

News

CONVENTIONS

GCSAA: sand greens draw biggest crowds

Just as at many regional turf conferences in the past few months, construction and topdressing of greens with sand created the most interest on the part of superintendents attending the 50th International Turfgrass Conference and Show in Atlanta last month. Walls of large meeting rooms were literally lined with standing conference attendees.

The staff of the sponsoring Golf Course Superintendents Association of America this year provided all the elements of a successful convention: the Georgia World Congress Center, more than 200 exhibitors and 6,500 registrants, and a program of educational sessions keyed by a strong motivational speech.

In an effort to respond to criticism of programs at previous years' conferences, GCSAA Director of Education Palmer Maples and his aides created a diversified program with greater participation by superintendents. There were turf management sessions divided into "north" and "south" groups, a morning of research reports, labor management topics, a morning for public course management, and the especially popular sand green

greens and has reduced application of fungicides because of his topdressing program. He said that "if your greens are healthy, there's no need to start sand topdressing," but that "it is a solution to many maintenance problems."

George Burgin of Atlanta Country Club in Marietta, Ga., started topdressing with sand to correct compaction problems and to reduce aerification from five times per year. He stopped using sand when he noticed while cutting cups that the root system on his greens extended only into the sand layer. Burgin told the audience, "Sand topdressing may be a good program under poor soil conditions, but don't do it unless it's necessary. Be very cautious."

Reduced *Poa annua* population was one benefit of sand topdressing discovered by Charles Nolan of Inglewood Golf and Country Club, Kenmore, Wash. Nolan's greens were constructed in 1918 of organic soils and were never tiled; they are now a 50/50 mixture of *Poa* and bent, and "you can't tell the bent from the *Poa* — they both stand up," Nolan said. He has adapted a topdresser so that a three-man crew can topdress all 20 greens in one morning.

How to live with rising water costs and drought was discussed by Jim Prusa of Pasatiempo Golf Club, Santa Cruz, Calif. Deciding where not to irrigate because of rationing, guarding against unscrupulous well drilling companies, and handling monthly water bills of \$12,000 for irrigation are just three of the reasons Prusa has been forced to make sacrifices at Pasatiempo.



LEFT TO RIGHT: Knapp, Burgin, and Nolan — two "aye's" and one "nay" for sand topdressing.

sessions.

After James Fitzroy, CGCS, superintendent at the Wollaston Recreational Facility in N. Quincy, Mass., filled the meeting room to overflowing relating his success with green construction using sand as the topmix, three other superintendents discussed their experiences with sand topdressing.

Ray Knapp of Tuckaway Country Club in Franklin, Wis., found regular light topdressing with sand provides a considerable amount of sand over a year's time and eliminates thatch problems. He has virtually stopped aerification of

To compensate for the cutback in water usage, Prusa has increased aerification, sand topdressing of greens, mowing heights, hand watering, efficiency of irrigation, use of native plants in the landscape, and use of drip irrigation. His biggest move was to arrange use of effluent water under a publicly funded project. Not only will the state and federal government pay most of the installation cost, but the club's water rate will be reduced by two thirds.

Paying \$42,000 per year for water is one big reason why Elmer Border, CGCS, El Caballero



ABOVE: Diesel power was in the forefront of GCSAA exhibits as several manufacturers introduced new tractors. BELOW: Recognizing superintendents' growing influence in golf car operations, virtually every major golf car company exhibited at GCSAA.



Country Club, Canoga Park, Calif., is concerned with making room for more golfers on his course. "We need more golfers for economic survival. We're being priced out of business," he said.

A superintendent since 1926, Border has helped his club initiate a number of new procedures to speed play and get more golfers through the course: playing fivesomes on weekends or whenever the course gets crowded, using 90 electric golf cars, installing permanent 150-yard markers, putting markers on the flagpoles to indicate pin position on the green, and asking golfers to putt continuously and to forget "honors" on teeing off.

Charles Tadge, CGCS, Mayfield Country Club, South Euclid, Ohio, was elected GCSAA president at the annual business meeting. Melvin Lucas, CGCS, Piping Rock Club, Long Island, N.Y., is the new vice president. Elected to 3-year directors' terms were Michael Bavier, CGCS, Inverness Golf Club, Palatine, Ill., and Edward Dembnicki, Arcadian Shores Golf Club, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

SEED

Salt-tolerant variety found on golf course

A new turf variety that thrives on soils with a pH as high as 8.5 was discovered on the fairways at Boulder Country Club in Colorado.

The variety — "Fults" *Puccinellia distans* — is intended initially for use along highways rights-of-way, but there are also plans to market it for golf course use.

Northrup King Co., Minneapolis, presently has production and marketing rights. The company is contemplating seeking Plant Variety Protection under federal law.

Fults was discovered by Stan Metsker, then superintendent at the Boulder golf course. He noticed patches of grass growing in salty areas of the fairways. Professor Jesse Fults of the Colorado State University Weed Research Lab identified the grass as *Puccinellia distans*. He was responsible for the initial collecting, purification, and

seed increase of the variety and is the person for whom the grass was ultimately named.

According to Larry Vetter, manager of the Professional Turf Products Div. for Northrup King, seed mixture formulas for fine turf use can include Kentucky bluegrass, fine-leaved perennial ryegrasses, and/or fine fescues such as the salt-tolerant Dawson red fescue, in addition to Fults.

He said that a combination of these species will provide quick cover, goof turf quality, and long-term persistence. It can also be seeded with bentgrass. It is expected to have uses on golf courses in areas where irrigation water is highly alkaline.

Fults is a low-growing bunch grass. Maximum unmown height, inclusive of seed heads, is between 12 and 16 inches. Foliage height ranges from 4 to 8 inches. It can be maintained at a mown height of between 1/2 and 2 inches. Plants are leafy and the leaves narrow. The color is dark green, which tends to darken on alkaline soils.

Optimum soil pH level for most grasses is between 6.5 and 7.0

ASSOCIATIONS

Ohio course owners form new group

Like the phoenix, a mythological bird which rose renewed from its own ashes, the Ohio Association of Public Golf Courses has been formed from what had been the Outdoor Recreation Association in that state.

The new name and a new set of bylaws were approved at a meeting on January 16. Elected president of the new association was Keith Maffit, president and major shareholder of Briarwood Golf Club, Broadview Hts.; Dean West, owner of Wests Mogodore Country Club, is secretary/treasurer.

The association divides the state into nine sections, each of which will elect a representative to the OAPGC board of directors. Elected thus far as directors are Don Likes, Kingswood Golf Club, Mason; Bill George, Valley View Golf Club, Lancaster; Ken Snode, Tannenhaut Country Club, Alliance; Tom Patterson, Orchard Hills Country Club, Chesterland; Larry Shute, Bluffton Golf Club; and Dean Peterson, Avalon Golf Club, Youngstown.

The former Outdoor Recreation Association was founded in 1965 by a group of Ohio golf course owners. It had 100 member courses in its first year, according to Sil Monday, executive director for the ORA's 14 years of existence, although the membership fell off in recent years. Only 25 courses were active members in 1978.

During Monday's tenure as executive director, he worked diligently campaigning for public issues beneficial to golf courses in the state, such as Daylight Savings Time and getting green belt legislation on the ballot.

Dues in the new organization will be \$30 per year for privately owned public golf courses, but there will also be an associate membership category for suppliers and others affiliated with the golf business in Ohio.

Interested public courses in Ohio can contact Keith Maffit at Briarwood GC, 2737 Edgerton Rd., Broadview Hts., OH 44147.

HERBICIDES

Rhone-Poulenc Inc. alters Chipco label

A label change in Rhone-Poulenc Inc.'s Chipco Ronstar G herbicide should help golf course superintendents control *Poa annua*, according to a spokesman from the company's Agricultural Division.

The herbicide, currently being manufactured in a new larger granule size, may now be applied in the late summer or early fall for pre-emergent control of *Poa annua*. "Expansion of our label should enable turf managers to regain control of *Poa annua*," the spokesman said.

In addition, the company announced that the herbicide may now be used to control weeds on established perennial ryegrass and St. Augustinegrass. Previously, the label covered only bermudagrass and bluegrass.

Further, the application rate of the herbicide for goosegrass and crabgrass control has been reduced to 2 to 4 pounds active ingredient per acre or 100 to 200 pounds of formulated material per acre. The prior rate had been 4 pounds active ingredient or 200 pounds of formulated material per acre.

GOLF COURSE BRIDGES

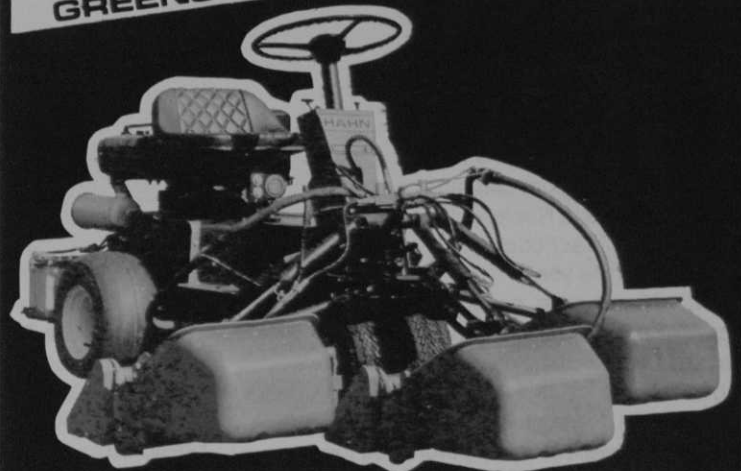


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