Degree-carrying 2nd assistants a trend of ’90s

By J. BARRY MOTHES

The steady supply of educated turfgrass graduates entering the job market year after year has led to more golf clubs and courses hiring degree-carrying second assistant superintendents, according to directors of some of the country’s biggest and most highly-regarded college and university-based turfgrass programs.

“I think we’ve been seeing more and more head superintendents going with first and second assistants,” said John “Trey” Rogers, an associate professor at Michigan State University. “They want more qualified people and for a few thousand dollars more [in salary] they can get an educated person as a second assistant. Their enthusiasm can make up for their lack of experience and they’re worth it.”

Rogers said some of the country’s leading turfgrass programs at Michigan State this year are headed for second assistants jobs. He pointed out there are real practical advantages for superintendents at clubs and courses who have a full-time second assistant superintendent.

“If you only have one assistant and you lose him, you’re in trouble,” said Rogers. “But if you have two assistants climbing the career ladder, you’ll have a second ready to step in when the first leaves which brings some stability to the program.”

The story for college and university turfgrass graduates hitting the pavement in 1997 seems to be much the same as in recent years — excellent opportunities at

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Audubon advances with Canadian leader

By MARK LESLIE

COLLINGWOOD, Ontario, Canada — Audubon International (AI) has reached a milestone in its advancement around the globe with the addition here of a national coordinator of The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System of Canada.

When ecologist Scott Martin took charge of the fledgling organization in February it was, first, a learning exercise, and, second, a “test launching pad” for AI as it prepares to initiate organizations in several other countries.

“We have been approached by entities in Portugal, Southeast Asia, Austria, Australia and France about setting up an operation there,” said AI President Ron Dodson. “We felt we could not do justice in managing a global environmental program from [AI headquarters] Selkirk, N.Y. Canada is close enough that it can serve to teach us how best to spread Audubon programs on a global basis.”

Martin, who has worked at parks throughout Ontario and holds degrees in natural sciences and outdoor recreation, parks and tourism from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, said: “The response has been very good. We will

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Golf Course News: What’s the latest news on CGM?

Nick Christians: The major development was the EPA’s decision that CGM no longer had to be registered as a pesticide. That opened the door for us to bring on new marketers. The companies and product names that have signed on include Safe Earth Lawn & Gardens, Corn Gluten Meal Weed Control; Rohde’s Services Inc., GreenSense; Floyd Rogers, WeedFREE, Manning Agricultural Center Inc., ProPac; Grain Processing Co., Corn Gluten Meal Herbicide; Blue Seal Feeds, Safe ‘N Simple; Walt’s Organic Fertilizer, Wonderful Weed & Feed; Hardesty Organic Supply, Suppressa; Winton Graf [TBD]. We should be announcing more in a few weeks.

NC: How has the product been accepted in the golf industry?

Dr. Nick Christians of Iowa State University is an expert in developing naturally occurring herbicides for the turf industry. His major research has been on a byproduct of the corn wet-milling process, corn gluten meal (CGM), which has shown to be effective against 22 different weeds. Christians holds a bachelor’s degree in forestry from Colorado State University and a master’s and doctorate degrees in agronomy from The Ohio State University.
Q&A: Iowa's research paying off for ag, turfgrass

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Try it on the driving range. Put down a 4-by-8-foot sheet of plywood and then apply CGM around it. Take the plywood back up after the application. The plywood area will be your control area so you have something to compare.

The biggest barrier to golf course use is the granular form.

Try it on the driving range. Put down a 4-by-8-foot sheet of plywood and then apply CGM around it. Take the plywood back up after the application. The plywood area will be your control area so you have something to compare.

NC: Primo from Novartis is getting a lot of our attention right now. It shows little phytotoxicity, helps reduce clippings on fairways and could show some reduction of poa annua.

GCN: We'd recommend a superintendent try a small amount first rather than totally convert to it. We haven't come to any conclusions yet, except that all three show a lot of promise. We'll know more about the relative success of each in another year.

NC: We recently completed a major project on pesticide movement through soil profiles. This has resulted in six published papers. We found that there can be movement and that pesticides could potentially reach ground water.

But we have the ability to control movement through proper turf management and reduce the risk. Control happens primarily through the watering program.

We tested movement after a heavy 1-inch rain and compared it to four evenly spaced 1/4-inch applications.

We saw a large reduction in the movement by applying water in smaller amounts at spaced intervals following a pesticide application and by not applying pesticides just before a heavy rainfall.

GCN: Does the USGA do a good job allocating its research dollars?

NC: Yes. I've been on the research committee and admired how the USGA funds a variety of subjects over such a large geographic area.

GCN: What will be the major advances in turfgrass management over the next 10 years?

NC: The Internet. It's such a great way to distribute information. I'm getting e-mail requests from superintendents more and more. In fact, we just added a site to access our latest research on corn, etc. The site: [www.hort.iastate.edu/hortthen click on faculty, click on Christians, then on CGM].

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