GOLF COURSE
THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 11, NUMBER 7
JULY 1999 • $5.50

INSIDE

Research Dollars
USGA Green Section prepares for another round of research funding .................................................. 11

Bermudagrass Report
Existing varieties improved, new types are on the developmental horizon ......................................... 17-19

Of ants, flies and other friendly pests
By MARK LESLIE
FAR HILLS, N.J. — Ants that devour the eggs and larvae of cutworms, grubs and other pest insects. Parasitic flies that kill mole crickets. The risks, or lack thereof, associated with golfer exposure to pesticides. The U.S. Golf Association (USGA) Green Section will reveal the results of investigations into these and many other matters in a soon-to-be-released report on the latest USGA-funded research projects. The research covers a gamut of topics from course construction practices and integrated turfgrass management to turfgrass germplasm enhancement, the environmental impact of golf and the Wildlife Links Program. But key to the entire program are naturally occurring biological controls, which are becoming more

Continued on page 16

Sports & Fitness expanding its portfolio
By PETER BLAIS
MANCHESTER, Mo. — It’s going to be a busy summer for Sports & Fitness Management, the Missouri-based golf and health club management firm. Sports & Fitness will open Fred Couples/Gene Bates-designed Stonebridge Golf Club in Bossier City, La., later this summer and recently agreed to purchase Garden Valley Golf Resort in Tyler, Texas. The firm is also about to break ground on a Gary Kern-designed course near St. Louis called Aberdeen and is negotiating a three-course purchase with a management firm operating facilities in Louisiana and Texas, according to Vice President

Continued on page 25

MOUNTAIN MEN
Dick Phelps, left, and son Rich have earned much of their reputation designing golf courses in the mountains. But they have also left their mark on the lowlands, and reputation designing golf courses in the mountains. But they have also left their mark on the lowlands, and

Continued on page 21

COURSE MAINTENANCE
Super Focus: Bandon Dunes’ Russell .................. 11
Equipment storage — clean and organized ............. 13
FIDES course joins Audubon Signature program ....... 15

COURSE DESIGN & DEVELOPMENT
Golfers, rounds drop slightly .................. 3
American Skiing Co. delays projects ............. 21
ClubCorp/Golden Bear begin teamwork ........... 25

COURSE MANAGEMENT
Changes in store for Arizona firm ............. 27
Kemper signs California course agreement ......... 27
CB Richard Ellis brokers several deals ............. 29

SUPPLIER BUSINESS
Toro acquires U.K. aerator maker ............. 31
‘Gray market’ tractor fine recommended .......... 31
New products featured .......................... 32

NEWSPAPER

Ocean Trails Golf Course suffers landslide between the 12th and 18th fairways, losing a bulldozer into the chasm.

Oceanside course trying to stay out of the water
By ANDREW OVERBECK
RANCH PALOS VERDES, Calif. — Southern California’s answer to Pebble Beach suffered a massive setback June 2 when a 200-by 400-foot section of the 18th hole shifted out 50 feet from the rest of the course, leaving behind a 60-to 90-foot-deep ravine between the 18th and 12th holes. The section of the course that shifted sat on an ancient landslide, which was bisected by an aging Los Angeles County sewer line. It is widely speculated that a leak in that sewer line touched off the land movement. The Ocean Trails Golf Course, designed by Pete Dye, was only weeks away from opening and develop-

Continued from page 4

Tests reveal good & bad of ultradwarfs
By A. OVERBECK
BELTSVILLE, Md. — As ultradwarf Bermudagrass continues to find its way onto golf course greens across the United States, independent research and on-site testing suggest that best management practices for these “super dwarfs” are radically different than for standard Bermudas. In cooperation with the United States Golf Association and the Golf Course Superintendent’s Association of America, the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) is currently in the second year of a five year ultradwarf test at eight courses across the

Continued on page 17

Pebble Beach megasale being worked out
MONTEREY, Calif. — Pebble Beach has changed hands for the fourth time this decade. A group of investors that includes Arnold Palmer, former baseball commissioner Peter Ueberroth, actor Clint Eastwood, former United Airlines CEO Richard Ferris and General Electric Pensions agreed June 17 to purchase the Pebble Beach golf resort for $820 million. Pebble Beach was bought for $841 million in 1990 by Japanese businessman Minoru Isutani, who turned around two years later and sold it to Tailfeather Club, Inc., a Tokyo-based resort company, for

Continued on page 25
Ultradwarfs

Continued from page 1

Southern United States. The 1998 findings from the NTEP trials offer preliminary information and establishment data on five ultradwarfs and two standard-entry Tifdwarf Bermudagrasses (see table). “With this trial we allow superintendents at each club to manage the turf the way they would manage the rest of their golf course greens,” said Kevin Morris, NTEP’s national director. “While management practices differ quite a bit, we hope to get good data on the differences between the ultradwarfs and the Tifdwarfs and establish the differences between the ultradwarf varieties.”

Ultradwarfs have created a lot of interest because they combine the hardiness of a Bermuda with similar density and low mowing height of bentgrass. “These are for courses that have used Tifdwarf, but would like to mow it closer,” said Morris. “Or for those who have had bentgrass but who are in the South and would like to try something else.”

However, while ultradwarfs have their advantages, they also require attentive management. “They are finer and more upright than Tifdwarf and they look a lot like bent,” said superintendent Keith Ihms at Bent Tree Country Club in Dallas, one of the eight testing sites. “But hopefully nobody has the impression that they will be any easier to maintain.”

Experts say since ultradwarfs have an aggressive growth pattern and a greater shoot density, they are more prone to developing thatch. Therefore, they require more frequent and light top dressing, frequent verticutting and must be kept at or below 1/8 inch mowing height. “It takes more intensive management to keep the thatch under control,” warns Dr. Richard White of Texas A&M University and sponsor of the on-site test in Houston. “Ultradwarfs are not for every golf course.” A careful eye must also be kept on fertilization practices, especially with nitrogen levels. While the high density provides a better putting surface, it also makes overseeding difficult and could result in a significantly altered root-zone profile.

“If I had to say one word about maintaining ultradwarfs it would be ‘verticut,’” said Dr. Beth Guertal of Auburn University, who is sponsoring the on-site test in Birmingham, Ala. “If you don’t have the budget to verticut twice a month and top dress twice a month, you shouldn’t consider an ultradwarf.”

The on-site superintendents agree. “We have had to verticut them a lot more often, weekly or bi-weekly, as well as top dress them,” said Ihms.

Mike Sandburg, superintendent at

The new Verti-Drain® Mustang:

Runs like a racehorse, works like a mule.

Spend less time aerating, spend more time playing.

The new Mustang deep-tine aerasates at an unsurpassed 2.7 mph. That’s about 90% faster than competing methods. It allows you to aerate a greater turf area - up to 66,000 square foot/hour production.

Using the new Mustang with solid or hollow tines, you can do high speed runs over large turf areas. Great for sportsfields, high-production landscape applications, as well as golf course fairways, tees and greens. And you’ll still get the unique, patented shattering effect that is exclusive to Verti-Drain®. With the shattering action, each tine is forced backwards underground, shattering the soil so air and water can move freely, strengthening roots and helping grasses resist pests, weeds, disease, drought and hard play.

The new, faster Mustang is the real thoroughbred in the field. Call today to find out more details.

VERTI-DRAIN®

Redexim Charterhouse

Breaking barriers to better turf.

458 Wyoming Ave., Kingston, PA 18704 1-800-597-5664

The NTEP Bermudagrass test in Houston (Lakeside CC)
"This is a red flag. Bermuda is not Bermuda anymore. We are going to have to start doing things differently than we used to," he said. 

Guertal and Unruh are starting tests on cold tolerance and how to deal with established thatch. 

Unruh has a 14,000-sq.-ft. green of TifEagle at his research facility that has about 2 1/2 to 3 inches of thatch and he plans to start a thatch remediation study in the coming months. "Everybody is going to plant these ultradwarfs and they will thatch, so we have to look at how you get rid of it," said Unruh. 

However, the advantages of ultradwarfs may outweigh the added maintenance headaches, according to Ihms and Sandburg. Sandburg is working with Tifdwarf greens and intends to convert to an ultradwarf within the next three to five years. "We are going to wait until years three, four and five to decide which ultradwarf to go with," he said. "So far there is not a favorite, but all the members agree that they are more acceptable than the Tifdwarf surfaces."

Ihms, who is working with bent greens, is also studying at the ultradwarfs. "When bent is good, nothing can beat it," said Ihms. 

"The question is, how often is that? Look at what you have to do to get there, running fans, etc. How much sense does that make, especially when these ultradwarfs are peaking while bent is down?"

While these maintenance practices help ensure proper turf health and growth, they may also adversely affect long term turf quality. As a result of light top dressing, root-zone profiles could be altered because the ultradwarfs act as a filter, allowing only fine sand to pass through. 

"I am seeing a lot of black layer on established ultradwarf greens as a result of improper water infiltration," said Dr. Milt Engleke of Texas A&M University and sponsor of the on-site test in Mobile, Ala. "If the mechanic can't get a mower to cut true at 1/8 then there is going to be trouble."

Continued from page 17

TurfStone Tee Signs can be mounted on three different post sizes ranging from 16" to 36," so whether it's high on the tee or low near the cart path, or as a complete console with ball washer and litter caddie, you'll have the elegant bok of granite at a fraction of the cost.

**BERMUDAGRASS REPORT**

**Ultradwarfs**

Continued from page 19

year," said White. "In fact, above 10 pounds we start to see problems because of the aggressive thatching tendencies.

Mowing height is also critical, with 1/8 inch being the ideal height of cut. "Even at 5/32s thatch begins to be a problem and there is considerable scalping," said Dr. Bryan Unruh of the University of Florida, and sponsor of the on-site test in Mobile, Ala. "If the mechanic can't get a mower to cut true at 1/8 then there is going to be trouble."

While these maintenance practices help ensure proper turf health and growth, they may also adversely affect long term turf quality. As a result of light top dressing, root-zone profiles could be altered because the ultradwarfs act as a filter, allowing only fine sand to pass through.

"I am seeing a lot of black layer on established ultradwarf greens as a result of improper water infiltration," said Dr. Milt Engleke of Texas A&M University and sponsor of the on-site test in Dallas.

**Bermudagrass**

Continued from page 17

inch. But only MiniVerde and TifEagle produced higher quality at a mowing height of 0.187 inch.

- At Mississippi State University, Dr. Michael Goatley Jr. is in the second year of a $72,790 project to obtain transgenic plants of hybrid Bermudagrass that express nematode-resistant genes.
- At Oklahoma State University, Dr. Charles M. Taliaferro is in the midst of a $125,000 five-year study that will assess the cold-hardiness of advanced breeding lines of Bermudagrass, and isolate and characterize cold-regulated genes responsible for conferring freeze tolerance.
- Taliaferro reported substantial progress toward isolating and characterizing cold-regulated genes from Midiron Bermudagrass.

In 1998 Taliaferro began a $124,978 five-year project of breeding and evaluating Bermudagrass varieties.

Golf Course News