

## Scotts acquires exclusive rights to gene gun

**M**ARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Company has announced a strategic alliance giving it exclusive marketing rights to turfgrass that has been genetically engineered using various technologies, including the biolistic process.

The biolistic process employs a "gene gun" to deliver DNA into turfgrass. Using this technology, Scotts will develop turfgrass varieties with improved characteristics such as resistance to disease, insects, and herbicides. The results will make it easier for turf managers and homeowners to grow healthy, thick turf with less need for insecticides, fungicides, and other treatments.

Scotts and Sanford Scientific, Inc. (SSI) reached a collaborative agreement this past year. John Sanford, Ph.D., principal of the Waterloo, N.Y.-based company, was principal inventor of the gene gun. SSI will work with Scotts to engineer improved turfgrass varieties. Scotts has been preparing a dedicated genetic engineering laboratory to conduct the program at the Dwight G. Scott Research Center here in Marysville. The program will be directed by Lisa Lee, Ph.D., who conducted research on genetic engineering of turfgrasses at the Center for Agricultural Molecular Biology, Cook College, Rutgers University before joining Scotts in December.

Initial work on the program at Scotts was directed by Virgil D. Meier, Ph.D., a 25-year Scotts veteran and one of the country's leading experts in turfgrass variety development. Meier received Scotts' annual John A. Long Excellence in research Award for his contributions in establishing the company's genetic engineering program.

"We are extremely excited about using this technology for genetic engineering of turfgrasses," said John Neal, Ph.D., vice president, Scotts Research and Development. "Employing genetic engineering in our program will allow our researchers to add desirable traits as well as speed up the process of turfgrass variety development."

With genetic engineering, it should take about half of the time previously required to create and market genetically improved turfgrass. This accelerated process should take only about seven years, compared to the 12 to 15 years previously required. In addition to introducing new traits into the plant varieties, this timetable also includes testing the new traits, followed by seed production for commercial release.

In her research at Rutgers University, Lee used the gene gun to conduct non-commercial genetic engineering of bentgrass. The Rutgers research team was successful in making a bentgrass variety resistant to a

widely used weed control product. That makes it possible to selectively control broadleaf weeds and grassy weeds, or even another turfgrass, without affecting the desirable turfgrass.

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**Virgil D. Meier, Ph.D., of The Scotts Co. recently received the John A. Long Excellence in Research Award.**

The peer-nominated award was presented at Scotts' annual research and Development awards banquet. The award acknowledges Meier's outstanding contributions in the field of turfgrass variety development,

including his work in establishing the company's genetic engineering program.

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Carlos Reyes and Charles Wise received scholarships from the O.M. Scott/Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) Scholarship Program. They were each awarded \$2,500. As part of the scholarship program and selection process both Reyes and Wise served as 1995 summer interns with Scotts.

Reyes, majoring in golf course management at the University

Continued on page 63

## Luper joins Golf Ventures sales team

**LAKELAND, Fla.** — John Luper has joined Golf Ventures, Inc. as territory manager for West Central Florida, where he will supply superintendents in a four-county area with agronomic advice and turf products from the Golf Ventures line.

A Certified Golf Course Superintendent, Luper was most recently employed as southeast sales manager for GreenTurf International, exclusive distributor for the water quality product pHair-

way. However, Luper has held a number of golf course positions. From 1983-90, he worked at Bardmoor Country Club in Largo, progressing from golf course superintendent to general manager.

At Bardmoor he was also responsible for overseeing construction of the Tom Fazio-designed Bayou Club course. Prior to joining Bardmoor, Luper was superintendent at a pair of Clearwater country clubs, Countryside and Clearwater.

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