

The BASF logo, consisting of a square with a smaller square inside, followed by the letters "BASF" in a bold, sans-serif font.

We create chemistry

A wide-angle photograph of a golf course green with a lake in the background. Two people are visible on the green. The sky is clear and blue.

BULLETPROOF

The data is in and **Maxtima® fungicide** and **Navicon® Intrinsic® brand fungicide** have earned rave reviews from superintendents and enthusiastic recommendations from salespeople.



by *Pat Jones*

About two years ago, I was on the phone with Dr. Jim Kerns, Dr. Bruce Clarke and other legends of plant pathology, digging into the testing and trials of two new BASF products: **Maxtima** fungicide and **Navicon Intrinsic** brand fungicide.

They were excited about the promise of the new DMI chemistry, but obviously the proof would be in how it performed in the field. The article I wrote then explained why the new products held some promise for superintendents looking for an effective dollar spot solution that didn't have the risks that some DMIs can present.

Now here we are in 2020, the craziest of years, and I can add one more unusual thing to the list of stuff that's happened: The reviews of **Maxtima** fungicide and **Navicon Intrinsic** brand fungicide have actually exceeded the high expectations.

In July, I fielded my own independent study to find out if superintendents actually liked the products or not. The results were remarkable, particularly considering how cautious turf pros are about committing to new products. Here's what we learned:

- An amazing 85% of the superintendents surveyed who have used the products said they were "likely" or "highly likely" to recommend them to their colleagues.
- Dollar spot is an important target, but many users (38%) embraced it as an effective broad spectrum rotation tool.
- Nearly 93% of users were pleased with the products thus far. A quarter of all users surveyed said they already consider it an important part of their disease control program.
- When asked to rate the value of **Maxtima** fungicide and **Navicon Intrinsic** brand fungicide overall, supers gave it 4.1 stars out of 5.

I've never seen numbers like this for a new chemical in our business. I think the launch was successful because of the extent of the testing and the reputation of the turf scientists who conducted the trials. Local distributor reps were involved in research from early on, quickly gaining confidence in the product and recommending it because they saw the need for a new DMI. And, as indicated in my study, the products performed as advertised from the get-go. The bottom line is, everyone is jazzed about the longer spray intervals and, of course, the ability to use it safely with PGRs.



To drill down on the results of my study, I reached out to experienced superintendents and distributors for specifics about how the products are performing.

I asked Lance Rogers of the venerable Colonia Country Club to describe his experience with the product in one word:

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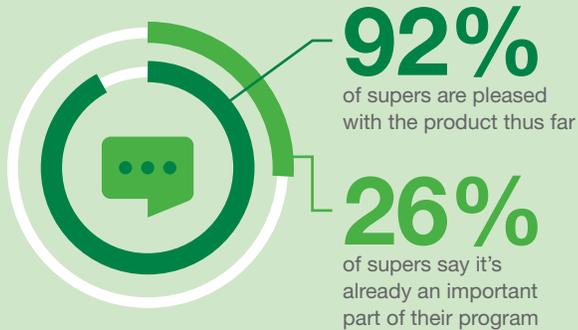
Clean. When I say clean, I mean one hundred percent clean. I put **Navicon** [**Intrinsic** brand fungicide] out about July 6. 17 days later, I sprayed again. My fairways were still clean. No brown patch, no dollar spot. It's healthier than it was previous to the spray. And that's with nearly 4 inches of rain, high dew points and humidity. The fairways were incredible. I probably could have even gone longer, but I wanted to stick with my rotation.

“It's been five years since I used a DMI in the summer and I'm sold on it. I spray it with PGRs every time and it's been perfect. I was also losing efficacy from SDHIs, so **Maxtima** [fungicide] makes those products more valuable. It's going to be part of our program for a long time.



Lance Rogers
Colonia Country Club

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Alan Corbin of Corbin Turf in the Carolinas said it got his attention two years ago when so many great turf researchers were giving it a thumbs up.

“When PhDs like Bruce Martin, Jim Kerns, Bruce Clarke and Rick Latin all say the product is great, you have to sit up and pay attention. Plus, it's obviously a very rare thing to have a DMI you can use in the summer. I was so impressed that all those professors said **Maxtima** [fungicide] had zero problem[s] with growth regulation.

“I'm pretty cautious about new products, but I have zero hesitancy recommending this one. Overall, everybody who tried it anywhere this year has loved it. And the price is right, so it works for a lot of people as a broad spectrum control. Even courses with tighter budgets who were only spraying tees and greens can now afford to also spray maybe 10 acres for spring dead spot control in fairways. We also highly recommended it for fairy ring. The biggest thing overall for us down here is we have a new active we can trust in the heat.”

When I talked to him in August, Paul Dotti of the great old Arcola Country Club had just hosted the New Jersey state amateur — in the middle of a pandemic and a hurricane. It was crazy, but the one thing he didn't have to worry about was disease.

“For a long time, my go-to summer sprays have been BASF products. This year we added **Maxtima** [fungicide] to the mix as we prepared to host the amateur. We finally sprayed at day 22, right before the event. We probably could have pushed it longer, but I didn't want to spray during play. It was 90 [degrees] and humid, but it was still doing great. **Maxtima** [fungicide] was just bulletproof for 21 days during the toughest conditions you could imagine.

“Everybody has products that I like and it's really amazing that we have so many good products in our arsenal today. But I am excited to have an effective fungicide like **Maxtima** [fungicide] that I can use with one hundred percent confidence during any kind of weather.”

According to Noble Turf's Brian Bontemps, it's all about having a summertime weapon. “The biggest thing **Maxtima** [fungicide] offers is the ability to have a DMI in the summer. The efficacy and spectrum of it gives [you] a great summer patch product, as well as anthracnose control. And I've had no reports of problems, which is amazing considering my supers are saying these are the worst summer conditions they've faced in a long time.

“The fact that we can use the products at high rates and still get high efficacy and extended control with zero impact is such a big deal. And it's hard to imagine they'd come up with something better on [a] cost-per-acre basis. I see it continuing to be a core product for years to come and I can't wait until it's approved in New York.”



Jeff Gregos of Pennsylvania's E.H. Griffith, a rep with extensive experience in testing new products in the turf market, put the products through their paces before he ever recommended them to supers.

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I got the product pretty early, and because I have a background running trials, I tested it pretty thoroughly. I know everyone is shy about DMIs during the summer, so we had to prove turf safety and beyond for [users] to be comfortable [with] it through the summer. I went up to the 7x¹ rate at one site last summer. Temps were in the 90s and we still saw phenomenal results.

“There are so many examples where Maxtima [fungicide] is helping. Two of my customers have had anthracnose issues year in and year out — neither one saw it this year. We've seen the same thing with summer patch and obviously dollar spot too. What we haven't seen is any growth regulation, and I'm really impressed with the [turf] safety and efficacy. Most of my customers opted in right off the bat. It's definitely going to be a strong performer for years.

Jeff Gregos
E.H. Griffith

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Ryan Snowden, a second-generation super, said the convenience and labor-saving factor interested him right away. “When you see a new DMI come to the market, you obviously pay attention. When you can also spray it with growth regulators and it's safe [for the turf], that really gets your attention. I hate to spray when I can't put Primo in the tank because it's expensive and a hassle to do a second spray. We have 30 acres of fairways and it's essentially a two-day job to do a spray. That's why I want to put as much in a tank as I can.”

Snowden, who works with his famed father, Buddy, at North Carolina's Burlingame Country Club, hit his fairways with **Navicon Intrinsic** brand fungicide in early March to “clean things up a little” and got 30 days of control [over] brown patch and other early diseases. In summer he's targeting anthracnose and brown patch and getting the results he'd hoped for. “You pay for what you get. Some of the less expensive products work sometimes, and sometimes they don't. One of our goals on fairways is to get 21 days of control and we're getting it. It gives you more time between applications, more tank-mixing flexibility and BASF makes good products. I just feel like you get a lot of bang for the buck.”

Josh Kopera, the Harrell's rep for one of the “ground zero” disease regions in the northeast, is a believer.

“**Maxtima** [fungicide] delivers as promised and the price is really competitive considering the longer intervals. It's been a very trusted product for us. [Users] won't have to worry about a rescue and it has zero growth regulation effects.

“I also like it because it's a ‘softer’ chemistry. It does its job but doesn't get angry with the turf. You can't overlook that. Finally, the price point is amazing and BASF is a trusted name. It's going to be a valuable product for a lot of years to come.”

Jim Evans of The Cliffs of Keowee Falls in the mountains of South Carolina caught me off guard when I asked him if **Maxtima** [fungicide] met his expectations for the regional scourge of spring dead spot.

“No,” he says, pausing, “It did far better than I thought possible. The truth is I've had crappy results from every program I've tried to fix spring dead spot. It's absolutely not the biggest disease out there, but it's absolutely my biggest problem. I did my own research and I put **Maxtima** [fungicide] side by side with Posterity[®] [fungicide] on my worst fairway and compared them. There was zero spring dead spot on the **Maxtima** side — zero. I honestly didn't believe [it], so I repeated it and it happened again. My sole objective was to control this one disease and I feel kind of like I found a cure with the two products in combination.

“We're not shooting from the hip anymore. I know I can use **Maxtima** [fungicide] and Posterity [fungicide]. Best of all, I don't have the stress of trying to fight through spring dead spot as we come out of spring into big May and June. It's a win for us.”

Another leader who literally grew up in the turf business, Keith Kubik of New Jersey's Grass Roots, Inc., was impressed from day one.

“First, BASF set the gold standard for how to launch a product. They had the right researchers answering the right questions for us early on. And we got to see it in action in trials. When you see a turf picture and someone tells you it's safe to use in summer at high rates with a PGR, that's one thing. But when you're out on the plots and it's 95 degrees and you're sweating and the grass is still just smiling, you know you're seeing something special.

“Now it has to perform as promised and, from my perspective, I haven't gotten calls saying it doesn't and that's huge. I've been very, very pleased. In a heavy SDHI market, the ability to break up those sprays in the heat of the summer with a DMI has been huge. We lead with branded products and we love innovation, so **Maxtima** [fungicide] and **Navicon [Intrinsic brand fungicide]** fit perfectly. It's met and even exceeded our expectations, even as high as they were.”

Ready to add Maxtima fungicide and Navicon Intrinsic brand fungicide to your rotation?
Visit betterturf.basf.us for more information.

1. The 7x rate was applied by a person licensed in the state of Pennsylvania to apply pesticides for research and demonstration purposes and was applied in a limited quantity on a limited area for research purposes only.
Always read and follow label directions.

Based on a BASF survey of 183 responding product users, July 2020.
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