



1986: The Season in Review

Each golfing season challenges the golf course superintendent with another set of surprises, crises and problems to attend to. The Green Section staff has spent the year visiting more than 1,000 golf courses in all parts of the country, and has highlighted the season in the following pages.

The #1 concern in 1986? You guessed it . . . **Water Problems!**



Mid-Atlantic Region

by STANLEY J. ZONTEK, Director,
and PATRICK M. O'BRIEN, Agronomist

FOR MOST golf courses, 1986 started out very well. In the early spring, the only complaints from most superintendents in the southern part of our region was the extremely slow early growth of the putting green bentgrasses. We had only a few problems with winterkill, and these were in the higher elevations of southern Ohio and parts of Kentucky.

The spring rains never arrived in the Mid-Atlantic Region, and irrigation systems were turned on earlier than normal. Unfortunately the drought continued through July in many areas, and a number of golf courses nearly ran out of water. Normal rainfall was oftentimes behind by 10 to 18 inches, with a few areas receiving no significant precipitation for over 100 days. Although not as widespread as last year, water restrictions were implemented in some localities.

A number of turfgrass diseases were very active on putting greens this season. One of the most prevalent was Summer Patch, or *Poa annua* Patch, caused by the organism *Phialophora graminicola* or *Leptosphaeria korrae*. There is still some debate on which organism causes the problem, but there seems little debate on which treatments control this disease. Good control centers around applying Bayleton at four ounces per 1,000 square feet or Tersan 1991 at eight ounces per 1,000 square feet. If one of these treatments does not adequately control the disease, try the other.

Pythium was very active as well, perhaps the most seen in years. The accompanying picture illustrates a hopefully isolated extreme. Warm, wet summer weather with high day temperatures and warm, humid night temperatures was perfect for *Pythium* development. This destructive disease is usually effectively and relatively economically controlled with a number of good fungicides. Unfortunately, a resistance problem apparently developed and turf was lost before an alternative fungicide could be applied. To make matters more interesting, there was also some indication that the disease pictured is an especially virulent race of *Pythium* which became active in isolated areas of Kentucky, Ohio, and Pennsylvania this summer.

Several management practices became popular on greens. For isolated dry spots on putting greens, solid-tine spiking worked well. Most superintendents used the tapered tips rather than blunted ones to reduce the compacting forces when the greens were punched. Please note that we are not recommending the regular use of solid-tine spiking as a substitute for traditional hollow-tine aeration. However, the use of solid tines can be useful for specific problems like isolated dry spots and when the root zone becomes saturated in the summer due to excess water. It is another tool that can be used when it's needed.

Other successful programs included the application of light rates of fertilizer during the summer on perennial ryegrass

fairways to maintain better turf density. Prograss applications in the fall to control *Poa annua* in perennial ryegrass fairways is also being used to good advantage on an increasing number of golf courses in the region. Combined with good mowing, pest control and overseeding programs, some excellent ryegrass fairways are being produced for golfers in this part of the country.

The year in review for the Mid-Atlantic Region can be described as a year of extremes — too dry, then too wet, too hot and too humid. These extremes caused problems and presented a challenge to the golf course superintendents in this region this year. No one knows what the future holds for 1987, but there will no doubt be a few new challenges out there.

(Below) Water is the issue!

(Opposite page, bottom, left) Build it right . . . the first time!

