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DOI: 10.1017/wet.2024.32

Plant growth regulators differentially suppress goosegrass and smooth crabgrass in creeping bentgrass turf

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Abstract

Goosegrass and smooth crabgrass control in creeping bentgrass is difficult due to a lack of selective herbicides. Based on preliminary field observations, we hypothesized that paclobutrazol and flurprimidol would reduce the overall competitiveness of goosegrass and smooth crabgrass in creeping bentgrass. Greenhouse and field studies were designed to evaluate the effect of several plant growth regulators (PGRs) on goosegrass and smooth crabgrass competitive indices. In greenhouse studies, flurprimidol, paclobutrazol, trinexapac-ethyl, and prohexadione-calcium were applied either preemergence only or preemergence plus two biweekly postemergence applications to goosegrass and smooth crabgrass plants to simulate the first 1.5 months of typical PGR programs utilized on golf courses. Two wk after the final postemergence treatment, above-ground biomass, and root biomass were recorded. Programmatic flurprimidol and paclobutrazol applications reduced smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass 67 and 69%, respectively, and more than trinexapac ethyl or prohexadione-calcium. When averaged across application programs, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced smooth crabgrass root biomass 74% and goosegrass biomass 73-80%. Field studies were established to further evaluate the influence of PGR on smooth crabgrass coverage in creeping bentgrass turf. Treatments consisting of flurprimidol, trinexapac-ethyl, flurprimidol plus trinexapac-ethyl, paclobutrazol, and fenoxaprop-p were applied every three wk from April to August. Weed coverage data were collected throughout the growing season, and final smooth crabgrass control data were collected at the end of the season. In general, flurprimidol-containing treatments more effectively reduced smooth crabgrass coverage throughout the growing season than trinexapac ethyl. After the studies, flurprimidol containing programs controlled smooth crabgrass 68-73%, greater than any other PGR program evaluated. Results from these studies indicate flurprimidol may be used to control smooth crabgrass or goosegrass in creeping bentgrass turf effectively. These are the first reported data regarding the use of flurprimidol for smooth crabgrass or goosegrass control in turf.

Nomenclature: Fenoxaprop-p; flurprimidol; paclobutrazol; prohexadione-calcium; trinexapac ethyl; goosegrass, *Eleusine indica* L. Gaertn.; smooth crabgrass, *Digitaria ischaemum* Schreb.; creeping bentgrass, *Agrostis stolonifera* L.

Key words: turfgrass, putting greens

Introduction

Goosegrass and smooth crabgrass are problematic weeds in creeping bentgrass putting greens due to a lack of selective herbicide options. Currently, only five preemergence herbicides are labeled for control of goosegrass and smooth crabgrass in creeping bentgrass putting greens. These include bensulide, dithiopyr, siduron, methiozolin, and oxadiazon. Although bensulide is generally safe for creeping bentgrass turfgrass (Callahan and McDonald, 1992) and effectively controls smooth crabgrass (Bingham and Schmidt, 1967), it marginally controls goosegrass (Johnson 1982). Oxadiazon is commonly used for goosegrass and smooth crabgrass control in creeping bentgrass putting greens when applied with bensulide. Potential for creeping bentgrass injury (Johnson 1987) and incidents of goosegrass resistance to oxadiazon (McElroy et al. 2017) have driven many turfgrass managers to seek alternative methods for goosegrass and smooth crabgrass control in creeping bentgrass putting greens. Although some studies indicate dithiopyr can be safely applied to creeping bentgrass putting greens (Dernoeden et al. 1993; Johnson 1994), it is rarely utilized by turfgrass managers due to restrictions on most product labels and the potential for stress-associated creeping bentgrass injury (Bhowmik and Bingham 1990; Hart et al. 2004). Brewer and Askew (2021) found that siduron selectively controls smooth crabgrass when applied bi-weekly at 5.6 kg ai ha^{-1}. However, siduron registration was not renewed during a recent review by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA 2018). Methiozolin is a newly registered herbicide that is labeled for goosegrass and smooth crabgrass control in creeping bentgrass putting greens (Anonymous 2021). Creeping bentgrass putting green safety has been well-documented with methiozolin (Askew 2017; Askew and McNulty 2014; Hoisington et al. 2014; McCullough et al. 2013). And methiozolin selectively controls goosegrass and smooth crabgrass when applied frequently preemergence (Peppers et al. 2024). However, methiozolin may be cost prohibitive for some turfgrass managers. In addition to recent work on methiozolin (Peppers et al. 2024), other herbicides such as fenoxaprop-p ethyl and topramezone, have successfully controlled smooth crabgrass or goosegrass when applied frequently at low doses on creeping bentgrass putting greens (Brewer and Askew 2021). This frequent treatment schedule for low doses of selected herbicides is similar to how plant growth regulators are used on golf greens.

https://doi.org/10.1017/wet.2024.32 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Plant growth regulators (PGRs) are regularly utilized for turfgrass growth suppression, increasing turfgrass green color, enhancing abiotic stress tolerance, increasing turfgrass stand density, and reduced plant water usage (Baldwin et al. 2009; Beam and Askew 2005; King et al. 1997; McCarty et al. 2011; McCullough et al. 2005). Paclobutrazol, ethephon, and flurprimidol are also regularly utilized for selective annual bluegrass (*Poa annua* L.) seedhead suppression (Askew 2017; Peppers et al. 2021; Reicher et al. 2020) or control (Johnson and Murphy 1995; Reicher et al. 2015) in turf. These PGRs reduce the competitive advantage of annual bluegrass relative to creeping bentgrass (Johnson and Murphy 1996). Whitwell and Lowe (1999) evaluated goosegrass and large crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis* L.) suppression via several PGRs applied postemergence, including trinexapac-ethyl, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol. No PGR evaluated reduced goosegrass or large crabgrass height greater than bermudagrass in this study. However, no peer-reviewed literature has evaluated these PGRs applied preemergence on goosegrass or smooth crabgrass.

In a long-term preliminary PGR study, Dernoeden (1982) observed that plots of Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.) turfgrass treated with two yearly applications of flurprimidol had significantly less smooth crabgrass coverage than nontreated and mefluidide-treated plots. Although this observation was not further investigated by Dernoeden in any subsequent peer-reviewed literature, these results suggest that flurprimidol may have herbicidal activity on smooth crabgrass. In a preliminary study, Sawyer et al. (1983) observed a reduction in crabgrass (*Digitaria* spp.) establishment following applications of paclobutrazol and flurprimidol. No peer-reviewed literature was subsequently published, further investigating the potential for smooth crabgrass control in turfgrass with paclobutrazol or flurprimidol. However, many subsequent studies have demonstrated the preemergence efficacy of paclobutrazol and flurprimidol on plant germination. Several researchers have found that flurprimidol reduces creeping bentgrass and annual bluegrass germination when applied preemergence (Gaussoin and Branham 1987; Haley and Fermanian 1989). Paclobutrazol inhibits the seed germination of many species of vegetables and other horticultural crops (Koukourikou-Petridou, 1996; Mage and Powell, 1990; Pressman and Shaked, 1988).

Based on existing literature, we hypothesized that programmatic applications of flurprimidol or paclobutrazol will reduce smooth crabgrass and goosegrass coverage on creeping

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bentgrass putting greens, likely through residual effects on germinating seedlings or postemergence suppression of weedy grasses to favor improved turfgrass density. Therefore, studies were designed to evaluate four PGRs commonly utilized in creeping bentgrass putting greens for their effects on goosegrass and smooth crabgrass growth when applied prior to weed emergence and when multiple treatments are extended through the summer season.

Materials and Methods

Goosegrass and smooth crabgrass greenhouse response to preemergence-applied PGRs

Four greenhouse studies were conducted between winter 2021 and spring 2022 to evaluate smooth crabgrass and goosegrass foliar growth and root development in response to four PGRs applied either once preemergence or thrice biweekly. Two studies evaluated smooth crabgrass, while the other two evaluated goosegrass. All studies were repeated in time and space. Trials were arranged as randomized complete block designs with six replications and nine treatments that included an embedded four-by-two factorial arrangement with four levels of PGR treatment and two levels of application program compared to a non-treated control. The four levels of PGR treatment were flurprimidol (Cutless® MEC, SePro Corp, Carmel IN) applied at 280 g ai ha^{-1}, paclobutrazol (Trimmit® 2SC, Syngenta Crop Protection LLC, Greensboro, NC) applied at 280 g ai ha^{-1}, trinexapac-ethyl (PrimoMaxx®, Syngenta Crop Protection LLC, Greensboro, NC) applied at 53 g ai ha^{-1}, and prohexadione-calcium (Anuew™, Nufarm Americas Inc., Morrisville, NC) applied at 154 g ai ha^{-1}. The two levels of the application program were a single application made one-hour following seeding and a single application made one hour after seeding followed by two additional biweekly applications to simulate a PGR reapplication schedule typically employed by golf course superintendents.

Approximately 50 goosegrass seeds and approximately 100 smooth crabgrass seeds were seeded into 4.4 by 7.6 by 12.7 cm pots containing a 2:1 sand to native soil mixture. The native soil admixture was a Groseclose-Urban land complex loam (clayey, mixed, mesic Typic Hapludults) with a pH of 6.0 and 3.1% organic matter. All plants were fertilized with ~25 kg N ha^{-1} approximately one wk after germination to maintain proper plant growth. Irrigation was supplied twice daily to prevent plant wilt. Supplemental lighting of 750 µmol s^{-1} photosynthetically active radiation (PAR) via sodium halide lights was set to a 14-hr daylength throughout the studies. Greenhouse day/night temperatures were maintained at 29/24 °C. All

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treatments were applied with a CO_2-pressurized backpack sprayer calibrated to deliver 374 L ha^{-1} at 331 kPa via TTI11004 nozzles (TeeJet Technologies, Spraying Systems Co., Wheaton, IL). Following application, all pots were allowed to dry for two hours before applying ~3 mm of overhead irrigation. Two wk following the final application, above-ground biomass, and root biomass were measured. Above-ground biomass was collected and dried at 50°C for 72 hours prior to weighing. Root biomass was removed from each pot, washed clean of all debris, then dried at 50°C for 72 hours and weighed. The dried roots were then ashed in a muffle furnace at 500 C for ~8 hr. The weight of the resulting matter was then weighed and subtracted from the measured root dry weight. Data were subjected to ANOVA via SAS 9.4 (Systat Software) with sums of squares partitioned to reflect the four by two factorial treatment design and trial effects as previously described. Appropriate means were separated with Fisher's protected least significant difference (LSD) test at $\alpha = 0.05$.

Field evaluation of smooth crabgrass and creeping bentgrass as affected by PGRs

Three field studies were conducted between 2022 and 2023 in Blacksburg, VA (37.22°N, 80.41°W) to evaluate smooth crabgrass control in creeping bentgrass using PGRs. Two trials were conducted at the Virginia Tech Turfgrass Research Center (TRC) and one at the Glade Road Research Facility (GRRF). The two trials at the TRC were conducted on an 'L93' creeping bentgrass putting green maintained at 3.2 mm in 2022 (TRC1) and 2023 (TRC2). The trial conducted at GRRF was conducted in 2023 on an 'L93' creeping bentgrass fairway maintained at 12.7 mm. All trials were arranged as randomized complete block designs with six treatments and four replications. The treatments evaluated were: flurprimidol (140 g ai ha^{-1}; Cutless MEC® SePro Corp.), trinexapac-ethyl (52.6 g ai ha^{-1}; Primo Maxx® Syngenta Crop Protection LLC), flurprimidol plus trinexapac-ethyl (Legacy® SePro Corp.), paclobutrazol (175 g ai ha^{-1}; Trimmit 2SC® Syngenta Crop Protection LLC), fenoxaprop-p (17.5 g ai ha^{-1}; Acclaim Extra® Bayer Environmental Science), and a nontreated control plot. Flurprimidol and paclobutrazol application rates were less than the rates utilized in the greenhouse study to reduce turfgrass injury potential throughout the growing season. Applications were done via CO_2-pressurized sprayer calibrated to deliver 375 L ha^{-1} at 330 kPa. All treatments were applied every three wk, beginning prior to weed emergence (~April 15), throughout the growing season, for seven total applications per season. All treated plots received ~4 mm of irrigation ~2 hr following application to wash flurprimidol and paclobutrazol treatments to the root system while also allowing for foliar absorption of trinexapac-ethyl and fenoxaprop-p. Smooth crabgrass coverage and creeping bentgrass injury were visually evaluated throughout the growing season as a percentage in which 0% equals no weed presence or turfgrass injury and 100% equals complete weed coverage or complete turfgrass death. At the conclusion of the studies (~August 30), smooth crabgrass coverage was assessed via line-intersect grids with 196 assessments per plot. Final assessments of weed control were extrapolated from the line-intersect counts by comparing weed coverage in the nontreated control in each replication versus the coverage in each treated plot. To control for variance structure in repeated measures over time, smooth crabgrass coverage data were transformed to the daily area under the progress curve (AUPC) (Askew et al. 2013). The area under the resulting curves was calculated by equation 1:

$$\mathrm{AUPC} = \Sigma^{ni\text{-}1}(((y_i + y_{i+1})/2)*(t_{i+1}\text{-}ti)) \qquad [1]$$

where y_i is response variable y at the ith observation, t_i is d after initial application at the ith observation, and n is the number of observations. The resulting AUPC was then converted to AUPC d^{-1} by dividing AUPC by the total number of d spanned by assessments. Similarly, creeping bentgrass injury data were expressed as the number of d over an injury threshold of 20% (DOT_{20}). These injury DOT_{20} values were calculated assuming linear trends in changes to creeping bentgrass injury between assessment dates. All data were subjected to ANOVA via SAS 9.4 (Systat Software) to test for significance between trial locations and treatments with appropriate means separated using Fisher's protected LSD at α=0.05. The nontreated control plot data were excluded from the analysis for the end-of-season smooth crabgrass control data.

Results and Discussion

Goosegrass and smooth crabgrass response to PRE-applied PGRs in a controlled environment

The trial-by-treatment interaction on smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass was insignificant (P= 0.654), therefore, above-ground biomass data were pooled over the two greenhouse trials. The PGR and application program main effects, and PGR by application program interaction were significant (P= <0.0001, 0.025, and 0.036, respectively). Single preemergence applications of flurprimidol, paclobutrazol, and trinexapac-ethyl reduced smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass 34, 37, and 17% relative to the nontreated control, respectively

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(Table 1). Single preemergence prohexadione-calcium applications did not reduce smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass compared to the other PGR treatments. Turfgrass response to prohexadione-calcium varies depending on species when the product is applied to actively growing foliage (Beam and Askew 2005), but plant response to preemergence treatments has not been reported. For all PGR treatments except trinexapac-ethyl, two additional biweekly applications reduced smooth crabgrass biomass compared to single preemergence applications. Three biweekly applications of flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass 67 and 69% relative to the nontreated control, respectively, and more than trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium. Three biweekly applications of trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium reduced smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass compared to the nontreated control similarly (21 and 33%, respectively). Trinexapac-ethyl was the only PGR where additional applications did not further decrease smooth crabgrass above-ground biomass.

The main effect of PGR was significant for smooth crabgrass root biomass ($P = 0.0002$), and this was not influenced by the interacting effects of the trial ($P= 0.185$) or application program ($P = 0.381$). Multiple PGR applications did not reduce root biomass compared to single preemergence applications. This lack of application program effect was expected from trinexapac ethyl and prohexadione-calcium since they had minimal impact on foliar biomass and did not reduce root biomass more than 15% (Table 1). The lack of a differential effect on root biomass from flurprimidol and paclobutrazol was surprising since these products applied sequentially reduced foliar biomass to approximately half that of plants treated only once (Table 1). Apparently, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol are highly effective at reducing root biomass regardless of the number of treatments, as they reduced smooth crabgrass root biomass by 74% on average compared to the nontreated control (Table 1).

The effect of the trial on goosegrass above-ground biomass was also insignificant ($P = 0.681$). Therefore, data are pooled over trials. The main effects of PGR and application program on goosegrass above-ground biomass were significant ($P = 0.008$ and $P = 0.029$), with no significant interaction ($P = 0.191$). Like smooth crabgrass, trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium had limited effect on goosegrass growth regardless of application program. When averaged over both application programs, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced goosegrass above-ground biomass 66 and 59% relative to the nontreated control, respectively (Table 1).

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Trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium reduced goosegrass above-ground biomass 24 and 19% relative to the nontreated control, respectively. Single and sequential PGR applications reduced goosegrass above-ground biomass 28 and 56% relative to the nontreated control, respectively, and were significantly different (data not shown).

The main effect of PGR was the only significant effect on goosegrass root biomass reduction (P = 0.029). When averaged across application programs, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced goosegrass root biomass 80 and 73%, respectively (Table 1). Conversely, trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium only reduced goosegrass root biomass 27 and 24%, respectively.

Results from this study indicate flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduce smooth crabgrass and goosegrass above-ground and root biomass more than trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium. Previous research indicates trinexapac-ethyl will not affect or increases rooting of other grass species (McCarty et al. 2011; McCullough et al. 2005). Prohexadione-calcium is similar to trinexapac-ethyl as both are late-stage GA-inhibitors in the same chemical family (Beam and Askew 2005; Nakayama et al. 1992). Previous research also indicates limited influence of trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium on goosegrass and crabgrass species specifically. Henry et al. (2020) observed low growth regulation (14-30%) of goosegrass and moderate regulation of large crabgrass (*Digitaria sanguinalis* L.) (40-49%) with trinexapac-ethyl and prohexadione-calcium. Additionally, preliminary research indicates that trinexapac-ethyl can even increase goosegrass growth in creeping bentgrass turfgrass systems (Diehl and Elmore 2024). Conversely, paclobutrazol and flurprimidol can decrease root biomass in turfgrass (Fagerness and Yelverton 2001; Hanson and Branham 1987). Although flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced weed root biomass significantly in this study, the reduction was not comparable to typical preemergence herbicides such as dinitroanilines (Bhowmik and Bingham 1990; Johnson 1996). In these studies, however, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced smooth crabgrass and goosegrass root biomass more than previously reported in creeping bentgrass (~20% reduction) (Fagerness and Yelverton 2001). Additionally, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol reduced weed above-ground biomass ~65% while paclobutrazol reduces creeping bentgrass above-ground growth ~50% in a previous study by Kreuser et al. (2018). Results from these studies corroborate the limited goosegrass and smooth crabgrass growth regulation observed following trinexapac ethyl or prohexadione-calcium treatment in previous literature, but these are the first data presented comparing root and foliar growth of goosegrass and smooth crabgrass in response to flurprimidol and paclobutrazol. These data indicated that flurprimidol or paclobutrazol may reduce the competitiveness of smooth crabgrass and goosegrass in creeping bentgrass suggesting that further field evaluations were warranted.

Field evaluation of smooth crabgrass and creeping bentgrass as affected by PGRs

The trial-by-treatment interaction was significant for smooth crabgrass AUPC d^{-1} ($P < 0.0001$); therefore, the three trials are presented separately. An increase in smooth crabgrass cover at TRC1 likely reduced treatment performance and contributed to the trial interaction. For example, trinexapac ethyl smooth crabgrass AUPC $d^{-1}$was equivalent to nontreated turfgrass at TRC1 but differed at the other two locations. Flurprimidol + trinexapac also performed inconsistently across locations as it decreased smooth crabgrass AUPC d^{-1} compared to trinexapac ethyl at TRC1 and GRRF, but not at TRC2 (Table 2). TRC2 received more frequent applications of preventative fungicides and was maintained with ~60% greater N fertility (data not shown). Trinexapac-ethyl is commonly applied to improve creeping bentgrass quality (Fagerness et al. 2002; King et al. 1997; Kreuser and Soldat 2011) and may have increased competitiveness of creeping bentgrass against smooth crabgrass at TRC2. Trinexapac-ethyl suppressed smooth crabgrass early in the growing season similar to other treatments at this location resulting in lower AUPC d^{-1} at TRC2 relative to other trial locations. Despite these differences, the mean rank at TRC2 and GRRF were similar for all treatments and both fenoxaprop-p and flurprimidol consistently yielded the lowest smooth crabgrass AUPC d^{-1} at all sites.

It should be noted that all of these sites had smooth crabgrass infestation levels that resulted in nearly complete smooth crabgrass coverage late season (data not shown). Evidence of high weed pressure lies in the smooth crabgrass coverage AUPC d^{-1}, which was 44 to 59% depending on site. Considering that the season starts with no smooth crabgrass and considerable time is needed for smooth crabgrass population expansion, these AUPC d^{-1} values would necessitate over 70% late-season smooth crabgrass coverage at all sites. Although smooth crabgrass AUPC d^{-1} following paclobutrazol treatment were always numerically twice that of flurprimidol or fenoxaprop-p, paclobutrazol plots had statistically equivalent AUPC d^{-1} compared to flurprimidol and fenoxaprop-p at two of the three locations (Table 2).

The trial-by-treatment interaction for end-of-season smooth crabgrass control was insignificant ($P= 0.193$), while the treatment main effect was significant ($P < 0.0001$); therefore, all end-of-season smooth crabgrass control data were pooled over sites. Fenoxaprop-p controlled smooth crabgrass 95% and greater than all other treatments (Table 2). However, fenoxaprop-p was the only treatment that significantly increased creeping bentgrass injury DOT_{20} compared to the nontreated (17 d; data not shown). Averaged across all site-years, flurprimidol alone and in conjunction with trinexapac-ethyl controlled smooth crabgrass 76 and 68%, respectively, and greater than all other PGR treatments. Although greenhouse studies indicated paclobutrazol should suppress smooth crabgrass similarly to flurprimidol, late-season smooth crabgrass control by paclobutrazol was 46%, which was less than that of flurprimidol and more that of trinexapac-ethyl (18%). The differential response of late-season smooth crabgrass to paclobutrazol and flurprimidol appears to conflict with season-long AUPC data where both PGRs collectively controlled smooth crabgrass equivalently. Responses following the two PGR treatments diverged only at the end of the season. Potentially greater creeping bentgrass suppression with paclobutrazol during periods of heat stress may have limited late-season competition between creeping bentgrass and smooth crabgrass. Although paclobutrazol has been reported to injure creeping bentgrass during summer heat (Baldwin and Brede 2011), visible evidence of creeping bentgrass injury was not apparent in the current study.

These results indicate flurprimidol-containing treatments will more effectively suppress smooth crabgrass throughout the growing season in creeping bentgrass than other PGR treatments, particularly trinexapac-ethyl. These results are consistent with previous literature in which flurprimidol effectively suppressed grass species when applied preemergence (Gaussoin and Branham 1987; Haley and Fermanian 1989). Although flurprimidol and paclobutrazol share a similar mode of action (Ervin and Zhang 2008), peer-reviewed literature evaluating paclobutrazol on grass germination is lacking. Several published studies have detailed germination inhibition via paclobutrazol but are limited to broadleaf plant species (Koukourikou-Petridou, 1996; Mage and Powell, 1990; Pasian and Bennett 2001; Pressman and Shaked, 1988). Conversely, flurprimidol reduces grass species germination (Gaussoin and Branham 1987; Haley

https://doi.org/10.1017/wet.2024.32 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and Fermanian 1989). It is possible that the difference in smooth crabgrass control between paclobutrazol and flurprimidol is a difference in selectivity. However, paclobutrazol and flurprimidol similarly affected smooth crabgrass in the greenhouse. It is more likely that the difference in smooth crabgrass control with paclobutrazol and flurprimidol was due to differential late-season creeping bentgrass suppression between the two growth regulators.

Practical Implications

Results from these studies indicate programmatic flurprimidol use can significantly reduce smooth crabgrass and goosegrass invasion into creeping bentgrass turf. In the US transition zone, trinexapac-ethyl is commonly utilized on creeping bentgrass turfgrass in the summer months to increase putting green speed, color, and root mass (Fagerness et al. 2002; King et al. 1997; Kreuser and Soldat 2011). Conversely, flurprimidol and paclobutrazol are often avoided due to perceived injury risks to creeping bentgrass in warmer, transition zone summers as was observed by Baldwin and Brede (2011). However, neither paclobutrazol nor flurprimidol unacceptably injured creeping bentgrass in this research, which is consistent with previous literature (Koski 1994; Petelewicz 2021; Reicher et al. 2015). Many turfgrass managers include early-GA-inhibiting PGRs with trinexapac-ethyl applications to prolong creeping bentgrass growth suppression while maintaining the physiological benefits associated with trinexapac-ethyl applications (Kreuser et al. 2018). Results from these studies indicate flurprimidol and trinexapac-ethyl applied in conjunction controls smooth crabgrass as effectively as flurprimidol applied alone. Likewise, paclobutrazol increased smooth crabgrass control more than trinexapac ethyl, but not as much as flurprimidol containing programs. Although goosegrass was not evaluated in the field studies, goosegrass responded similarly to smooth crabgrass in the greenhouse studies. It can be inferred that flurprimidol may control goosegrass similarly to smooth crabgrass. Preliminary observations from McElroy et al. (2018) indicate flurprimidol can effectively reduce goosegrass coverage within creeping bentgrass putting greens. These are the first published data regarding using flurprimidol or paclobutrazol for selective control of smooth crabgrass or goosegrass in creeping bentgrass turf.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Mr. John Hinson for maintaining research plots in Blacksburg, VA.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests

Competing interests: the authors declare none.

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Table 1. Influence of plant growth regulator (PGR) and application program (single (PRE) or three biweekly applications (PRE + POST)) on smooth crabgrass and goosegrass above-ground and root biomass percent reduction relative to the nontreated control in a greenhouse study.

	Biomass reduction									
	Smooth crabgrass						Goosegrass			
	Above-ground				Root		Above-ground		Root	
PGR[a]	PRE		PRE + POST							
	%									
Flurprimidol	34	a**[bc]	67	a**	74	a	66	a	80	a
Paclobutrazol	37	a**	69	a**	74	a	59	a	73	a
Prohexadione-calcium	-12	b**	33	b**	3	b	19	b	24	b
Trinexapac ethyl	17	b	21	b	15	b	24	b	27	b

[a] Flurprimidol, paclobutrazol, prohexadione-calcium, and trinexapac-ethyl treatments were applied at 280, 280, 154, and 53 g ai ha^{-1}, respectively. Approximately 3 mm of irrigation was applied two hours after application to ensure root uptake of flurprimidol and paclobutrazol.

[b] Different letters following means indicate significant differences between means within a given column. Negative values indicate an increase relative to the nontreated whereas positive values indicate a decrease relative to the non-treated.

[c] Letters followed by ** indicate significant differences between application programs within a given PGR treatment.

https://doi.org/10.1017/wet.2024.32 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Table 2. Influence of treatment on smooth crabgrass (*Digitaria ischaemum* Schreb.) coverage area under the progress curve d^{-1} (AUPCD) and end-of-season control.

Treatment[d]	Rate[e]	Coverage AUPCD[a]						End-of-season control[b]	
		TRC1[c]		TRC2		GRRF			
		%							
Nontreated	-	59	a[f]	45	a	44	a	-	-
Fenoxaprop-p	17.5	3	d	0	c	6	c	95	a
Flurprimidol	140	12	c	6	c	8	c	73	b
Flurprimidol + trinexapac ethyl	140 + 52.6	22	b	10	bc	8	c	68	b
Paclobutrazol	175	26	b	14	bc	19	bc	46	c
Trinexapac ethyl	52.6	58	a	24	b	30	b	18	d

[a] Area under the progress curve d^{-1} (AUPCD) was calculated by assuming linear changes in smooth crabgrass coverage between rating assessments.

[b] End-of-season smooth crabgrass control was derived via line-intersect counts taken at the conclusion of the trial (~August 30) and compared to the nontreated within a given replication.

[c] Trials at TRC1 and TRC2 were conducted on ‘L93’ creeping bentgrass putting greens maintained at 3.2 mm and trial at GRRF was conducted on an ‘L93’ creeping bentgrass fairway maintained at 12.7 mm.

[d] Approximately 4 mm of irrigation was applied ~2 hr following application to allow for root uptake of flurprimidol and paclobutrazol according to label recommendations.

[e] All rates are expressed as g ai ha^{-1}.

[f] Letters following means denote significant differences between means within a given column.

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