

On the West Coast, purple martins are less common, so sometimes smaller swallows will try to steal the purple martin holes, which need to be 2.25 inches in diameter. Koch is able to exclude smaller swallows by painting a picture of cat teeth on an adjustable lever. The system is activated to scare off the undesirables, making the hole a wholesome settlement as purple martins arrive.

Purple martins can also be attracted by airing tapes of suitable bird sounds.

When established, the population will remain. "Once they've successfully raised a

family in the area, they'll be back every year," Koch points out.

Bird house design specifications must be directly geared toward the region of the country in which they will be erected, Koch stresses. "It depends on what species you have as to what type of housing to get for them," he says. "You have to get in contact with the wildlife department in your area. A lot of places have different species."

Nesting sites for bats also have region-specific variables, such as the size and number of shelves inside the box. These details need to be attended to before approaching the jigsaw and grabbing the hammer and nails.

Koch, who is 81 years old, reports that he had to do a lot of experimenting when he first tried to control the mosquitos that plagued his fruit production operation. He now has 800 bird and bat houses on his 200-acre spread, yet he remains modest. "I'm just a farmer who got tired of spraying. We don't use any chemicals," he notes.

Sawllows and bats will control a multitude of insects in addition to mosquitos and moths.

—For more information, Koch can be reached at (503) 769-5597. Also, Barbara French at Bat Conservation International can be telephoned at (512) 327-9721.