

# On the Grow

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## Summer Swelter Stresses Iowa Lawns

by Dr. Dave Minner, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, Iowa State University



Mild growing conditions in the spring and early summer produced beautiful lawns across Iowa, but excessive heat and rainfall has produced some weary and weedy lawns that will need assistance to recover this fall. It seems like every year we have some type of weather related disaster in Iowa.

The Parkersburg Tornado, Eldora hail storm, and Cedar Rapids/Iowa City floods are just a few recent memories. Ames and parts of the ISU campus took a direct hit from this year's deluge of rain. Precipitation and flooding seem to be localized depending on the watershed you live in. Regardless, statewide precipitation rates well above normal provided ample water for lawn growth, but while your sprinklers may have been growing cobwebs lawns in Iowa were being set up for decline from diseases, weeds, insects, and the pressure of summer stress.

### Disease

In June I reported <http://iaturf.blogspot.com/2010/06/ascochyta-leaf-blight-scorches-iowa.html> on a rather unusual outbreak of *Ascochyta* caused by, of all things, dry conditions and heat. Lawns damaged by *Ascochyta* recovered in varying degrees but it is important to remember that summer stress accumulates and lawns are generally weakest by late August. Dollar spot and red thread were active through June, but the more deadly brown patch and *Pythium* have reared their ugly head in late July and August to finish off some of the weaker lawns.

### Weeds

This year was certainly the year for crabgrass and yellow nut sedge. Pre-emergence herbicides generally give 85 to 100% control of crabgrass, but this year excessive rain and high temperature reduced efficacy

from crabgrass control products. High moisture and high temperature are two factors that increase the activity of soil microorganisms that ultimately ingest the herbicide and render it inactive for season long weed control. Post emergence weed control products like Acclaim, Drive, and Tenacity give us the option of waiting until May or June to see if we even need crabgrass control. This is a great Integrated Pest Management strategy that potentially reduces lawn herbicides. However, lawns inundated with crabgrass by August 2010 would benefit from pre-emergence crabgrass control in spring 2011 to reduce the infestation of crabgrass that is eminent; seed from this year's heavy infestation will germinate next summer and the cycle of crabgrass will continue. Should you try to kill the heavy infestation of crabgrass that is occurring in August? When crabgrass covers less than 25% of the turf



Picture taken August 2010 shows darker green Kentucky bluegrass that is heavily infested with crabgrass. Crabgrass will first turn white and then brown after being treated with Tenacity. The Kentucky bluegrass area did not receive pre-emergence herbicide for two years and it has transitioned from 100% Kentucky bluegrass to nearly 75% crabgrass.

- "Summer Swelter" continued on page 6

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## ISU Horticulture Career Night

by Marcus Jones, Graduate Research Asst., Iowa State University

Thinking back to when I was an undergraduate, I remember what a great learning experience my internships were. I could finally start to apply some of the information I had learned in the classroom and I was able to communicate and interact with field experts on a daily basis. Similarly, from my time spent in industry, I understand how staffing reliable, enthusiastic workers can benefit the day to day operations of any facility. The bottom line is that internships can be beneficial to both the student and the facility alike.

Some of you may have had an intern from ISU at your facility in the past and others may be curious about employing an intern in the future. Our department has approximately 50 turfgrass students who will be looking for internship opportunities this coming summer in golf, sports, and lawn and landscape settings.

These potential interns (along with their resumes) will be available for an informal meet and greet at our upcoming Horticulture Career Night. The event will be held on Monday, October 18 at Reiman Garden's just south of the ISU campus. The event will begin at 5:30 pm and food and beverages will be provided at no charge. Consider coming to this event to recruit potential interns. Those planning on attending need to RSVP to Marcus Jones at [mjones99@iastate.edu](mailto:mjones99@iastate.edu).



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# New Features at PLANET's Green Industry Conference

by the Professional Landcare Network

The Professional Landcare Network (PLANET) Green Industry Conference (GIC), to be held October 27–30, 2010, in Louisville, Kentucky, brings several new opportunities and features to the table to help members grow their businesses in this tough economy.

New features to GIC this year include a series of six interactive clinics on topics such as PR, green roofs, and business building; a full range of educational sessions offered by Hardscape North America, which for the first time is co-locating with GIC and GIE+EXPO; Specialty Group Thursday, which will provide networking and educational sessions targeted by specialty group (lawn care, design/build/installation and landscape management); a virtual facility tour of three top-notch facilities — Mari-ani Landscape, Moyer Indoor | Outdoor®, and Pacific Landscape Management; and the launch of PLANET's newest resource, PLANET UNIVERSE, a brand new online portal filled with the latest green industry news and information. As always, GIC attendees are encouraged to experience the GIE+EXPO to see and test drive the latest in equipment, products, and technology.

Attendees will be inspired by this year's keynote speaker, Jamie Clarke, an extreme adventurer and gifted storyteller who has twice scaled Mt. Everest; awed by the award-winning work of colleagues displayed during the PLANET Awards Presentation and Reception; and encouraged to support the PLANET Academic Excellence Foundation (PLANET AEF) and PLANET's legislative activities through participation in a silent as well as the annual live auction. There'll be plenty of time to catch up with old friends and make new ones through a number of evening receptions, and chart-topping entertainment to take in at Fourth Street Live!, Louisville's premier dining and entertainment district, from some of country's brightest stars, Neal McCoy and Heidi Newfield.

PLANET thanks its Green Industry Conference Platinum Sponsor JOHN DEERE and its Silver Sponsor Bayer Environmental Science. For more information about GIC, to register, or to book your hotel room, visit [GreenIndustryConference.org](http://GreenIndustryConference.org) or contact PLANET at (800) 395-2522.

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# **Thank You to the 2010 Iowa Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show Exhibitors**

**Check back soon for the 2011 Trade Show Exhibitor List! <http://www.iowaturfgrass.org>**

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Charles Marshall is one of the most popular humorous motivational speakers speaking today and has almost 20 years experience speaking to audiences all over the United States. Each year, Charles travels 100,000 miles to perform in over 100 corporate and civic venues from New York to California. His animated delivery and original observations have captivated over 1,000 audiences over the past two decades, including many Fortune 500 companies.

Charles Marshall is also a nationally syndicated humor columnist and the author of the modern day motivational classic, Shattering the Glass Slipper and the popular humor book, I'm Not Crazy, But I Might Be A Carrier. Additionally, he has released two full-length comedy videos, Fully Animated and I'm Just Sayin'. [www.charlesmarshall.net](http://www.charlesmarshall.net)

# Iowa Turfgrass Office Update

by Jeff Wendel, CGCS, Executive/Communications Director, Iowa Turfgrass Office



## 2010 ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit Tournament

Thanks to all the participants in the 2010 ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit Tournament. See the sidebar for a complete list of Sponsors. Special thanks to Rick Tegtmeier, CGCS for his input and assistance. Many thanks also to the Golf Course Staff at Des Moines Golf, and to Scott Howe, PGA Professional and his staff. Kudos to Rachel Naber and the club staff for the arrangements and excellent food.

One hundred twenty four players participated in the 'modified alternate shot' event. The format proved to be a difficult challenge, but the large majority of participants enjoyed the challenge. The blind draw for prizes helped to take the 'sting' out of the higher than usual scores. For most, it was a great way to enjoy a day on Des Moines Golf's fabulous North Course. The condition of the course in this difficult year was no less than amazing and the weather was perfect. The event served to raise about \$3500 each for ITI and Iowa GCSA. Thanks again to everyone for their loyal support!

The 2011 ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit is scheduled for Wakonda on October 3rd. Plan now to participate.

## Iowa Turfgrass Office Update

The Iowa Turfgrass Office is still operating with only yours truly as staff. I apologize if you find me difficult to reach by phone, please leave a message if you get the voicemail as I go insane when I miss calls. Please contact me if you are waiting for something, I try very hard to get things taken care of each day, so if you are waiting on me I probably forgot. Do not be afraid to remind me!

Iowa Turfgrass is very close to launching an online membership solution with Avectra. The new system will make it much easier to update your contact info, manage your member services and register for events. No prediction on the actual 'launch' but I am working on the data every day.

## 2011 Iowa Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show

The 2011 Conference is January 18- 20 in Des Moines. Make plans now to attend. The 2011 Exhibitor information will mail on October 1st, followed by a program mailing around the 1st of November. The 2011 Conference webpage is at: <http://www.iowaturfgrass.org/iticonference.htm>. Updates are coming each week, and there are links to the keynote and sponsorship opportunities.

The Conference & Trade Show are critically important to Research, Scholarship and the function of the Iowa Turfgrass Office, how to see you there!

## 2011 ITI/Iowa GCSA Benefit Sponsors

Special thanks to Colby Marriott and E-Z-GO for sponsoring the golf cars for the 2010 event!

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Thanks to Adam Neate & DuPont for sponsoring lunch.



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area it can be left alone because it will die after the first frost and the Kentucky bluegrass will usually fill in the areas through the dead crabgrass. However, this year the Kentucky bluegrass is being smothered beneath a layer of crabgrass that covers nearly 50 to 100% of the visible lawn surface. In this case a product like Tenacity can be used to suppress or kill enough of the existing crabgrass in August so that the turf can be power raked and re-seeded in early September. Seeding can occur at the same time or prior to Tenacity application. This is necessary because the heavy infestations of crabgrass that we are experiencing this year will not allow existing or reseeded turf to reestablish in September unless the crabgrass is sufficiently weakened. The thick, uncontrolled mat of crabgrass will dominate the turf until the first killing frost that usually occurs in October; then it will be too late to establish Kentucky bluegrass from seed. Tenacity is currently labeled for weed control in golf courses, sod farms, sports turf and commercial turf. A label for residential weed control is anticipated next year.

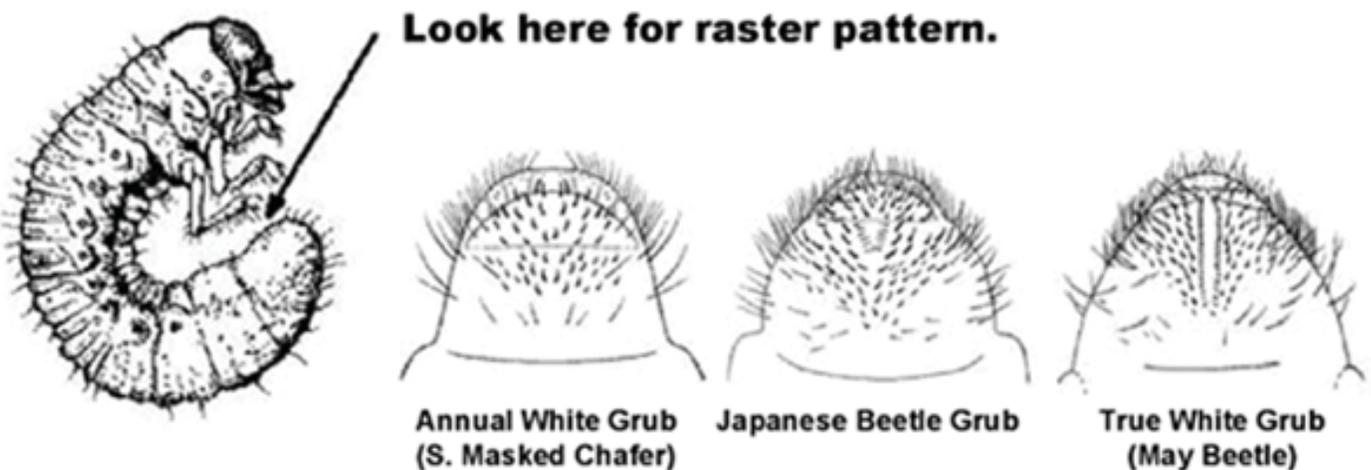
## Insects

White grubs and bluegrass bill bugs are our two major lawn insects. I found some bluegrass billbugs this year but damage was very limited compared to past years and drier conditions. Annual white grubs caused by the Masked Chaffer are showing up in ample supply and right on schedule for Mid-August. If grubs are actively feeding in August and early September then Dylox will be a good choice. It needs to be thoroughly watered into the surface 1.5 inches of soil where the grubs are feeding. It only lasts about seven days in the soil and grubs should begin to die about a week after treatment. I received some calls this year for abnormally large white grubs

in June and July. Most people know about the more prolific annual white grub, but don't forget that we also have another white grub caused by the May/June beetle *Phyllophaga* spp that periodically causes turf loss. I see these every year in various stages of growth and they take 3 years to complete their life cycle. Consequently they are in the ground for an entire year as a grub and that is why some of them appear rather large during the middle of the summer. Check the raster pattern to determine which grub you are dealing with. While you are at it look for the V-shaped raster found on white grubs of Japanese Beetles. The adult Japanese Beetles are becoming an important pest on ornamentals as they spread from east to west across Iowa. The importance of Japanese beetle grubs on turf has not been determined. Please let me know if you are experiencing actual grub damage to lawns from Japanese Beetles.

## Summer Stress

High temperature and excessive moisture are a deadly combination that stresses lawns. Cool-season grasses grown in Iowa (Kentucky bluegrass, tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue) are what we call C-3 plants. They grow and store energy just fine when temperatures are below 70° F but as temperatures increase, especially above 85°, our cool-season turf uses its reserve of stored carbon and this causes a plant energy deficit. The grass plant is simply starving itself to death when temperature is too high. Crabgrass is a C-4 warm-season plant that continues to thrive and efficiently store energy during hot conditions. This partially explains why crabgrass is more competitive and can overtake Kentucky bluegrass as the summer progresses.



[Line drawings – USDA/Cornell]

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Excessive moisture is another factor that can contribute to lawn decline in the summer. Roots need air to survive. Oxygen is displaced in soggy or flooded soils and this causes anerobic conditions and roots that do not function properly. Imagine lying down in the sun of your front yard in the hottest part of the day on a sunny, soggy and humid bed of grass. You wouldn't last but a few minutes. Grass plants in the sun can't get up and move to the shade. They're stuck, and when the evaporative cooling system begins to shut down the grass plant, thatch, and soil surface quickly heat up to the existing air temperature or higher. Plants can be literally cooked to death by direct heat injury as plant tissue temperatures rise above 95°F.

Temperatures this year were sufficient to cause rapid injury directly from high temperatures and indirectly from prolonged periods of high temperatures that eventually depleted stored carbohydrates. Weakened plants with slow growth were often overcome by brown patch and pythium that flourished when night time temperatures were greater than 72° F. To develop a weather profile for your local area go to <http://www.mesonet.agron.iastate.edu/>.

## What to do

The bad news is that several lawns in have succumb to the various woes of summer described above. The good news is that now is the best time to rejuvenate damaged lawns. So if you are tired of that tired old lawn it may be a good time to kill the existing mess and start over with some improved grass varieties suitable for your lawn. Consult your local lawn care professional company to develop a plan to recover your lawn through aerification, slicing, seeding, and fertilizing.



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