MAINTENANCE

BRIEFS

LATHAM WINS PIPER AND OAKLEY AWARD

FAR HILLS, N.J. — James M. Latham has been honored with the USGA Green Section's Piper and Oakley Award. Latham was actively involved on the USGA Turfgrass and Environmental Research Committee from 1995 to 2002. He attended numerous research-monitoring visits and offered advice on the research being considered by the committee. Latham worked as a USGA Green Section Agronomist from 1956 to 1960 and from 1984 to 1994. In the interim, Latham worked for 25 years with the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission, helping to promote one of the nation's first businesses designed to recycle waste products into landscape fertilizers. The Piper and Oakley award was established in 1998 to periodically recognize those who have contributed to the programs and activities of the USGA Green Section.

NEGCSA HONORS KURPOSKA

DELMAR, N.Y. — The Northeastern Golf Course Superintendents Association (NEGCSA) has presented its Distinguished Service Award to James Kurposka, superintendent of Normanside Country Club here. Kurposka previously worked at Colonie Country Club, Albany Country Club and Noyack Golf & Country Club. The NEGCSA presented Kurposka with the award to recognize his involvement, interest and commitment to the association. The award has been presented annually by the NEGCSA since 2000.

EPIC ADDS SPANISH TITLES

WEST BEND, Wis. — EPIC of Wisconsin has added two new Spanish titles to its Superintendent's Video Workshop series of golf course maintenance training programs. Both "The Fine Art of Hand Watering with Paul Latshaw" and "Sun Safety" are now available in English and Spanish. The company now has 12 Spanish titles in its 26-program series, which are supplied on both VHS tape and CD-ROM.

Editorial Focus: Putting Green Management

Technology permits lower, leaner and faster greens

By KEVIN J. ROSS, CGCS

There is no debating the fact that managing golf greens today has changed over the last 25 years. Today, greens management uses technology and years of experience to produce the finest conditioned greens surfaces ever. It wasn't too many years ago, the 1970s, that we were cutting greens at 3/16 inch and producing speeds of seven feet on the Stimpmeter. Times have changed.

CONSTRUCTION

The greens that superintendents produce today are, in large part, a result of greens construction techniques that have been refined through the years to offer the ultimate in soil physics. The USGA has done an excellent job in continually reviewing and improving their specifications for greens construction. Present specifications are based on scientific laboratory testing, which will ensure that, with proper construction, a green will perform for many years.

With technology, we have also improved the ability to match the proper sand particle sizes of a USGA spec green. Golf course material suppliers now have very sophisticated sand screening and mixing machines. These machines ensure the proper material will be produced and mixed for greens rootzones.

TURFGRASSES

Since the late 1950s, Penncross creeping bentgrass has dominated the bentgrass market. Even with the newer bentgrasses on the market, Penncross is still the world's top-selling bentgrass, with some 750,000 pounds sold annually. While Penncross still dominates the market, the grass we now play on is one of the biggest changes in greens surfaces. The new "superbents" (As, Gs, L-93, SR1119, etc.) offer finer texture, greater density, upright

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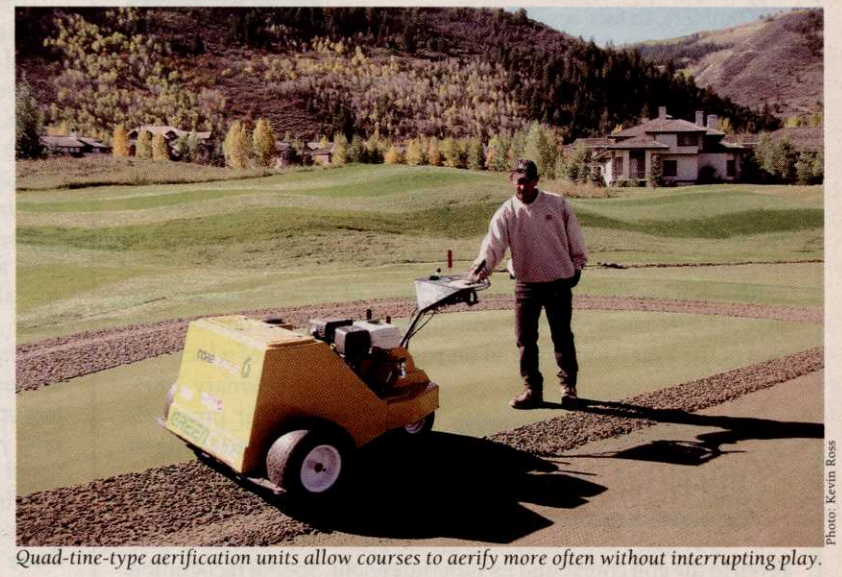

Photo: Kevin Ross

Quad-tine-type aerification units allow courses to aerify more often without interrupting play.

Anthracnose proliferation continues

By ANDREW OVERBECK

As new chemicals to fight anthracnose proliferate, so does the disease. The combination of warm winters, hot summers, lower cutting heights and leaner greens has led to increased outbreaks of anthracnose over the last few years.

"It used to be a hot-weather phenomenon, but it has become a disease that starts up in the spring," said Dr. Gail Schumann from the University of Massachusetts. "I need to put a thing on my phone that says, 'If you are calling about anthracnose, press 2.'"

According to Schumann and other turfgrass pathologists, the disease that attacks Poa annua and has even been seen on bentgrass, is becoming more prevalent and more

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UMass study determines pesticide exposure figures

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — A University of Massachusetts researcher has completed the first phase of a golf course pesticide study that provides, for the first time, accurate exposure estimates for golfers. The research is significant because it will give the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency realistic human exposure data to use when reregistering pesticides under the Food Quality and Protection Act (FQPA).

At a presentation delivered during the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show here March 19, Dr. John Clark outlined the results of the three-year, $250,000 study. The work was sponsored by the USGA, the New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation, the United States Department of Agriculture, Dow AgroSciences and Bayer.

"The EPA didn't ask us to do it [the study]," said Clark. "The driving issue is they are in the process of reregistering through FQPA and as the industry looks

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Researchers had volunteer golfers wear special suits to absorb pesticide residues.

SUPERideas

System refills divot mix bottles with ease

At many clubs it is common practice to have divot mix bottles on golf cars and located on par-3 teeing areas. One of the biggest problems is efficiently filling these bottles. Some methods, such as the ice scoop, are more of a means of frustration than efficiency.

One way to ease the pain of filling divot bottles is to construct your own divot sand tube filler. There are many ways to make a filling device. The unit I made holds slightly more than three 150-pound bags of mix and can be mounted in many ways. In the photo, the tube sits in a welded square of two-inch angle iron that is

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Photo: Kevin Ross

Ross' tube filler refills divot mix bottles efficiently

Editorial Focus: Putting Green Management

Nikolai: Green contour, not speed, matters most

LANSING, Mich. — In the course of researching his upcoming book on green speed and helping Crystal Downs Country Club superintendent Mike Morris identify his course's optimum green speed, Michigan State University turfgrass research specialist Thom Nikolai may have found the answer to end the constant debate over green speed.

"When the USGA perfected the Stimpmeter in the late 1970s they set up a chart for tournament play and named [the readings] fast, medium and slow," said Nikolai. "They should not have done that, because no one is going to say 'I want to play on the slow ones.' Whenever a golfer hears the speed they say they want to play something that fast. It is synonymous with wanting a faster car."

Instead, Nikolai argues, the chart should be changed from describing speed to describing the contour of the green. This would replace fast, medium and slow with flat, undulating and severely contoured.

"It would be better for all golfers on each individual course, it would be better for superintendents and it would be better for the turf," said Nikolai. "You can tell people that speeds are different from course to course, but people are not very good at communicating why speeds are different. It comes down to contours.

"What needs to be done is to find and evaluate the correct green speed for each particular course and that can be done very simply with the superintendent identifying a range by surveying members," he added. "This could be done over the course of a year. And the results would be a determined green speed range that is the best speed for each particular course."

> *'I think golfers would rather play on contoured greens as opposed to flat greens.'*
> *— Thom Nikolai*

Although more research is necessary, Nikolai hopes to develop a model that takes into account the topography of the green, making the fastest possible numbers less appealing.

"I think the majority of golfers would rather play on contoured greens as opposed to flat greens, thus fastest should not be perceived as the best to play on," he said.■

Divot sand filler

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mounted to a shelving unit and secured at the top for stability.

The following parts are needed to construct the tube filler:

- 1 piece of eight inch PVC Pipe, four to five feet long
- 1 eight inch by two inch PVC reducer
- 1 two inch by one inch FPT bushing
- 1 one inch threaded nipple
- 1 one inch brass ball valve
- 1 eight inch glue end cap (optional)

To assemble the unit, thread the nipple into the ball valve, then thread the nipple into the bushing. Then glue the bushing into the reducer, and attach it to the eight-inch pipe. The opposite end of the pipe is used to pour the divot mix into the device. You can, however, grind the outside diameter of the pipe so an eight-inch cap will fit over the pipe if needed.

— Kevin J. Ross, CGCS, superintendent Country Club of the Rockies, Edwards, Colo.

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Got a SUPERidea of your own? Email your ideas to editor Andrew Overbeck at aoverbeck@golfcoursenews.com. If your idea is selected for publication, we'll send you a *Golf Course News* golf shirt.■