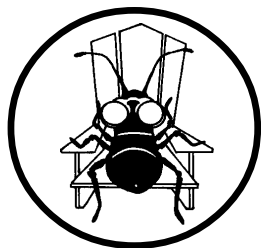


Managing *Poa annua*



Pest Watch

Spring is the time for dealing with annual bluegrass.

*Some significant advances in managing out *Poa annua* in golf course turf have been made in recent years.*

Whether you're trying to manage or eliminate it, spring is a time for dealing with annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*). *Poa annua* is a prolific pest infesting golf courses, lawns, and most mown turf areas. In recent years many techniques have been developed to manage both for and against *Poa*.

Those who prefer to live with *Poa* know its spring seed production is most objectionable. On golf courses, the abundance of seedheads detracts from the appearance, and may affect playability as well. Seedheads can be suppressed by using materials that regulate plant growth.

One of the most commonly used products is Embark (mefluidide). On golf courses it is recommended for fairways only. Properly timed, low rates of Embark will suppress the formation of *Poa* seedheads. Embark should be applied at labeled rates (for seedhead suppression) to actively growing turf, but before seedhead emergence. Examine *Poa* sheaths on a regular basis for the presence of developing seedheads to ensure proper timing. Use a spray marker to avoid spray overlap or skips.

On greens, the wetting agent Aqua-Gro can be used for suppressing seedheads. Studies at Cornell several years ago found Aqua-Gro applied at 4 oz/1000 square feet in 5 gal. of water resulted in a 65-70% reduction in seedheads. Apply Aqua-Gro about 10 days before seedhead emergence, repeating again 2 weeks later.

Some significant advances in managing out *Poa annua* in golf course turf have been made in recent years. We know that merely switching to

lightweight mowers and removing clippings can effectively convert to more desirable grasses. Using growth regulators can accelerate these conversions. Growth regulators that suppress the growth of *Poa annua* to a greater extent than a desirable grass (like bentgrass) will eventually result in the desirable grass predominating.

One product is paclobutrazol (Scotts TGR), and, again, spring is the time to act. Spring applications of Scotts TGR should be made to actively growing turf, but before seedheads emerge. Cornell studies indicate the lower label application rate may be best for spring application on greens to minimize discoloration.

If you have less than 30% desirable grasses in your fairways, consider a total renovation program, followed by TGR applications to keep the *Poa* out.

A spring insect problem exclusive to *Poa annua* is the Hyperodes or annual bluegrass weevil. Adult weevils overwinter in leaf debris and emerge in April and May to feed, mate, and lay their eggs. Young, legless larvae feed within annual bluegrass stems through May and June.

While this pest is most prevalent in South-eastern New York, damaging infestations are becoming more common further north and west. Hyperodes weevil is best controlled when in the adult stage; that is in late April or May. One recommendation is to apply an insecticide when the flowering dogwood is in full bloom. Materials recommended in New York State include Dursban and Oftanol.

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