



April 15, 2011 Scouting Report – April is Nice! More Flowers, New Leaves, Average Soil Temperatures Hit 50+, Rhizoctonia Yellow Patch, and Tim’s Colorific Kentucky Bluegrass

Chicago/Northern Illinois Update: Derek Settle - DSettle@cdga.org

Flowers. This was a terrific week in your life, especially if you have horticulture in your blood. I grew up learning the art of growing plants from an Iowa farm girl. It turned out I knew a little Latin before I was told it wasn’t a real ‘living language’. Hah! This week turf greenup continued its good pace across the landscape. Golf courses in Chicago and Northern Illinois look terrific with few issues reported. Another nice warm week during April has meant good things for more than just monocots (grasses). Increasingly, we’ve begun to see some nice flowers. For example, star magnolia is now with creamy white flowers, one of the first to deliver a potent fragrance. Another woody ornamental with a medium yellow flower appeared this week – Corneliancherry dogwood or *Cornus mas*. Golf continued its return as well, just ask Sunshine.



1st play. Sunshine Course delivers a smooth putt for Special Olympics coach training on a special practice green – every 10 ft a ball rolls across a unique bentgrass variety. *A Nolly 4-15-11*

It is the best spring I have experienced in 5 years – turf healthwise. We still face the risk of a late hard freeze and to remind us of that, Mother Nature turned off our tap of warm air this weekend. In the meantime we can enjoy spring’s progress up to now. Yellow flowers anyone?

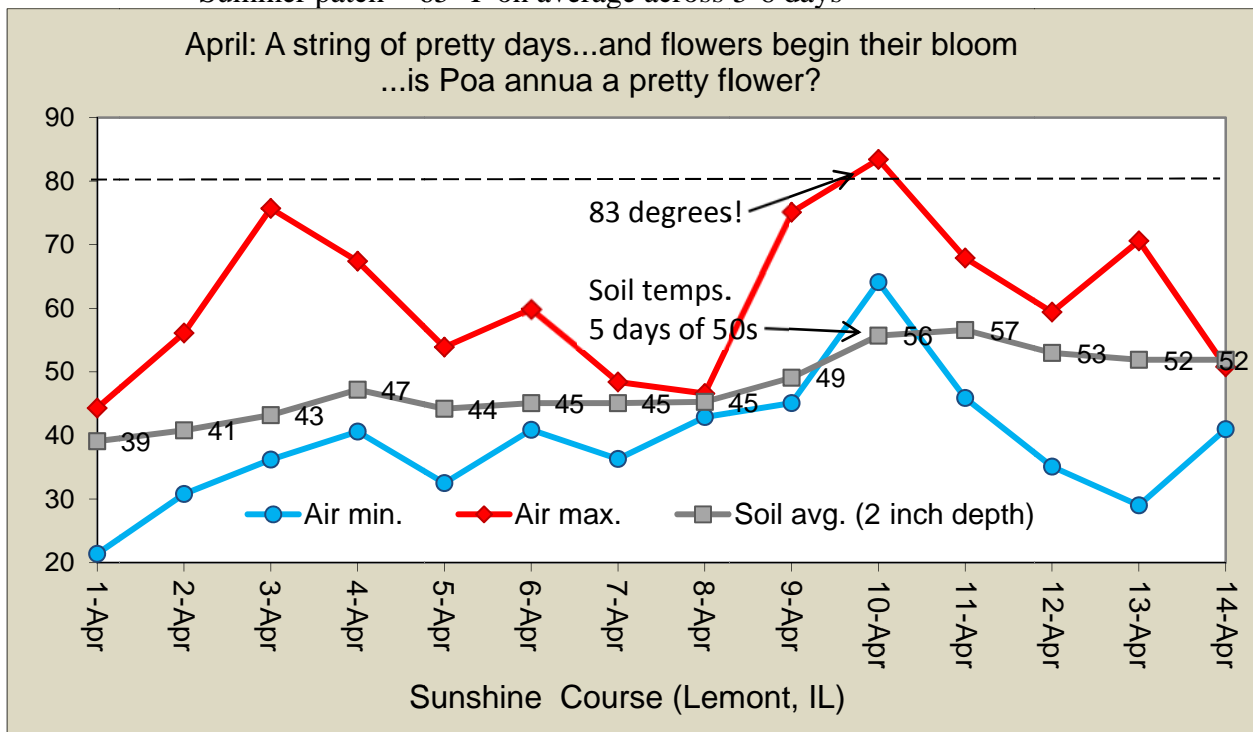
April brings us closer to our first preventive timing of fungicides for some

The temperatures earlier this week were dreamlike and we found ourselves saying déjà vu. It was a repeat of 1 week ago with weekend high temperatures at levels we had not experienced since 2010. Since 1 April we have counted 4 days which were 70° degrees or warmer. Accordingly, soil temperatures are now hovering in the 50s at a 2 inch depth. The jump was a surprise! Using soil temperature, we often time our first use preventive fungicides for turf (see pdf).

<http://pest.ca.uky.edu/PSEP/Manuals/ppa1.pdf>

Average soil temperature (2 in.) = +50°; prevention for root/soil pathogens a consideration

- ✓ Fairy Ring and Take-all = 55° F on average across 5 days
- ✓ Summer patch = 65° F on average across 5-6 days



Signs of spring. Common weeds have begun to flower. Tiny white star-like flowers of mouseear chickweed, then there's *Poa annua*. Both have a flower size less than a fingernail. *Settle 4-9-11*

***Rhizoctonia cerealis*: Yellow patch shows up in Central Illinois**

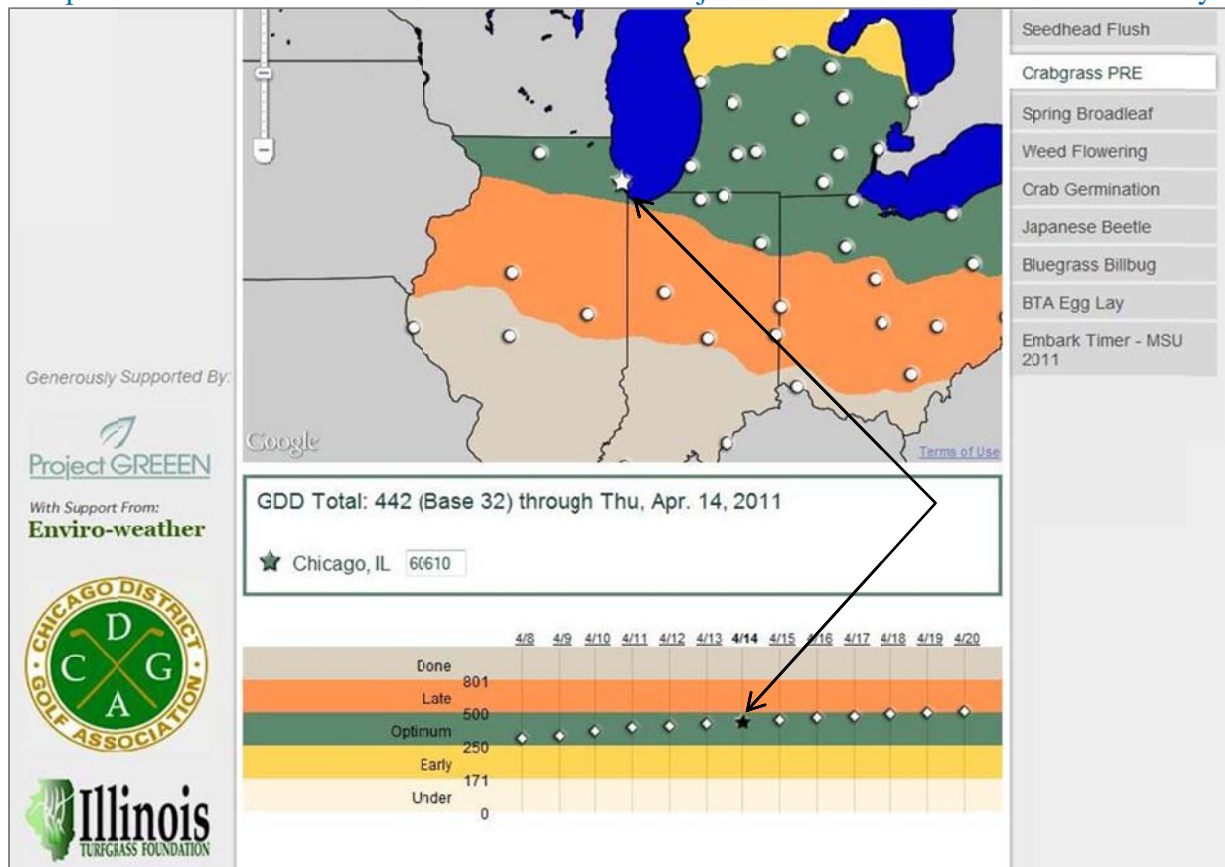
Yesterday, I received several excellent photos from Bill Sharp, University of Illinois. Bill had visited a Penn A4 green and found large irregular circles of varying size. The color was reddish, but the patten of injury is similar to *R. cerealis* and the time of the outbreak followed a 0.5 inch thunderstorm. Clues: 1) Affected green has a tendency to remain wet (*R. cerealis* likes it wet). 2) Optimum temperature for growth is 50°-65° F air temperature (*R. cerealis* occurs Mar-Apr).



Reddish rings of *R. cerealis* blight a PennA4 bentgrass green, Central Illinois. B. Sharp 4-14-11

www.gddtracker.net – Crabgrass Preemergence Timing Is Now

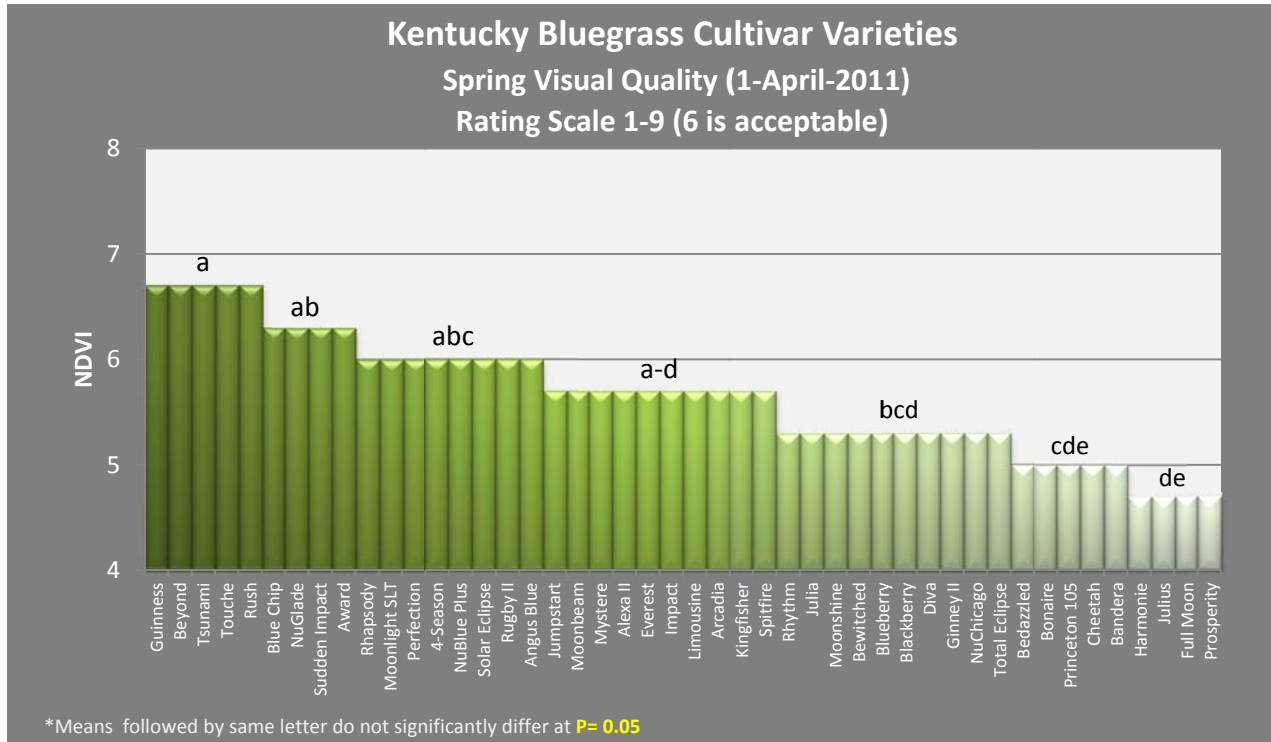
Current model shows the GDD32 for crabgrass preemergence herbicides is now for Chicago. The idea is to anticipate germination of crabgrass: uses soil T of 50° to 55°. It’s germination is also predicted: “Crab Germination” tab. Notice: Ohio joined the network in 2011. Go Buckeyes!



Kentucky Bluegrass Cultivar Varieties in the Midwest

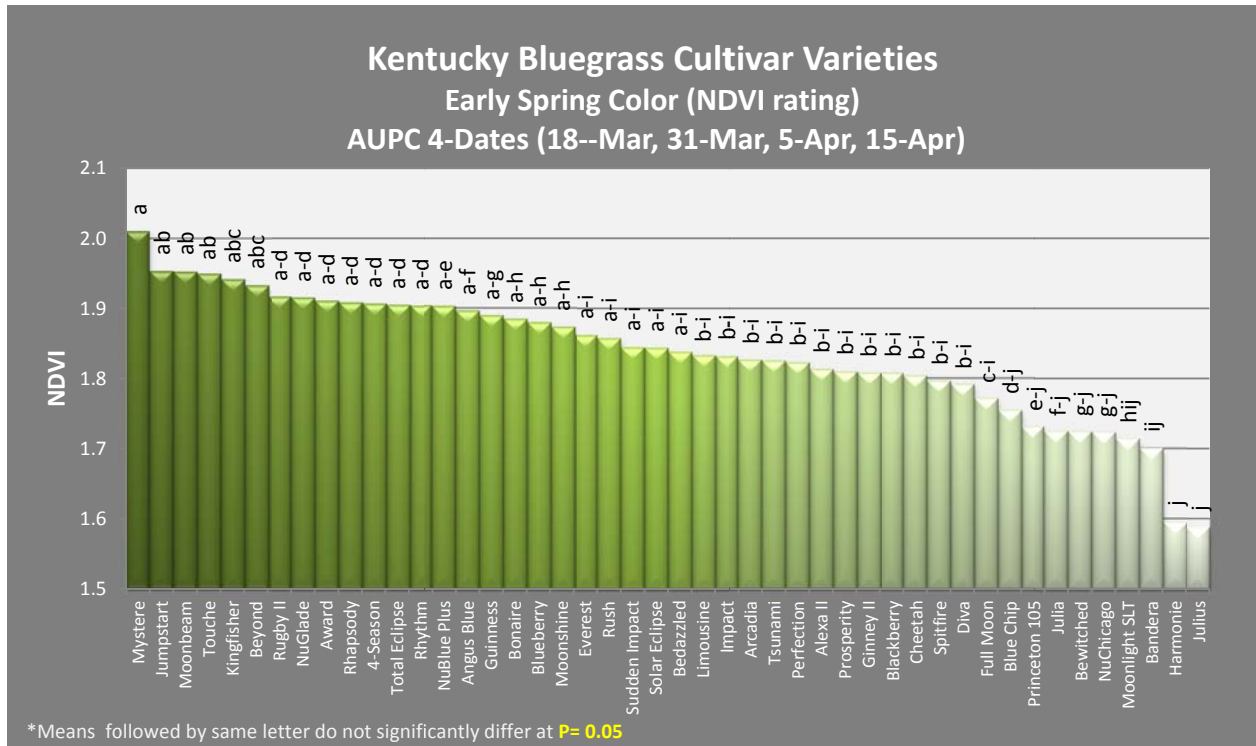
The past week has been a week of change for the Midwest. The bland landscape that we have grown to know in winter is now changing for the better with bright new colors and the flowering of spring ornamentals that now includes forsythias, magnolias, dogwoods, daffodils and even the first tulips. I am excited for the changing of the seasons and all the new plant growth, but we must not forget the most important part, greener grass!

Taking a walk out onto the Sunshine Course, we are able to observe the different cultivar variety trials. To me, the one that stands out with the greatest diversity of color is the Kentucky bluegrass cultivar trial. There are 52 cultivar varieties in this trial representing the work of 9 different seed producers including; DLF, Scotts, Turf Merchants, ProSeeds, Jacklin Seed, Allied Seed, Seed Research of Oregon, Turf Inovations and Pure Seed Testing. Early season performance (data below) has been determined by visual appearance rating using a 1-9 scale, with 6 being acceptable. Visually quality is quantified by factoring



color, density and uniformity. The best appearing varieties this spring include Guinness, Beyond, Tsunami, Touche and Rush. Additional varieties that are acceptable include Blue Chip NuGlade, Sudden Impact and Award. Visual quality ratings by appearance sometimes receive criticism for containing bias of the researcher's eye. To combat this concern, we are able to use a new tool by Spectrum Technologies to quantify the appearance of plots without any bias or preference of the researcher. It is called the Turf Color Meter (TCM500). This tool allows us to quantify the green leaf tissue via an instrument using radiometric sensor technology to apply a numerical indicator called NDVI (normalized difference vegetative index) to each individual plot. This technology is interesting because it was originally used to study the earth's surface from satellites back in 1960's. As technology has improved and the size of the

meter has become smaller and portable, we are able to apply its measurements from the big picture aspect all the way down to individual grass blades. The NDVI ratings can also be used as an overall indicator of plant health. Between the dates 18-March and 15-April (data below), the varieties of Kentucky bluegrass with the darkest greenest color and density are Mystere, Jumpstart, Moonbeam, Touche, Kingfisher and Beyond. Spring green up is not only important to satisfy early season golfers, but also to allow a longer duration of best growing conditions so the turfgrass can prepare for the coming heat of the summer. Hopefully, it will not be so hot in 2011.



Sunshine Course’s Kentucky bluegrass trial displays a distinctive checkerboard pattern during spring greenup caused by the genetic diversity of different cultivars. *Sibicky 3-14-11*

Final Images – A week of spring color and the landscape changes



A) Willow *Sibicky* 4-13-11; B) Clematis *Settle* 4-10-11; C) Redbud *T. Anderson* 4-14-11; D) Cornus *mas Settle* 4-12-11; E) Daffodil *B. Thomson* 4-14-11; F) Magnolia *Settle* 4-12-11

New website www.cdgaturf.org has cool blogs
Derek, Tim, Nick and Chris The CDGA Turfgrass Program