

MINNESOTA TURF SEED GROWERS NEWSLETTER
MAY 19, 2009

RYEGRASS GROWING DEGREE DAYS (GDD)

Ryegrass GDD will be tracked for the 2009 growing season with comparisons to the last three years. A base temp of 32 degrees F will be used for ryegrass (T-Base =32 F). The GDD information presented in the table below is year to date data through and including May 17 for 2006 to 2009.

Year	2009	2008	2007	2006	09 vs. 08
March	30	6	90	53	+24
April	247	202	322	529	+45
May 1-17	234	221	405	307	+37
Total	511	429	817	889	+82

The 2009 season is 82 GDD ahead of 2008, but -306 and -378 GDD behind the 2007 and 2006 seasons, respectively. The average GDD/day for the first 17 days of May was 13, 23.8 and 18 for 2008, 2007 and 2006, respectively. How does 2009 compare? The accumulated GDD/day for the first 17 days in May of 2009 was 13.8/day.

GENERAL CROP CONDITION

Ryegrass

For the most part, it appears ryegrass made it through the winter quite well. The cool growing season of 2009 has made it difficult to make stand assessment decisions. However, the vast majority of ryegrass fields appear to have made it through the winter. A couple of questions still remain if ryegrass fields were planted in late September and fields that had water standing for an extended period of time. Additional time is needed to fully assess these fields.

Bluegrass

Bluegrass fields are greening up and for the most part, look good. 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 operations completed prior to this elongation and jointing stage.

PEST MANAGEMENT

Ryegrass

Mustard and other cool season broadleaf weeds are beginning to emerge. Wild oats have emerged while, foxtail species are still dormant. Many of the winter annuals are growing well and will soon begin to bolt. Canada thistle has yet to begin to grow. This presents a dilemma for weed control in ryegrass. If we wait too long, the winter annuals will flower and produce seed, but if we spray too soon the thistle and other warm weed species will not be controlled as they have yet to emerge. It may be advantageous to consider two applications for broadleaf weed control. The first timing will control winter annuals and cool season broadleaf weeds and the second timing for Canada thistle and warm season broadleaf weeds.

Dicamba and 2, 4-D are the workhorses for broadleaf weed control in ryegrass. Product rates range from 0.5 to 1 pint depending upon weed size and species. Ryegrass is very tolerant of these two products. However, small plants generally are easier to control than large plants. Weeds grow fast and regular scouting is essential to determine the best weed control program for your situation.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture approved a 24C label for Nortron in ryegrass. Nortron at 2 pints/A has activity on volunteer cereals, annual bluegrass, foxtail barley and other grassy weeds. Nortron has soil and postemergence activity. However, it is critical to make applications before grassy weeds have 2 leaves for postemergence activity.

Bluegrass

If Beacon is to be used for weed control in bluegrass it should be applied this week. The Beacon use rate is 0.38 oz/A, and should be used with a non-ionic surfactant. Previous research with Beacon in bluegrass indicates that bluegrass injury may occur if applications are made during the jointing stage in bluegrass. The jointing stage in bluegrass corresponds to the time when the variety 'Park' gets the uneven (ragged) look.

Many fungicides have activity on powdery mildew in bluegrass. However, Tilt appears to be the product of choice for mildew control in bluegrass. Product rates of 2 to 4 oz have been used successfully in previous years. Keep in mind the higher use rate will offer extended period of disease control.

CROP MANAGEMENT

If certified grass seed is raised, be sure to schedule a field inspection and cut isolation strips around grass seed fields. Contact your fieldman or the Minnesota Crop Improvement (MCIA) for details.

Ryegrass

Now is the time to get spring fertilizer applied in ryegrass. A single application of nitrogen has been successful in the fall or spring. Fall applications of 100-30-30 to 130-30-30 are used across the ryegrass growing region. In the spring, nitrogen fertilizer rates are reduced to 80-30-30 to 110-30-30. Ammonium sulfate at a rate 5 to 20 units have been used with positive results. Several growers are experimenting with split application of nitrogen. Split applications of nitrogen offers the advantage of improved nitrogen use efficiency and reduced the potential of loss of nitrogen due to extreme environmental conditions. Several trials will be conducted this year to evaluate various fall/spring splits and spring spit applications of nitrogen.

Wheat is being planted this week. All indications point to a late wheat harvest which will crowd the fall ryegrass planting window. Ryegrass seeded after the first two weeks of September have a higher probability of winter kill than ryegrass seeded in August. One consideration may be to seed ryegrass this spring with wheat.

Bluegrass

In the last three years, mildew infestations have corresponded to the accumulation of approximately 650 GDD. Thus far in 2009, we have accumulated 511 GDD. When will we begin to see mildew in bluegrass? Field scouting will determine the actual incidence of pest outbreaks. However, if the GDD model acts like previous years we should begin to see mildew after the accumulation of an additional 140 GDD.

How many days will that take? In 2009, the first 17 days of May averaged 13.8 GDD/day was 13.8. In 2006, during the same time frame the accumulated GDD/day was 23.8. If we use 13.8 GDD/day we are 10 days away and if we use 23.8 GDD/day we are 5.9 days. If the GDD model is correct, in cool temps we should see mildew next week and if warm, we may see mildew late this week.

The next edition of this newsletter will be released on May 26, 2009.