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The causes of late winter early spring damage to golf turfgrass

By J. R. WATSON Vice President, The Toro Company

During late winter-early spring, fluctuating temperatures and waterlogged, partially frozen soil produce conditions that cause the loss of turf. This loss may be the direct or indirect result of one or more of these phenomena. Direct damage or kill of the permanent grass may occur at any point of the freeze - frozen - thaw cycle so characteristic of this season. Indirect injury may result from attacks by disease producing organisms (mostly snowmold and other low temperature fungi) and by traffic on frozén and partially frozen turfgrass areas.

Causes Relating to Temperature Variations



Dead ring around healthy green area was caused by melted edge of ice cover. Turf was saturated for a period of time and when temperatures fell there was crown damage.

Turfgrass may be destroyed - at the time it freezes, during the time it's frozen, during the time it's thawing, or after it's thawed and growth has begun. Some killing probably occurs during each of these periods. This cycle of freezing, frozen, thawing may be repeated several times during each winter and early spring. When associated with intermittent growth in late winterearly spring, damage may be severe. Death as the plant freezes happens most often in the late fall-early winter, but may occur after a period of growth



These areas appeared in a swale or valley. They were under water and the crowns were damaged when cold temperatures occured.

(particularly rapid growth) in the spring when a sudden drop in temperature occurs. This is most damaging when the grass plants are in a nonhardened condition. Ice crystals form within the cells and this disruption of the protoplasm may cause death. Too, repeated cycles in the spring will exhaust food reserves upon which the plants must draw to initiate growth. For this reason, Poa annua is especially vulnerable.

Death during the time the plant is frozen is unlikely to occur unless it is subjected to traffic. This will seldom occur if a good snow cover exists, which is the case most often during the winter months. However, play during the time period under discussion may cause mechanical damage either by attrition or from pressure which forces the ice crystals through the cells, thereby puncturing them and causing death. Play during time the grass is covered with frost has the same effect.

Death at the time of thawing depends on the amount and the state of the "bound" water within the cell (intra-cellular water). Unless adequate bound water is present in the protoplasm, death may result if thawing is rapid or if inter-cellular water reenters the cell too rapidly. In the latter case, the cell wall is permeable but the protoplasm is unable to absorb the water. Prolonged cold may be conducive to death because it contributes to brittleness of the protoplasm and, if contact (from traffic) is made, the plant is highly susceptible to damage.

Causes Relating to Traffic

Grass will initiate growth during the warmer periods of late winter-early spring. If the season is characterized by widely fluctuating temperatures, the grass is vulnerable to the freezefrozen-thaw growth cycle with its attendent problems. Too, the environment produced is highly conducive to disease development. Thus, this may be the most critical phase of the turf management program facing the golf course superintendent. And, he often finds his turf management programs (and therefore, himself) in direct conflict with the golfing membership. especially those desirous of playing a few early rounds.

Mechanical injury by traffic on partially frozen or wet soil may be immediately evident (visible) or delayed (invisible). Visible injuries (soil displacement) are the footprints



Keep golfers off your greens when the frost is coming out of the ground — This may happen if you don't.

and ruts caused by foot and vehicular traffic - sliding and slipping, walking or rolling - on partially frozen or saturated soil. Invisible injury stems from soil compaction.

Although this type of mechanical damage is not confined to the winter months, soil compaction may be far more damaging during this period than generally recognized. Traffic on partially frozen or wet soil, without the protection of living grass, will exert greater pressure (hence, more compacting force) than during the normal growing season. This results, subsequently, in poor growth and may explain "problem areas" which show up in spring and summer for no apparent reason. Cupping areas are particularly vulnerable in this respect.

Traffic on frosted turf causes the frost crystals to puncture leaf cells and kill the grass. Removal of frost, or preventing play when the grass is frosted, is essential.

Control of traffic during vulnerable periods does not always contribute to harmony between early golfing members and the less enthusiastic golfing and non-golfing members. The responsibility for control rests with the club officials - president, green chairman, superintendent and golf professional. *Causes Relating to Ice Sheets and*

Ponded Water

Turfgrasses, although essentially dormant during the winter months. carry on metabolic nevertheless. (growth) activity, particularly respiration. During late winter-early spring, growth activity increases, the as grass may suffocate (a) if difussion of atmospheric and soil gases is reduced or stopped; (b) if excess carbon dioxide accumulates, or (c) if oxygen supplies are reduced to a minimum. Such conditions exist under ice sheets in poorly drained areas where the soil remains saturated for extended periods and, under flooded conditions when ponded or standing water persists. The higher the temperature, the shorter



Remember to break up the ice.

the period of time that the grass can survive these adverse conditions.

Under limited (and rare) conditions, ice sheets and ponded water may act as a lens. When this happens, the sun's rays are magnified to the point where the excessive heat produced may cause a burning or scalding of the turfgrass.

Causes Related to Reduced Water Intake

Desiccation is a "wilting" phenomenon. Like wilt, which occurs during the normal growing season, desiccation occurs when evapotranspiration exceeds water intake. This inability of the roots to absorb water, or for the plant to transport it to or through its system, may result from a shallow, poorly branched root system; diseased vascular system, or, from a reduced or restricted soil water supply. Limited soil moisture may be the result of a "dry" soil (not enough water) or of a frozen or partially frozen soil (water unavailable to the root because of its physical state). Thus, the roots simply cannot take in enough water to offset that being lost by the plant and it "desiccates" or dries up - it wilts. Although more serious during periods when the soil is "on the dry side" or partially frozen, desiccation on high windswept sites may occur at any time. The increased air movement causes excessive transpiration and under limited or reduced soil moisture conditions, the plants may die unless protected.

In late winter-early spring, before the irrigation system has been activated, damage from desiccation may be severe. Water hauled in spray tanks or by other means and applied to critical sites will preclude or minimize loss. *Protective Measures*

Techniques and procedures that protect, avoid and correct the damage that occurs in late winter-early spring are well known to and understood by the golf course superintendent. For the most part, protective measures relate to production of a healthy vigorous grass and to the control, to the extent possible, of the soil - plant environment. When these factors are adversely impacted by anomalous conditions of weather, poor construction or inadequate equipment and supplies, the responsibility for loss of turfgrass must be shared.

A Patch of Green celebrates 8th year

With this issue of "A Patch of Green" we complete our 8th year of publication. The official publication of the Michigan & Border Cities G.C.S.A. was started February, 1971. Ninety-six issues have been printed.

The circulation has grown from 400 to 1200 and almost every Club in Michigan is now receiving a copy.

We will be asking for your help in correcting name and address changes from time to time so that accuracy can be maintained. We also ask that you support our advertisers. They are supporting us - so buy from them! Thanks. Practices available to minimize winter injury on golf course turf

Types of	Practices that r	ninimize injury		Turfgrass species most commonly	
winter injury	Turfgrass cultural	Soil management	Specific protectants	affected	
A. Desiccation:					
(1) Atmosphere	Moderate nitrogen nutri-	Do not core in late fall and	Conwed Winter *	Annual bluegrass	
	tional levels.	leave the holes open.	Protection Blanket		
	Elimination of any thatch problem.		Polyethylene (4-6 mil)		
			Saran Shade Cloth (94%)		
			Topdressing (0.4 yd ³ / 1,000 sq. ft.)		
	and the second		Windbreaks such as snow fence, brush, or ornamental tree and shrub plantings.		
			Natural organic mulches.		
(2) Soil	Moderate nitrogen nutri- tional levels.	(Same as above)	(Same as above)	Annual bluegrass	
	Irrigation or hauling of water to critical turfgrass areas.				
B Direct low	Moderate nitrogen nutri-	Rapid surface drainage by	Conwed Winter	Bermudagrass	
temperature	tional levels.	proper contours, open	Protection Cover	Annual bluegrass	
kill	High potassium nutritional	catch basins, and ditches.	Soil Retention Mat	Red fescue	
	levels.	Adequate subsurface drain-	Enhancing a snow cover	AVAILABLE IN THE	
	Higher cutting heights.	age by drain tile, soil modi-	with a snow fence or brush.		
	Elimination of any thatch	materials, slit trenches, and	Natural organic mulches such		
	problem.	dry wells.	as straw.		
	irrigation,	Cultivation, especially coring and slicing, when compaction	Soil warming by electricity.	1.000	
C. Low temperature diseases		is a problem		- 19 K	
(1) Fusarium patch	Moderate nitrogen nutri-	Avoiding neutral to alkaline	Cadmiums	Annual bluegrass	
	tional levels.	soil pH's	Benomyl	Bentgrass	
	High potassium and iron		Daconil	Million - Color	
	nutritional levels.		Mercuries	1 N. H	
	heights.		1 1		
	Elimination of any thatch problem.	Contract and Market	1.	10 10	
(3) Typhula blight	Moderate nitrogen nutri-	Provide good surface and	danse -	and the second second	
	tional levels.	subsurface drainage.	Cadmiums	Annual bluegrass	
	Moderate to low cutting	Cultivate when compaction	Chloraneb	Bentgrass	
	Elimination of any thatch	is a protiem.	Mercuries		
	problem.		and the second second		
(4) Winter crown rot	Elimination of any thatch problem.		(2 applications)	Annual bluegrass Bentgrass	
D. Traffic:	and the second sec				
(1) On frozen	Apply a light application		Withhold or divert traffic		
turfgrass	of water in early morning;		from turfgrass areas during		
leaves	this is most effective when the soil is not frozen and	1. 1. 1.	stem tissues are frozen.		
	the air temperatures are		States and a state		
	above freezing.				
(2) On wet, slush covered turf			Withhold traffic on turfgrass areas during wet, slushy con- ditions, especially if a drastic	Annual bluegrass	

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Turf Pathology

By DR. JOSEPH P. KRAUSZ Assistant Professor, Plant Pathology, Clemson University Pee Dee Experiment Station, Florence, S.C.

Although most turf diseases take a rest during the winter, the wise turfgrass manager should not do the same. The winter is a good time to evaluate your over-all disease control program. Too often a good disease control program is not initiated, and when a turf disease suddenly springs up, the manager panics and immediately sprays the diseased area with any fungicide he might have available.

The keys to successful turfgrass disease control are prevention and accurate and rapid diagnosis. It is much easier and more economical to prevent a turfgrass disease than to try to cure it after it becomes established. Chemical control can be costly and time consuming with numerous fungicide applications being necessary to control a disease. To minimize the possibility of a disease becoming established. follow faithfully all recommended cultural practices. Proper mowing, careful fertilization, iudicious and timely irrigation, and aerification help frequent prevent diseases by maintaining a vigorously growing turf. A properly maintained turf is less severely damaged by diseases and is able to recover more quickly.

Proper fertilization, especially the amount of nitrogen applied, is important to disease prevention. Too much nitrogen results in soft, succulent growth that makes turf more susceptible to some diseases such as brown patch. On the other hand, insufficient nitrogen makes turf more susceptible to other diseases like dollar spot. Proper nitrogen fertilization is very important in a good disease prevention program.

Judicious and timely irrigation is also very important in disease prevention. Diseases such as brown patch and cottony blight are favored by wet soils, while dollar spot is often more severe in turfgrass with insufficient moisture. Apply irrigation wisely and only as recommended. Watering early in the morning is best, since foliage will dry rapidly in the sun and be less able to support foliar disease infections.

Carefully following recommended cultural practices can do much in preventing turfgrass diseases and in limiting their damage. However, diseases still can become established. This is where accurate and early diagnosis of the problem is essential. The superficial approach of merely treating the symptoms without being certain what has caused them can be disasterous. Although symptoms may often appear somewhat similar, the problems may be caused by different pathogens, and a chemical used to control one may be ineffective against the other. Cottony blight and brown patch are both very destructive diseases whose symptoms are easily confused. To mistakenly diagnose these diseases could be costly, since the fungicides recommended to control brown patch are essentially ineffective against cottony blight and vice versa. Rapid and accurate diagnosis of the problem is essential. As soon as the problem is accurately diagnosed, a recommended chemical control can be chosen. To be effective, a chemical control involves using the right chemical in the right amount at the right time and in obtaining the right coverage. Continued on next page

What's in store for 1979

What is in store for our profession in the coming year?

Prices will continue to climb, but hopefully with some help from industry and President Carter's Administration, the rate of inflation will begin to level off.

Turf Pathology cont.

the turfgrass Diagnosing major diseases is an art which the wise turfgrass manager should strive to develop. Obtaining some of the books and publications available on turfgrass diseases would be advisable. Try to develop a thorough background in the major diseases that are known to occur during each season of the year on the turfgrass species in question. In the early stages of learning the art, confine your diagnoses with state agricultural Extension specialists in your area. With this approach, the turfgrass manager will be able to start controlling diseases before they get out of hand, and those strange patches of dead turfgrass will no longer be a mystery which too often ends up with expressions of sympathy from the pathologist and advice on renovation by the agronomist.

Supplies seem to be plentiful, but once again we should become concerned about energy. Do everything you can to conserve our precious natural resources. Water and energy conservation should be at the top of our list of priorities.

New equipment continues to dominate the scene. A trap rake with a rock picker, computerized irrigation, more hydraulic mowers, a golf cart using an underground mono rail and new pesticides make our future look bright.

Golf tournaments will abound in 1979

In June, you can travel to Toledo and see the U.S. Open; in August, the PGA Championship will be at Oakland Hills Country Club (1st week in August), Birmingham, Michigan.

Other tournaments will be "The Ladies STROHS" at Dearborn Country Club and the newly revitalized "Buick Open" at Warwick Hills C.C.

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I set out to be a friend, and friends were everywhere!



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Steve Dearborn

Dr. C. Reed Funk to receive GCSAA Distinguished Service Award

Lawrence, Kan. - Dr. C. Reed Funk, research professor of turfgrass agronomy at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., has been selected to receive the 1979 Distinguished Service Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) for his outstanding contribution to golf.

He will be honored at the opening session of the 50th International Turfgrass Conference and Show Feb. 5 in Atlanta, Ga. The conference, sponsored by GCSAA, is the largest international educational event and trade show for turf specialists and will attract more than 6,000 conferees.

Funk is best known for his leadership of one of the world's most extensive turfgrass breeding programs. He developed the first successful method of producing Kentucky bluegrass cultivars by hybridization. The Adelphi, Bonnieblue and Majestic bluegrasses also were developed by him using the newly discovered technique. Prior to Funk's breakthrough, the only method of obtaining improved varieties was to search for better naturally-occurring plants. His work has opened the way for genetic manipulation of a whole new group of plants.

From this research Funk went on to develop the first internationally used

turf-type cultivar of perennial ryegrass (Manhattan). Other germplasm sources developed by Funk have contributed to the development of the cultivars Citation, Yorktown and Yorktown II, Diplomat, Derby, Regal, Omega and Sabre.

Funk, who has accumulated one of the most valuable collections of Poa and Festuca germplasm presently available in North America, developed techniques for screening this collection for turf performance, response to management practices and disease resistance. The cultivars Touchdown, Brunswick and Glade originated from this Poa collection.

He is a member of the American Society of Agronomy, the Crop Science Society of America, the American Genetic Association, the American Sod Producers Association, the New Jersey Turfgrass Association and the Pennsylvania Turfgrass Association. He also has served on the subcommittee for Glossary of Crop Science Terms; the Foundation Seed Committee, the Patent and Copyright Policy Task Force and the Turfgrass Committee for the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. He was the chairman for the regional committee for Breeding and Evaluation of Kentucky Bluegrass for Turf. His work is widely published.





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How managers deal with tension on the job

All organizations experience times when, because of external or internal pressures, members of the organization become tense. As tension increases, the liklihood of conflicts among employees and between employees and managers increases. As a manager, you should be aware when stressful circumstances are developing and what actions you should take to defuse a potentially explosive situation.

First, remember that people under pressure may not be objective. They become overly sensitive to real or imagined slights and find it difficult to retain perspective. For this reason, it is virtually impossible to resolve a problem under tension-producing conditions, particularly if you are feeling tense yourself.

There are two techniques, used singly or together, which will help

cool down tempers and promote a quiet, intelligent approach to a problem.

First, change the place of your discussion. If the problem involves a location or object that caused the stressful situation, like a broken piece of machinery or a patch of damaged turf, having the evidence there will only serve to perpetuate the crisis.

If you have a private office or another place where you will not be interrupted, use it. Trying to resolve a problem with a crowd of onlookers is asking for trouble. It may also be that the problem is of a confidential nature, making an employee reluctant to discuss it fully where he may be overheard.

A cooling off period is another good move toward peaceful resolution of a Continued on page 15



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Ice damage to trees in southeast Michigan





Dealing with tension cont.

stressful situation. If an employee or manager has reacted emotionally to a situation, it may only take a few hours for him to see his error and be ready to act reasonably again.

Before the time comes for a discussion, analyze what caused the stress. By pinpointing the cause for the stress, the emotional reaction that "everything's going wrong" will be cut down to size; you'll be able to say, "Situation or person X is causing the problem - let's deal with X."

Seek a resolution of the problem that allows everyone involved to retain his dignity. Nothing is accomplished by humiliating an employee, and may only cause further deterioration of an already unsatisfactory situation. If an apology on your part is appropriate, by all means offer one. It is one of the best ways to demonstrate your concern and desire to be fair. At no time is the ability to listen more important. In a well-managed organization,

stressful situations with employees arise only occasionally. How they are handled when they do arise can make the difference between an unhappy, divisive bunch of workers and a satisfied group of employees who respect both you and themselves. Credit - ForeFront

GCSAA CONFERENCE & SHOW How to enjoy an exhibit

In order to take full advantage of the Show we offer you a guide on how to enjoy an exhibit:

- 1. Plan to visit schedule a special time in your busy week.
- 2. Browse you'll surely miss something of value to you if you merely peek in.
- 3. Look see them all; there's always something new under the sun.
- 4. Listen the exhibitor is ready to talk with you about his display.
- 5. Get the facts don't depend on rumors. Continued on next page



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6. Follow up when you get home -Exhibitors are glad to help throughout the year; not just during meetings.

Exhibit Hall Schedule:

Tuesday, February 6, 1979

9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, February 7, 1979

9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 8, 1979

9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

With over 220 exhibits to visit at the Show this year we hope some of the above pointers will be useful.

Century names new executives

Two new appointments to the Century Rain-Aid executive and administrative staff were announced by Ernie Hodas, president.

Ben Taliaferro, a 17-year veteran in the industry, was named Executive Vice President, with a broad range of operational responsibilities. After attending Lawrence Institute of Technology and Wayne State University, with extension courses at Stanford University, he started with Century Rain-Aid nine years ago as a Division General Manager. He has lectured extensively on irrigation at U of M and Michigan State. He is a past educational committee chairman of the Irrigation Association.

Paul R. Sowerby assumes the post of Inventory Manager for Century Rain-Aid. Headquartered at the company's Main Office and Central Warehouse in Madison Heights, he will administer CRA's stock of irrigation equipment and supplies. A graduate of Western Michigan University, his previous posts include Production Control Analyst for Ford Motor Company, and sales and management positions including the presidency of Safety Sales, Inc.

If You Don't Know The Answers, At Least Know Where To Find Them.

GCSAA SEMINARS

Yarborough joins TUCO

KALAMAZOO, Michigan - Robert H. Yarborough has been named an agricultural chemical sales representative for TUCO, Division of The Upjohn Company, by Marketing Manager Owen B. Lewis. Yarborough is responsible for TUCO agricultural chemical sales in Michigan, Indiana and Ohio, and will report to Paul L. Chechele, Manager for TUCO's Eastern District.

Yarborough received his B.S. Degree in Agronomy and Turf Management from Delaware Valley College of Agriculture at Doylestown, Pennsylvania, and his A.A.S. Degree from State University of New York at Cobbleskill. Before joining TUCO, he was Manager and Superintendent of Golf at Tanglewood Lake, Inc. in Greentown, Pennsylvania.

Yarborough, a native of Pennsylvania, his wife Susan, and their son. will relocate to Columbus, Ohio, in the near future.



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How many clubs do this?

Every business depends on sound internal communications to function properly. Clubs are no exception to this rule, but how many clubs do each of the following:

Coordinate all activities via a master-schedule authority?

Offer orientation programs for new staff members and new committee members?

Document all club operating pro cedures, job descriptions for staff am committee members?

Keep members abreast of long range club planning?

Maintain a comprehensive file system for each business department and club activity?

Survey members occasionally re garding important club issues?

Discuss and record job performance evaluations with staff members?

Prepare and disseminate clu operating rules for membership consideration?

Employ recognized hiring practice when filling key staff positions?

Clubs cannot afford to be neglectful about any of the above, because doin so invites management breakdown.



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