

Introduction to Golf Course Pest Management

A turfgrass pest is any organism causing deterioration in the aesthetic or functional value of turfgrass. Pests include weeds, insects and mites, nematodes, diseases and vertebrate mammals.

When pests are mentioned, pesticides are considered as important means for achieving control. Pesticides are valuable components of a turfgrass management program, but pest management includes more than selecting and applying the appropriate pesticide. The concept of integrated pest management (IPM) begins with selection of a well-adapted turfgrass, following proper establishment procedures and implementing cultural practices that favor healthy turfgrass growth. Therefore, IPM is the proper use of pesticides in conjunction with a sound cultural program that ensures high-quality turfgrass.

Weeds and diseases are often indicative of unfavorable growing conditions for specific turfgrasses. Their incidence can be prevented or, at least, substantially reduced where favorable

turfgrass growth conditions prevail. Damage from insects and mites, nematodes and other animals is often greater where the turfgrass is also subjected to other stresses. Many pests can be effectively controlled as long as vigorous turfgrass growth is favored. As often as not, pest activity is the result of underlying cultural problems rather than the problem pest itself.

Symptoms associated with various pests and cultural problems are often similar and easily confused. As a result, pests can inflict extensive damage before proper control measures can be started. Therefore, the first step toward the alleviation of any turfgrass pest problem must be proper identification.

The following chapters in this manual are designed to help turfgrass managers understand cultural practices that promote a healthy turf, properly identify pest problems, understand conditions that favor these pests and review the principles of safe and proper pesticide application.