

Gazing in the Grass

Frank S. Rossi, Ph.D.

The US Drought Monitor has now classified almost 30 percent of the Northeast as “Abnormally Dry”. Yet from Central NJ and south of LI and coastal New England it seems it has not stopped raining since April! As an example, Rochester, NY and Boston, MA have recorded about 8” total precipitation since March 15. New Brunswick, NJ is at 15”, Baltimore 17” and Frostburg, MD 23”! Last week brought only minor relief and as a result moisture stressed turf dominates the discussion. The widespread rainfall last weekend provided some relief but many received less than 0.25” of precipitation.

Crabgrass populations in areas with failed preemergence or none applied responded as expected to warm and briefly moist conditions.

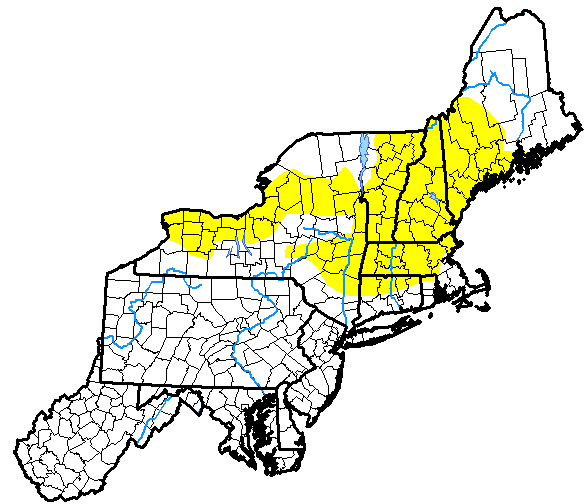
Expect growth stage development to accelerate dramatically this week as plants will move into the period where quinchlorac-based products will struggle for control, Acclaim Extra offers good control into the 5-tiller stage but will not perform well if crabgrass is under drought stress and Tenacity will offer some control up to 3-tillered plants and some additional pre-benefit.

Annual bluegrass weevil populations have are finishing their 1st generation and moving into second generation with callow adults visible when scouting. Expect intense damage development over the next few weeks if abiotic stress continues to build in the system. Adult control of second generation might be required moving forward so keep scouting the course and check your resources for data (Weevil track, etc.) before considering follow up treatment.

Disease management issues currently reflect the moisture gradient. Some root pathogen issues beginning to emerge in dry areas and dollar spot conditions are persisting that require regular preventative treatment. However in areas with higher levels of moisture Pythium Root Rot is persisting as is Brown Patch and Summer Patch right on schedule for the typical July 4th outbreak!

Hot and steamy weather is heading our way toward the end of this week and expect not only an uptick in the biotic issues from disease, insects and weeds, but I would anticipate a number of areas will begin to struggle with Abiotic stress from expected heat stress. Remember it is better to be dry and hot then wet and hot, so water management becomes even more critical. Expect night time temps to stay well into the 70’s opening the door for Pythium blight and Brown Patch, so be sure to have foliar sprays in place if there is a history of these issues.

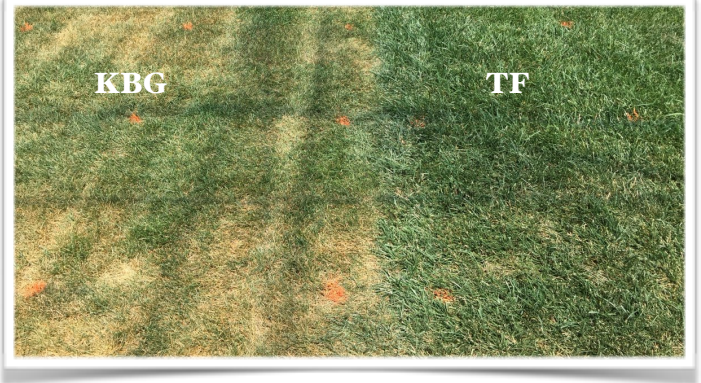
U.S. Drought Monitor Northeast



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

The rains missed my location and I am getting really concerned for my lawn landscapes that might not have the best irrigation systems. What should I be communicating to my clients who want “green”?

The pursuit of the color green in a drought situation such as this can lead to more problems than good. Persistent reliance on water for maintaining green color poses the same challenges that applying Nitrogen fertilizer just for green color. Attempting to water and then watering inefficiently (pulling a hose around every once in a while) doesn't allow the plant to go into dormancy efficiently and keeps it teetering back and forth in a weakened state, making it susceptible to disease, heat, and traffic stress. In addition, many homeowners water in the evening, which may be convenient, but can spur disease outbreaks such as brown patch and Pythium. Some interesting research is underway at Kansas State University regarding in-ground home lawn irrigation systems. Surveys of irrigating behavior and lawn knowledge indicates that more than 85 percent of homeowners irrigate their lawns in excess of 100 percent ET replacement. While those that irrigate with hoses do so less than 10 percent of the time. This is important and translates as well to the many of the landscape professionals responsible for setting irrigation clocks. Use data, don't just set it and forget it!



For a long-term solution consider changes grasses. Sandier, more well drained soils are ideal for growing drought tolerant grasses in Northern climates. The long concern over lack of winter hardiness among improved varieties of tall fescue is more than 20 years past. Tall fescue, has excellent drought tolerance and more importantly is able to hold its green color longer than the traditional Midnight-type Kentucky bluegrasses. This dormancy response in tall fescue is ideal in tough to irrigate or non-irrigated areas. It's time to begin investigating and adopting new grass technology into the urban landscape.

Searchable Pesticide Efficacy Data!

Pest problems vary in the Northeast with areas of persistent rainfall filled with foliar and root pathogens, areas with dry turf now filling with summer annual weeds, and grub scouting season underway. Considering options for cultural, chemical and biological management it is vital to know how products or practices perform in a wide range of conditions. For many years the Kentucky publication by Professor Paul Vincelli known as PPA-1 (<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/ppa/ppa1/ppa1.PDF>) has provided excellent turfgrass disease management products assessment. Of course, we produce the Cornell Guide for Turfgrass Pest Management updated every two years listing legal products for use in NY. recently, Professor Paul Koch's program at the University of Wisconsin developed an on-line searchable database of turfgrass pest management product efficacy. This is an exciting new tool for turfgrass managers to fully assess their product choices based on efficacy. Viewed this info at <https://turfpests.wisc.edu/>

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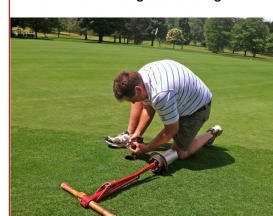
Chemical Control of Turfgrass Diseases 2017

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Turfgrasses under intensive management are often subject to outbreaks of infectious diseases. Diseases usually are most damaging when weather or cultural conditions favor the disease-causing agent but not plant growth and vigor. Cultural

If disease is not yet evident, fungicides may be applied to foliage that is either wet or dry. (In either case, wearing impermeable boots is recommended.)

2017 Cornell Guide for Commercial Turfgrass Management



Dr. Cornell, Superintendent of Cornell Club (Ithaca, NY) conducting pest scouting. Photo by: Joseph Green, New York State Department for Agriculture Programs.

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