



“I love it when a plan comes together”

We've heard a lot about integrated pest management (IPM) over the years, almost so much that we've forgotten what it really means. I could give you a definition, but I'll demonstrate my point with a practical example instead.

Last summer and fall, areas of your turf may have succumbed to disease. The IPM Accreditation process taught you to document these incidences and design a plan to manage the disease in the future. If the 9th green was lost to Summer Patch, you've probably retained the diagnostic report in your IPM records. When you start your 2008 management plan, you may have included an overseeding event to transition the annual bluegrass to the more tolerant creeping bentgrass. You've also planned to increase root health by reducing compaction and promoting drainage, and by applying a fungicide in the spring to protect the roots while the pathogen is infecting. The infection takes place when soil temperatures ≥ 16 °C for 4 consecutive days. Because you know this is a root pathogen, you use enough water (8-16 L/100 m²) to deliver the product to the crowns and the roots. At the same time, you integrate your knowledge of turfgrass pathology, and document that while you are preventing summer patch, you can also protect the plants from other diseases such as Fusarium Patch, Leaf Spot, Melting Out, Anthracnose, and Fairy Ring if you use a broad-spectrum product like Heritage MAXX @ 63 mL/100 m². Also remember if the target pathogen is Summer Patch, a follow up application is needed 28 days later. Further integrating your knowledge of product chemistry, you recognize that Heritage MAXX is not registered for the control of Pythium Root Rot, so in treating for that disease you will need to use Subdue MAXX at 32 mL/100 m². If you've already used Subdue MAXX for root rot this season, you'll need to switch to a product with a different mode of action to defer resistance. How do you tell if a fungicide has a different mode of action? Look at the fungicide group on the front page of the label. For Example, Heritage MAXX is Group 11 whereas Subdue MAXX is Group 4. As soon as the heat and drought stress of the summer begin, you can monitor the summer patch site to determine the effectiveness of the treatments, and to decide if a curative treatment is necessary for adjacent turf that was not included in the preventative applications. All of your observations can be documented in your 2008 records so that you can prepare for an even better management plan in 2009.

Your IPM is scouting, diagnostics, planning, promoting root health, using properly timed fungicides, and critiquing your program. Most of all, IPM involves the critical step of documentation. We are experiencing large changes in regulatory requirements and we will have to be even more accountable in justifying our applications. We need to demonstrate to golfers, fellow club management, neighbours and politicians that we are good stewards of the environment. Practicing IPM is the way we've committed to do this in the years to come.

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