

It's time to control annual bluegrass seedheads March 23, 2018

Annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*) seedheads can negatively impact turf appearance and playability. While those annoying seedheads won't appear for several weeks, they are forming now at the base of the plant. The Michigan State GDD Tracker website (GDDTracker.net) shows that southern Nebraska has entered the ideal timing for the first application of ethephon (Proxy). This product transforms into the plant stress hormone ethylene. Exposure to this hormone stops the production of developing seedheads.

One application will not provide adequate control because new seedheads are constantly forming this time of year. As a result, two to three applications are suggested. Applications should be spaced roughly 200 GDD (base 0C) apart. Trinexapac-ethyl (Primo Maxx) is traditionally mixed with ethephon during these early spring applications to minimize the risk of discoloration and crown rising (less common). Some superintendents have skipped the trinexapac-ethyl in the first application because they don't want to hinder green-up with the gibberellin-inhibitor. While, I haven't specifically evaluated that program, the rational seems sound.

If seedhead control is a perennial challenge at your facility, consider an application of ethephon in late fall. Some seedheads form during the late fall and early winter. This new application timing has proven to be very successful when combined with the three traditional spring timings.

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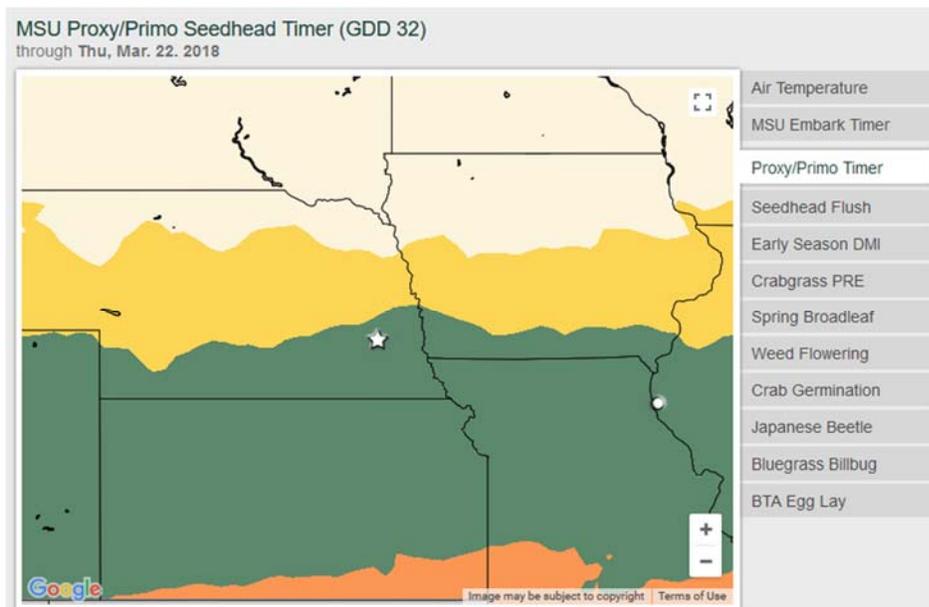


Figure 1. The Michigan State GDD Tracker (GDDTracker.net) is an easy way to help time that first Proxy/Primo application. Southern Nebraska has entered the ideal timing window.