DNA fingerprinting pegs rogue cultivars

BY LARRY KIEFFER

Tampa, Fla. — Developing techniques to identify “off-types” of Bermudagrass 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 Bermudagrass,” said Dr. Phil Busey, one of four researchers with the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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Biosolids gain favor

BY MARK LESLIE

Ogunquit, Maine — Nutrient-rich, disease-suppressant “biosolids” 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, Technigrass.

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 renovation projects.

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Course marketing entering new media

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 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,” con-