



It's time to think about Pythium root rot.

The art of growing plants is about balance. Plants require nutrients, water, gasses and sunlight in the right quantities, otherwise plants cannot function properly and become stressed. A complicating factor is that half of the plant is not visible – it exists as roots underground. Those roots need readily available water, but at the same time need air pockets around them so that they can conduct respiration. Providing this ideal balance within the soil around the roots is challenging.

Once the snow begins to melt and the spring rains begin, turfgrass plants are vulnerable to over saturated soils. These cool, wet, anaerobic soils are not ideal conditions for the roots, yet are great conditions for the “water mould”, Pythium, which causes root rot. Plants suffering from root rot will appear sparse, yellow and in a declining pattern. They will break dormancy later than expected and will not respond to fertilizer applications. Essentially, the roots are not functioning, so the rest of the plant cannot get the ingredients for survival, let alone growth.

Pythium symptoms can be expected when the average air temperature is 7 - 15 °C. Pythium root rot will occur when the turf plant did not winter well, or had a weakened root system in the fall. Also, it will happen in low lying areas with improper drainage or to turf growing in soil that is slow to warm in the spring (i.e., shady locations). Once the pathogen starts its lifecycle, it can produce zoospores that are motile and can move on their own accord to adjacent roots to cause further infection.

An excellent product to control Pythium root rot is Subdue MAXX. Subdue MAXX is to be applied in plenty of water (10-20 L of water/100 m²) to reach the crowns and the roots. The product is moved systemically in the plant to protect the roots. One application at a rate of 32 mL/100 m² is recommended for management of Pythium root rot. Always refer to the product label for complete instructions. Generally, this application should be applied as the first spray before the course opens and it will provide the turf with up to 21 days of protection from Pythium root rot.

Wishing you all the best for a successful 2007 golf season, both professionally and personally!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Nailor".

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