

**NORTHERN MINNESOTA GRASS SEED GROWERS
NEWSLETTER
May 2, 2011**

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first edition of the Grass Seed Growers Newsletter for 2011. The primary objective of this newsletter is to report on growing conditions, crop development and progress of perennial ryegrass and bluegrass crops. The newsletter will be sent weekly, with alerts sent as pests infestations dictate or production problems arise.

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RYEGRASS GROWING DEGREE DAYS (GDD)

Ryegrass GDD will be tracked for the 2011 growing season with comparisons to the last four years. A base temp of 32 degrees F will be used for ryegrass (T-Base =32 F).

Table 1. Growing degree days (GDD) for March and April 2006 - 2011 near Roseau MN.

Year	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2011 vs. 10
March	7	137	30	6	90	-130
April	278	476	247	202	322	-198
Total	285	613	277	208	412	

The 2011 season is off to a cold start. Last year, ice was off Lake of the Woods in mid-April. This year the ice is still on the lake. According to locals that live near the lake, the average ice out date on Lake of the Woods is May 6-10.

Bluegrass and ryegrass fields are in the “green-up” stage and are beginning to grow.

One of the reasons for the delay in green-up of the grass seed crops is the cold soil temperature in 2011. The following information lists soil temperatures in both tilled and turf (sod) conditions near Roseau.

Table 2. Calendar date when soil temperatures reach 40 F, in tilled and turf conditions near Roseau in 2005 to 2011.

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2005	2006	2005
Tilled	4-8	3-30	4-14	4-15	4-14	4-11	4-6
Turf	4-23	4-13	4-29	4-18	4-19	4-11	4-16
Difference	15	14	15	3	5	0	10

In 2011, the soil temperatures in turf didn’t reach the 40 degree mark until April 23. Thus far, the 2011 season is tracking close to 2009, which was a cool spring. However, this can change in hurry with several days of warm dry conditions. As expected, it generally taken longer for the soil to warm up in turf compared to tilled ground and the data in last three seasons has a 2 week spread between a 40 degree temperatures in tilled ground (black) compared to turf (sod).

GENERAL CROP CONDITION

Ryegrass

It appears most perennial ryegrass plants survived the winter. To assess winter survivability of various ryegrass varieties, a trial was seeded in August of 2010 at the Magnusson Research Farm north of Roseau. Reports from this trial indicate all ryegrass varieties survived the winter, even annual ryegrass, which is an indication of good winter survivability of ryegrass.

Bluegrass

Bluegrass fields are just beginning to green up. Bluegrass plants will soon begin to show signs of “stretching out” and will soon begin a rapid elongation growth phase. It is important to get weed control and fertility operations completed prior to this elongation and jointing stage.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Ryegrass

Herbicide applications for broadleaf weeds are right around the corner. Now is the time to scout fields for broadleaf weeds. Winter annuals (dandelion, shepardspurse, and cockle) are beginning to grow. Annual weeds (volunteer canola, mustard, and smartweed) are first to emerge in the spring. Weeds grow fast and regular scouting is essential to determine the best weed control program for your situation.

CROP MANAGEMENT

Ryegrass

If ryegrass has not been fertilized, now is the time to begin planning a ryegrass fertility program. A single application of nitrogen has been successful in the past. Recent trial results indicate a split application of nitrogen may offer more efficient use of nitrogen with higher ryegrass yields. More next week.

Bluegrass

If bluegrass was not fertilized last fall it is critical to get nitrogen to these fields soon. Nitrogen must be in the root zone during the rapid growth phase of late tillering and jointing.

A discussion of herbicide choices for broadleaf control in ryegrass and fertility programs in ryegrass and spring herbicide applications in bluegrass will be included in next week's edition which will be released on May 9, 2011.