**MINNESOTA TURF SEED GROWERS NEWSLETTER**
**MAY 26, 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 24 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 1-24 | 368 | 342 | 574 | 485 | +26 |
| Total | 645 | 550 | 986 | 1,067 | +95 |

The 2009 season is 95 GDD ahead of 2008, but -341 and -422 GDD behind the 2007 and 2006 seasons, respectively. The average GDD/day for the first 24 days of May was 14.3, 23.9 and 20.2 for 2008, 2007 and 2006, respectively. How does 2009 compare? The accumulated GDD/day for the first 24 days in May of 2009 was 15.3/day.

The dandelions were in full bloom over the weekend. Lilacs have yet to bloom. Most plants have yet experience a rapid growth phase. One of the reasons is the low night-time temperatures. Thus far in 2009, we have had 11 mornings in May with temperatures below freezing. In 2008, 12 days in May had temperatures below the frost point. This compares to only 2 in 2007 and 3 in 2006.

## GENERAL CROP CONDITION

### Ryegrass

The cool growing season of 2009 has made it difficult to make stand assessment decisions. At the Magnusson Research Farm a ryegrass date of planting was established in the fall of 2008. This trial was seeded at weekly intervals from late August into October in tilled and no-till ground. In tilled ground, ryegrass seeded up to September 9 has good vigor. Ryegrass seeded on September 17 has visible plants, but an approximate 50% stand loss. All other dates in the tilled ground were killed over the winter.

Ryegrass seeded into no-till wheat stubble had better winter survival than ryegrass seeded in tilled ground. Ryegrass seeded up to September 17$^{th}$ has good vigor. Ryegrass seeded on September 22$^{nd}$ has visible plants and has an approximate 30% stand loss. Other seeding dates in no-till ground had significant winter kill. Additional time is needed to fully access these fields.

### Bluegrass

The ‘Park’ and ‘Minnfine’ bluegrass fields will soon be jointing stage. The jointing stage is a time for rapid elongation. 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.

Bluegrass

Many fungicides have activity on powdery mildew in bluegrass. However, Tilt appears to 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.

In the last three years, mildew infestations have corresponded to the accumulation of approximately 650 GDD. Thus far in 2009, we have accumulated 645 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 this week.

## 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

Rainfall on Monday put the brakes on planting for several days. Field conditions will determine if additional acres of wheat will be seeded this spring. If field conditions dry out a consideration would be to under seed ryegrass, as 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.

Bluegrass

Scout fields for mildew.

The next edition of this newsletter will be released on June 2, 2009.