BRIEFS

CORNELL OFFERS SHORT COURSES

ITHACA, N.Y. — Cornell University has announced the start of their 2002 short course season. The one-week turfgrass management short course will be held here in January and in the Lower Hudson Valley area in February. Fundamental principles of soil management, grass identification, selection, establishment and primary care will be covered. Also, a new Organic Turf Management course will be held here in January and in the Lower turfgrass management short course will provide an opportunity for a course on organic turf management. The course will cover topics such as selecting and establishing grasses relying on fewer chemical inputs.

REGISTRATION FORMS FOR THESE COURSES CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING Joann Gruttadario at 607-255-1792.

GCSAA APPOINTS BORMAN

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's CEO Steve Mona has named Chuck Borman as the organization's chief operating officer. Borman, who has been the executive director of the Carolinas GCSA since 1998, had previous experience on the GCSAA staff as director of membership and coordinating advisor. As COO, Borman will oversee GCSAA member programs and services in areas of education, research, environmental stewardship, career development, membership/chapter services, communications and publications.

2001 Newsmakers

Winterkill, drought and floods dealt hard lessons in 2001

By JOEL JOYNER

HOUSTON — Mother Nature was both forgiving and unforgiving to superintendents in regions throughout the country this year. Winterkill, drought, disease, and floods dealt some hard lessons and reminded superintendents that there's only so much that can be done when faced with the unrelenting force of nature.

Superintendent Michael Wing at the 18-hole golf and ski resort, Sugarloaf Golf Course in Kingfield, Maine, started the 2001 season off with 14 greens severely damaged from winterkill. In the mountains, western part of the state the golfing season is limited and soil temperatures make it a tough region to grow close-cut bentgrass.

"With a new construction course, you normally grow-in greens 12 to 18 months before play is allowed on them," said Wing. "We tried to do it in four weeks." The course, usually open around mid-May, delayed its opening to the first of June. The greens were cultivated and seeded a number of times, according to Wing. "With the exception of two, we had the greens back into condition by the end of June to the first week of July," he said. "We got the last two back by the middle of July."

George Hamilton, agronomist at Penn State, paid a visit to the course in the spring to access the damage. "He said he had never seen anything like it," said Wing. Fall preparations for this winter were altered slightly, mentioned Wing, but nothing radically different. "Unfortunately, I don't think there's a cure-all for this kind of damage," he said. "The best thing you can do is have a good, healthy stand of turf going into the winter. We've hardened the turf off with some high-potassium fertilizers and tried to keep any water on the surface of the greens to a minimum."

The greens were verti-drained in October and dormant seed was used in areas where there is quite a bit of Poa annua. "Chances are we'll be under enough cover to kill the Poa," explained Wing. "I've also placed permanent covers on all the greens for added protection. Hopefully, next spring, the covers will get soil temperatures up quicker to help the germination of the dormant seed." "I've been here 15 years, and it's rare to come through the winter in real good shape," he said. "But this spring was one of the worst."

FLORIDA DROUGHT

Florida has spent the past three years in a drought. This spring didn't look very promising to most superintendents who were faced with phase two and phase three water restrictions. However, by late summer and fall, the state was on the upswing. "It's possible in that time to reduce the price from 60,000 German marks [about $27,500] – for just the laser cutter itself – to between 10,000 to 15,000 marks [about $4,600 to $6,900, respectively],” Bihnrer said. “Once that is achieved, then we’ll start to bring the machine to the market. At the moment, there’s no chance because the mower would be around 100,000 marks [approximately $45,800]."

WOLFGARTEN STRIVING TO READY LASER MOWER

BETZDORF, Germany — WOLF-Garten introduced its prototype laser mower, the Zero, in Europe earlier this year (GCN January). The company is now refining the "revolutionary" machine in order to take the product to the worldwide marketplace.

"It's possible in that time to reduce the price from 60,000 German marks [about $27,500] – for just the laser cutter itself – to between 10,000 to 15,000 marks [about $4,600 to $6,900, respectively],” Bihnrer said. “Once that is achieved, then we’ll start to bring the machine to the market. At the moment, there’s no chance because the mower would be around 100,000 marks [approximately $45,800]."

2001 Newsmakers

Superintendents initiate innovative plans to get golf courses Audubon certified

By JOEL JOYNER

CHICAGO, Ill. — Audubon International provides information and guidance to help preserve wildlife habitat and protect natural resources, but superintendents are the ones who make it a reality by implementing innovative plans to make golf courses more environmentally friendly.

Superintendents fulfilled Audubon International's environmental mission this year by protecting bald eagles and creating trout spawning channels, establishing buffer zones and native areas, identifying and attracting wildlife, and sharing their environmental message with their communities.

This year has shown an impressive turn out in the number of courses striving to get their courses registered and certified with the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP). There are now more than 300 golf courses worldwide that have met the challenging but rewarding certification process.

SEA MARSH AT SEA PINES

Identifying wildlife and maintaining 600 acres of preserved land at the Sea Pines Plantation on Hilton Head Island, S.C., has helped superintendent Jim Cregan at the Sea Marsh course (GCN May) reach certification.

The course has gone above and beyond certification requirements by having 100 percent of their landscape plans native and buffering as much as 25 percent of their shorelines.

"Members and people in the area know

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

2001 Newsmakers

GCSAA to launch Internet venture by year's end

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Despite industry objections and the general unwillingness of superintendents to purchase supplies online, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has finalized its e-commerce strategy and plans to roll out the refined Web site before the end of the year.

When the association announced its e-commerce intentions in late April, the industry and superintendents bristled at the idea that the GCSAA would profit from the venture at the expense of its members. In order to gauge response, the association held a 90-day pilot program that was followed by a series of industry feedback meetings. By late summer, the association had abandoned its net market strategy (that would have levied a percentage fee on all transactions) in favor of a more traditional storefront model that protects existing distribution channels.

"People had it in their minds that the GCSAA had already decided what they wanted to do with e-commerce," said Bryce Gartner, senior manager for Internet services for the GCSAA, who stripped into his role during the end of the pilot program. "The industry and superintendents had opinions on where they thought we should take this. Since the pilot, we have changed the approach and gotten a more favorable response."

According to Gartner, the storefront model will preserve existing relationships between suppliers, distributors and superintendents.

"We are not trying to cannibalize the distribution channels or affect relationships," he said. "We are trying to take advantage of the traffic on our site and be the third party that helps our industry partners get together with buyers in a way that gets the local distributor involved..."
Foul weather
Continued from page 9
road to recovery.
"It seems like it has been rain-
ing forever," said Kevin Down-
ing, superintendent at the
Willoughby Golf Club along the
southeast coast in Stuart. "In
early October, the South Florida
Water Management District re-
laxed the water restrictions.
They've pretty much rescinded
all the phases of the program.
Even though we didn't have any
major storms this year, we had
enough sporadic rainfall through
the fall to relieve the pressure
on Lake Okeechobee [a main
reservoir in South Florida]."
A number of courses, busi-
nesses and homeowners were
cited for water use violations
during the restrictions. "Water
control is something that will not
permanently go away in Florida," said Downing. "I think the
drought situation was positive
overall in getting awareness lev-
els up, especially with individu-
als learning the capabilities of
their watering systems.
"It also helps promote legisla-
tion to regulate water use for the
future of the state – not only
golf," he said. "Golf course us-
age represents a little less than
two percent of water usage in
this area, according to the water
management district. We're just
more visible."

Zero mower
Continued from page 9
alone ranged to as much as
$160,000. One of the biggest is-
ues in bringing down the price
has been working to focalize the
laser using power efficiently.
"It requires a lot of power at the
moment," said Bihnrer, "about six
to 10 kilowatts to cut the grass.
We're working to bring it down to
around one kilowatt. It will make it
a very small and efficient system."
The Zero mower will be mar-
keted worldwide, according to
Bihnrer. "But we'll start it off in
Europe first to solve any issues
with safety regulations," he said.
Developed on the chassis of a
Mercedes Smart Cabriolet – a two-
seat convertible – the laser mower
comes with Internet capabilities
and is approved for use on public
roads. The machine is known as the
Zero because of the vehicle's fea-
tures. There's zero noise emit-
ted because grass is cut by la-
sers rather than rotating blades.
There is zero disposal since
grass clippings are chopped and
dried in a solid dry process and
redistributed to the turf as tiny
particles. There are zero exhaust
emissions from its environmen-
tally-friendly engine with a cata-
lytic afterburning of fuel. Also,
there are zero problems with
thatch and mold formations due
to the special drying process.

Most of the state received at
least normal rainfall for the sum-
mer, according to assistant state
climatologist David Zierden at
the Climate Prediction Center in
Tallahassee. "In north Florida
and the panhandle, we had Tropi-
cal Storm Allison come through
and drop nearly 12 inches of rain
in the Tallahassee area," he said.
"Shortly after that, Tropical
Storm Barry came through with
another strong rainfall event. On
top of those storms, we've had
our normal afternoon thunder-
storms."

The only lingering effects of
the drought is that, in some ar-
eas of the state, aquifers and
lakes fed from aquifers remain
below normal. "They're not at
the critical levels we had this
spring," said Zierden, "but they
still bear watching. The worst
areas for that are in north-cen-
tral Florida, like Ocala and
Gainesville." In October, the state entered
des dry season. "That's just the
normal climate," explained
Zierden. "The peninsula, from
about Ocala southward, stays
fairly dry averaging two to three
inches of rain a month. It's cer-
tainly not time to let the guard
down and stop water conserva-
tion measures."
The phenomenon of El Nino
and La Nina effect rainfall pat-
terns in the state, said the clima-
tologist. "They were the main
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Tropical Storm Allison left a mess at
the Northgate CC in Houston.