

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 8, NUMBER 10
OCTOBER 1996 • \$4.50

INSIDE

The War On Thatch

Just say, "street cleaner"? Superintendent Brett Harris shares a novel approach to turf cultivation 13

Minimum Impact

Course managers and supers need not despair over the recent minimum wage hike 39

DNA fingerprinting pegs rogue cultivars

By LARRY KIEFFER

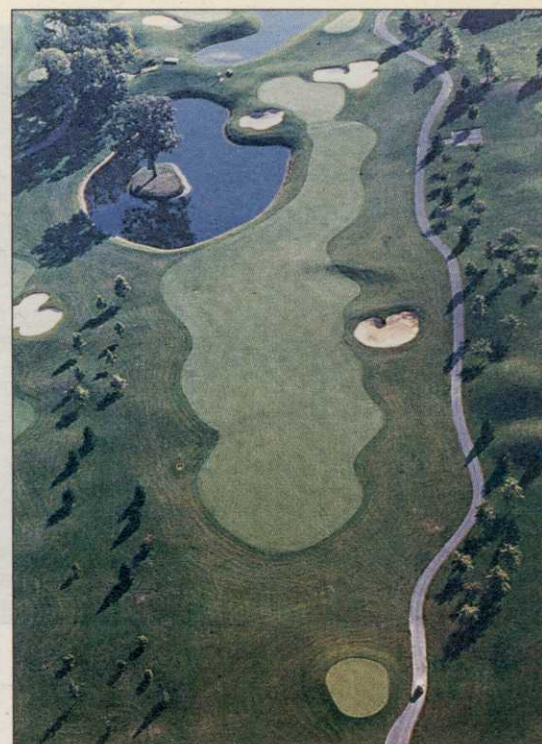
TAMPA, Fla. — Developing techniques to identify "off-types" of Bermuda grass through DNA analysis has become a market-driven research project in Florida. Superintendents in the state increasingly face job insecurity as these off-types appear on their golf courses, particularly on the greens.

The objective is to find a reliable means of verifying a cultivar before it is planted. With his job on the line, the superintendent wants to make sure he is getting what his boss

is paying for.

"We have found that DNA fingerprinting has proved to be a powerful tool for identifying off-types in Tifway Bermuda grass," said Dr. Phil Busey, one of four researchers with the University of Florida's Institute of Food

Continued on page 28



FERTIGATION OVERVIEW

This blimp shot of the 10th hole at Bent Creek Country Club in Lancaster, Pa., was taken last August at the height of heat and humidity season. How did superintendent H. James Loke maintain such color and plant vitality? The answer is fertigation. See this month's Super Focus on page 22.

Biosolids gain favor

By MARK LESLIE

OGUNQUIT, Maine — Nutrient-rich, disease-suppressant "biosolid" compost is gaining support and becoming a player in the world of golf course design and maintenance.

Some took notice when Firestone Country Club used a biosolid compost to rebuild its greens two years ago. Others have watched as several courses in Ohio purchased the Kurtz Bros.' sludge compost product, Technigrow.

Now courses are contracting companies like Kurtz and Brown & Ferris Industries (BFI) to provide biosolids for the root-zone mix on greens in new course construction and

Continued on page 34



Forum Update
See page 54

U.S. OPEN GOES PUBLIC IN 2002

Score another victory for public-access golf in America: The U.S. Golf Association will, for the first time, conduct its Open Championship at a publicly-owned facility: the Black Course at Bethpage State Park on Long Island (the par-3, 17th is shown here). For story, see page 3.

Course marketing entering new media

• The Internet

By PETER BLAIS

ST. GEORGE, Utah — Developers of a golf and residential community in southwest Utah have started their own web page to keep the 2,000 investors informed about the project's status on a daily basis.

Golf Ventures Inc., a publicly traded company specializing in golf and related real-estate development, is building Red Hawk International Golf Community, located 30 minutes from Zion National Park and 90 minutes from Las Vegas.

Through its web site — www.gvim.com — GVI



PUBLIC GOLF FORUM

keeps investors apprised of daily developments at the 670-acre project, home to a 27-hole Fred Couples/Gene Bates-designed golf course, clubhouse, tennis facilities and 945 residences. The first phase, 18 holes and 114 dwelling units, should be completed by spring 1998.

"We use a digital camera to take photos and update them on the web page on a regular basis," com-

Continued on page 41

• TV and Radio

By MARK LESLIE

LINCOLNSHIRE, Ill. — Intimidated by the mere thought of doing a television or radio commercial — the dynamics, the costs, the stage fright — most golf course operators flee exclusively to other media to promote their facilities.

Resist no longer, urges Vince Alfonso Jr., president of Alfonso Creative Golf Enterprises in Williamsville, Ill. Alfonso will conduct a one-day seminar, "Marketing Your Course on TV and Radio," following the Public Golf Forum here this month.

Continued on page 42



THE GAME'S THE THING

Architect Ken Kavanaugh said he won't compromise the game for appearance's sake. See story page 29.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

Personnel Management: UMass meets need 13
GCSAA membership dues at issue, again 17
The Savvy Super charts his way to success 24

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Atlanta developers warn Sydney counterparts 4
Love & Fought hang out their own shingles 29
Bruce Matthews project mixes golf & fishing 31

COURSE MANAGEMENT

AGC eyes Cleveland market 5
Fore Star promotes hands-on approach 39
Today, only the nimble manager survives 54

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

States assume regulatory responsibilities 45
Ransomes, Toro join on-line service 49
What's new in the marketplace? 50

Red Hawk web page

Continued from page 1

pany President and major shareholder George Badger said in late August. "We'll use photos of the groundbreaking this Friday [Aug. 23]. We can display the golf architect's drawings or sketched designs of some of the amenities.

"The information is accessible to brokerage and investment firms who deal

with potential investors. We can put SEC [Securities and Exchange Commission] filings, stock values and real-estate values, as well as photos of what is actually happening on the course or house lots right on the web page. It's a great marketing tool."

Red Hawk is GVI's flagship project. The St. George area is being marketed as a second Palm Springs, cooler in summer and hotter in winter than nearby Las Vegas, Badger said. The company president

expects Red Hawk to draw most of its members and homeowners from the Utah Front Range communities of Salt Lake City, Ogden, Provo and Logan as well as from the surrounding states of Montana, Idaho, Colorado and Wyoming. Public play will be allowed until the course reaches 300 members, according to the company.

"We're looking at four other projects that are within a couple of hours of St. George by air," Badger said.

Minimum wage

Continued from page 39

his starting pay scale from \$5.50 per hour to \$7 to \$7.50 per hour in order to attract better quality applicants and lower employee turnover.

"We get around 20 applicants for job openings now," Sloan estimated. "We were only getting two to three before. Our choices were much more limited. I'm glad the minimum wage is going up. The jobs we ask people to do on a golf course aren't the easiest in the world."

Across the border in Jackson, Miss., Country Club of Jackson superintendent Stephen Harrell said the minimum-wage increase would have little or no effect on courses in his area.

"If it had any, it would just be with the summertime help," he said. "But courses around here hire a lot of summer help from the Mississippi State University Cooperative program. Alabama courses pay them \$6.50 an hour plus room and board to work there. We have to pay them at least \$5.50 in order to compete. The last thing the members want to hear is the course is in bad shape because we don't have enough people to maintain it."

Even in the poorer sections of the Northeast, laborers generally make above minimum wage.

"I start new people at \$5 to \$5.50 an hour, depending on experience and references," said Jim Hodge, head superintendent at Val Halla Golf Club in Cumberland, Maine, and the state's representative to the September Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Chapter Relations Meeting. "If people return the following summer, they can generally expect a raise.

"I don't think we'll have to raise our starting wages 50 cents just because the minimum went up that amount, though. People like working here because they get to play some golf, work outside and are done for the day around 1 p.m. They like this a lot better than flipping burgers."

The issue was discussed at the GCSAA's annual Chapter Relations Meeting. GCSAA media spokesman Jeff Bollig said a recent survey noted that golf courses typically pay well above the minimum wage, i.e. an average \$6.49 for greens crew workers, \$7 for gardeners and \$8.56 for office assistants.

"We've gotten a lot of questions about it on our web site," Bollig said. "One of the concerns was that raising the minimum wage would have a trickle up effect that would cause golf courses to raise wages on the lower end. An increase in the minimum wage could do that in some cases."



control of crabgrass,

goosegrass and other tough

weeds. Consistent control that lasts for

up to 26 weeks depending on the rate you

choose. For even more confidence and security,

Barricade keeps golf shoes and everything else

on your course stain-free. And since you're

applying as little as one-fourth as much active

ingredient, you'll reduce worker exposure and

lessen the environmental load. What's more, its

low water solubility means Barricade

will stay right where you put it, even on slopes

and hillsides. Choose from two different

formulations: on-fertilizer and sprayable.

Barricade really can provide the added confidence

and security you need. But only if you apply it.

For more details, talk to your authorized

Barricade distributor, Sandoz sales representative

Barricade
HERBICIDE

or call 1-800-248-7763.

THEY HAVE TO BE APPLIED.



Always read and follow label directions. Sandoz Agro, Inc., 1300 E. Touhy Ave., Des Plaines, IL 60018. Barricade is a trademark of Sandoz Ltd. ©1995 Sandoz Agro, Inc.

Metro Milorganite, Inc.
Bedford Hills, NY 914-666-3171

The Andersons
Maumee, OH 800-537-3370

Turf Supply Co.
Eagan, MN 612-454-3106

United Horticultural Supply
Tampa, FL 813-628-0496

Western Farm Service
Fresno, CA 209-436-0450

Professional Turf Specialties
Champaign, IL 217-352-0591

Turf Industries, Inc.
Dallas, TX 214-241-0545

United Horticultural Supply
Aurora, OR 503-678-9000

United Horticultural Supply
Tucson, AZ 520-293-4330

Wilbur-Ellis Co.
Auburn, WA 206-230-0577

Regal Chemical Co.
Alpharetta, GA 800-621-5208

Turf Industries, Inc.
Houston, TX 800-288-8873

United Horticultural Supply
Fresno, CA 209-253-5717

Vigoro Industries
Winter Haven, FL 800-329-4238

CIRCLE #132