

From the desk of GCM

The official blog of GCSAA's Golf Course Management magazine

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Lions, tigers, weevils and borers ... oh my!

It's golf course pest day on the GCM blog! We've picked up a pair of stories from industry sources in recent days on two particular pests that have been vexing superintendents this season — annual bluegrass weevils and emerald ash borer.

For superintendents in the northeast, news that ABWs are taking their toll again this season won't come as any news flash. But since this is the time of year when curative treatments are most effective, this update that I received from the folks at DuPont seemed particularly timely and worthy of a spot on the blog. Here's what they said:

If you struggled to gain control of annual bluegrass weevil (ABW) last year, you're not alone. The ABW has become one of the most important pests confronting golf course superintendents in the northeast and it has recently spread through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland and even northeastern Ohio.

So far in 2008, the weevil appears to be behaving just as anticipated. They became active in Maryland in early April. Superintendents in southeastern Pennsylvania saw their first weevils in mid April. Pat Vittum, Ph.D., of the University of Massachusetts reports that overwintering adults became active in Westchester County in New York during the third week of April, and by the first of May they were active throughout most of New England. Vittum also found very young larvae in the Hartford, Conn., area on May 19th.

If your turf was not treated preventatively for ABW, you can still use a late spring curative program. If weevil damage is found in untreated areas during the latter part of May through early June, sequential applications of the proper insecticide can be effective at stopping the infestation. The first application should be applied as soon as turf damage has been noticed. The second application should be made about 10 days after the first application if weather conditions are normal. After the first application, if the weather turns unseasonably warm, shorten the interval by 1–3 days. If the weather turns unseasonably cool, extend the interval by 1–3 days.

For years, superintendents have relied primarily on one class of chemistry for adulticide applications to control ABW. Key university researchers have recently documented cases of ABW resistance in Connecticut, the epicenter of ABW resistance. Recently, new products have been introduced that offer superintendents new chemistries and new modes of action to consider.

So what can superintendents do as they look ahead to next year? Vittum has been studying the weevil since the mid-1970's and she likes to remind superintendents that they do not have to begin preventative treatments as soon as they see adults in the spring. This is because there is a delay of about 7 to 14 days between when adults are first observed and when the females begin to lay eggs. Vittum also recommends that forsythia may be used as a local indicator of the optimal timing of preventative adulticide applications. Preventative treatments should be applied when forsythia is usually at the "Half Green, Half Gold" stage in each region.

If you're looking for more information on ABW, GCM can certainly help. The lead research feature in our March issue, authored by Vittum and Louis Simard, Ph.D., was called "What's up with the annual bluegrass weevil in the North?" and if you're a GCSAA member, you can read that story [right here](#). Also, August will feature another story on the topic from several scientists from the northeastern U.S. who are studying annual bluegrass weevil and how the pest is managed on golf courses.

Now, onto emerald ash bore, a pest that has been particularly devastating to trees in the Midwest. Dave Roberts, Ph.D., a specialist and district horticulture agent with Michigan State University Extension who first identified the pest back in 2002, is playing host to a 24-minute video at [this Web site](#) that examines the pest, provides details about the signs and diagnosis of emerald ash bore and walks through an overview of the chemicals and fertilizers available to help treat Ash trees.

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