

RHODE ISLAND SURE 'n' TURF

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION



Beech Leaf Disease Spreading in New England

Dr. Nathaniel Mitkowski

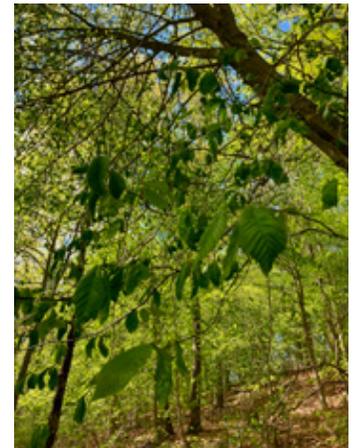
Chair, Dept. of Plant Sciences and Entomology,
University of Rhode Island

Beech leaf disease (BLD) is a “new” pathogen of beech trees that was recently observed in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. During 2020, it had only been identified in one location in RI, near Beech Hill Road in Ashaway. For those of you who have sent me samples during COVID, you will recognize Ashaway as my hometown and the initial infection was about 2 miles from my house. Sadly, the disease has not remained localized to my village and has since been seen throughout the state. Just about every beech tree that myself or Heather Faubert (one of URI’s extension specialists) has visited in RI in 2021 is infected. It seems likely that the pathogen has been present for at least 3-5 years, based on the severity of one of the sites we identified in Westerly. The isolated location of that site allowed it to go undetected.

So what does beech leaf disease mean for New Englanders? It’s a challenge to say exactly how the disease will progress over time but it will surely kill a large number of American beech trees. Solitary beech trees are likely to remain uninfected longer while trees in close proximity to other beech trees are likely to spread infection faster. A single beech tree on a golf course might escape infection for a long time. Regardless, golf course superintendents should be on the lookout for the disease on their property. Beech trees are regularly used near buildings and many of them can be found throughout Newport and on the URI campus where they often grow to be large and attractive. Consequently, a sick beech can become an eyesore very quickly. It is also unclear whether all varieties of beech are equally susceptible to the disease. American beech is the preferred host and the pathogen will infect European beech but very little work has been done on other species or varieties of beech. It has been noted that there is some variation in infection rate within stands of beech, which suggests that some clones may possess innate resistance (beech trees often spread by root suckers so an entire grove of trees may be one genetic unit or clone/biotype).

Symptoms of damage caused by the disease start out as striping of leaves between veins. After multiple years of infection, leaves

appear shriveled and trees will defoliate. Saplings have been killed in as little as 2-3 years while mature trees last longer. As with any disease, environment plays a major role so disease progression may not always be consistent from year to year. As the disease has gotten more severe over time, we are seeing substantial damage and defoliation on some of the longest infected trees.



Photos above showing symptoms of the disease.

Beech leaf disease is unique because most researchers believe it is caused by a nematode (*Litylenchus crenatae mccannii*) that is carried by birds or insects to the leaves of beech trees. The nematode is very active in the late summer where it reproduces and presumably infects leaf buds as the plants go dormant for the winter. This is an odd behavior because it appears to be causing damage in the buds, which is then expressed in spring foliage. When the leaves emerge there is substantial damage, presumably based proportionally on the load of nematodes present in the bud. However, nematodes cannot be found in the leaves until the end of the summer. It is unclear where *Litylenchus* came from. It was first discovered in Ohio along Lake Erie in 2012 and has progressively spread through that area. When first reported in Connecticut in 2019, it had jumped across most of the state of Pennsylvania, leaving it untouched. However, it is now being seen in many counties throughout PA. The nematode is closely related to a Japanese nematode species but is a different enough that the US subspecies does not appear to have originated in Japan.

Continued on page 4

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President's Message



Hello Everyone,

Don't blink, it's going to be the middle of July next week. Hope everyone is in solid shape for the main stretch.

I wanted to say thanks again to Joe Oliveira and Green Valley for hosting our meeting last month. This month we get to see Triggs for the first time in a while. This should be a treat for all of us architecture nerds.

Hope to see many of you there. Stay cool everybody.

John Lombardi
RIGCSA President

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Beech Leaf Disease continued

There are currently no management options available for control of this nematode pathogen. A working group of researchers from Ohio to New Hampshire is looking at various aspects of the disease and nematicidal products are being tested but treating a tree for nematodes is much more challenging than treating turf. There are three ways to treat a tree for disease: injection, soil drench and foliar/bark spray. Unfortunately, foliar sprays are not generally useful because of the location and large size of specimen trees. Tree injection requires expensive and specialized equipment that is typically undertaken by tree management companies. Soil drenches can be useful but any type of soil application will require that the applied material be mobile in the soil but not so mobile that it leaches into the water table. And as most superintendents are aware, new nematicides are in very short supply so the choice of product is also limiting.

Even if nematicides are identified which can be used to manage BLD, these will not be helpful for the millions of wild trees across New England. It should also be noted that beech trees are not

always particular hardy. Beech trees are shallow rooted and often excessively pruned in landscape settings, which leads to decline. There are also other pathogens and insects that can stress beech trees, causing health problems and additional premature decline. With the addition of BLD as a major pathogen of beech trees, a noticeable level of mortality is a certainty.

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June 13, 2021 - RIGCSA Family Day at Mulligan's Island Golf & Entertainment Center



Photos by Michelle Maltais

June 13, 2021 - RIGCSA Family Day at Mulligan's Island Golf & Entertainment Center



Photos by Michelle Maltais

May 18, 2021 - RIGCSA and GCSANE Joint Meeting at Braintree Municipal Golf Course



Photos by Don Hearn



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Photos by Don Hearn

Kevin's GCSAA Corner By Kevin Doyle, GCSAA Northeast Field Rep.



Golf course maintenance as an industry has its challenges. As an outdoor profession we fall to the whims of mother nature whether through rainfall, lack thereof, frost and extreme temperatures high or low. She dictates our day-to-day situation, and we often respond to counteract. 2020 will be remembered as the year Covid both shut the golf world down and broke it wide open. While it's early in 2021,

don't be surprised if it is remembered for being an all-time high in another outdoor factor, allergies!

Michael Volkner, CRNP of Maryland Primary Care Physicians wrote a piece that summarizes some of what we already may know. Allergies in 2021 are BAD! He writes:

"Like taxes, allergy season is one of those things you just can't avoid. In fact, due to climate change, it may be getting worse. Warmer temperatures lead to more pollen production, so 2021 may be the most intense allergy season yet. And due to COVID-19 quarantine, children may especially have a rough year."

Volkner would explain how the reduced exposure to pollen in 2020 by many due to indoor quarantining, especially by younger children, would intensify the body's reaction to pollen in 2021. Adults have had many years of exposure to pollen, children not so much. Add on top of that, the quick warm up of this spring in the Northeast aided in pollen production leading to an elongated allergy season and the perfect eye irritation, itchy throat, and sneezing storm!

The article offers a few mitigation strategies to help get through the season.

- If you have pets, keep them in the house on high-pollen days. Pollen may stick to their fur and end up in your nose. (a difficult ask for our @dogsofturf lovers)
- Change your AC filters regularly and consider getting a HEPA air filter to strain allergens out of the air in your home.
- Use over-the-counter allergy medicines to relieve symptoms: antihistamines to relieve your itchy nose and sneezing, and decongestants to get rid of your stuffy nose. (other sources note a proactive approach on expected high pollen count days is best)
- On high pollen days, change your clothes when coming in from outside.
- Keep windows and doors closed to reduce pollen entering the house.

It is difficult to imagine window washer or bridge construction workers with a fear of heights, yet so many of our peers in golf course maintenance suffer from the outdoor affliction of pollen-related allergies. As if the stress of a normal golf season wasn't enough already! If you have noted the increase of symptoms in 2021 you are by all accounts correct. For those of you with upcoming ragweed sensitivity, hopefully some of the abatement tactics will help you get through when the peak allergen arrives soon.

To read Michael Volkner's article, click on the link [here](#).

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The contest runs May 4-July 31, 2021.

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Again, if I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Kevin Doyle
GCSAA Field Staff

kdoyle@gcsaa.org

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Press Release



May 26, 2021

The New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation recently held its 24th Annual Meeting on May 26, 2021 where a new Executive

Board was elected. It was Zoom Meeting due to concerns and Covid restrictions. Robert B. Searle, Golf Course Superintendent of the Abenakee Club in Bidderford Pool, Maine has been elected as the 25th President of the Foundation. Bob is a past-president of the Maine Golf Course Superintendent Association and has been serving on the NERTF Board since 2016. Bob is replacing Peter J. Rappoccio, CGCS from Concord Country Club in Concord, MA. Peter served as the 23rd & 24th President of the Foundation. He served as the first two term president of the foundation due to Covid-19 concerns. Randy Weeks, of Laconia Country Club was serving as the Immediate Past-President, Peter will replace Randy in that role. Mark B. Mansur, of Wintonbury Hills Golf Course representing the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS), will serve as the vice-president/treasurer for this upcoming year. Benjamin J. Polimer of the Town of Weston, who represents the New England Sports Turf Managers Association (NESTMA), will become the current foundation secretary. Ben joined the board in 2020.

The foundation consists of 2 delegates from each of the 7 GCSAA Chapters located in New England, 2 delegates from the Sports Turf Managers Association of New England (NESTMA) and 1 delegate from the Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals (MALCP) for a total of 17 members. Advisory board members are invited from state universities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The board usually meets every other month avoiding the hot days of the summer.

The 24th Annual Conference was held virtually on March 2nd & 3rd, 2021. 600 seminar seats and over 400 session seats were sold over the two days. Many great speakers and presentations were received by those attending. Pesticide recertification credits were available from nearly all the seminars and sessions. The conference was highly successful considering the Covid restrictions and the need to offer a remote program. Many of the area's industry vendors contributed generously to the program through sponsorships helping to subsidize the attendees experience and program. The foundation will celebrate the 25th annual Conference and Show in Providence on March 8-10, 2022 at the Rhode Island Convention Center. Planning has already begun. For more information on the show and New England Turfgrass Research please visit our website: www.nertf.org or call 401-841-5490.

In other NERTF news, the 10th annual Tee-Up New England rounds of golf auction was held April 12-19, 2021. 83 rounds of golf, a Day of Grass Tennis at Longwood Cricket Club and a Golden Passport to New England Golf donated by the New England Golf Course Owners Association were auctioned off. Nearly \$28,000 were raised to fund turfgrass research here in New England. The foundation recently cleared a milestone, with Tee-Up New England's help, the foundation has funded more than \$2.5M of turfgrass research in New England since March 1998 when the first New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show was held and the first research proposals were submitted later that year.

Gary J. Sykes, Executive Director, NERTF, Inc.

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RIGCSA Member News

Congratulations to **Mike Marino** on his new position with FMC. Mike was formerly the Superintendent at Stonington CC for the past 18 years. His new contact information is cell: 860-287-3334, email: Michaelmarino270@gmail.com

Our condolences are extended to **Shaun Marcellus** and family on the passing of Shaun's father, **Douglas Marcellus**, on June 7, 2021.

Congratulations to **Pat and Sadie Meehan** on the birth of their daughter Whitney Anne who was born on June 16, 2021.

Congratulations to **Jeff and Amber Mello** on the birth of their son **Grayson John** who was born on February 21, 2021.

Congratulations to **Jack Harrell Jr.**, Chairman and CEO of Harrell's, LLC, who has been selected to join the class of 2020's induction into the Tampa Bay Business Hall of Fame. Jack R. Harrell, Jr. is a native of Lakeland, Florida and the third Harrell in three-quarters of a century to lead the company, which was established in 1941. Over the years Jack has served the company in many roles spanning across every department before becoming CEO in 1990. Having been delayed from May of 2020, this year's ceremony will not only commemorate the induction of the class of 2020, but also the class of 2021. The purpose of the induction is to "recognize exceptional individuals who've distinguished themselves through their contributions to the Tampa Bay community." -Florida Council on Economic Education (FCEE).

Thank you to **Mike Kroian and Frank Arruda** for their donations towards the RIGCSA Family Day this year.

Welcome to **Greg Pinto** as the new Interim Golf Course Superintendent at Agawam Hunt. Greg was formerly the superintendent at The Cape Club in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

The Rhode Island GCSA is now offering an Equipment Manager membership for \$75 for the year.

(\$112.50 to join which includes a one-time application fee)

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RIGCSA Member News

Save the Date for the 38th Annual Scholarship and Research Tournament



Date: **Tuesday, September 21**
Host Club: **Potowomut Golf Club**
Host Superintendent: **Peter Fish**

Tournament Results:

May 18, 2021

Braintree Municipal Golf Course

Host: **Daryn Brown**

Joint meeting with GCSA of New England

Low gross: **Ed Downing, Vin Iacono,
Dan St. Laurent, Peter Lund**

Low net: **Mark Casey, Greg Misodoulakis,
Brian Skinner, Mike Whitehead**

Closest to the Hole #2: **Pat Daly 6' 9"**

Closest to the Hole #16: **Scott Gabrielson 4' 4"**

June 21, 2021

Green Valley Country Club

Host: **Joe Oliveira**

Member/Member Tournament

1st Gross: **Tom Hoffer/Dan St. Laurent 73**

1st Net: **Jason Dowgiewicz/Mike Dachowski 62**

2nd Net: **Robert McNeil/Jeff Urquhart 63**

3rd Net: **Kevin Doyle/Melissa Gugliotti 64**

3rd Net: **Jim Santoro/Shawn Marcellus 64**

Long Drive: **Dave Henault**

Closest to Pin: **Robert McNeil**

If your club or company has received an award or distinction, please send a brief description to Julie Heston jheston@verizon.net or Michelle Maltais nonquitt687@cox.net and we will list in the Member News section of the Surf 'n' Turf newsletter.

Good friends enjoying their day at Green Valley CC.



From L-R: **Mike Iacono, Ted Ellis, Tom Ohlson, Richard Lombardi and Mark Richard**

Photo Credit: **Jim Santoro**



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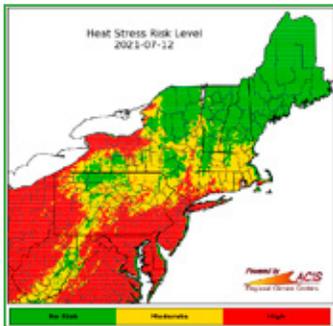
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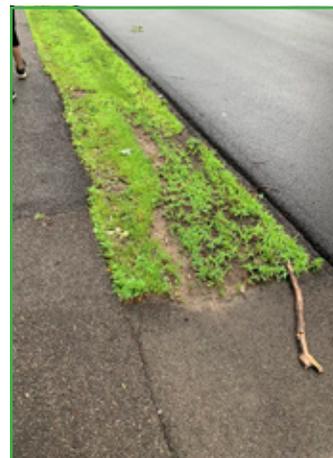
High heat stress conditions are expanding and contracting as the various fronts move through the Northeast bringing sporadic rainfall, some heavy and intense. Some cooling this week will give way to a return to above normal temperatures, but also in areas that have received rainfall, persistent leaf wetness from high dew points.

Soil temperatures are reaching into the low 80's in some areas during the day, but on average remain in the mid-high 70's. High solar radiation levels driving ET loss is exposing poor soil conditions, poor rooting depth, and creating stress that worsens summer patch, take-all patch and annual bluegrass weevil feeding damage. Most turf areas that struggle this early in the Summer from these conditions have poor infrastructure, i.e. high OM soils, poorly drained, low soil oxygen, layering, etc. It's a good idea to draw the attention of your clientele to these needs and consider making plans for long term solutions to poor soil conditions. For now, keep on a preventative fungicide program, especially on weakened annual bluegrass areas. **The UW-Madison Turfgrass Program has an excellent website for fungicide efficacy.**



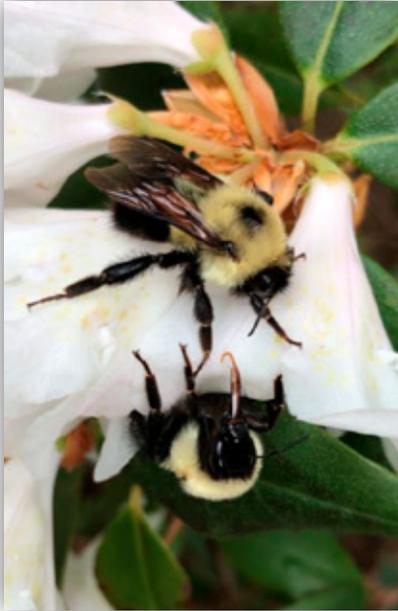
Obviously, risk of foliar pathogens, dollar spot and brown patch, are very high for much of the region, kept at bay for most with pesticides, but now is the time of year where having improved varieties in lawns, sports fields and golf courses really make a difference. Red Thread (*Laetisaria fuciformis*) pressure is causing many turfgrass managers to make pesticide application to stop significant turf loss. Red thread occurs during humid periods when the air temperatures are between 16°C and 24°C (60°F and 75°F). The disease is especially severe on ALL types slow-growing turf. Fine-leaf fescues and some ryegrasses are particularly susceptible. It is being observed on turf that has been regularly fertilized but not actively growing. This persistent conducive environment has allowed an otherwise minor nuisance pathogen to become a source of significant turf damage. Good curative recovery, not control, has been observed with chlorothalonil, flutolanil, iprodione, mancozeb and pyraclostrobin. In one test, a formulation of myclobutanil caused foliar discoloration and stand thinning to creeping red fescue when applied for red thread control.

Widespread reports of chinch bugs causing injury to lawns and in dry areas this is easily mistaken for drought stress. If an area fails to recover following adequate rainfall, look for frass or try floating insects out of the thatch with an open ended can. Take care if using an insecticide at this time, as many flowering plants in bloom in the landscape that attract pollinators that could be injured when foraging on treated plants. Use good **pollinator BMPs!**



Finally, about half the crabgrass and goosegrass that will germinate this year has already emerged. Now it becomes using the right postemergence strategy and planning for better prevention next season. Post emergence control is all about plant size and being sure the weeds are actively growing. The bleaching herbicides, Tenacity and Pylex, as well as Acclaim Extra all have good activity on smaller plants, however as plants get larger, products containing quinchlorac are more likely to be effective.

Citizen Scientists Needed!
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Understanding our wild bees



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- Send videos with dates, locations, and flower identification to bombussurvey@gmail.com
- Pictures may be submitted as well, but videos are preferred

❖ Video Tips

- Hold phone/camera about a foot away from the bee
- Don't zoom in
- Try to get different angles of the bee (dorsal view is most important for identification... see example below)

Please report any **found dead bumble bees or nests** (with photographs and details of location) to:
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Photo Credit: www.bugguide.net

Questions?

E-mail us at bombussurvey@gmail.com



RIGCSA

2021 Meeting Schedule

**Monday, June 21 - Green Valley Country Club
(Member/Member Tournament)**

**Monday, July 12 - Triggs Memorial Golf Course
(Joint meeting with GCSA of Cape Cod - Rho-Cod Cup)**

**Monday, August 16 - Midville Golf Club
(Stress Buster Day)**

**Tuesday, September 21 - Potowomut Country Club
(Scholarship & Research Tournament)**

**Monday, September 27 - Newport National Golf Club
(Championship and NE Champs Qualifier)**

**Monday, October 25 - Newport Country Club
(Superintendent/Assistant Tournament)**

November TBA

**December TBA - O'Brien's Pub
Holiday Networking and Meeting**

**For more information and to register, please visit www.rigcsa.org or
contact Julie Heston at (401) 934-7660 or jheston@verizon.net**



Sun Safety Practices

To Protect your Employees and Patrons

The Rhode Island Department of Health's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program is looking to engage golf course superintendents in discussions about your efforts to protect your employees and patrons from harmful exposure to the sun's UV rays. Golfers and outdoor workers who spend long periods of time in the sun are at increased risk of developing skin cancer. We can work with you to identify the most effective and feasible policy/practice changes that you can adopt to protect your employees and patrons. We'd love to meet with you to discuss the strategies below and others that you can implement on your course.

The CDC's Community Preventive Services Task Force recommends interventions in outdoor recreational settings, based on strong evidence of effectiveness for increasing sunscreen use and decreasing incidence of sunburns.



For Golfers & Employees

Increase Available Shade - The sun's rays are strongest between 10am and 2pm

- Offer discounts for early and late tee times
- Avoid scheduling events during peak sun hours
- Equip carts with shade covers to keep golfers safe between holes

Encourage Sun-Safe Behaviors - Use of sunscreen and protective clothing

- Provide SPF 30 broad spectrum sunscreen to employees and patrons where they pick up cards and carts
- Stock UV protective clothing options in your pro shop
- Provide UV protective long-sleeved uniforms and hats to employees
- Remind patrons to seek shade and use sunscreen with signage around the course and messaging on score cards
- Take extra caution around sand and water, which can reflect and intensify UV rays

If you are interested in scheduling a short conversation with the Cancer Control program staff, please contact George Andoscia at (401)222-3047 or George.Andoscia@Health.RI.gov.



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