

# CHEMICAL LOG

## PGRs: MORE THAN CHEMICAL MOWING

**P**lant growth regulators (PGRs) are probably the least used and understood tools in sports turf management.

Even though some growth regulators to caution against applications to high-traffic turf areas, golf courses are now major users of the newer PGR products on the market. This new generation includes Ciba-Geigy's Primo, DowElanco's Cutlass, PBI/Gordon's Embark Lite and Scott's TGR Turf Enhancer. Together, they cover a variety of golf turf applications: reduction of vertical growth and clippings on greens, tees and fairways; less frequent mowing of roughs; and *Poa annua* seedhead control or elimination.

As for sports turf applications, there are novel uses, such as adding plant growth regulators to field-stripping paint mixtures to slow the removal of markings through mowing. The use of a

growth regulator to suppress existing turf and postpone mowings for three or four weeks to allow newly seeded areas to establish faster and better is another example.

An easily instituted practice that can save many hours of hard labor is to apply a PGR after string trimming. Treated edges along fences and walkways and around signs, trees or landscape beds require trimming only one-third as often, according to Mel Crudge, park superintendent for the city of LaVerne, CA. Spraying such trimmed edges with Embark, as Crudge typically does twice in the spring and once in the fall, holds them for an interval of six weeks instead of two.

Many sports turf managers are also responsible for some nonathletic and ornamental turf areas. Using a PGR to reduce mowing labor and clippings volume on these low-traffic areas may be a

good place to begin. Vertical growth of treated grass can be reduced by 50 percent or more for four to six weeks or longer, depending on the product and dosage used. The result is reduced mowing and increased time-savings.

Seedhead development can be inhibited by applying PGR prior to seedhead formation (up to four to six weeks after initial green-up in Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue). Energy that would otherwise be used in developing seeds and stems remains in the roots instead. This deeper, stronger root mass helps account for the "rebound effect" or flush of growth and tillering that occur with some products as the PGR wears off.

Not all the aforementioned uses are advisable or permitted with all of the products mentioned. As with any chemical, it is important to carefully read the product label and follow directions for use.

*Technical Credit: PBI/Gordon Corp.*

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