Bug off!

Beyond pesticides: Mosquito control goes high-tech

By ANDREW OVERBECK

When it comes to controlling mosquitoes and other biting insects, common tools such as pesticides and electric zappers may soon become a thing of the past. Thanks to cooperative research between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and two New England-based biotech companies, the latest mosquito abatement technology is now available.

American Biophysics, based in East Greenwich, R.I., launched the Mosquito Magnet in September 1998 and BioSensory of Willimantic, Conn., will release its Dragonfly model this month.

While the science behind the two products is complicated, the concept is simple. Both use carbon dioxide and an octanol lure to mimic the respiration of mammals and attract mosquitoes to the trap where they are killed and collected. However, the two machines use different luring and killing techniques and have different sources of CO2.

American Biophysics manufactures mosquito abatement equipment for scientists and entomologists who collect live insects for study. The company's professional line of equipment uses dry ice or pure CO2, two items that present some difficulties in mass production.

In order to expand the technology and the market, we had to develop a device that used a readily available source of inexpensive fuel,” said Karen Salvatore, sales director for American Biophysics. “We invented a catalytic converter that

Some myths debunked concerning blue-yew mixes

By DR. ERIC K. NELSON

Combining Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass can provide a versatile, high-performance turfgrass for golf course tees, fairways and roughs in cool-season grass areas, proving to be a quick-establishing, persistent, resilient and versatile playing surface.

This statement is more true now than ever with recent releases of several new low-mow tolerant Kentucky bluegrasses. Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass have complementary characteristics, where the features and benefits of one can overcome the potential disadvantages of the other.

The key to taking advantage of both species in turf is to get them established in a balanced stand. There are many conflicting theories concerning the proper way to uniformly establish these species together. Some of the techniques are based upon research, experience and good agronomics. Others are based on hypotheses and conjecture.

However, there is more than one proper way to get the job done. Factors including species ratio in the seed mixture, seeding rate, seedling management, establishment timing and the immediate influence of Mother Nature on plant survival can all affect the results.

My general recommendation for taking advantage of features and benefits of both species in a balanced stand is to sow a mixture consisting of 80 percent (by
Blue Ridge Golf

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-Avide expertise, guidance and profitability to the golf course owner."

Working out of offices here, Barber will travel throughout the country for agronomic consulting visits, but will focus on the East Coast from Washington, D.C., to the Carolinas for the other side of his work: maintenance management. "If the opportunity exists, I would love to expand into course management," he said.

As a vice president of agronomy/regional manager with Golf South from 1996-99, Barber's background is wide-ranging. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Missouri in 1975, a master's in horticulture and soils from Oklahoma State University in 1978 and then worked as a superintendent for five years. Returning to school, he earned a PhD in 1987 from the University of Nebraska, then took a job as a professor at Oklahoma State University for four years in research teaching.

When former Golf Course Superintendents Association of America President Bob Williams formed Golf Enterprise in 1991, Barber joined him as head of agronomy. When the company bought Jim Colbert Golf, its portfolio grew to 44 courses. When American Golf bought Golf Enterprise, Barber took the post at Golf South.

He has overseen agronomy on courses from Idaho to Florida and from the Carolinas to California. Already, Blue Ridge Golf has two maintenance management contracts, and Barber has performed agronomic audits for facilities as far away as Reno, Nev.

"I can customize my services to the needs of the clients," he said. "I will do single agronomic audits to maintenance management to superintendent searches."

Barber said the greatest need he has seen is "finding good superintendents. That is the hardest challenge of the day— finding the right individual for the right club. They may be a tremendous superintendent but not like golf course management. Some don't want the problems of dealing with greens committees but love the golf course side."

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