

# MAINTENANCE



## BRIEFS

### USGA RELEASES "MAKING ROOM FOR NATIVE POLLINATORS"

FAR HILLS, N.J. — The United States Golf Association has released a new book, "Making Room for Native Pollinators: How to Create Habitat for Pollinator Insects on Golf Courses." Written by Matthew Shepherd, pollinator program director for the Xerces Society, the book is a result of a grant provided through the USGA's Wildlife Links program and is targeted to golf course superintendents, course officials, and environmental consultants to help manage out-of-play areas on the golf course. By taking some simple steps to establish patches of native wild flowers and nesting sites, golf courses can provide an important refuge for bees and other pollinating insects, which in turn helps maintain healthy plant communities.

### VALLEYCREST GOLF NETS STONE CREEK GOLF CLUB CONTRACT

MAKANDA, Ill. — ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance has signed a partnership to perform golf course maintenance for Stone Creek Golf Club here. Under the agreement, ValleyCrest will provide professional maintenance services for the 18-hole daily-fee golf club. The addition of this facility is the company's first in Illinois and increases the company's maintenance portfolio in the Great Lakes area to four. Stone Creek was designed in 1998 by Jerry Lemmons of Golf Links Inc. The course features bluegrass/ryegrass tees and fairways with fescue roughs and bentgrass greens. Superintendent Joel Tyrpak will handle maintenance duties at the course.

### DELHI PAIR WIN SCHOLARSHIP

DELHI, N.Y. — Two students of the State University of New York at Delhi's golf course management program were recently awarded scholarships from the Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association. Brian Macmillan and Christian Munoz were awarded \$750 each, recognizing them as outstanding students pursuing a career in golf course management.

## 2002 NEWSMAKERS

# More superintendents taking organic approach

By DOUG SAUNDERS

TRUCKEE, Calif. — The interest in organics has increased this year on many fronts other than in the golf industry. The Food and Drug Administration recently announced new guidelines for the labeling of organic products for the marketplace after years of discussion. More organic products are appearing in stores, which increases public awareness about trends in the agricultural industry. More public awareness leads to more concerns on how to best protect our environment.

But for the golf maintenance industry, the talk of organic methods for the golf course is tempered by several factors. Foremost is the desire to present the best possible conditions in order to attract the playing public. Second are the economic factors that have to be weighed as golf course superintendents are continually juggling their budgets in order to satisfy the needs of their golf course and the demands of their course managers.

Can an organic approach sat-



Old Brockway near Lake Tahoe has adopted an organic maintenance program.

isfy these two primary demands?

Over the last several years more organic fertilizers and products have been introduced to the golf market but the decision to use

them is a difficult one for course managers as there is little track record on their effectiveness.

"The bottom line in the discussion about the pros and cons of

the use of organics on golf courses is that the turf itself knows no difference in nutrients that come from organics or from synthetic

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## 2002 NEWSMAKERS

# Compost tea shows promise

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WOODBURY, N.J. — As more superintendents study organic golf course maintenance practices, compost tea has emerged as viable alternative to a chemical-only approach.

While the compost tea technique has been around for

more than a century, today's higher-tech version "brews" compost to create a concentrated "tea" that delivers beneficial microbes and low levels of nutrients to turfgrass.

Evidence at this point is strictly anecdotal, but superintendents using compost tea report less disease pressure, less need for fer-

tilization and irrigation and all-around healthier turf.

Last February, *Golf Course News* interviewed Woodbury (N.J.) Country Club superintendent Charles Clarke about the results he had gotten after two years of using compost tea. Clarke stuck with his compost tea regimen this year and recorded a third successful season with his "home brew"

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## 2002 NEWSMAKERS

# Courses face cost-cutting pressure

By ANDREW OVERBECK

An uncertain economy and flat or declining rounds played numbers have placed increasing pressure on the bottom line at courses across the country.

According to a *Golf Course News* poll, 56.3 percent of courses will see maintenance budgets for 2003 remain the same, while 25 percent will see them drop (See page 8).

As more budgets come under pressure, superintendents are forced to produce the same turf conditions with fewer resources.

"You have to cut costs

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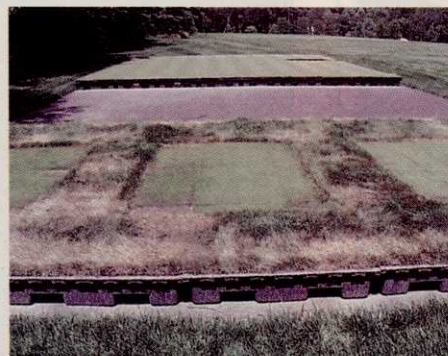
## 2002 NEWSMAKERS

# Roundup Ready bentgrass still on track

By ANDREW OVERBECK

MARYSVILLE, Ohio — The Scotts Co. and Monsanto are pressing forward with the development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass. The transgenic turf has created a buzz throughout the golf industry this year because it would allow superintendents to control weeds with Roundup without damaging the bentgrass (see related story page 18).

Since gaining approval from the



Roundup Ready trials are ongoing at several courses

Oregon Department of Agriculture in July to set up an 11,000-

acre control area for the production of the transgenic turfgrass, 400 acres have been planted and will be ready for harvest in July 2003.

However, the two companies cannot market Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass until they receive approval from the United States Department of Agriculture's Animal Plant and Health In-

spection Service (APHIS). That

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## Superintendents doing more with less

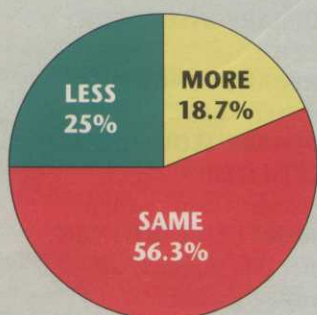
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but you still have to keep the course green and clean," said Sam Hocutt, superintendent at Pawleys Plantation in Pawleys Island, S.C. "We cut costs this year by watching our insecticide use closely. Because of the drought we didn't have as many mole crickets so we were able to use half rates and save the other half for next year. We controlled army worms by doing a two-ring perimeter around the fairway instead of spraying the whole fairway."

### GOLF COURSE NEWS POLL

THE BUSINESS NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY  
www.golfcoursenews.com

**How will your 2003 budget compare to last year's?**



James McNair, superintendent at Orchard Valley Golf Course in Aurora, Ill., anticipates a budget similar to last year's.

"We had a slow spring because of weather but revenue was up in August and up significantly in September and October," he said. "Overall our play was down two percent."

While he plans on having more of a capital budget to buy some new equipment this year to replace 10-year-old greens mowers and other aged machinery, McNair got through this year because he had a good mechanic.

"Sometimes it is Band-Aid and Duct tape," he said. "It puts a greater load on the equipment technician but we do the best we can to keep things running around here."

Cutler Robinson, superintendent at the private Bayville Golf Club in Virginia Beach, Va., is part of the 18.7 percent that will see a budget increase next year, although it is a modest one.

"We will have a small increase of three to four percent," said Robinson. "We are doing well and we filled our membership to its limit of 300 members a year ago. Our play and revenues have been similar to projected and our expenses have been similar to projected."

Robinson said he has been able

to balance the budget because of lower payroll increases and good price competition on chemicals, fertilizers and other supplies. Specialty chemicals and equipment have gone up in price, Robinson noted.

However, Robinson also said there is a reluctance to modify the budget once it has been put

in place.

"If I have a new idea or a new product that we didn't consider in the budget process, I don't bring it up," he said. "Before, I may have mentioned it, but right now it isn't even an option."

That said, Robinson has done his part to trim costs out of the budget.

"We have been converting our out-of-play roughs to native

grasses that don't take as much water," said Robinson. "It helps with the drought and it means we don't have to mow out-of-play areas. It reduces our cost per acre from \$2,000 to \$500."

In the short term, superintendents seem to have a handle on managing constrained budgets. However, in the long-term some worry about events out of their immediate control.

"Things are closer to normal now," said Hocutt, "but if we go to war with Iraq then I'm pretty sure we'll have a new scenario because there will likely be a cutback in golf. You have to look into the future when planning a budget. Gas recently went from \$1.27 a gallon to \$1.47 a gallon so now I have to redo my budget and plan for around \$1.50 for gas." ■

## OTHER PREEMERGENTS TALK WITH PENDULUM, IT



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