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Jason's Productivity Files

SUNDAY, 12 JUNE 2016

## Do you even IPM?

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) isn't a new concept. It might actually be one of the oldest ways turf managers have dealt with certain pests, but in recent times we have been able to rely less and less on IPM practices as amazing new pest control products come to market. These new products essentially allow us to do almost anything to our grass regardless of what the pest pressure is.

**Integrated pest management (IPM), also known as integrated pest control (IPC) is a broad-based approach that integrates practices for economic control of pests. IPM aims to suppress pest populations below the economic injury level (EIL) Source: Wikipedia**

Now even with these highly effective pest control products we still need to use IPM to some extent to help get through periods of extreme disease pressure. Raising the heights of cut, water management, and fertilizer practices can all help when used in conjunction with effective pest control products. There's no product that will allow you to do anything to grass with no consequences but with a broad IPM plan you can possibly get by with cheaper products and products that have a lower environmental impact. With good IPM we can also reduce the need for preventative pesticide applications and can stretch our pesticide application intervals. This is key to be able to see the benefits of IPM on your golf course.

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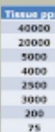
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There's no point in IPM unless you can keep the grass healthy and playable

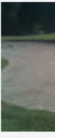
I often share some of the practices that I have found to work for me but get the response that it doesn't give good enough control to keep pests below the EIL. Of course every site is different but I also question the use of IPM practices if they don't make a measurable difference.

For example, I used to drag dew off the greens in the winter to "reduce disease pressure" of fusarium. It turns out that dew (or rain) has very little to do with how bad fusarium is in the winter in my part of the world. I wasn't seeing any impact from this time consuming practice so I dropped it. I made a change and I saved time and money.

Another example was how we used to water greens last each night to reduce the period of leaf wetness in an effort to reduce disease. Again, I saw no real impact on disease so switched to **watering greens first thing** each night which made it much easier for me to manage poa greens during stressful drought conditions. I made a change and conditions improved.

ISR products like Civitas and phosphite will also leave you disappointed if you use them like traditional pesticides. You will see the maximum benefit of these products if you use them in conjunction with good and broad IPM practices.

So if you employ IPM practices you need to ask yourself a few things. Does it increase the quality of my playing surfaces? Does it reduce the need for corrective or preventative pesticide applications? If it doesn't, the IPM product or practice you are using is probably a waste of time and money.



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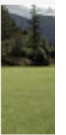
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Rolling and hand watering are very important parts of my IPM plan

It's no secret that I have **had a lot of success this winter/spring managing fusarium**. I continue to be surprised each and every day at how little disease there is on my putting greens. No matter what the weather throws at us they continue to be disease free for some reason. I was recently asked why we had so little disease this year. Of course, a lot of it is probably luck. For some reason I have been able to make decisions that are correct over and over. This doesn't happen very often especially when dealing with nature!

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This day saw temperatures reach 37C! That's hot for our poa but it managed just fine.

The other reason is that every single aspect of my maintenance plan revolves around disease management. From mowing, rolling, fertilizer rates and types, irrigation, plant growth regulators, traditional pesticides and ISR products. As fusarium is our most costly and potentially damaging turf pest we throw everything we have at it to try and lessen its impact on our operation. We don't just employ the odd practice here and there, every single thing is geared towards fusarium reduction while still maintaining quality playing surfaces for golf.

Since changing to this approach we have been able to make **huge reductions in costs and environmental impact** and huge increases in turfgrass quality. Now that's what I call IPM!

In an upcoming post I will share in detail my approach to managing fusarium patch at my course.

Posted by [Jason Haines](#)



Labels: [IPM](#)

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