

MAINTENANCE



BRIEFS

IGM PROMOTES GANO, WELLS

CHAMPIONSGATE, Fla. — International Golf Maintenance (IGM) has promoted both Steve Gano and Jim Wells, CGCS, from regional managers to vice presidents of operation. Wells began working as a sales representative with Meadowbrook Golf's supply subsidiary, Golf Ventures, in 1990. He joined IGM in 1995 as a regional manager. Gano joined IGM in 1999 as a golf course superintendent at an IGM-maintained property. Prior to assuming his role as vice president of operations, Gano spent the last two years as the Southeast U.S. regional manager for IGM.

BLUE HERON PINES GC TO HOST USGA PUBLIC LINKS TOURNEY

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Blue Heron Pines Golf Club and the United States Golf Association will host the 2003 U.S. Amateur Public Links Championship July 14 to 19, 2003. It has been 20 years since this event has taken place in the Tri-state area, and net proceeds will be donated to the South Jersey Junior Golf Foundation, a non-profit organization based at Blue Heron Pines Golf Club. Steven Sanchez is the course's superintendent.

GRIGG BROTHERS MAKES SEVERAL PERSONNEL MOVES

ALBION, Idaho — In response to strong sales growth in 2002, organic amino acid and fertilizer manufacturer Grigg Brothers has reorganized its staff. Gary Grigg, CGCS, MG, who recently retired after 34 years as a superintendent, is the firm's new vice president and corporate agronomist. Grigg, who is a past president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, will be responsible for product education and training. The company also added Vince Van Meter as national sales manager, Roman Grigg as Northwest regional manager, and Todd Scott as Midwest regional manager.

Dobie uses underground 'eyes' to solve drainage issues

By ANDREW OVERBECK

SHARON CENTER, Ohio — Faced with poorly-drained greens, superintendent Frank Dobie here at The Sharon Club decided to go underground in search of the culprit.

Instead of digging up his problem greens and redoing the drainage, which is quite a time-consuming and costly project, Dobie used high-tech plumbing equipment to locate blocked and clogged drains.

"We had a drainage problem in one of our greens and we noticed that a local plumber had a flyer that showed a snake with a TV camera mounted on the end," Dobie said. "So we rented the equipment to try it out on drain tiles, but a plumber had to come in and operate it. After taking seven hours to check one green and paying the plumber \$100 an hour I quickly figured out that we could buy one of these and save a

lot of money."

The club purchased a Rigid See Snake that came with a 200-foot snake, pushrod, monitor and radio transmitter for \$8,000. It takes two workers to run the equipment with one watching the monitor and the other manipulating the snake. Once a problem spot is located, the radio transmitter records the depth and location of the end of the snake, allowing workers to pinpoint the blocked area.

"This way we aren't guessing and digging in the wrong spot," said Dobie. "It is right on the money, within three inches. It has helped us fix crushed drain tiles and clear



A worker feeds the See Snake into a drain to scan for any blockages or crushed tiles.

tree roots from drain lines."

Dobie estimated the cost of equipment has paid for itself, and then some.

"This is one of the most valuable tools we have ever had, and in my estimation every course should own one," he said. "The money saved in

time and labor is worth the cost of the equipment alone.

"In terms of headaches, it is probably worth 10 times that," Dobie continued. "If you lost a poorly-drained green during the playing season, you lose rounds,

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Returning supers battle tough job market, changes

By ANDREW OVERBECK

As the golf course construction boom in Asia has waned over the last couple of years, American superintendents have returned home to a very competitive job market. Out of the employment loop after time overseas, some have spent nearly a year looking for a superintendent position.

"My wife and I miss the cultural experience, but as for a career move I could not have timed it better," said James Sprinkle, superintendent at Ibis Golf and Country Club in West Palm Beach, Fla., who spent eight years in Asia, mainly in the Philippines. "Projects [in Asia] are still not starting and most clubs are going with local superintendents now."

"Being out of the U.S. market for eight years made it difficult to obtain a good job. I searched for about a year," he added. "Luckily, I had strong ties with

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White puts enzymes to the test at Olde Mill

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PORTAGE, Mich. — After years of using a chemical-first approach to golf course maintenance, superintendent Paul White decided to take matters into his own hands and test alternative products and practices.

"I got to the point spraying fungicides when I realized that they were great at killing disease but the grass was not getting any healthier," said White, who is superintendent at Olde Mill Golf Club here.

White discovered an alternative to a chemical-only approach by accident. While working at Sauganash National in Three Rivers, he came across two drums of products from Consulting

Agronomists, a natural product formulator based in Chicago.

"I called up their agronomist Doug Arenberg and he explained to me what it was and we decided to give it a try," said White.

The product, Vital Reactions, is a proprietary formulation of enzymes combined with organic liquid fertilizer and micronutrients.

White saw success during his



White credits Vital Reactions for increased root growth

time at Sauganash so he decided to adopt the program full time at Olde Mill. But first, he set up a test program.

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Audubon Int'l to hold first industry summit

HARTWELL, Ga. — Kicking off a "Fifty in Five" initiative to enroll 50 percent of U.S. golf courses in its environmental programs within the next five years, Audubon International is planning its first-ever industry summit on Feb. 12 at Catechee Golf Club here.

Catechee superintendent Buck Workman and course designer Mike Young will open the session, speaking on the intricacies of designing and maintaining an Audubon Signature property, while Signature Program director Nancy

Richardson will present an overview of the Audubon Signature Program. Then Audubon president Ron Dodson and director of programs and administration Kevin Fletcher will emcee an agenda geared toward the "Fifty in Five" initiative.

"At the end of the day," Fletcher said, "we want people to walk away with something that they feel they are a part of — an advisory council. We also expect to produce a document which captures the results of the discussion."

See Snake helps solve drainage issues

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members are dissatisfied and it puts added stress on your crew. You can't put a price on that."

On the greens he has fixed he has also had less anthracnose pressure and what fungicides he still has to use, work much more effectively.

In his four years using the See Snake, Dobie has focused on eight

problem greens.

"I was here when we did construction in 1964 and 1965, and we discovered that most of the drain tiles were crushed during construction," he said. "When they put down the gravel, trucks drove over it and crushed them."

While the construction damage was surprising, the real eye

opener for Dobie was realizing that his problem greens were suffering because of settling.

"When you have green sites that are built on fill material, that dirt settles over time no matter how much you compact it," said Dobie. "We have eight greens that incline from right to left on a 15-degree slope. So the left side settles more than the right. The herringbone had settled eight inches and in-

stead of draining out the front of the green, it was getting trapped."

This caused all sorts of problems during wet, humid summers when the clay would saturate with water and turn anaerobic, forming carbon dioxide and methane gas, which would force out oxygen and damage the root zone and eventually the plant.

"There are so many courses built today where there is a lot of

fill used," said Dobie. "This is as much a problem in old construction as it is in new construction."

Dobie's crew takes the snake out whenever it gets a chance to investigate and isolate trouble spots, but they wait until the season slows down in October to do any repairs. ■

White's enzyme test

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"I put a test area across fairways and did 45 1,000-square-foot plots. We tested it against all kinds of organic biostimulants at label rates to see what worked," he said. "What we found was the enzymes in the Vital Reactions work to help the fertilizer kick it up a notch. They allow more nutrients to get to the plants and we have seen more horizontal growth. It heals faster and makes the turf thicker and denser."

In his second full season of use, White has been able to reduce his

'Buy four gallons, mix it up and go test it out.'

— Paul White

fungicide budget and he has seen evidence of bentgrass actually crowding out Poa annua.

"I have cut my fungicide use by 75 percent," White said. "And the bentgrass is encroaching in on the Poa annua and not letting it reproduce. When I first came here you could pull the bentgrass right out of the ground. Now I have bentgrass plugs with roots going down into and through the clay layer."

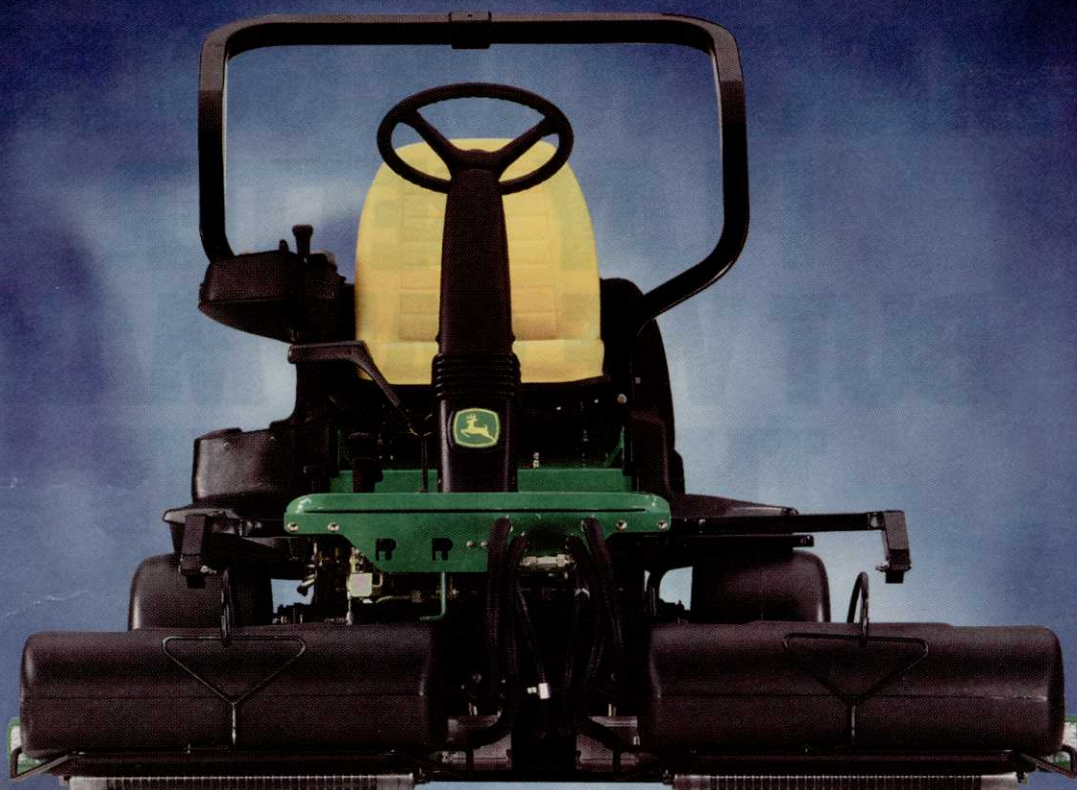
According to Arenberg, Vital Reactions contains enzymes that are natural in prairie soils.

"The ones we have discovered perform certain processes in wild grasses that make them more tolerant of adversity," he said. "The enzymes occur naturally in soil, but they don't grow in the soil. By applying them to turf you can add them back. They are not present in man-managed soils."

Because of the product's cost, White has only been using it on his greens and approaches. Vital Reactions costs \$37 a gallon and the recommended rates are half a gallon per 1,000 square feet every two weeks. White said he has been using one-third rates and getting results. He hopes to go to a reduced-rate application program for fairways next year.

While White has had success at Olde Mill, he recommends that superintendents test the product and any others before implementing a course-wide application program.

"Test it on your course," he said. "Don't go out and buy the whole program. Buy four gallons, mix it up and go test it out." ■



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