

# UNITED STATES GOLF ASSOCIATION GREEN SECTION

## NORTHEASTERN OFFICE

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## NORTHEASTERN TURFLETTER

Vol. 3, No. 6

December, 1956

### LOOKING BACK ON THE '56 SEASON

The Patron Saint of the Golf Course Superintendent was indeed kind in 1956; the turf growing weather of the season was one of the finest that Northeasterners experienced in some time. Timely (almost weekly) rains fell -- the summer season was "cool" for the most part, and on very few occasions did the temperature rise above 90°. This excellent turf growing season following on the heels of a disastrous year in '55 helped superintendents to quickly restore turfgrass areas that were badly injured last season.

Yet, although rainfall and temperatures were almost perfect, humidity was a problem. High humidity and disease usually go hand in hand, and this season was no exception. Normally, Brownpatch and Dollarspot are fairly easy to keep in check through preventative sprayings with presentday fungicides, but there were times when greens had to be sprayed two and three times weekly this year to stay ahead of persistent disease outbreaks. Dollarspot held on during the entire month of November in sections of the Northeast; spring-like temperatures coupled with high humidity apparently favored this disease organism.

Pythium, Curvularia, and Helminthosporium outbreaks were also prevalent at one time or another. Severe attacks of Helminthosporium were observed on three separate occasions. In each case, the disease infestation was brought about primarily by a combination of poor soil drainage, and the abnormal rainfall.

A year ago at the Rutgers Conference, Mr. Elmer Michael, Superintendent, Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, New York, said, "A watering system is only as good as your drainage system". We certainly agree, for whether naturally or artificially overwatered, turfgrasses suffer. In dry seasons, superintendents usually get by without serious difficulty because, knowing the watering requirements of their individual greens, they control watering practices. When nature waters all greens uniformly and heavily, then poorly drained greens become problem greens -- usually disease problems. In such cases, fungicides are not as effective as they are under normal conditions... Dr. O. J. Noer of the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, has in effect said this many times at conferences over the years.

Curvularia was about as troublesome as it was in '55. Curvularia is the "piggy-back" disease that usually shows up after the turf has first been weakened by other disease organisms, or other factors such as over-succulence, chlorosis, scald, mechanical injury, etc. A fine example of the saprophytic nature of this fungus was observed this season on one of the New Jersey courses. In Spring a portion of the turf was weakened by the snowmold (Fusarium) organism, and although the snowmold never really got to the troublesome stage, Curvularia peppered the afflicted area. Where the Fusarium organism weakened the turf, Curvularia stepped in; the rest of the surrounding turf was free of either disease organism.

Presently there is no "sure-fire" control for Curvularia, and the elusive manner of control may well be tied up in the deceptive manner of occurrence. In the 1955 Rutgers fungicide tests, the mercuries, mercuries plus Tersan, and the cadmium compounds looked promising; in 1956, results with the same chemicals were variable. Thus the fungicide picture for Curvularia is somewhat uncertain, though the fungicides mentioned appear to have some influence. In any event, a good preventative fungicide program lessens chances for weaknesses developing, hence giving Curvularia less room to ride in on the coat tails of other diseases.

Pythium was also more prevalent due to wetness and humidity. Several superintendents had the opportunity to try Malachite Green with reported good results, as recommended by Dr. Frank Howard, Pathologist of the Rhode Island Agricultural Experiment Station. Dr. Howard reported that Malachite Green (a dye material with fungicidal properties) would check fungus diseases which spread as a result of mycelial growth. Pythium is included in this group. One of the objections to this material, as voiced by many who have worked with it, is the problem of the dye staining golf balls, shoes, and the workmen who apply it.

Snowmold continues to be a troublesome disease pest in the Northeast. Dr. James Watson and Dr. J. L. Kolb, Agronomists for the Toro Manufacturing Company, recently reported results of tests conducted on plots at their plant in Minneapolis. Excerpts of their report follow: "...Two organisms, Typhula itoana (gray snowmold) and Fusarium nivale (pink snowmold) responsible for this disease ... organisms active between 28° and 42° F, when excessive moisture is present ... develop whenever temperature and moisture are favorable irrespective of snow cover ... apply fungicide in late fall or early winter after soil freezes, prior to first remaining snowfall ... 3 to 4 ozs. of Calo Chlor per 1000 square feet produced effective control ... 3 to 4 ozs. of FIAS effective under normal conditions, but appears inadequate under extreme environment -- retreatment may be necessary ... Milorganite and/or top dressing as carriers enhanced results ... treat aprons, approach, and shoulders as well as green."

Have you measured the size of your greens lately? Dr. Jesse DeFrance rarely fails to emphasize at each Rhode Island Field Day that turf areas should be measured carefully prior to treatment with herbicides or fungicides. Tolerance margins of grasses (putting green turf especially) to chemicals is often slight, therefore in order to do a good, safe job of application, it is first necessary to know the exact size of the areas to be treated. Measure your greens carefully!

IMPORTANT DATES

- January 10 - 12, 1957 -- Northeast Weed Control Conference  
Sheraton-McAlpin Hotel, New York, N. Y.
- January 21 - 24, 1957 -- Rutgers Turfgrass Conference  
Rutgers University  
New Brunswick, New Jersey  
Dr. Ralph E. Engel
- February 10 - 15, 1957 -- 28th National Turfgrass Conference and Show  
Kentucky Hotel  
Louisville, Kentucky  
The Golf Course Superintendents Association  
of America
- February 25 - 28, 1957 -- Cornell Turfgrass Conference  
Cornell University  
Ithaca, New York  
Dr. John F. Cornman

We cordially invite Green Committee Members and Golf Course Superintendents of U.S.G.A. Member Clubs to attend:

The Green Section Educational Program  
January 25, 1957, 3:00 to 5:00 P. M.  
Williams Club - 24 East 39th Street  
New York, N. Y.

Program Chairman

Mr. Edwin Hoyt, President, Wee Burn Country Club, Darien, Conn.

- Topic: WORK OF A CLUB GREEN COMMITTEE
- Part I - Analysis and Planning of Green Committee Work  
Mr. Allan Brown, President, Ekwanok Country Club,  
Manchester, Vermont
  - Part II - Relationship between Green Committee and Club  
Panel Discussion
  - Part III - Relationship between Green Committee, the  
Superintendent and his staff  
Panel Discussion

Hope to see you at all of these important educational conferences!

# ***Northeastern Turfletter***

USGA GREEN SECTION

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