

Goosegrass - A Golf Course Battle

By: Wayne Slaton, Golf Course Superintendent

Goosegrass you say! What kind of weed is that? Goosegrass is a very invasive weed that can slowly take over many of the high traffic areas of a golf course, such as the walk-up areas of tees, greens and even fairways. A single goosegrass plant can produce 120,000 seeds! The other weed next to goosegrass is crabgrass. Some miss identify goosegrass and call it crabgrass. Crabgrass is a wider blade, lime green looking weed that will grow in greens, tees, fairways and rough as well. If these weeds go unchecked without a pre-emergent and post emergent treatment plan, they can take over a golf course and affect all turf surfaces. Some of the best pre-emergent for controlling goose and crab grass only last for a short time depending on the rate of application and the amount of rainfall received. Spring to summer heavy rainfalls like this year can affect the longevity of the pre-emergent plan and cause an outbreak of these pesky weeds. What does goose grass look like? See picture blew:



The center can be white, and it can grow into a very large clump. On greens and tees it can blend in like the picture below until it grows into a large bump.



Goosegrass on the greens can affect the ball roll even more than poa annua seed heads in the wintertime. We are limited on the type of chemistry and the timing to control the goosegrass on our greens. With overseeded greens, any treatment for early spring will eliminate the overseed on the greens. Negative effects would be thin greens with poor playability. This is why we must be careful with our timing on the treatment application we use to control goose and crabgrass on the greens. Successful control of goosegrass results in a yellowish to tan, brown goosegrass plant that a healthy golf green can outgrow before the first winter frost arrives. The picture below shows progress on goosegrass control on our 9th fairway.



Goosegrass control on greens is very challenging and takes time. Another picture of goosegrass control on 15 green below.



We are limited on available chemistry to use on crabgrass and goosegrass and must use a small spot sprayer to not risk damaging healthy turf in the current heat wave we are in.

Our 14th green I would say had the most, and now we are getting some results from our spot spray program as seen below.



Take a look at the USGA link below if you would like to learn more about this subject:

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/green-section-record/63/issue-04/a-guide-to-geosegrass-control.html>

We all look forward to seeing our healthy greens overgrow the goosegrass so we can continue to achieve good golf ball roll on our greens. We love to see golfers enjoy a well struck putt falling into the cup, even if the hole location is too difficult for others. Hope this has been educational and look forward to seeing you on our golf course soon.