

# Don't call it a comeback!

More warm-season supers have embraced **Tower® herbicide** again as resistance issues and regulatory restrictions have limited the effectiveness of other products. Here's why use of this proven herbicide is surging again.

By Pat Jones

Evansville Country Club, Evansville, Indiana

**Managing warm-season turf presents plenty of challenges. The last things most superintendents need are weed resistance problems or regulatory issues. Yet that's exactly what's happened over the past few years as pre-emergence weed control options have dwindled down south.**

**Where have turf pros turned to get control of invasive *Poa annua*, goosegrass and doveweed? For many, the solution has been Tower® herbicide from BASF.**

**Here's a refresher on Tower and why it's made a big comeback...despite the fact that it never really went away.**

## TOWER BASICS

Why has Tower recently grown in importance as an option for warm-season pre-emergent control? We asked BASF senior tech services representative Kyle Miller: "With *Poa annua* becoming an even bigger problem during the winter months on southern turf, Tower fills an important void left by problems like *Poa* resistance and restrictions placed on oxadiazon."

Miller also points out that Tower remains a popular way to deliver top-notch pre-emergent goosegrass control. He also notes that, "Even though control of sedge species is usually a post-emergent activity, Tower offers pre-emergent control of many sedges."

What makes it so effective? "Tower is a different mode of action, and it is also a shoot inhibitor vs. a root inhibitor, like many pre-emergents. That's why it works on Goosegrass so well."

So, the science has always supported Tower's effectiveness. But how are superintendents using it in today's environment? We spoke with turf pros using it for different situations in different areas.



Camp Creek Golf Course, Inlet Beach, Florida

## IN THE ZONE

Indiana may not jump out as a warm-season weed management hotspot until you consider that Evansville CC is actually well south of Louisville. Longtime superintendent Jeff Sexton wanted better Poa control for his fairways.

"Gary Myers (his BASF territory manager) came and visited and brought Tower to my attention. We had the budget for it, so I thought we'd give it a try," says Sexton. He'd used other products and felt like



**Jeff Sexton**  
Superintendent at Evansville Country Club

results were mixed in terms of injury and length of control. So, he tried Tower on his zoysiagrass.

"I kind of reversed things and did Tower in November and then came back in late January and put another product down to get us through to the Poa germination phase into the spring."

And the results so far? "Excellent, really excellent," says Sexton. "I think the change in active ingredient made a difference. We didn't have the Poa breakthrough on the latter end like other applications we'd made, and we didn't have to worry about root-pruning." The goal was for Tower to last long enough to bridge into one last app. Did it work?

***"There's no question it's working. Our critical time is the end of March when the Poa emergence starts a second wave. If I can keep it out through then, then Tower will really be a win."***



Untreated; 2024



Treated with  
Tower® Herbicide; 2024

Dr. Jim Brosnan, University of Tennessee

## TARGETING EARLY POST-EMERGE

The Florida panhandle gets a little bit of everything thrown its way and, like most supers in the area, Zach Tolleson is used to finding new ways to control Poa breakthroughs. For him, Tower was more of a post-emerge extension to prevent breakthroughs in the fall.

"We started using Tower again here at Camp Creek because our Poa window is so long. I use it primarily in September at the full rate as an early post-emerge on Poa," says Tolleson. "I just spray Tower in early September at full rate. I do one shot."

Why is it right for him? "It's not a root pruner and it has early post on Poa." He uses Tower on all of

his Platinum paspalum surfaces, which is basically everywhere but his TifEagle greens.

For him, the high rate is the way to go. **“Don’t expect to have the same post action if you go with the lower rate,”** he says.

## A NATURAL FIT

“There’s been so much change within our industry and people are scrambling to make good decisions about their pre-emerge programs,” says Chris Key, senior sales specialist for BASF T&O in central Florida.

***“As other products wane, it’s an even better opportunity for Tower. It’s just a natural fit in some of those shoulder areas.”***

Poa in bermuda is definitely the biggest issue in his region. How do people get ahead of Poa outbreaks? **“It’s a 12-month program. You cannot let your guard down. Most supers start in August or September.”**

Key says goosegrass is also a year-round battle. **“We’ve had such mild winters recently that goosegrass doesn’t go completely dormant. Many of my customers are starting control as early as late February. There just isn’t a clear finish line anymore.”**



**Chris Key**  
BASF Senior Sales Specialist



**The Amelia River Club, Amelia Island, Florida**

## KEEP IT IN THE GROUND

In over a quarter-century as a superintendent, Jason Wilson of The Amelia River Club learned that there are seasons for managing Poa and goosegrass. **“You kind of get one shot and if you miss it, you have to wait a year. It’s a critical window.”** He struggled with that when he first came to the club and finally brought in Dr. Jim Brosnan from University of Tennessee to take a look. Dr. Brosnan found the Poa had developed resistance to several active ingredients. That’s when Wilson discovered Tower. **“It can fit into that transitional role for goosegrass and help bridge a gap, and it works very well on Poa annua.”**

They tested Tower and FreeHand® 1.75G herbicide (a granular combination of dimethenamid-P and pendimethalin) over the course of two years on a couple of Amelia’s fairways. **“When the study was done, they found everywhere they used Tower and Freehand it was clean as a whistle.”** Ultimately, Wilson concluded that Tower was a great “bridging” product to continue protection between apps of other actives.

**“Because of resistance concerns, Poa annua really can’t be allowed to emerge anymore. The goal is to keep it in the ground with a complete program. If you start the job and don’t finish it, you’re inviting bigger problems later,”** he says. **“That’s why I like Tower in my program.”**

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