Audubon hails supers' rising involvement

By MARK LESLIE

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ELKIRK, N.Y. — Citing "dramatic results" and a growing number of golf course members, Audubon International reports its Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System (ACSS) experienced a year of stability and strong member involvement in 1995.

"At an average of 120 or more acres per site, [golf courses] represent some of the most extensive sanctuary areas in the country," the ACSS Annual Program Report says. "ACSS members are literally transforming their courses to improve habitat, protect water sources, and reduce water and pesticide use."

"The [program's] momentum seems to be picking up more and more," said Audubon International President

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The Report Is In

Plastic spikes vs. metal and none

By G.W. HAMILTON, D.S. SINKUS, L.P. TREDWAY & A.E. GOVER

UNIVERSITY PARK, Pa. — Two studies have been conducted here at Penn State University evaluating the effects of three tread types on putting green turf wear, ball-roll distance, and ball-roll deflection.

The study found that tread types significantly affected ball-roll distance and caused an unacceptable amount of wear at certain traffic intensities on both types of root zones: all-sand and modified soil.

Deflection in ball-roll was rarely statistically different for tread types.

Another general observation: Metal spikes, because of the creation of the hole in the turf, made the traffic much more noticeable. Although the holes make the traffic more apparent, the effect on ball-roll may not be as significant as the effect on turf visual quality.

The study did show that shoe tread type does affect turf wear and ball-roll distance and deflection. However, the amount of thatch present, the root-zone soil texture, and amount of traffic can also significantly influence which type of shoe tread would be best for daily use.

The objectives of the first study were to evaluate the effects of tread type on turf wear and ball-roll distance. It was conducted at the Valentine Memorial Turfgrass Research Center here.

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Latshaw's poa attackus plan at Merion

By MARK LESLIE

ARDMORE—While his dad has been tackling major greens woes at Congressional Country Club, Paul Latshaw Jr. has faced obstacles of his own at Merion Country Club here and has made major strides in conquering poa annua problems.

The Merion superintendent said a combination of gassing the greens last September with methyl bromide, cover- ing the greens and applying heavy dormant feeding through the winter, and using a four-cultivar blend of bentgrasses that had his putting surfaces looking "pretty decent" for the May 18 opening. Now Latshaw and his crew are faced with the real chore: keeping poa annua from again invading this famous golf course.

His plan? A multidimensional approach that will include hand-picking this first year, a possible pre-emergent herbicide application in the fall to prevent poa from germinating, a future use of plant growth regulators to inhibit poa seed-head production, and a move to plastic-spiked golf shoes.

PHASE ONE

Latshaw credited much of the success in the grow-in phase of his greens renovation to extensive fumigation.

"There are a lot of things in our favor because we fumigated so far out," he said, explaining that crews not only fumigated the greens but also at least 30 feet out into the rough.

"This was the first golf course the Merion superintendent had fumigated in 25 years," the Superintendent said. "It has made a big difference in the turf quality."

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Mercion success

Continued from page 15: "The greens are doing so well," said Latshaw. "If I had to do it over, I probably would have gone even farther out," he said. "Poa that tracks in from the fairways will be an issue, but we have the right approaches and we can deal with it better there because it's at a higher height of cut."

Now, the chore is to keep the greens healthy and fight off any invasion of poa annua. "I'm going to rely heavily on my consultants," said Latshaw, who has sought advice from, among others, Penn State's Dr. Thomas Watschke, among other issues; University of Maryland plant pathologist Dr. Peter Dernodean; and U.S. Golf Association Green Section Mid-Atlantic Region Director Stanley Zoneck.

"This first year we'll rely most on mechanically removing any poa annua with knives, and filling in with top dressing and seed," Latshaw said. "With seedings, I don't want to take any chances putting growth regulators [PGRs] on them. When we do use PGRs, we will do so on greens and approaches. I'm leaning toward TGR, which is aggressive on the poa. Primo seemed the safest but is not that aggressive on poa."

"Maybe in the fall we will be able to put down a pre-emergent that would prevent any poa annua from germinating," Latshaw said. "By using Prograss in the fall and Embark in the spring, starting after first heavy frost in October, and 21 to 28 days apart, we're trying to not let any poa annua we have go to seedhead."

Meanwhile, he said, the club is "going spikeless," allowing only plastic-spiked golf shoes, which will help against a poa invasion. "A lot of people say the most dramatic thing they ever did was change their course to spikeless shoes," Latshaw said. "We visited Wilmington Country Club with a lot of members at 4 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon and it was amazing. The place was packed with players, and yet the greens were absolutely flawless."

Finally, Latshaw believes his conversion will be made more successful by blending Crenshaw, L93, Southshore and Providence bentgrasses, with a touch of Pennlinks. "All through school you're taught to avoid monocultures at all costs," he said. "I went back to the old way of doing things, blending grasses for the survival of the fittest. On our course and a lot of golf courses, we have 18 greens that are in different micro-environments. What does well on No. 11 won't do well on No. 3. There's up on a hill with good sunshine. Eleven's down at the lowest point of the course, goes under water and has shade problems."