

Spring regrowth and *Poa* seedhead control March 13, 2017

Oh the difference a week makes. High temperatures have slid from the 70s back into the lower 30s across Nebraska. This cool-down is only going to be temporary, however, with the NOAA Climate Prediction Center models indicating a return of above average weather in 6-14 days (Fig 1). Unlike the past three winters, much of the state's turfgrass is in pretty good shape. We are seeing the turf resume growth from both the intercalary meristems and crown. The intercalary meristems are located at the base of each leaf and support leaf growth. Viable intercalary meristems means existing leaves with resume growth from last fall (Fig 2). This will accelerate green up relative to the past couple springs because many of the intercalary meristems were killed in past winters.

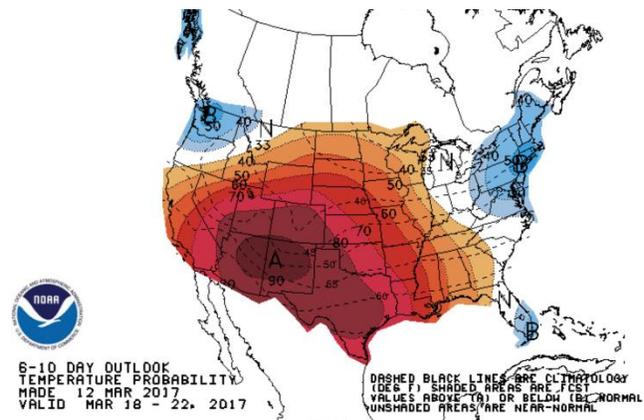


Figure 1. The six to ten day temperature outlook. There is a high probability of above average temperatures to close out March.



Figure 2. Turf leaves regrow from both the crown and intercalary meristems. This will accelerate spring green up.

Another common concern this time of year is seedhead control in annual bluegrass. With the loss of Embark, our only tool to control seedheads is ethephon (Proxy). Michigan State University has developed a nice website to help schedule Proxy applications with growing degree days (<http://www.gddtracker.net>). The above average temperatures in late February have accelerated GDD accumulation across much of the country. The tracker shows much of Nebraska is in or entering the optimal window to apply Proxy+Primo (Fig. 3). A repeat application of Proxy+Proxy is recommended 21 days after the initial application. Our research indicates Signature Xtra or a turf colorant can be substituted for Primo Maxx.

A couple of things to remember. First, remember that the GDD models for seedhead control with Proxy were developed in Michigan and have not been validated in Nebraska. One of the biggest challenges we face is when to start the GDD models. The MSU models start on February 15th each year. That day may or may not be appropriate in Nebraska. Wait for signs of green up before making the application. Second, even well timed Proxy applications rarely provide 100% seedhead control. Seeing a few seedheads is normal and doesn't mean the application isn't working. There would likely be many more seedheads without the application. Include a control with your application to validate the Proxy performance on your turf.

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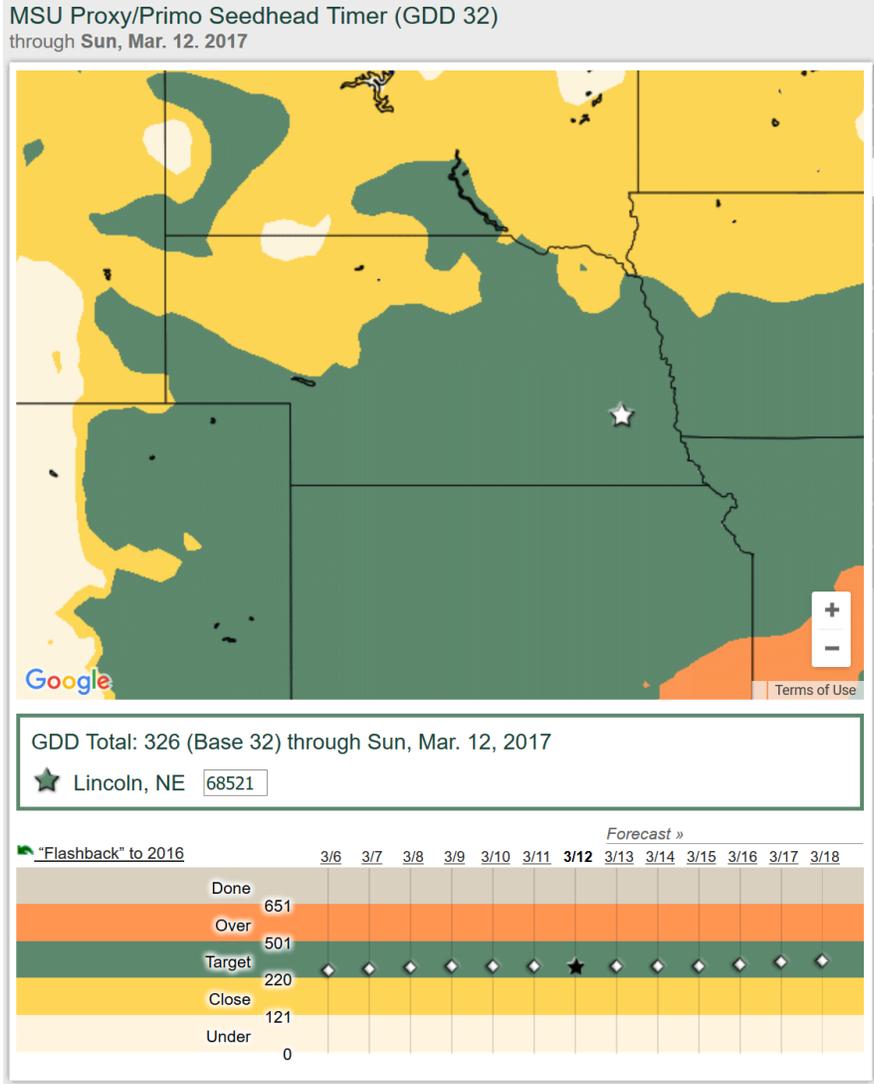


Figure 3. Seedheads can be an unsightly side effect of annual ecotypes of *Poa annua*. The MSU GDD Tracker indicates we are entering the optimum time for Proxy+Primo. Wait for signs of green up before making the first application.