

MAINTENANCE



BRIEFS

GRANGER HEADS TO HAWAII

HOKULI'A, Hawaii — Hokuli'a has named Fred Granger as superintendent of its new Jack Nicklaus signature golf course. Granger, who has worked for courses such as Turnberry Isle in Miami, previously served as a consultant for courses throughout the southern United States. Hokuli'a is a private oceanside golf community just south of Kailua-Kona on Hawaii's Big Island.

SYNGENTA'S GREENPARTNERS POINTS GOOD FOR GCSAA SHOW

Greensboro, N.C. — Syngenta Professional Products has announced that golf course superintendents can now redeem GreenPartners P2 points to purchase full-pack registration to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show held in Atlanta February 10 to 15, 2003. Syngenta also added GCSAA seminars, self-study courses, and several other educational opportunities to the GreenPartners reward offering. The GCSAA full conference package includes the opening session and reception, the golf general session, conference educational program, career development general session and the opportunity to visit with more than 700 exhibitors at the three-day trade show. It can be purchased by redeeming 35,900 GreenPartners points.

VALLEYCREST SIGNS RAMBLEWOOD CC

CALABASAS, Calif. — ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance has signed a maintenance agreement with the 27-hole public Ramblewood Country Club in Mount Laurel, N.J. The addition of this facility increases the company's maintenance portfolio in the Northeast region to nine. Situated in South Jersey, Ramblewood Country Club was designed in 1962 by Ed Ault. The course features bluegrass/ryegrass tees, fairways and roughs with Poa-bentgrass greens.

Fist attacks effluent problems at the source

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BARRINGTON, Ill. — With more courses using effluent water for irrigation purposes, more superintendents are being forced to irrigate with less than ideal water. Untreated effluent can cause numerous agronomic problems due to its usually high bicarbonate and sodium levels.

Superintendent Ted Fist at Wynstone Golf Club here has eased these problems in one simple step by convincing homeowners to switch their water softening agents from sodium chloride to potassium chloride.

Under the terms of the development agreement, Fist is obligated to use wastewater from the 345 homes that surround the course. Wynstone's water supply, which is drawn from five wells, is very hard and has bicarbonate levels of 370 parts per million. As a result, 88 percent of

the homes use water softeners and prior to 1999 sodium chloride was the predominant water softening agent. After the wastewater runs through a two-stage lagoon treatment system, Fist has an irrigation source that has sodium levels above 300 parts per million, resulting in base saturation levels of 48.9 percent sodium and 20.6 percent magnesium.

"These water conditions created severe infiltration and soil structure problems," said Fist. "The turf would wilt very quickly

in the summer under moderate stress conditions. Trees would defoliate. It was free water but it wasn't very good."

Back in 1990, the club installed an acid injection system to combat the bicarbonate levels, but

Fist knew more had to be done to combat the sodium levels.

He first determined that the levels on the homeowner's water softeners were set too high and worked with the Wynstone

Continued on page 9



Fist's crew at Wynstone GC handles the delivery of 65 tons of potassium chloride to its 345 homes each year.

GCSAA, USGA to examine wetting agents

By ANDREW OVERBECK

LAWRENCE, Kan. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and the United States Golf Association's Green Section are teaming up on what could be the first of several comparative research projects that provide scientific evaluations of products that are widely used by superintendents but not widely tested by universities.

According to GCSAA's director of research, Clark Throssell, the first study will address the efficacy of wetting agents.

"We are in the process of sending the scientific protocol to university scientists to assess their interest in conducting an investigation," he said. "The plans are to start field evaluations in late spring 2003 and continue through 2004. The goal is to have evaluations on localized dry spot at eight

Continued on page 9

Klingstone protects bunker investment

By ANDREW OVERBECK

WAYNESVILLE, N.C. — When it comes to keeping bunker sand consistent and free of contamination, many courses are turning to liners and other materials.

One lining product recently received a patent for its unique polyurethane material that binds directly to the top layer of soil to create a barrier that eliminates contamination of bunker sand and sidewall erosion. Klingstone, which is manufactured by Green Mountain International, is applied as a liquid, allowing it to conform to any bunker shape.

"You apply it directly through a hose and once you wet out the surface it soaks in and forms a layer one-quarter to one-half-inch



Co-inventor Tim Johnson installs Klingstone at Springhill Golf Club.

thick. In 24 hours, it is dry enough to put sand in," said Dennis Galbreath. "It is a urethane polymer so it won't break down and it can take physical abuse."

While the product is more expensive up front, costing \$900 for a 55-gallon drum, Galbreath said it reduces bunker maintenance costs

Continued on page 8

Achieving bunker consistency is a Herculean task

By KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS

Other than the condition of greens, bunkers are the most talked about and controversial area of the golf course. Most of the talk is from golfers, and superintendents have all heard the comments: too soft, too hard, too wet, too dry, too much sand, too little sand, too inconsistent. While bunkers are a hazard, it is up to superintendents to ensure that they are a fair hazard.

The most important part is the sand quality.

There are very few places in the United States that have natural sand deposits that meet specifications for great bunker sand. Most premium bunker sand today is manufactured in a few locations across the country. These manufactured sands, along with a few rare natural deposits, make the process of finding great bunker sands very difficult and expensive.

What makes great bunker sand? The United

Continued on page 8

Fist enlists homeowners to solve effluent problem

Continued from page 6

Property Owners Association to dial back usage of sodium chloride. That reduced sodium levels to 180 parts per million, but Fist was still not satisfied.

"In 1999 we began a study to determine the benefits of using potassium chloride as a water softening agent instead of sodium chloride," Fist said. "We started the program by providing every resident with six bags of potassium chloride three times a year."

Within three months of starting the program, Fist began to see results.

"We saw significant increases in the



Better water quality has made for more resilient turf.

potassium concentrations in the effluent," he said. "Potassium levels are now at 170 parts per million and sodium has declined to 82 parts per million."

"Because the irrigation water has improved, the soil conditions are better. We are not wilting as fast, the trees are not defoliating and we are able to reduce the amount of potassium in our fertilizer program," Fist added.

Fist is able to cut back his fertilizer use

Wetting agent research

Continued from page 6

sites across the country."

The project will cost \$200,000 and will be split between the GCSAA and USGA. Throssell said the study will not look at all the wetting agents on the market, but that it will focus on the products that are more widely used by superintendents.

Many industry insiders and some superintendents are wondering why the two organizations have decided to start with a wetting agent study, as opposed to organic products or off-patent versions of Roundup.

"It was felt that the wetting agent category was one that was widely used and one which there is not much comparative research on," said Throssell. "This is intended to be a pilot project. After we finish we will see what the response is from members and industry and then determine how to handle more research."

While Throssell stresses that the project is a test case, the USGA's Green Section director Mike Kenna is hopeful that the program will expand beyond the initial study.

"We both owe it to our members to do oversight," he said. "We all know there are things that are advertised and sold that we don't know a heck of a lot about. So maybe this is something that we can provide through an ongoing research program."

If the research project is a success, Throssell said future studies could potentially include biostimulants and other products that have not been widely studied. ■

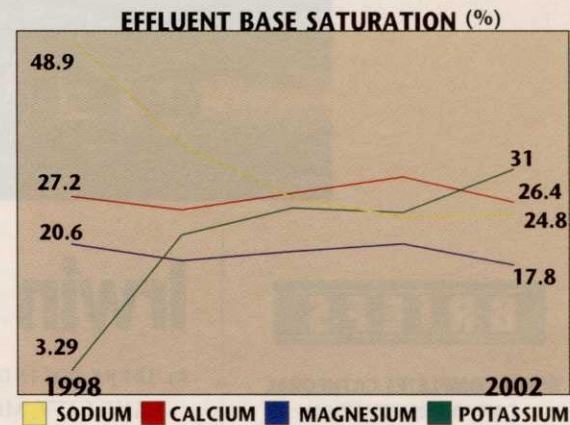
because of the added potassium in the water. He applies 33 million gallons of water on 100 acres of irrigated turf, which converts to 10.5 pounds of elemental potassium per 1,000 square feet.

Fist's staff handles the distribution of potassium chloride and homeowners use a dedicated hotline to place their orders. The homeowners go through 65 tons of potassium chloride a year at a cost of \$18,000. The cost is split between Fist's operating budget and the property owners

association.

Without the changeover to potassium chloride, Fist said he is not sure what the course would have done.

"I can't imagine where we would be if we had not done this," he said. "Our water quality is still not ideal, but it is more manageable. It will take a few more years of good nutrient management and cultural practices to alleviate the build-up of sodium in the soil." ■



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