

On the Grow

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Fall Lawn Care

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New Title, Same Face

Randy Robinson, Executive Director, Iowa Turfgrass Institute



As most of you already know, my name is Randy Robinson and I have the honor of serving as the ITI Executive Director. I can't say thank you enough to the ITI Board for having faith in me to help lead this industry that I love into the future. For those wondering, Jeff Wendel, CGCS will be retiring at

the end of October and I have the pleasure of learning from him until he leaves. I will have huge shoes to fill, but I am anxious for that challenge.

As the title says, "new title, same face", I say that because I have been in the Turfgrass Industry for 21 years of my life. Here is a little background on me. I have been married to my lovely, patient, and understanding wife Emily for nearly 11 years. As I write this, we have been blessed with 3 children and one on

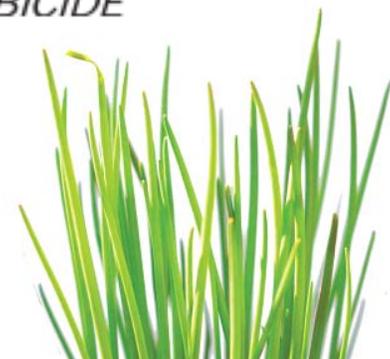
the way. In fact, when you read this, we will probably have just had our 4th. I am an avid golfer, hunter, fisherman, and all around outdoorsman. I spent 15 months deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom serving in the US Army as a combat medic.

Enough about me, I can't explain how excited I am to get to know all sides of the turf industry. It will be a great honor serving all the associations and aiding you with any questions or concerns you may have. Please feel free to contact me anytime with any needs at randy@iowaturfgrass.org or call the Turf Office at 515.635.0306.

As always, make sure you thank the vendors for their support of the association. Whether through newsletter advertising or supporting your continuing education.



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The End of Another Season

Dave Hardy, Northeast Director, Spray Away

The end of another season is coming closer as the days are shorter and nights are crisper. We have been really gearing up for broad leaf weed control and strong fertilizer blends. It would seem that with a cooler wetter summer we would have nothing to complain about. However I saw several challenges. First off crabgrass in northeast Iowa have been out of control. I am thankful for buying good quality pre-emergent products and early post-emergent products and applying high rates. We have had some breakthrough in thin areas but when compared to those who didn't apply pre-emergent or a good product at a high rate we really had great success.

Secondly I have gotten several calls for disease in turf. Most often I have seen summer patch and ascochyta.

For those who haven't seen ascochyta hold onto your hats when you do. I have seen it shortly after an application and it appears that something went wrong with your lawn application. Sometimes you will see wheel tracks or odd streaks. It can be really challenging to explain to the customer that the problems are a disease and not a mistake. I have been using 2 applications of fungicide on diseased yards the following year and increasing potassium rates. It has seemed to help.

I wish the best for all of you and hope the remainder of your season goes well.

Fall Lawn Care

Kevin Johnson, At-Large Director, All American Turf Beauty, Inc.

Spring Fever seems to drive our industry. As most of us know, spring brings us the most opportunity to sign up prospective customers. Spring seems to trigger the buying signal for most customers to get on a plan to improve their lawns. Unfortunately, many miss the great opportunity to improve their lawns in the fall. Fall is one of the best times of year to start improving your lawn. I only wish that people would develop Fall Fever when it comes to lawn care.

Fall is generally regarded as the best time of the year to: 1) fertilize 2) obtain broadleaf weed control and 3) seed. There are many reasons for fall being a great time of year to improve your lawn. If you could only afford to treat your lawn one time – it would be hard to beat the advantages gained by making this application in the fall.

Why is it so hard to get potential customers excited about fall lawn care? This is a question I have been trying to solve for the past 30 years. It seems like it has been ingrained into our culture that spring is the best time to start lawn care. I realize that the 1st application of crabgrass preventer is quite important, but why lay all our eggs in one basket? I have come to believe that beginning in the fall (new customers) is one of the

best ways to get your lawn off to a great start for the following year. Our company offers two treatments in the fall – our regular fall application, and the late fall application which contains a heavy feeding of fertilizer once the lawn has stopped above ground growth. These two applications provide the very foundation for success in the following growing season. Customers who have developed “Fall Lawn Care” fever achieve better looking lawns earlier in the following growing season than those who wait for “Spring Fever”.

I encourage each of you to promote and grow your business in the fall each year. Your customers will not regret it next spring.



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IPLCA is now accepting IPLCA Board of Director nominations. Open positions include: South Central Director, Northeast Director, two At-Large Directors.

Please provide us with short biography to be use in the December issue of the IPLCA newsletter. Please email the biography along with a picture to Randy Robinson no later than November 1st. Send to randy@iowaturfgrass.org.

Name: _____

Company: _____

_____ Years at current job position
Number of years IPLCA MEMBER _____

Running for which board position: _____

Employment History (start from current job, and go backwards)
List dates, name of company and your title

Personal Information/Family/Hobbies:

Education: (Only necessary to list highest degree, but if you'd like to list more, you may.)

Goals as a Board Member: (maximum number of words: 75 please)

Ectotrophic Root Infecting Fungi Control

Ryan Adams, Iowa State University

Ectotrophic root infecting (ERI) fungi are one of the most destructive classes of turfgrass diseases. Summer patch (*Magnaporthe poae*) and necrotic ring spot (*Leptosphaeria korrae*) are the most common ERI fungi to affect Kentucky bluegrass lawns. Summer patch (SP) and necrotic ring spot (NRS) are caused by Ascomycetes. Spring dead spot, dead spot (bentgrass) and take-all patch also fall into the ERI fungi category.

Disease Management Steps

The first step in ERI control is the correct identification of the disease present. It is important to accurately diagnose diseases because of the cost associated with incorrect diagnoses and potential for further turf damage. In addition, newer generation fungicides only control a small group of specific diseases.

Start with a simple list of the possibilities based on your turf species and the time of the year. Through the process of elimination, narrow the list by writing down symptoms and signs. Symptoms are visible damage or expression on host for example a sheath lesion. Signs (mycelium, hyphae, spores) are the visual expression of

the organism. If you are still struggling with a correct diagnosis, send a sample to a diagnostic lab.

Diseases are grouped as abiotic (physical stress not derived from living organisms) and biotic (biological stress caused by living organisms). Abiotic diseases that affect turf are nutritional deficiencies and toxicities of heavy metals in the soil, drought and heat stress, air or soil pollution, winterkill, and pesticide damage or phytotoxicity. Biotic factors caused by living organism are bacteria, viruses, nematodes, parasitoids, and fungi. Fungi are plant-like organisms that do not produce true seeds and lack roots, stems, leaves, and chlorophyll. A majority of fungi is beneficial thatch decomposers in the soil and does not cause injury to turfgrass and other crops. However, like summer patch and necrotic ring spot, most of the turfgrass diseases are attributed to fungi.

Ecology

Even under the trained eye, disease symptoms cannot be distinguished in the field. Summer patch and

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Ectotrophic Root Continued...

necrotic ring spot produce identical symptoms on bluegrasses and fine fescue. Both diseases are known as “frog-eyed” diseases because they produce 6-12 inch semicircle frogeye spots. Sometimes arcs or patches can be seen. In mixed stands of grass, the pattern of symptoms is much more irregular. The best way to identify ERI fungi is the sparse, dark colored runner hyphae on the outer surface of the roots. The infected roots are unable to supply adequate water to the turf causing the appearance of moisture stress.

The biggest difference between SP and NRS is the frequency of occurrence. Summer patch is seen on a higher frequency in Iowa than NRS. Summer patch also occurs between June-September, while NRS damage commonly occurs between March-June and October-December. Even this difference is sometimes hard to distinguish in certain years. Adequate spring rainfall can mask NRS damage well into June or July. The damage only becomes existent during hot, dry periods leading to a false diagnosis.

Summer Patch primarily affects Kentucky bluegrass in Iowa and across the transition zone. Symptoms of summer patch can be easily confused with leaf and sheath spot, insect damage from grubs, or drought stress. These possible causes need to be eliminated before a diagnosis of summer patch is made.

Dull red/tan/ to straw-colored tissue in a frog-eye pattern is the first symptom on summer patch. Further observation of the roots, rhizomes, and crowns yields dark brown to black roots. Summer patch survives winter as mycelium and begins colonizing roots between 68-90oF. The fungi spread along roots and rhizomes from plant to plant. Ectotrophic root infecting damage is often large because it can spread by long distances through aerification and infected sod. Often recovery has been slow because new roots are inhibited by high soil temperatures. The risk factors that attribute to the ecology of SP are hot, wet weather, compaction, high pH soils, low mowing heights, south facing slopes, and the use of soluble fertilizers. Summer patch is most severe in 2-5 year old lawns from sod. Severity can also increase when “muck soil sod” is placed on native Iowa soil. This is commonly seen in new housing developments.

Necrotic ring spot causes symptoms in the spring and fall and begin colonizing roots between 50-85 °F. Cool wet, weather favors NRS. Drought stress can also predispose attack during the summer. Like summer patch, compaction favors the disease. Dull red tinted to straw-colored tissue in a frogeye pattern is most commonly observed. Small pear-shaped fruiting bodies may be present on the decaying roots. Necrotic ring spot is often most severe on 4-5 year old lawns established by seed.

Fungicide Control

There are several curative and preventative fungicides labeled for summer patch control. Applications need to begin early in the spring when soil temperatures reach 64 oF. Repeat application 2-3 times on 21-28 day intervals through mid-August. Once symptoms of SP appear, it is too late for fungicides. Curative fungicides have proven to be inconsistent and cultural controls are the most effective option. Summer patch research has observed the best control using combination products containing DMI's and strobilurins. Disarm™,

Continued on Page 9...



Ectotrophic Root Continued...

Headway™, and Armada™ are a few of the chemical trade names that fall into this category. Other products such as fluxapyroxad, propiconazole, myclobutanil, thiophanate-methyl, trifloxystrobin, and triadimefon are labeled for summer patch control.

Necrotic ring spot control is very similar to summer patch. Applications need to begin early in the spring when soil temperatures reach 55 oF. Repeat application 2-3 times on 21-28 day intervals. Once symptoms of NRS appear, it is too late for fungicides. Curative fungicides have also proven to be inconsistent and cultural controls are the most effective option. Necrotic ring spot research has determined DMI products provide the best control. Eagle™, Rubigan™, Banner Maxx™ and Torque™, are a few of the chemical trade names that fall into this category. Other products containing thiophanate-methyl, azoxystrobin, and iprodione are also labeled for necrotic ring spot control.

Cultural Practices

When summer patch or necrotic ring spot symptoms

appear, it is most cost effective to try to control culturally. Foliar spoon-feed applications of ammonium sulfate at 0.1 -0.3lbs./N/1000 sq. ft. can briefly reduce severity. If foliar feeding is not an option, use slow release products rather than high rate applications of soluble nitrogen fertilizers. An annual spring application of magnesium sulfate may also help reduce SP and NRS issues.

In addition, raising the mowing height during high stress periods will help reduce disease pressure. Both diseases are prevalent in compacted soils, so improving internal drainage through core aeration, and deep-tine aeration will help a great deal. If summer patch or necrotic ring spot is an annual problem, consider overseeding resistant varieties. The older varieties of Kentucky bluegrass, including Adelphi, Challenge, Eclipse, and Nuglade are moderately resistant to both diseases. If battling summer patch exclusively Barvette, Nuglade, Midnight, Impact, and Sky are Kentucky bluegrass varieties less susceptible.



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