

A Tool for Every Toolbox:

Plant Growth Regulators



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by Bob Milano Jr.

Plant growth regulators are not the magic elixir that will solve all of the sports turf manager's ills, but they are a tool that can be successfully and economically used in many instances.

Like any other tool in our arsenal, the costs, benefits and goals of plant growth regulator application need to be carefully evaluated. Each of us are subject to different variables (turf type, soil, climate, client expectations) but the following are general applications that you may want to consider:

- * Mix plant growth regulators with field marking paint to reduce the number of times you need to repaint the field, which will save both time and money.

- * Apply plant growth regulators under and around obstructions (grandstands, television towers, light poles) to reduce maintenance and improve regrowth.

- * Apply plant growth regulators to new sod to enhance rooting, reduce need to mow, reduce irrigation demand and improve turf density.

- * Apply plant growth regulators to warm season turf in fall, prior to overseeding, to reduce competition and improve rye establishment.

- * Apply plant growth regulators to establishing, recently seeded turf to improve density, thicken stems and improve plant water use efficiency.

- * Apply plant growth regulators to difficult to maintain turf slopes to reduce mowing frequency and maintenance demands.



Photo courtesy Floyd Perry



Photo courtesy Pioneer

Plant growth regulators can be expensive to apply, but many times the benefits will be worth the cost. The end result of a proper application is healthy, durable turf with a high tolerance to extreme conditions. So evaluate the goal of your particular application, research the different types of plant growth regulators on the market and add this tool to your inventory of management options. And good luck!



Bob Milano Jr. is the stadiums' and sports turf manager for the University of California Athletic Department and a founding member of the Northern California STMA Chapter.

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