

Annual bluegrass may have filled in last winter's damage**Feb. 27, 2012**

Last winter's damage on golf greens was compounded with an extremely cold snap in mid-May that damaged seedlings and often resulted in very slow recovery. In spite of repeated reseeding in many cases, thin areas remaining by late summer finally started filling in during the fall with cool temperatures, reduced traffic, and fall nitrogen. However, there's a good chance that some or all of the new turf filling in last fall was annual bluegrass. It's almost impossible to distinguish annual bluegrass from creeping bentgrass, but you'll notice it this spring with its aggressive seed production. Unfortunately in greens, there are no inexpensive options for limiting annual bluegrass and no quick fixes. Frequent mowing and topdressing will help limit the seedheads from affecting play. Proxy+Primo are effective for limiting seedhead production, but these have to be applied before seedheads are visible and likely before superintendents first realize there is a problem in those areas. Getting more aggressive with growth regulators is a difficult decision, since most effective control can take years of applications, may be inconsistent from year to year or location to location, and is expensive for sometimes minor effects on annual bluegrass cover. Our most recent data over four years and three states show the growth regulator paclobutrazol (Trimmit™, TGR™, etc) is most effective for reducing annual bluegrass, followed closely by flurprimidol (Cutless™). To be most effective, applications should be made every two weeks throughout the growing season and will likely take multiple years for maximum effectiveness. In our studies, Legacy™ (trinexapac-ethyl + paclobutrazol) was less effective and trinexapac-ethyl (Primo™ or T-Nex™) was ineffective controlling annual bluegrass in creeping bentgrass greens.

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Winter damaged areas from last year likely filled in with annual bluegrass last fall and will be especially obvious once seedheads start to form this spring. Unfortunately, control is especially difficult and may be almost impossible on some courses.