



Moonlighting in Turf Research

I am an assistant superintendent/spray tech at Pine Island Ridge C.C. in the Fort Lauderdale area. My work week, Monday through Thursday and Sunday morning, lends itself to having a second job.

While taking a plant pathology class at the University of Florida Research and Education Center in Fort Lauderdale, I was talking to another student about extra work.

She mentioned that on weekends she worked on campus in a research capacity. I thought to myself, "What better thing to do than be a research assistant for the University of Florida?" I mentioned my interest in turf and that I would even be willing to donate my time if necessary. She recommended that I talk to Dr. Phil Busey.

While attending the 1998 Turf Exposition at the FLREC campus I talked to Dr. Busey. He is a 22-year employee of the University specializing in turfgrass production and weed control. He was enthusiastic about my interest in working Friday to Sunday and my willingness to donate my time. That Friday I showed up ready to get started.

After spending a few hours getting acclimated, Dr. Busey gave me 240 abstracts (article summaries) on torpedograss, *Panicum repens* to go over and choose the most relevant articles on torpedograss control. BASF let Dr. Busey in the loop on its current quinclorac (Drive) trials for the control of torpedograss in bermudagrass at Broken Sound in Boca Raton. By the way, there have been some very promising results.

What else could you want for a first assignment? I spent the weekend going over the abstracts, which were filled with technical information. Even though I was donating my time I was learning. The next Friday Dr. Busey said he wanted to put me on the payroll.

Normally, on Fridays we visit local golf courses and talk to superintendents about weed control problems. If they have a weed they can't control, we make sure they have the proper identification and then discuss management options.



Dr. Phil Busey (left) hired John Rowland as a research assistant at the University of Florida's Ft. Lauderdale Research and Education Center after John volunteered to work on his days off. John is the Assistant Superintendent at the Pine Island Ridge CC in Ft. Lauderdale.

Dr. Busey and Diane Johnston, a biologist, compiled a list of "Herbicides and PGRs Labeled for Bermudagrass Turf in Florida" which we can use as a reference. Although we are primarily interested in weed control, we hear questions about other turf problems.

What valuable insights I am getting into the profession. It is also rewarding and educational to be able to participate with superintendents discussing their problems with Dr. Busey!

On Saturdays and Sundays I work primarily on weed-control experiments. One current project is the control of goosegrass in bermudagrass. We are comparing the effects of non-selective herbicides to selective herbicides.

A one-time crown treatment application of Round Up (glyphosate) spraying only on the center 3 inches of the plant compared to a complete saturation of the plant with MSMA/Sencor (metribuzin) using two applications two weeks apart showed similar control results.

However, we found that applying Round Up only as a crown treatment may cause less damage to the surrounding bermudagrass compared to spraying the entire plant (approximately a one foot diameter) with MSMA/Sencor.

I also do computer work for Dr. Busey. One job was to scan the minutes of the

1949-1959 Florida Association of Golf Course Superintendents meetings. This work will help preserve the minutes in full color detail for future generations to see.

I have a flexible schedule at the University of Florida. Dr. Busey is generous in allowing me access to information contained in his office. He even outfitted my desk with a computer.

The other researchers on the FLREC campus are also generous in their willingness to answer questions on subjects in their specialties.

I also have a great boss in John Troonin, the superintendent at Pine Island Ridge Country Club. He has never turned down my request to attend a seminar, superintendent meeting or other educational opportunity.

I appreciate his willingness to teach me the ins and outs of golf course management.

I hope to maintain my involvement with the University of Florida even after I become a superintendent because the link to the university and faculty is priceless!

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