MAINTENANCE

2002 NEWSMAKERS

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, III. — 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/greensery grass tees and fairways with fescue roughs and bentgrass greens. Superintendent Joel Tyrpak will handle maintenance duties at the course.

DELPHI PAIR WIN SCHOLARSHIP

DELFH, N.Y. — Two students of the State University of New York at Delphi'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 concern 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 satisfy 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 the use of organics on golf courses is that the turf itself knows no different in nutrients that come from organics or from synthetic fertilizer and irrigation and all-around healthier turf.

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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 fertilization and irrigation and all-around healthier turf.

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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 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 Inspection Service (APHIS). That

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GOLF COURSE NEWS
Turf-Seed continues research on male sterile and naturally Roundup tolerant turfgrass

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HUBBARD, Ore. — The development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass by Scotts and Monsanto has been a contentious issue.itters here in the Willamette Valley contend the transgenic turf will ruin the country’s primary bentgrass production region.

Bill Rose, president of Turf-Seed, has been the most vocal, predicting earlier this year that the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s (ODA) approval for open pollination of Roundup Ready bentgrass in an 11,000-acre control area in Jefferson County would be a “disaster” (GCM, Sept. 2002).

“As a result of this control area, I expect to see genetic-altered turfgrass banned in the United States,” he said. “My goal is to try not to get it banned.”

Rose is concerned that production fields in the Willamette Valley could be contaminated, jeopardizing exports to Japan and Europe, which have strict regulations on genetically modified organisms.

Ross reviews new products of the year

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walk spreaders. One has to wonder what took so long for us to have these.

When it comes to iron, the debut of the Toro 4500-D/4700-D was probably the most talked-about new mowing unit. By learning from the faults of previous large out-front turf rotary mowers, this unit has performed very well for many courses.

Another mower which drew high interest this season was the Jacobsen LF 1880 fairway unit. Although not available for the better part of the season, demo units were out in force, and the feedback among superintendents was generally positive. The concept of this fairway mower falls between the triplex and fiveplex. It was being marketed toward high-end facilities, this unit has performed very well for many courses.

Although not new, two pieces of equipment still seem to be the talk of the industry. The Toro Flex 21 may still be the hottest new mowing unit on the market. In its second full season, this mower started to dominate the walking greensmower market. One major reason for this (besides the concept of the machine) was the lack of mechanical problems since its debut. This season, Toro also offered attachments for the unit, from brushes to groomers. These additions now offer even greater benefits for this mower.

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Bayer divests fipronil

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devolved for the greenhouse industry, the fipronil diverticule will directly impact the golf market. Current fipronil products include Chipco Choice, Top Choice and Fire Star.

“We have the right to negotiate licensing back the products, but there is no guarantee,” Carothers said. “But the opportunity for a co-exclusive is part of the negotiations.”

If licensing back the products doesn’t pan out, Carothers said Bayer ES would still have a very strong product line.

“It is not critical to our business model,” he said. “Our portfolio is still extremely strong. We have products like 2xGT, Merit, Compass and Bayleton which will make a huge impact in the golf market.”

Bayer ES also has three insecticides, two herbicides and four fungicides in development right now.

Three of the new products are currently in the registration process with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Those being reviewed include: Triton, a broad-spectrum fungicide; Lynx, a steryl inhibitor fungicide; and Revolver, a post-emergent herbicide that removes cool-season turf from warm-season turf.

“When we look at our project review, we look at what diseases and pests are controlled and what the unique selling proposition is,” said Carothers. “Then look at whether the active ingredient is compatible from an EPA perspective. All of this is being looked at to make sure we come out with new technology that our customers want and need. We need to bring new solutions to superintendents to help them more effectively manage their courses.”

Rose’s company Pure Seed Testing is also working on getting a turf label for its naturally Roundup tolerant Aurora Gold hard fescue and Pure Gold and Tomahawk RT tall fescues that are already on the market.

According to Pure Seed president Crystal Rose-Friker, the company is waiting for an approval from Monsanto so it can release recommended safe Roundup rates that can be applied to the turf without harming it.

Rose-Friker said work is also progressing on naturally Roundup tolerant creeping fescue, chewings fescue, slender creeping fescue, perennial ryegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, and bentgrass.