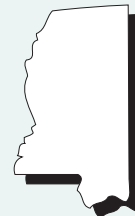
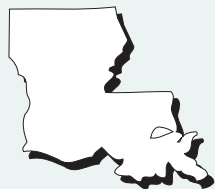


TEE TO GREEN

A Quarterly Publication of the Louisiana-Mississippi Chapter



WINTER 2009



From the President

In reflecting on the Association's activities for 2009, for the most part, business was "as usual." We did, however, experience several firsts. Early in the year we joined forces with the Gulf States GCSA and the Alumni Associations of both MSU and LSU to host our inaugural Hospitality Night at the GIS in the Big Easy. Attendance was exceptional and all agree that the event surpassed all expectations. Also, in late summer we were able to hold the first Assistant Superintendent Golf Tournament at Annandale Golf Club. Thanks to Al Osteen and his staff for hosting.

Our Zonal Outings were quite successful. In March there was a Zone Two golf day at TPC of Louisiana. Hattiesburg Country Club hosted a Zone Four golf outing in May. Then in June Dancing Rabbit was the site for a Zone Five educational program and a round of golf. Each event had maximum participation. Thanks to host superintendents Robb Arnold, Frank Ogletree, and Brent McBrayer and their staffs.

As is the norm, the Association continued to award scholarships to college students. We are very appreciative of perennial scholarship supporters, Beard Equipment and Jerry Pate Turf and Irrigation, who once again sponsored the Legacy Scholarship and the Turf Scholarship, respectively.

Over the past year we were fortun-

nate to have the opportunity to help those of our number who experienced hardship. I am very proud of the way this group is always ready to help. In response to the LeBlanc family needs, dual association member, Josh Hicks, initiated and organized a benefit golf tournament with door prizes and a silent auction at Koasati Pines. Also, Phill Junkins with Jerry Pate Turf and Irrigation, on two separate occasions, donated and cooked steak dinners with all the trimmings for benefit suppers to help Brent and his family. With regard to providing assistance to Richie Woolwine, many of our number participated in the first Annual Carl Spangler Benefit Golf Tournament. Additionally, proceeds from our Member/Guest Tournament held in November at Black Bear will be given to help the Woolwine family. Thanks to host superintendent Mike Allen and his staff for making the event a success.

I feel a great sense of gratitude to Executive Director Linda Wells, Board of Directors Brent McBrayer, Neil Mayberry, Rick Maier, Matt Hughes, Brent LeBlanc, Jason McDonald, Stephen Miles, Rob Randel, Tommy Tims, and Jeremy Tate, as well as to others that served on the various committees. This group worked hard to streamline expenses and at the same time offer quality, affordable activities to members.

I will close with one more thank

you, a request, and an announcement. Thanks to all the vendors who sponsored our activities. LMGCSA would be unable to purposefully go about its business without your support. My urgent plea is to all members. Please consider how you can personally be involved in strengthening this Association's position to enhance the professional, educational, and research components of our industry. Your active involvement can begin by making plans to attend the all inclusive **educational session, annual meeting, and golf day at the Brookhaven Country Club in Brookhaven, Mississippi on January 4 at 9:00 A.M.**

*Pat Sneed, CGCS
MSU Golf Course
Starkville, MS*

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Welcome, New Members!

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F: 251-955-2003
C: 251-747-1442
E: don@craftturfarms.com

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Ricky Maier, Chair

The following slate of candidates will be presented for election at our Annual Meeting on January 4, 2010 at Brookhaven Country Club in Brookhaven, MS. Nominations from the floor will be accepted as well.

President: Brent McBrayer, CGCS
Dancing Rabbit Golf Club,
Choctaw, MS

*Brent served as vice president in 2009

Vice President: Neil Mayberry
New Orleans Country Club,
New Orleans, LA

*Neil served as Sec/Treasurer in 2009

Sec/Treasurer: Jason McDonald
Southern Trace Country Club,
Shreveport, LA

Stephen Miles
The Preserve Golf Club,
Vancleave, MS

*Both Jason and Stephen served on the board as Directors in 2009

Directors: (Elect two)
Robb Arnold
TPC Louisiana, Avondale, LA

*Robb served as a zone coordinator in 2009

Bryan DeWeese
Colonial Country Club/Deerfield
Course, Madison, MS

Jimmy Shannon
Diamondhead Golf Course,
Diamondhead, MS

Alan Sullivan
Grand Bear Golf Course,
Saucier, MS



Mark Your Calendars!

What: LMGCSA Annual Meeting/ Educational Seminar/Golf
When: January 4, 2010 (Monday)
Where: Brookhaven Country Club
640 Country Club Rd NE
Brookhaven, Mississippi

What: LTA Annual Conference
When: January 7, 2010 (Thursday)
Where: Lawton Room in Tiger Stadium
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

What: GCSAA Education Conference/GIS
When: February 8-12, 2010
Where: San Diego, California

What: Hospitality Night, GCSAA GIS
When: February 10, 2010
Where: TBA
San Diego, California

What: O and T Pesticide Re-certification
When: February 2010, date TBA
Where: Hammond Research Station
Hammond, Louisiana
Contact: Allen Owings at
aowings@agcenter.lsu.edu

What: Louisiana Irrigation Association
Recertification
When: February 18, 2010
Where: LSU AgCenter, Avoyelles Parish Office
Mansura, Louisiana
Contact: Severn Doughty at
scd357@maaccess.com

*Please continue to support our organization
by attending as many of the above events as you can!
We look forward to seeing you there!*

IN MEMORIAM



Chris Booty
1968–2009

Chris died on November 27, 2009.
He was a Past President of LMGCSA,
having served in 2001.



*From
all of us,
we wish you
Merry Christmas
and the Happiest
New Year in 2010!*



Louisiana Turfgrass Association 2010 Conference

The Louisiana Turfgrass Association will have its annual conference on January 7, 2010. The theme of this year's meeting will be water use efficiency. The featured speaker is Dr. David Chalmers, turfgrass specialist at Texas A&M. Dr. Chalmers will discuss the results of a two year research project that evaluated the drought tolerance of 25 warm season turfgrass varieties. Grass varieties studied included eight types of bermudagrass, seven of St. Augustine grass and nine of zoysiagrass and one variety of buffalograss grown on 4-inch or 18-inch depth soil. In the study, drought was simulated for 60 days using a 5000 ft² drought simulator constructed in San Antonio, Texas. Grasses were evaluated visually for drought performance, and were assigned ratings from one to nine based on how they responded to and recovered from the drought. Dr. Chalmers will discuss

the performance of the varieties subjected to drought conditions at our meeting. In a separate presentation, Dr. Chalmers will discuss strategies for career success in the turfgrass industry.

Continuing with our water use theme, Jon Pons of Hunter Industries will present information concerning irrigation basics and its efficient use. Jerome Nettles will discuss his research that is currently evaluating the use of preemergence herbicides and their negative effects on turfgrass root architecture. These negative effects could cause a temporary reduction in root efficiency.

Dearl Sanders will inform the audience on aquatic weed management in irrigation ponds. Ron Strahan will discuss the latest on MSMA regulations and alternative herbicide options. Jeff Beasley's turfgrass graduate students will discuss their research.

Panel discussions will cover irrigation trouble shooting, frequent agronomic problems encountered on golf courses and sports fields and lawn and landscape installation. The overall theme of the panel discussions will be "money saving tips."

The location of this year's meeting is the Lawton Room at Tiger Stadium on the campus of LSU in Baton Rouge. Registration fee for the meeting is \$50.00. Pre-registration is recommended but on-site registration will be available from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. Please find information concerning the registration for the 2010 LTA Annual Conference in this newsletter. We look forward to your attendance on January 7th.

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Alleviating Competitive Exclusion of Brown-headed Nuthatches by Eastern Bluebirds on Southeastern Golf Courses

Dr. Mark Stanbach • Davidson College • Charlotte, North Carolina



The Brown-headed Nuthatch (*Sitta pusilla*) is a cooperatively breeding bird endemic to the southeastern

United States. But for nearly half a century its numbers have been in decline. Habitat degradation is usually blamed; Brown-headed Nuthatches are said to be habitat specialists – dependent on old growth pine forests. As development overtakes more of the Southeast, there are fewer old pine stands usable by these birds.

At the same time that these nuthatches have been in decline, another cavity-nesting species has increased dramatically in number in the same region – the Eastern Bluebird (*Sialia sialis*). Bluebirds tend to fare well in a variety of human-altered habitats. Moreover, bluebirds have been the beneficiaries of nest box programs throughout their range. My students and I hypothesized that the burgeoning bluebird population in the Southeast may be negatively impacting Brown-headed Nuthatches if bluebirds are monopolizing nesting boxes in areas where they coexist with Brown-headed Nuthatches.

We tested this hypothesis in two ways. First we measured the density of pine trees near all of our golf course nest boxes. We then provided a subset of our boxes with smaller entrance holes that excluded bluebirds, but not nuthatches. Although the nuthatches do require a certain level of pine density in order to be present, we found that size of the entrance hole was a far better predictor of box use by nuthatches than was local pine density. This suggests that in appropriate habi-

tat, competition with bluebirds is more important than pine density for this pine specialist.

We then conducted a large-scale experiment in which we provided a third of our nest boxes on each of three golf courses with “bluebird-proof” nest boxes (with small holes). On three control courses all boxes retained large, “bluebird-friendly” holes. All courses started with few or no nuthatches, but over three years we observed dramatic increases in the numbers of nesting nuthatches on our experimental courses. Control courses remained unchanged. This demonstrated that exclusion of just a subset of bluebirds allowed for the successful breeding of brown-headed nuthatches. Again, this suggests that in the absence of management intervention, bluebirds outcompete nuthatches.

Finally, to demonstrate that the above results were not biased, we reversed the treatments on our six golf courses. When we provided smaller holes to a subset of boxes on our control courses, the numbers of nuthatch nests increased significantly (after four years of no nuthatches). However, on the three courses where nuthatches had become common breeders as a result of our providing boxes with bluebird-proof holes, we observed widespread usurpation of nuthatches by bluebirds when large holes were returned to these experimental boxes.

Our data suggest that golf course nest box programs can make a significant contribution to the recovery of the Brown-headed Nuthatch if boxes are provided with smaller entrance holes. We recommend that Southeastern (eastern Virginia to eastern Texas) golf courses that already have nest boxes consider retrofitting a subset of them

(at least one third) with 1” entrance holes. Although 1.25” holes can accomplish the same result, 1.25” holes also accommodate house (English) sparrows, which usurp boxes from both nuthatches and bluebirds. Retrofitting can be accomplished by attaching a block of wood with a 1” hole on top of the 1.5” standard bluebird-sized hole.



1.5” entrance holes (left) accommodate both bluebirds and nuthatches; smaller holes (right) exclude the larger bluebirds.

Although we found that nuthatches are not limited to piney areas, we suspect that boxes in such areas will be discovered and utilized more quickly by this nuthatch. Alternatively, if there are old nest boxes on a course that need replacing, we recommend that they be replaced with boxes with 1” holes. And of course, if golf courses are interested in initiating a nest box program, simply make sure that both bluebirds and nuthatches are provided for.

Bluebird lovers (many of whom are responsible for the monitoring of golf course nest box programs) may be initially reluctant to reduce opportunities for bluebirds. Two facts should help persuade them. First, the North American Bluebird Society includes all cavity-nesting birds in its mission statement. Second, numbers of bluebirds in the Southeast has quadrupled over the same period that nuthatch numbers have declined. Nest boxes have rescued bluebirds; now it’s the nuthatches’ turn. Finally, most bird enthusiasts are thoroughly charmed by the charismatic, squeaky, group-living Brown-headed Nuthatch. ■

Is There Value in a Tissue Test?

Bud White • USGA Green Section / Director, Mid-Continent Region

I am often asked if tissue testing is really valid, and is there any significant information to be derived from a tissue test? The answer to this is absolutely "Yes!" but many times tissue testing is promoted far beyond the actual need. However, a small number of tissue tests, taken at the right time, can give you volumes of information on your fertility programs.

Soil tests provide valuable information to help superintendents build and develop fertility and soil amendment programs over the course of time. Water tests, of course, supplement this to see what direct impact the water has on the health of the soil and indirectly on the health of the grass. Tissue testing simply serves as a snapshot in time of what the grass is actually receiving from the soil and it allows the superintendent to monitor his/her fertility inputs as related to soil tests and what impact it is actually having on the turf. In other words, tissue testing enables you to better evaluate if your fertility program is doing the job you intended.

A good rule of thumb is to take three or four tissue tests in mid-spring, early summer, mid-summer, and early to mid-fall. This provides a tool to monitor nutrient levels that are actually entering the plant and to make sure the fertility programs being built are addressing the needs of the turf. For example, if a superintendent is experiencing poor color response on the greens, or possibly having very poor clipping yield during mowing each morning, the first tendency may be to increase nitrogen rates to produce more growth. However, a tissue test will validate if the nitrogen levels are low, or if they are adequate and possibly there is another imbalance or outside factor that is affecting color and/or growth rates.

Sand based putting greens can have nutrient fluctuations quite rapidly if particular weather environments persist or other stress conditions of management exist. A very heavy and extended rainfall or a very high intensity management for a particular golf tournament during excessive stress conditions are two prime examples. Tissue testing allows the superintendent to monitor nutrients within the plant and make sure fertility programs are properly targeted to meet the needs of the turfgrass.

Below are charts which show the proper tissue levels of nutrients for bentgrass and bermudagrass putting greens. These values are obtained from Dr. Benton Jones' *Plant Analysis Handbook II*. This is the most accurate information for proper tissue nutrient levels to date.

Bentgrass Green*

N%	2.4–8.3
P%	0.2–0.55
K%	0.86–2.55
Ca%	0.21–0.5
Mg	0.09–0.22
S%	0.23–0.39
Fe, ppm	99–500
Mn, ppm	30–160
Zn, ppm	5–60

Bermudagrass Green*

N%	4.0–6.0
P%	0.25–0.60
K%	1.5–4.0
Ca%	0.50–1.0
Mg	0.13–0.40
S%	0.20–0.50
Fe, ppm	50–500
Mn, ppm	25–300
Zn, ppm	20–250

*Average growing season conditions

Plant Analysis Handbook II. 1996, Drs. Harry Mills and Benton Jones Jr., MicroMacro Publishing, Inc.

Tissue samples should be taken from the green mower basket and sent overnight to the lab. Collect about a double handful of clippings from the center of the basket and from clippings that are free from debris. Place them in a plastic bag and ship. You might check with your preferred soil testing lab as to the method of shipping and packaging they prefer.

Hopefully this brief overview of tissue analysis will help you better understand the value of this procedure when used in the right context. It does not replace soil tests by any means but simply provides a 'balance sheet' of fertility applied vs. activity in the plant. I suggest you try taking a few tissue samples next growing season. You might find the results very surprising.

If you have questions about your results, please feel free to contact me at (972) 662-1138 or via email at budwhite@usga.org.

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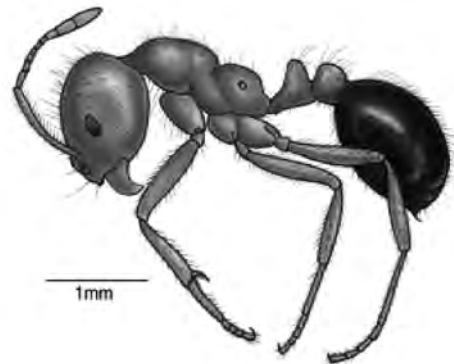
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Fire Ant Facts

Blake Layton, Ph.D. • Extension Entomology Specialist
Mississippi State University

- Imported fire ants first entered the US about 1918, near Mobile, Alabama.
- Fire ants reached Mississippi and Louisiana in the 1930s.
- Fire ants now occur over much of the southeast.
- Imported fire ants are native to South America.
- Open savanna-like habitats—like golf courses—are especially suitable to fire ants.
- Frequent mowing disturbs colonies, causing them to move to nearby, less disturbed areas. (This is one reason there are fewer mounds on the greens than in the rough.)
- Northern migration of fire ants will likely be limited by cold—winter temperatures that freeze the soil deeply enough to affect overwintering colonies.
- There are two species of imported fire ants. Red imported fire ants are the most common, but some areas have black imported fire ants, or hybrids of these two species. These two species are similar in biology and behavior.
- Fire ants are social insects that nest in the soil in large colonies that contain tens of thousands to more than 250,000 ants.
- Most of the ants in a fire ant colony are infertile female workers.
- Worker fire ants vary in size, but all are capable of stinging.
- Fire ant venom is unique—much different from the venom of bees and wasps.
- Fire ant stings, even a single sting, can be fatal to people who are hypersensitive to the venom. Fortunately, this is only a very tiny percent of people.
- Usually there is only one queen per colony. The queen lays all the eggs.
- Multiple queen colonies occur in some areas. Multiple queen colonies are more tolerant of neighboring fire ant colonies than are single queen colonies.
- The number of mounds per acre is usually much higher in areas with multiple queen colonies.
- Fire ants have a complete life cycle. The eggs hatch into legless larvae, which develop into pupae and ultimately become adults.
- Fire ants feed on a wide range of foods, including insects, honeydew, plant nectar, seeds, fruit and animal carcasses. They especially like foods high in fat.
- Foraging workers exit the mound through underground tunnels that radiate away from the mound, exiting to the surface five to 25 feet away from the mound.
- Adult fire ants are incapable of swallowing solid food. They have to carry it back to the mound.
- Solid food is fed to the larger larvae, which chew and digest it and regurgitate it in liquid form.
- Liquid food is passed from the larvae back to the workers and then shared with all ants in the colony. (This is the reason baits work so well against fire ants.)
- Fire ants spread by swarming. Unmated, winged reproductive male and female ants exit the mound in mass, fly into the air and mate while airborne.
- Newly mated fire ant queens fall back to the ground within a few hundred yards to a few miles of the mound from which they emerged, shed their wings and attempt to start new colonies.
- At first the new queen is ‘on her own.’ She lays a few eggs that eventually become small workers. These first workers then help care for their younger sisters and the colony begins to grow.
- It takes several months for a colony to get large enough to build a mound large enough to be noticed above the grass.
- For every large mound you can see in an area there are usually many younger colonies that are still too small to produce visible mounds.
- Once a young fire ant colony is well established and has a few thousand workers, it can quickly develop into a mature colony containing tens of thousands of ants.
- Small colonies develop into large colonies especially quickly if there are no bigger colonies nearby to compete with them.
- Fire ants are a fact of life in the South.
- Fire ant populations can be managed (kept to tolerably low levels) by wise and timely use of baits, contact insecticides, and individual mound treatments.
- Fire ant populations will increase when management efforts decrease.



Solenopsis invicta.

Photo courtesy of Joe McGown,
Mississippi State University

Torpedograss is One Tough Perennial Grassy Weed

Dr. Ron Strahan • Louisiana State University

If you live within a couple of hours drive or less of the Gulf of Mexico, it is a sure bet that you have heard of torpedograss. I probably get 10 or so calls on torpedograss every month during the growing season. Torpedograss is a perennial rhizomatous grass that is considered one of the most invasive grasses in the world. Although the plant does produce seed, the seeds are not viable. The weedy grass solely reproduces vegetatively by robust rhizomes.

The spread of torpedograss in Louisiana is mainly attributed to the movement of soils infested with torpedograss from the Bonnet Carré Spillway. The spillway is located just west of New Orleans and is the main source for southeast Louisiana; especially within the New Orleans metro area. However, I see torpedograss throughout southeast Texas and regularly get calls on it from Mississippi and Alabama.

The fact is you can find torpedograss

everywhere along the Gulf Coast. Have you ever wondered why? Believe it or not torpedograss was actually deliberately spread in the region in the 1920s because the grass was thought to be the next great forage for cattle and horses. It made a lot of sense at the time because torpedograss certainly spreads quickly and has very good salt tolerance. Unfortunately, compared to other forage grasses used in the South, torpedograss is not suitable at all as forage due to its low protein concentration. The grass can actually be toxic to horses. Unfortunately due to this error, torpedograss infestations have expanded considerably over the years and the weed is very common on golf courses, home lawns, and landscape beds throughout the region.

LSU Research on Torpedograss Infesting Centipedegrass

I get the most calls regarding infes-

tations of torpedograss in centipedegrass. Centipedegrass is one of our most common turfgrasses and is usually the choice of lawns in new subdivisions. Many homes' lawns on golf courses have centipedegrass lawns also. However, centipedegrass is easily infested by torpedograss because the turf is such a slow grower and it does not compete very well with aggressive weedy grasses. Danny Taverner, recent graduate of LSU, did his masters research on torpedograss management in centipedegrass. Danny screened many herbicides (experimental and labeled) for torpedograss activity and centipedegrass safety. Unfortunately, he was never able to discover an herbicide that killed torpedograss selectively in centipedegrass. He was only able to suppress the weed without significant centipedegrass injury using multiple applications of sethoxydim (Segment,

continued on page 9

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TORPEDOGRASS IS GRASSY WEED *continued from page 8*

Sethoxydim E-Pro) spaced four weeks apart. His work showed that frequency of application was the most important aspect of using sethoxydim. Surprisingly, there was no advantage in exceeding the sethoxydim manufacturer's labeled rate.

Danny also evaluated cultural practices such as mowing height and nitrogen fertility in centipedegrass infested with torpedograss. Although there was a slight advantage in reducing the mowing height below two inches, no cultural practice evaluated gave centipedegrass a competitive advantage over torpedograss. Right now, our only option for centipedegrass lawns that

have torpedograss is multiple (at least three) applications of sethoxydim. Sethoxydim will not get rid of torpedograss but it will keep the weed knocked back to a certain extent with frequent use.

The Nuclear Option

There is also the nuclear option. Some centipedegrass lawns are so severely infested with torpedograss that total renovation is necessary. This requires spraying the lawn area with a very high concentration of glyphosate with the goal of killing torpedograss and starting over with a new lawn. Sometimes it takes two applications to

get the torpedograss killed off. If you end up killing out the centipedegrass, consider installing zoysiagrass (semi shady or full sun properties) or bermudagrass (full sun properties only). Switching to zoysiagrass or bermudagrass will allow the use of Drive Herbicide (quinclorac). Drive is one of the more effective herbicides for managing torpedograss but it is too damaging to be used in centipedegrass. Renovation and switching to bermudagrass or zoysiagrass is absolutely the last resort and definitely not the cheapest route to travel but it may be the most effective way to manage severe torpedograss problems. ■

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The Toro Company Acquires Assets of TY-CROP Manufacturing Ltd.

Broadens Toro's Global Offering of Turf Maintenance Equipment

The Toro Company (NYSE: TTC) announced it has acquired certain assets from TY-CROP Manufacturing Ltd., a leading manufacturer of topdressing and material handling equipment for golf course and sports field applications.

Through the acquisition, Toro has acquired several models of topdressing and material handling equipment that will

enhance the company's position in the turf maintenance industry. TY-CROP products will be marketed under the Toro brand and sold through Toro's distribution channel in the United States and international markets.

"Comprehensive cultivation and topdressing programs are increasingly important for our customers around the world," said Michael Happe, vice president of Toro's commercial business. "Golf courses and sports fields rely on these machines to achieve improved agronomic conditions and to create healthy, consistent playing surfaces. TY-CROP's solid reputation in this important category complements our existing line of application and cultivation equipment. Equally, it provides our customers with a more comprehensive offering to meet their turf maintenance needs."

While primarily employed on golf course greens and fairways to improve turf health, control thatch and provide optimal playing conditions, topdressing and material handling equipment is gaining increased acceptance on sports fields. Sports turf managers will use these machines to evenly apply a variety of materials like topsoil, fertilizer, sand, lime, and even crumb rubber for artificial turf.

Based in Rosedale, British Columbia, TY-CROP is a privately held company. In business for more than 30 years, TY-CROP has built a solid reputation around a durable line of topdressers and material handlers. The company's other businesses, which include trailers and oil and gas products, were not associated with this acquisition and will continue normal operation. ■



"While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

Luke 2:6-7



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WAYNE'S WORLD



of Turf

Wayne Wells
Extension Turfgrass Specialist
Mississippi State University

In a recent meeting I attended one of the key topics discussed was the Environmental Protection Agency's continual pressure and demands for new scientific evaluations on the safety of pesticides, their uses, labeling, and the restrictions that may be placed on those applying pesticides. The message was clear that for even pesticides such as 2,4-D that have been around for over 60 years, been through extensive reviews several times and just within the past two years was given a clean report is now back under scrutiny. Even though good scientific data supports the safe, labeled use of pesticides, the red flag that generates many of the new demands are what is termed "precautionary possibilities." Simply put this means that if a group or someone can stir up enough outcry that there is a remote chance that a pesticide has the potential (no evidence to substantiate) to change or injure something that has never been tested under a "what if" situation then there becomes a good chance that

more testing will have to be done or the label must be amended or maybe even pulled for precautionary reasoning. Now this is not all bad and should require more evaluations if the "precautionary possibility" has direct implications to human life, the environment, etc. but in many cases they are of little significance only political.

How does politics come into play? Let's say one of your pesticides or its application techniques is being challenged and you gather your sound scientific data and a few colleagues for support but when your turn comes to testify you find that you are out-numbered fifty-to-one by the opposition who have no scientific evidence but they do have "what if" signs, posters, etc. and are voters. It does have an influence and this is reported to be the scene on many occasions when task force teams go to testify.

I mention all of this to get to a point that it is imperative—when you are asked to support a task force, write a letter to defend good sound use of pesticides, or to let a legislative representative know how changes will affect our industry—that you do it. We will be losing many use applications of MSMA, if we get to keep it at all, because many of us probably did not respond or waited too late to act. Atrazine is presently going through another comprehensive evaluation and already mentioned 2,4-D has a task force trying to justify its continued use. Due to a decision in the National Cotton Council vs. EPA by the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in January 2009 EPA has been given until April 9, 2011 to implement a Clean Water Act National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit to apply pesticides on, over or near waters of the U.S. Golf course superintendents may face some very difficult challenges and may severely limit their application of pesticides depending how the final wording of the permit turns out. GCSAA is closely following this permit development and I encourage you to keep informed. **We need to be responsive and better yet become pro-active.** ■

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2010 LTA Turf Conference Registration

Lawton Room in Tiger Stadium • January 7, 2010

Please try to pre-register if possible. Pre-registration will be accepted until **January 4, 2010**. Registration will be accepted at the door. The fee for the conference is \$50/person. Conference attendees are encouraged to be current members of the LTA. All persons interested in turfgrass and landscape management are welcome. **This form may be used also for just membership dues.**

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Your e-mail address is necessary for confirmation of a received payment.

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LMGCSA ANNUAL MEETING

**MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2010
BROOKHAVEN COUNTRY CLUB**

640 Country Club Road NE • Brookhaven, MS

AGENDA

- 9:00–9:30 Dr. Wayne Wells, MSU Turf Extension Specialist
“Be Pro-active in Keeping Pesticides Available”
- 9:30–10:00 Dr. Victor Maddox, MSU Geosystems Research Institute
“Invasive Species Affecting Our Golf Courses”
- 10:00–10:15 Vendor Updates
- 10:15–10:30 Break
- 10:30–11:00 LMGCSA Business Meeting and Election of 2010 Officers
- 11:00–12:00 University Research Updates
• Louisiana State University
• Mississippi State University
- 12:00 noon Lunch



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USGA Green Section Southeast Regional Update

Aeration: Get It Done!

Christopher Hartwiger and Patrick O'Brien, USGA Green Section SE Region Agronomists

2009 is in the rear view mirror. Good! It was a year that everyone wants to forget, but no one will. Planning for the 2010 growing season is underway, and we will focus this article on developing an aeration and topdressing program for the upcoming year. Isn't it ironic that whether the economy is booming or in recession, scheduling these tasks is difficult? We heard for years in a healthy economy that aeration needed to be deferred/skipped/compromised because of the associated loss of revenue. Yet, when rounds plunged in this recession, we hear that courses are contemplating deferring/skipping/compromising aeration because of revenue concerns. Some things never change.

The Importance of Aeration

One of the key functions of core aeration is the physical removal of organic matter and the replacement of this material with sand. For a complete discussion of the role of aeration and its importance as a cultural tool in a putting green management program, refer to the article, "Aeration and Topdressing for the 21st Century," that appeared in the Green Section Record: <http://turf.lib.msu.edu/2000s/2003/030301.pdf>.

Bentgrass Putting Greens

The question of how much to aerate bentgrass putting greens and when to aerate are questions we field regularly. Based upon the research conducted by Dr. Bob Carrow at the University of Georgia, the goal should be to apply a total of 40–50 cubic feet of sand per 1,000 sq. ft. through both core aeration and topdressing. Since the goal is dilution of organic matter, it is useful to think of aeration and surface topdressing together since they both help with this goal. This recommendation can be difficult to conceptualize. Practically speaking it can be reached with three core aerations using 5/8" diameter tines on 2 inch by 2 inch centers. Two of these aerations can be combined on one date in the spring and the third can be done in late summer or early fall. Surface topdressings should be done regularly throughout the season.

Ultradwarf Bermudagrass Putting Greens

On non-overseeded ultradwarf bermudagrass putting greens, less aeration is required and it can be done on one date in the middle of the summer. An approach we like is to use 5/8 inch tines on the tightest spacing possible, assuming no mechanical damage to the putting green other than the removal of the core. This method allows the golf course superintendent to provide 49 weeks or so of golfing conditions not disrupted by aeration. Topdressing should be applied regularly throughout the season assuming the ultradwarf is growing.



Scheduling aeration and topdressing applications for the year is a step in the right direction as we move to the next growing season.

What if the appropriate program is overruled by the economy?

Sometimes golf courses are not able to do what is agronomically appropriate. What will happen if the greens are not aerated as extensively as desired? First, unwanted organic matter will continue to accumulate. Most likely your putting greens began as a sand rootzone with particles of organic matter floating in them. As aeration is deferred and organic matter levels increase through the deposition of old plant parts and roots, this sand rootzone is transformed into a sea of organic matter with sand particles floating in it. Unfortunately, a high organic matter rootzone has physical properties with fewer large air-filled macropores that can lead to many secondary problems such as disease, shallow roots, a propensity to scalp, algae, softness, etc.

If you are not able to aerate at the desired level, the rescue technique is to use solid tines or the Hydro-ject every three weeks throughout the growing season. This will increase soil oxygen levels and will help water drain through the profile more readily. Please be advised this suggestion is not a replacement for core aeration or a recommendation to skip aeration.

Conclusion

Aeration and topdressing are no fun for the crew and can be disruptive to golf. However, the life of the putting greens is longer than a single season and the effort needs to be made. There is an old saying, "Pay me now or pay me later" and this certainly rings true with core aeration. We wish you the best with getting these important practices on the books for 2010 and stand ready at your request to be of assistance at your facility.

Source: Patrick O'Brien, 770-229-8125 or patobrien@usga.org and Chris Hartwiger, 205-444-5079 or chartwiger@usga.org



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