Beard's *Turfax* now available

By MARK LESLIE

CHELSEA, Mich. — There should be a saying, "University professors don't retire, they just stop going to class."

In Dr. James B. Beard's case, when he "retired" from Texas A&M, he just increased his workload in other areas. Consultant. Conference speaker. Writer/editor.

Subscribers to his *Turfax* are thankful Beard is continuing — and improving upon — his "international newsletter about current developments in turfgrass." Publisher Skip DeWall of Ann Arbor Press here, who published Beard and Toshikazu Tani's *Color Atlas of Turfgrass Diseases*, talked Beard into making the newsletter available to the general public — not just his clients.

So, with a little help from his friends, Beard has complied. Those friends are worthy of mention:

- Contributing Editors Dr. Peter H. Dernoeden of the University of Maryland, Dr. Daniel A. Potter of the University of Kentucky and Dr. Fred Yelverton of North Carolina State University; and
- Advisory Committee members Gary Grigg of Royal Poinciana Golf Club in North Naples, Fla., Bruce Williams of Los Angeles Country Club, Dan Quast of Medinah Country Club in Chicago, Don Tolson of Stock Farm in Hamilton, Mont., and Gordon Witteveen of Toronto's Board of Trade Country Club.

This, folks, is an all-star cast. Two editions of the eight-page Turfax have been published. One of my copies in hand includes articles by Potter on managing earthworm problems; by Dernoeden stating that summer bentgrass decline complex may be more physiological than pathological; by Yelverton spelling out the potential problems that may occur with continuous use of the same herbicide; and by Beard on the cultural changes demanded by fast putting surfaces.

Ann Arbor Press will mail a free copy of the latest issue to interested people, who may call 800-858-5299. The yearly subscription rate is $69.95.

Potter reveals earthworm 'fix' in *Turfax* feature article

By DR. DANIEL POTTER

Earthworms have been called the "intestines of the earth" because of their importance in breaking down plant litter, recycling nutrients and enriching the topsoil. But on golf fairways, an abundance of earthworms can be too much of a good thing.

Generally, you'll have much healthier turfgrass where earthworms are abundant. Their burrowing reduces soil compaction and improves air and water infiltration. Earthworm tunnels may account for two-thirds of the total pore space in soils. Earthworms enrich the soil with their fecal matter, called castings. Their feeding breaks down thatch while mixing topsoil into the thatch layer, enhancing its suitability for turfgrass growth. Thus, earthworms perform a function much like mechanical topdressing. Their activity encourages microbes that further decompose thatch and enhance soil fertility. Conservation of earthworms is important in lawns and other turf sites where thatch is a concern.

However, on golf courses, mud mounds abound where earthworms have pushed up castings through close-mowed grass. Golf cars and mower tires compact these mounds, smothering patches of grass. Golfers' drives

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