

## Gazing in the Grass

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A few more steamy nights early last week kept the progress of the season ahead of last year and the 30 year average by a week to 10 days. Spotty rainfall benefited the areas where the 1-2" fell in Western PA, DC, and the Cape. The Washington, DC area has received 300% of normal rainfall in last 30 days. Yet, the area from Central PA/NY northeast to Maine is 25% of normal rainfall. No matter the direction of the local growing season conditions, there is biotic and abiotic stress abound. Super saturated soils are beginning to "marinate" roots in anaerobic environments with Pythium Root Rot and dry areas of predominantly bentgrass are showing signs of persistent take-all patch (discussed in last weeks edition). Anthracnose samples are approaching a steady stream with dry and wet conditions. Annual bluegrass weevil damage is beginning visible on edges of collars and fairways, especially areas dominated by weak annual bluegrass. From a distance looks like wilt, slightly closer might resemble summer patch or anthracnose, but upon close inspection grass blades loose, yellow and detach from crown easily.

Cornell Turfgrass Soil Insect Ecologist, Professor Kyle Wickings has reported 4-5 instar stage weevil larvae in the soil throughout much of the northeast now and further developed south. Right now it appears feeding damage is consistent with damage from last season that was considered low to moderate. However what is unknown at this stage is the amount of stress in the system. Too dry or too wet conditions, the rapid onset of warm, humid nights, and increasing traffic stress could all exacerbate the turf loss from feeding. At this stage the larvicides, if not applied, might still be useful to reduce the feeding pressure of continually emerging larvae. The anthranilic diamides such as Ferrence and Spinosyns offer excellent control options. Some managers have been using this pest as a means of reducing invasive annual bluegrass plant populations, others preemptively slit seed areas where damage is beginning to occur both to avoid addtuoinal insecticide applications. However, if larval feeding and abiotic stress persist there is growing risk that anthracnose and summer patch issues would also increase. Therefore identify areas immediately at risk and work to reduce maintenance stress, moisture stress, i.e., the stress that can be controlled and if damage is in high value area consider additional pest management options to avoid large scale turf loss.



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

*I've got some events this summer on my sports fields (and graduation in a few weeks). What is best method for protecting turf from traffic with flooring?*

Researchers at the University of Connecticut and Royse Green Technologies (RGT) have been investigating this issue for several years. The best low cost option is plywood when turf is covered for less than 3 days. It can withstand significant weight loads without causing soil problems but more than 3 days and there will be a loss in color and quality of the turf. Portable flooring such as Terratrak Plus does improve performance when longer cover is expected but does result in rutting and soil displacement. **Either option will perform better when soil is dried down.** The RGT work involved LED lighting installed INSIDE the plastic flooring (LED Turf Tile System) that allowed for more green turf after 5 days of cover. Expect more info about these efforts as the number events increase on many sports fields.

*Nutsedge Has Emerged in the Landscape. How Did It Invade and Can I Control It?*

Much of the nutsedge that has begun to emerge is yellow nutsedge. It often comes to a location from sod or imported soil. It has historically been a challenge in wet areas, as the plant produces nutlets that lie dormant in the soil and then germinate following a rain event. The growth and success of yellow nutsedge is due to its ability to colonize and area, tolerate mowing, and reproduce via seed and underground nutlets. Successful control programs include avoiding the use of contaminated soil and a well timed application of Halosulfuron (Sedgehammer) applied with the appropriate crop oil for necessary absorption. The best timing for control of above AND below ground plant parts is in the next few weeks around the summer solstice when plants begin to translocate sugars for storage in the nutlets. This will burn back the existing foliage and translocate the herbicide to the nutlets for both post and preemergence control. Be sure the nutsedge is not under moisture stress when making the application. Be sure to read and follow all label directions, including those associated with use of crop oil concentrate. Warm weather increases the potential for injury to desirable cool season turf that might also be under moisture stress.

## Don't Get Ticked, Learn to Communicate Risk!

Managing turfgrass areas is a form of professional land management for use by people. This is unlike many forms of land management for food or other horticultural pursuits in that people regularly interact with plants on the land being managed. It follows then that professionals should be knowledgeable about risks people face when present in the managed landscapes. Ticks are a growing risk managed landscapes of the northeast. Ticks are not new, and recent evidence suggests that ticks were carrying pathogens 15- to 20-million years ago. What is new, however, is the distribution (geographic spread) and abundance (number) of ticks found throughout the northeast, which is greater than any time in recorded history. More ticks in more parts of the region increases your risk of encountering a tick. While there is no definitive answer for how and why ticks are moving beyond their previous boundaries, it is likely a combination of factors. For example, changes in land use such as construction of new neighborhoods and shopping centers leave small patches of wooded areas, and these are great habitat for deer and mice. More hosts means more ticks! In addition, a warming climate makes northern areas more hospitable for ticks, and creates longer seasons when ticks are active to feed and reproduce. Learn about this emerging issue and communicate the risk and responsible management to turf users. Check out all the information and resources available @ <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/ticks>.

