

I Think We Are Going To Make It Through The Summer Of 2020

By Bruce Schweiger, Manager, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility

With all the new rules that came out in March because of the Coronavirus, then the many, many rounds of changes to those rules, we are moving ever so slowly forward. I wasn't sure how the 2020 turf season was going to turn out. Although it did not come without a lot of worry, headaches, meetings and a lot of shaking your head, we will make it through 2020.

Hiring staff was a big concern for everyone in the turf industry. Here at the O.J. Noer Facility it was no different. In total, I ended up hiring three kids for the summer. There was a break of about 3 weeks from when Eliot left to go to play soccer for the UW – Madison and Caden came on board. Sierra, who worked for me last summer, is a tremendous help to me this year and a real trooper during that three-week period. I have always known that returning employees can be a blessing, but this year Sierra was truly a lifesaver. Sierra and Caden will both be leaving August 21st to go to school, or at least that is the plan. But changes have been a daily part of 2020. The University has allowed me to hire one person for the fall. I am hoping that I have some good applicants and will be able to start September 1st.

Virtural Summer Field Day videos will be on the WTA website www.wisconsinturfgrassassociation.org about the time you receive this newsletter. Although we are not charging a registration fee as we have in the past, we are asking if you are able, to please make a donation for Field Day to help offset our costs. We all have been forced to think outside the box because of the Coronavirus. This was the safest way to get the latest turf research information to you. The flier of what the video's will be is included in this newsletter.

Another item that the WTA and I have been working on getting nailed down is the golf outing. This year it is going to be held at Westmoor Country Club in Brookfield, WI on Monday, October 5th. As I have said many times in this article, there will be changes to the outing making sure everyone does their part to social distance and adhere to the many other rules that are out there. That registration information is also included in this newsletter.

My wife Carol, my two sons and their kids will be taking a vacation up north at the end of August. When we booked it a year ago, I never would have believed that we might have to cancel. It is in Wisconsin and they have assured us that the cottage will be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized before our arrival. I have not physically seen my grandson since Christmas. I really do miss him. We have all been very careful to not go out unless we have to, washing our hands, wearing a mask, the list is endless so we can keep this family vacation. We have decided to take this vacation because it will be good for our physical and mental health. It will be wonderful to relax by the water, hang out with my three grandchildren, catch some fish and just to be away from the daily stresses of 2020.

I did not even discuss weather. The year has been wet until the end of July. As I write this, the last 18 days have provide two rain events both less than 0.1 inches of rain. We are DRY! Whoever turned off the valve to the Madison areas rain system please turn it back on.

See you all at the Fall Golf Classic at Westmoor Country Club in Brookfield. ■



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Your Future, Your Choice

By Brad T. DeBels, PhD, Weed Man Lawn Care



I receive a weekly correspondence from JP Horizons, a team that specializes in personal and professional development. I have the pleasure of spending a fair amount of time with this group, which must mean I'm a work in progress. Over the last few months there have been plentiful conversations regarding attitude, change, perseverance, and way of thinking. One article that stuck

with me is titled, "Hunker Down", which highlights the challenges many are facing through these uncertain times. Bob Coulter, one of my professional coaches, responded to this article with, "in the midst of everything going on right now, it is energizing to understand that we have the power to create our own reality."

What does this mean? It highlights that during these very challenging times we have the ability to choose our own path of failure or success. This path is determined by every decision we make and the energy we put forth towards personal victory. One thing I know about folks in the green industry, it is in your nature to critically think, develop, and grow when challenged. I fully expect all of you to come out the other end stronger and wiser than before.

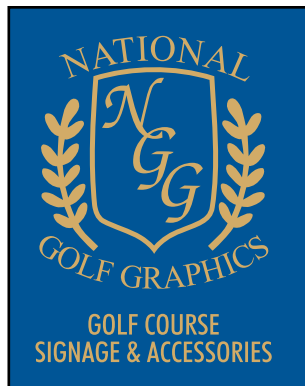
My conversations with golf course superintendents indicate greater levels of play, by members and the public, not seen in years,

if not decades. On the lawn care and landscaping side, we see increased interest in general aesthetics and reconstruction projects. The green industry has the unique ability to offer the safe haven people currently desire and folks working from home have become far more interested in their home landscape. While not necessarily packaged like we had hoped, it appears we are seeing rejuvenated interest in golf, landscaping and lawn care, which is a win for all of us.

The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association (WTA) is similarly finding success. Unfortunately, we recently cancelled our traditional in person field day at the O.J. Noer, however, I am very excited for the virtual field day being offered on September 8th. This new concept could lead to a very exciting new feature for members in future years. The WTA is also seeing an increase in membership year over year. Thank you to the board for your tireless work and thank you all for your dedication to the WTA and University of Wisconsin research. The future is bright!

Remember, it is a time to choose your own path of success. I am confident the WTA, as well as the rest of the green industry will learn from current challenges and be stronger for it. Enjoy the rest of your summer, remain safe, enjoy the virtual field day and I look forward to seeing you this Fall at the WTA Golf Outing.

Cheers! ■



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Noernet Is Alive Again!

By Bruce Schweiger, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Facility Manager

When Noernet was introduced, many, many years ago it was cutting edge. As time has progressed there are many more ways for the industry to communicate and get answers to questions. Noernet is still mainly a Wisconsin group.

Last year I was informed, as Noernet administrator, that the Wisconsin List Serve was being retired and replaced by a new service. I pondered, did the industry need Noernet or was it time to retire this communication tool like the man who started it, Tom Schwab? I asked a wide variety of people and although most felt it was outdated it was still useful. It gives the UW turf program, WTA and its members another way to easily communicate.

While it is not used as frequently as other forms of communication it can be very useful:

- Announcing and reminders for WTA events
- Announcing the UW Turfgrass Short Course cancelation
- Pest alerts
- Questions for other turf professionals
- A good way for members to move used equipment

I felt that Noernet should continue into the future. Last month I worked with the UW IT Department and made the required shift to the new platform. In the last month I have sent out a couple of Noernet postings from the new system and have seen no issues.

All you have to do to move over to the "new" Noernet is change the address in your contacts to read noernet@g-groups.wisc.edu. It is that simple. Noernet is still there for questions, answers, used equipment and news.

Change the address in your contact list to noernet@g-groups.wisc.edu. That is all you need to do! UW IT and I have taken care of the rest. Now get back to growing turfgrass and feel at ease knowing that Noernet is still there for questions, answers, comments, used equipment and news. ■



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Time To Talk Snow Mold Again

By Paul Koch, PhD, Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Author's note: This article was originally published in the August 2020 issue of Golfdom Magazine. It is republished here with their permission.

By my count, this is the 8th consecutive year I've written a snow mold article for Golfdom. Over these eight years, some things have been constants, such as the need to mix multiple active ingredients for acceptable disease control in heavy pressure environments. Other things are specific to each year, such as how minor environmental changes over a small area can lead to large changes in disease development.

This article will be much the same, certain things you've heard me say before (you need multiple actives if you're in a high-pressure area!) and others you haven't because I haven't mentioned them. Let's take a look back at the 2019-2020 winter to help us prepare for 2020-2021.

Turf hardening impacts snow mold resistance...a lot

From an environmental standpoint, last fall and winter in the Midwest were drunk. An early and prolonged cold snap in October and November caused early course closures and a mad rush to blow out irrigation systems and get out snow mold applications.

In Madison, we got almost 6 inches of snow on Halloween, which made for some difficult trick-or-treating. Fast-forward to December, and the weather felt more like September. Multiple weeks with high temperatures in the 40's and 50's culminated in a 54°F Christmas Day and a Koch household Christmas party that moved to the back patio. Winter returned on January 1st when snow fell, and it stuck until mid-March.

Discussion among superintendents in Wisconsin centered around how much snow mold would develop, and whether breakthrough would occur in treated areas. I was unsure, torn between conflicting indicators. On the one hand, there was snow on the unfrozen ground, which generally leads to lots of snow mold. On the other hand, the snow fell late, was never that deep, and barely lasted 60 days.

In the end, snow mold pressure was very high across most of Wisconsin and the upper Midwest (Figure 1). This indicated that even with a short window of snow

cover, the lack of turf hardening allowed for widespread snow mold to develop on non-treated turf. Turf hardening is a complex process that allows the turf to be ready for the winter ahead and is a critical component for snow mold resistance.

Fortunately, snow mold breakthrough on treated turf was very rare, suggesting that snow mold applications made in October and November knocked back the fungal population enough so that it couldn't recover and cause disease before the snow melted in spring.

Our changing winters make it difficult to consistently predict how climate change will impact future snow mold development. Prior to this year, most of the evidence I observed suggested that climate change was resulting in later and less snow cover and less disease development (Figure 2). But 2019-2020 showed that warmer temperatures in late fall could lead to 'dehardening' of the turf, which results in widespread snow mold development on turf that is, for lack of a better phrase, 'unprepared for winter.' How this plays out with further climate change in the years ahead will be interesting (and essential) to watch.

Fungicide timing matters

Timing of snow mold fungicide applications is something I have talked about before, but the 2019-2020 winter provided a great example of just how important it is. Applying snow mold fungicides too late (i.e.,

when snow is already on the ground) is bad. However, applying them too early is also bad, most likely due to a combination of product breakdown before snow cover AND the snow mold fungi not actively growing (and not taking up) the fungicide at the time of application.

But what is too early, and how do you determine the optimal time to apply when the conditions fluctuate so much from year to year?



Figure 1. Snow mold pressure at our research station in Madison, WI was very high despite a relatively short window of snow cover.

Continued on page 5

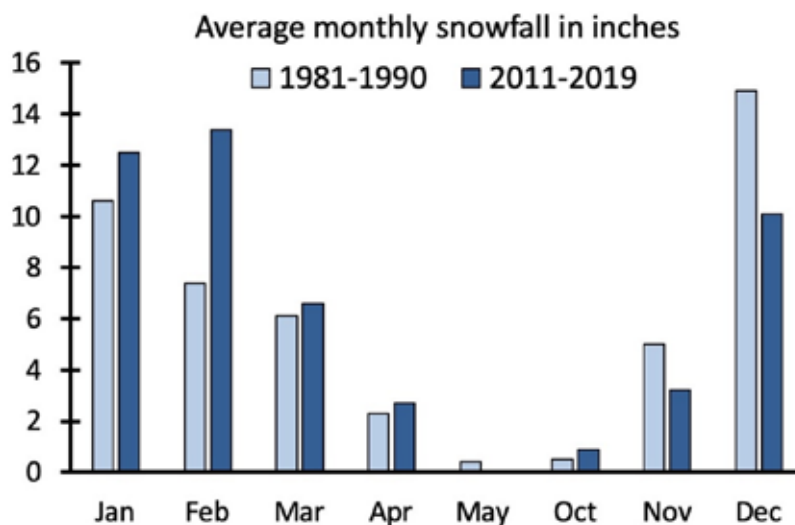


Figure 2. Average monthly snowfall in Madison, WI has increased over the last ten years in January and February but fallen significantly in November and December. December is usually a critical time for snow mold development. The figure is taken from the website <https://news.wisc.edu/new-weather-normals-show-how-madisons-climate-has-changed-over-40-years/>



Figure 3. There can be a sharp cutoff in effective snow mold control. At our research site on Timber Ridge GC in Minocqua, WI, the difference between no control and great control was just 12 days.

To investigate this, we have researched optimal snow mold fungicide timing for the past five years. The study is straightforward; we apply Instrata once at various times prior to 'expected' snow cover for that particular site and then rate how much snow mold developed on the site the following spring. The application timings are 8, 6, 4, 2, and 0 weeks before the expected snow cover.

At our research site in Minocqua, WI, in 2019-2020, the cutoff from almost no control (applied October 14th) to excellent control (applied October 26th) was only 12 days (Figure 3). The control increased dramatically over the same two application dates at research sites in Wausau in central Wisconsin and Madison in southern WI.

As part of this project, we have also researched various environmental measurements that can effectively predict the optimal timing. To date, the most effective has been 'heating degree days.' Heating degree days are the opposite of growing degree days because you set a base temperature (we use 50°F) and beginning on July 1st of each year, record how much BELOW 50°F the average daily temperature was.

From our past research, we know that increases in snow mold control are seen when fungicide applications are made at heating degree day accumulations right around 100, and that is precisely what we saw at these three sites in 2019-2020. More research is needed across more locations. Still, we know that fungicide timing is essential for snow mold control, and we're making progress on ways to predict when that optimal timing will be.

Effective alternative snow mold products don't yet exist

There are a host of alternatives to traditional fungicides that have provided some level of efficacy against certain turf diseases. For example, iron sulfate can reduce dollar spot and phosphites are effective against Pythium blight. Even Microdochium patch that occurs in snowless areas of the Pacific Northwest and northern Europe can be controlled using combinations of iron sulfate, Civitas mineral oil, and phosphites. However, we haven't yet found an alternative product that is effective against traditional snow molds.

We have tested Civitas many times with poor results. This past winter, we tested a potential new biocontrol agent with poor results. We even tested applications of iron sulfate and phosphite applied six times on a 2-week interval throughout the fall leading up to snow cover and still had poor results (Figure 4).



Figure 4. I thought that repeatedly applying iron sulfate (Extreme Green) and potassium phosphite (Duraphite) throughout the fall would knock back the snow mold fungal population and provide significant disease control. As this photo from Timber Ridge GC in Minocqua, WI shows...I was wrong

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Continued on page 6

The bottom line is that there remains considerable interest in developing alternative methods to control snow mold in areas where snow cover persists, but right now, those options don't exist.

Mix those active ingredients!

Every year I talk about mixing multiple active ingredients for successful snow mold control, and our research this year once again showed how important that is. We conducted snow mold research at four sites in 2019-2020: Marquette GC in Marquette, MI; Timber Ridge GC in Minocqua, WI; Wausau CC in Wausau, WI; and the OJ Noer Turfgrass Research Facility in Madison, WI.

Snow mold pressure was high at all four sites, and in all of them, the only products that performed well were those that had mixtures of three or more active ingredients. In Marquette, the main snow mold present was speckled snow mold (*Typhula ishikariensis*), and the amount of disease in the non-treated control was a whopping 87.5%. In Wausau, the main snow mold present was Microdochium patch (*Microdochium nivale*), and the amount of disease in the non-treated control was high at 71%.

Even under these heavy disease pressures, there were plenty of treatments that provided highly effective control (Figure 5). At Marquette, there were 16 of 63 treatments that allowed less than 5% disease, and at Wausau, 28 of the 63 treatments allowed less than 1% disease to occur.

The common theme among ALL of these successful treatments is that they contained three or more active ingredients. While the specific mixtures varied, almost all of them included a DMI fungicide such as tebuconazole or propiconazole, a contact fungicide such as chlorothalonil or PCNB,



Figure 5. Many treatments provide highly effective snow mold control despite really high disease pressure at our research site on Marquette GC in Marquette, MI.

and an additional active ingredient such as pyraclostrobin, azoxystrobin, or iprodione.

I strongly encourage you to view the full research results at the University of Wisconsin's Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab Fungicide Results page (<https://tdl.wisc.edu/results/>) and contact me with any questions you have.

Acknowledgments

I want to acknowledge and thank my Field Research Manager, Kurt Hockemeyer, for organizing and implementing our research trials. Also, a huge thank you to the host superintendents that allow us to conduct this research and provide this great information to

all of you: Craig Moore at Marquette GC, Jay Pritzl at Timber Ridge GC, and Randy Slavik and Aaron Hansen at Wausau CC. Lastly, thank you to Adjuvants Plus, AMVAC, BASF, Bayer, Belchim, FMC, Nufarm, PBI Gordon, Precision, PrimeSource, SePro, Simplot, Quali-Pro, and Syngenta for supporting this research. ■

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New Turfgrass Certificate Program Delayed One Year

By Doug Soldat, PhD, Soils Department, University of Wisconsin – Madison

What a long, strange year it has been! A lot has changed since announcing our new one- and two-year certificate programs in turfgrass management, which was scheduled to welcome the inaugural class in the fall of 2020. Because of the pandemic, University administrators and Farm & Industry Short Course Leadership decided to delay the start of the new turfgrass certificate program by one year. This was done in part due to the University's July announcement that students will not return to campus following Thanksgiving break, at which point all classes would be finished virtually. Since the short course starts just before Thanksgiving break, it did not make sense to move forward with our new certificates this year. That said, we are all looking forward to the end of this health crisis and beginning the certificate programs in the fall of 2021 under more normal circumstances. This gives us some more time to get the word out and build up excitement for the new program.

In other University news, I am excited that I'll be able to teach General Soil Science (or Soils 301, formerly known as Soils 101) in-person this fall semester along with the laboratory instructor Dr. Mattie Urrutia and my co-instructor Dr. Phil Barak. We normally teach Soils 301 in the iconic 270 Soils lecture hall, which remains largely unchanged since the building opened around the time of the Spanish Flu. However, because of the social distancing mandate this year we have been assigned to an even more iconic room – 125 Agriculture Hall, which is the largest lecture hall at UW-Madison with 588 seats. Strangely, in all my years at the UW (six as a student and fourteen as a professor), I have never had the opportunity to watch a lecture or teach in that room before so am really looking forward to the opportunity. Because of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences policy that classes of 50 or over must be online only, we limited our enrollment in Soils 301 to 49 students. Typically, our enrollment is in the upper 50s or mid-60s, so we will reach almost the same number of students we normally do. Even so, we have had to make many modifications to our laboratory instruction where students normally work together in small teams, and more than a few adjustments to the curriculum have been made for the two-week period after Thanksgiving and before final exams when all instruction at UW-Madison will move to virtual. However, given the state of things we feel lucky to get somewhat back to normal with face-to-face instruction this fall.

As you are likely aware, the Wisconsin Turfgrass Field Day is moving to a virtual format for 2020. While nobody was happy about this, after recording and editing the videos, I have to say that I think all field days in the future will have at least some virtual content. It is going to be a great way to reach those who cannot make it down to Madison for the day. It also gives us the opportunity to talk about things across the whole year and not just whatever is happening in late July. For example, in late July many of our spring broadleaf trials are finished. With virtual Field Day videos, I have been able to talk about them when the differences between treatments are at their peak. Similarly, I know Dr. Koch can be frustrated by the lack of disease on the last Tuesday in July. Now, he is able to talk about the disease trials when the disease are active. While I do not want to ever sacrifice the opportunity to talk face to face at our Field Day, I think adding a virtual component every year makes a lot of sense. Some say whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger, and I know our WTA Turfgrass Field Day will come out of this situation stronger than ever. Thank you for your support and On Wisconsin! ■



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2020 Summer Pathology Trials

By Kurt Hockemeyer, TDL Manager, Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin – Madison

2020 has been an interesting year to say the least. Luckily, we have still been able to do our summer research trials without much disruption. With all the heat and humidity, it has been just about a perfect year to do pathology trials. Not all the diseases are showing up at the same time, but we have been able to see dollar spot, *Bipolaris* leaf spot, anthracnose, rust, brown patch, and *Pythium* foliar blight at one point or another this summer. This is great from a turf pathology research perspective. Not so great from a grass growing perspective. This has been reflected in the number of samples sent into the TDL. Last year was a busy year for the lab, but sample submissions are significantly higher than where I was last year at this time. And that's with very few sample submissions in April and May due to the lab being partially shut down. But with cooler weather coming in the next few days I suspect sample submissions will slow down again as turf is able to recover from the hot/humid mess that was July 2020.

Dollar spot is by far the turf disease that we know the most about. That can be contributed to one simple reason. It is by far the easiest disease to study. It is a significant disease across the whole turf growing world. It can easily be isolated from infected leaves, grown in pure culture on a Petri dish, and then reintroduced into another environment through inoculation. It infects turf naturally every year without inoculation. It can infect under a wide range



Figure 1. Dollar spot became pretty severe in late July 2020 on fairways. The stark lines between fungicide treated plots, non-treated plots, and non-treated alleyways is pretty striking.

of environmental conditions. The list goes on and on. Yet still it feels like for all we know, there is still so much we don't know. Here at the research station, dollar spot showed up pretty early this year on putting greens (late May). It then subsided on putting greens and took a while but eventually ramped up on fairways (July). Now at the end of July it's pretty severe on fairways (Figure 1) and is finally starting to show up on greens again. Why is this the case? I chalk it up



Figure 2. *Bipolaris* leaf spot causing some reddish purplish blighting of certain clones on a putting green. This damage showed up during the first warm and humid spell in early June.

to the vagaries of dollar spot. We have no idea why this occurs. We will continue to research dollar spot though. Every study advances the boundary of knowledge just a little bit. Maybe one day we can understand the vagaries of dollar spot, but for now we will use our existing knowledge to the best of our ability.

Bipolaris leaf spot showed up on one of our putting greens here at the Noer in early June (Figure 2). The first warm and humid spell caused it to show up on very specific clones. It did not result in turf loss but caused a reddish purplish blighting in small spots. This was not a research study but was simply observed as one of the many diseases seen here at the Noer. It was not treated and cleared up on its own once things dried down a bit.

We have a couple of off-site studies this year. One looking at anthracnose on annual bluegrass fairways and one for rust on Kentucky bluegrass. The anthracnose has been pretty severe this year and rust is just now starting to move into the plots. The studies should give us some interesting data. Be on the lookout for these reports on our website, tdl.wisc.edu, in September.

Brown patch is a hot/humid disease and therefore something we don't see a ton of in Wisconsin. We just don't get the extended periods of heat and humidity that



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Continued on page 9



Figure 3. Some brown patch development on colonial bentgrass that was pumped up with high levels of nitrogen. This year we had an all-natural infection.

more southern locations typically get. Well July 2020 said to heck with that. You get all the heat and humidity you want. This resulted in some good brown patch development on our brown patch study this year (Figure 3). In most years we need to inoculate the plots with the brown patch fungus and cover the plots with a tarp to help trap moisture. This year was all-natural infection. It still only showed up on colonial bentgrass which is notoriously susceptible to brown patch, and I still had to pump up the nitrogen, but it was still a very natural infection.

Pythium foliar blight even showed up on one fairway plot (Figure 4). There was some damage to one area of a fairway last year. These areas were seeded this spring and fertilized to encourage rapid growth. The Pythium only affected these juvenile bentgrass plants. A Pythium-specific fungicide was applied just as a precaution to prevent further turf loss. No Pythium samples were sent in to the TDL but I heard many reports of it showing up during the hot mess known as July 2020.

Relief appears to be on the horizon as highs appear to be in the low 70s and lows in the 50s. Then before you know it snow will be here. The cycle continues. ■



Figure 4. Pythium developed on only some spots that were seeded just this spring, affecting only the juvenile bentgrass.



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Wisconsin Turfgrass Association

Virtual Summer Field Day – posted September 8th, 2020

We have received .40 education points from GCSAA for this event.



Not even a pandemic can stop UW Turf Professors from delivering their research findings.



Brought to you in part by the WTA Vendor Package Sponsors (listed below).

With all the changes happening because of the pandemic, we are removing the registration fee for Field Day. If you would like to make a donation to support turfgrass research in Wisconsin, go to www.wisconsinturfgrassassociation.org click on the Field Day link under events.

Plant Pathology Videos

- New Fungicides for Dollar Spot Control
- Technology for Precision Dollar Spot Control
- Smith Kerns Model to Improve FeSO₄ Efficacy
- Dollar Spot Resurgence After Fungicide Application
- Tracking the Dollar Spot Fungus Pre-Symptoms
- Soil Microbiome Impact on 2,4-D Breakdown
- The View From the TDL

Soil Science Videos

- Spring Broadleaf Weed Control Trials
- Crabgrass and Spring Broadleaf Control
- Growing Clover In Your Lawn On Purpose
- PGR's on Athletic Fields: Does It Help Or Hinder Traffic Tolerance
- Robotic Mowing Update
- Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivars for Wisconsin
- Fertilizing Bentgrass Greens Using Growth Models
- Wisconsin Golf Course Resource Use Survey Update
- Poa Cure: A Tool In The Fight Against Poa

Thank you to our exhibitors who purchased a vendor Sponsorship Package!

Advanced Turf Solutions, Aquatrols, Corteva, DHD Turf & Tree Products, Helena, Insight FS, J W Turf, National Golf Graphics, Pendelton Turf Supply, Reinders, SiteOne, Syngenta, The Andersons, Waupaca Sand & Solutions

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 5th WTA Annual Golf Outing – Westmoor Country Club Brookfield, WI

To see if a turf event is still scheduled, please contact them directly.
Phone numbers for some of the common organizations are listed below.
Stay safe and healthy!

WTA Members -- If you have an important date that you would like to share with other members,
Call 608-845-6536 or email audra.anderson@wisc.edu to include it in the next calendar.

Contact Telephone Numbers

GCSAA	Golf Course Superintendents Association of America	800-472-7878
Great Lakes	Great Lakes School of Turfgrass Science Online.....	763-767-3518
iLandscape	the Illinois + Wisconsin Landscape Show	630-472-2851
NGLGCSA	Northern Great Lakes Golf Course Superintendents Assoc.....	906-424-4176
Northern	Northern Green	651-633-4987
PAT	Pesticide Applicator Training (Turf and Landscape 3.0).....	608-262-7588
STMA	Sports Turf Managers Association	800-323-3875
TPI	Turf Producers International	800-405-8873
WDATCP	Pesticide Certification & Licensing.....	608-224-4548
Wee One	Wee One Foundation Golf Outing	630-457-7276
WGCSA	Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association	920-643-4888
WGIF	Wisconsin Green Industry Federation	414-529-4705
WPT	WPT Garden Expo	608-262-5256
WSPA	Wisconsin Sod Producers Association	262-895-6820
WSTMA	Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association	608-792-9264
WTA	Wisconsin Turfgrass Association	608-845-6536