New Turfgrass America eyes national market

By A. OVERBECK

GRANBURY, Texas — In a move to expand beyond their regional reach, three Texas turf companies and a Florida grower have formed an alliance creating a new full-service firm here. The new entity, Turfgrass America, combines Thomas Brothers Grass, Crenshaw and Doguet Turf and Milberger Turf Farms with Apollo, Fla.-based Elsberry Greenhouses.

While the merger was completed May 14, Milberger and Thomas Brothers have been considering the move for a year and a half.

"As we all looked at the
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Z-Net may revolutionize slow-growing grasses

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Tannenbaum Golf Course on Greers Ferry Lake near Heber Springs may have written its name into golf course history when it opened for public play in June. No scoring records were broken. The big story was a process that doubles the speed of growth for zoysiagrass, an excellent turf many superintendents have not used because of its notorious slow growth.

Z-Net, a new patented growing method developed in Japan and brought to America by Winrock Turfgrass America, has been able to grow zoysiagrass in five to six months instead of the four to six months they predicted. But last summer was a hot summer and it was hard to get anything to grow. Right now it's 90 to 95 percent
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Fertilization, filtration systems said growing in popularity

By PETER BLAIS

Demands for improved playing conditions have led many courses to install fertilization, acid-injection and filtration systems as part of their pumping stations.

Tanks, tubing and controllers for both fertilization and acid-injection systems (which improve water quality) can be rigged up to a pump station at a cost ranging from $7,000 to $15,000, a dramatic reduction from the $20,000 to $30,000 price tag common just a few years ago, said
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Country club fertility on a public's budget

By DAVID WILBER

The subject of turfgrass fertility is an ever-changing and often complicated road of twists and turns. But by being aware of several essential areas, turfgrass managers at public, resort and daily-fee golf operations can untangle the knots that might otherwise keep them from having the best possible fertilizer program.

There is a myth that only the private club is spending enough money to do the fertility management job correctly. From the standpoint of many golf facilities, public and private, fertility management and fertilizer purchasing is often a guessing
Z-Net maker thinks revolution

At left, in six weeks, the zoysiagrass is firmly established at Tannenbaum Golf Course in Arkansas. Z-Net’s biodegradable netting disappears during grow-in. At right, zoysiagrass a fairway and rough is grown in and ready to play in 4-1/2 months.

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grown in, and in many places it’s entirely grown in.

“I’m excited by it and love the results I’m getting.”

White had the zoysia installed nearly wall to wall — “fairways, roughs, tees, everything,” he said. “We have bentgrass greens and fescue underneath the trees, but we even used zoysia on the slopes to the greens.”

The Z-Net process allowed Tannenbaum to open one year ahead of schedule, White said, adding that the cost is between that of row sodding and sprigging.

“We were the guinea pigs,” White said. “Everything was under the microscope. A lot of superintendents came out to see it.”

Much of the attention is because zoysiagrass is known for its low requirements for water, mowing, fertilizer and herbicides, and its wide tolerances to temperature, sun and shade. But its major deterrent has been its slow growth. Whitbeck feels Z-Net is the answer since it greatly speeds up slower growing grasses and its costs less than zoysiagrass sod.

Z-Net contains specially grown soil-free sprigs held between layers of biodegradable netting. It is then simply rolled out like a carpet and top dressed. Z-Net typically grows in completely in four to six months, with some variance for growing conditions at the site. Conventionally, sprigging, plugging and strip sodding normally require between 15 and 24 months to achieve full grow-in.

During the first few months, the netting, which helps prevent erosion from wind, irrigation and rainfall, completely dissolves.

Z-Net can be installed any time the ground is not frozen. Once established, it offers all the maintenance benefits of environmental advantages of conventionally installed zoysiagrass. Since Winrock Grass Farm grows Meyer Z-52 zoysia, that is the cultivar it has been using, but Whitbeck said he could use other varieties.

At maturity, Z-Net produces a dense turf with a strong divot-resistant root system and vertical leaf blades that many golfers prefer.

“We believe Z-Net will revolutionize the turfgrass industry and bring the benefits of Meyer Z-52 zoysiagrass to more golf course, cities and home lawns at a lower cost than ever before,” Whitbeck said.

“Most turfgrass research is headed in the wrong direction,” he added. “Fast-growing grasses do not benefit the consumer or the environment. They only benefit the seed company or sod grower.

“That is why Z-Net is such a break-through technology. We can now grow in slower growing, environmentally friendly grasses faster.”

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