**Dursban Alert Sounded**

Dow AgroSciences has sounded a rallying cry for superintendents using Dursban to make themselves heard in Washington.

Dursban’s active ingredient, chlorpyrifos, is one of the organophosphate pesticides being scrutinized by the EPA as part of ongoing implementation of the Food Quality Protection Act. EPA recently competed a risk assessment of chlorpyrifos and began a 60-day public comment period on Oct. 1. Dow is urging superintendents to write to EPA to let them know that continued use of Dursban is important to them.

According to Dow’s Tim Maniscalco, Dursban is a “primary tool” for golf courses that may be lost to new regulations unless users act now. Superintendents “are an important group that need to be considered when any decisions are made on this compound,” he said. “They need to make certain that their voices are heard.”

Maniscalco believes superintendents can make a difference in the decision-making process. “People in Washington will take notice when voters let their voices be heard,” he said.

He suggested that superintendents contact their Dow Agro representatives to learn more about the issue and how to respond. A Web site with key information is also planned.

Under the FQPA process, the risks and benefits of dozens of turf chemicals are being reviewed under a controversial set of standards developed by EPA in response to a federal law that was originally widely supported by industry and environmentalists alike.

Dursban is among the first widely used golf course products to reach this stage of the review. Despite the need for superintendents to comment immediately, Maniscalco noted that it will likely still be several years before a final ruling is made.

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**Humdinger of a Price**

If you’ve got money to burn and really want to make an impression on the golfers at your course, have we got something for you.

Introducing the Humdinger golf car, an electric vehicle manufactured in the mold of the muscular Hummer sport-utility vehicle. The Humdinger, retailing for a mere $15,600, is perfect for cruising the golf course or for light off-road excursions. Check out these features:

- 3.8 horsepower electric motor;
- 22-inch knobby tires;
- street-legal configuration;
- top speed of 30 miles per hour.

The Humdinger is sold at In Celebration of Golf, a 12,000-square-foot golf retail store located in Scottsdale, Ariz.

“*It’s perfect for someone who wants to make a statement,*” says Peter Meyer of In Celebration of Golf.

A statement?

Yeah, like, “I’m rich, I’m bored and my golf game sucks, so I bought this yellow toy to impress my buddies.”
Weird Science Comes to Golf

GENE GUNS, GOLD PARTICLES AND PLANT DNA

A brief glimpse inside The Scotts Co.'s Marysville, Ohio, research-and-development laboratory reveals there are no skittish white mice. Only scientists like John A. Neal, armed with Ph.D.s, gold and tungsten, a supply of petri dishes and an arsenal of expensive, high-tech equipment. Oh yes, and the all-important selected plant DNA.

Neal and his team of white-coated scientists are performing pioneering research to create genetically engineered turfgrasses that perform well on golf courses. Some scientists say it boils down to improving turfgrass traits by helping Mother Nature along with the evolutionary process. Critics say it's meddling. No one can argue its effectiveness because, as in little as six months, plantlets are created with important traits designed to make them hold up better under the strain of thousands of players.

Such teamwork at Scotts has been ongoing for several years. In many ways, the work resembles that of seed companies that cross-breed different turfgrasses to create improved cultivars. The main difference is that biotechnological methods are much more precise and faster. Genes for tolerance can be cloned and transferred into different turfgrass plants.

At Scotts, one handy piece of proprietary equipment is the gene gun, which Neal said looks more like a toaster oven. In short, the gene gun is used to accelerate about 10 million gold particles, each containing about 10 million copies of a plant gene.

"That's like a hundred trillion bullets that we shoot at a million targets, and we get maybe 10 hits," Neal said of the process that takes a few minutes.

Neal said gold or tungsten is used because the material is heavy, inert and can be ground into a fine powder that is nearly invisible.

The real work comes in finding those 10 cells that survive because they contain specific genes.

"If the gene that I chose was the one to make the plant resistant to Roundup (glyphosate), then I would transfer those cells onto some media that contained glyphosate," Neal said. "Gradually, the cells that were not transferred would not do well and the ones that were transferred would." It's a selection process that takes months.

By 2002, the company's genetically engineered bentgrass may be growing on some golf courses.

Quotable

"We spilled our guts out."
— Hal Sutton, top soldier and scorer for the U.S. Ryder Cup team, telling a Reuters reporter how captain Ben Crenshaw's group overcame a seemingly insurmountable lead to reclaim the cup it lost to the Europeans in 1995.

"Tuna!"
— A catcall from a heckler in the Ryder Cup gallery intended for Colin Montgomerie, who bears an uncanny resemblance to New York Jets football coach Bill Parcells, the man they nicknamed after the stinky fish. Parcells reportedly hates the nickname, and Montgomerie didn't like it much either.

"I've always said of most superintendents: If you give them a 50-foot section of garden hose and a walk-behind mower, they can make their courses look pretty nice."
— Don Bulmer, golf sales manager for the Toro Co.'s Irrigation Division, on hard-working superintendents.

"The greens aren't great. They're hard, and I don't think the weather has anything to do with it."
— Lee Janzen, as told to the Chicago Tribune, griping about the greens at the Medinah CC for the PGA Championship.

"All I can tell you is we are doing the best we can."
— Medinah's CGCS Danny Quast, as told to the Chicago Tribune, on Janzen's criticism.

"Superintendents are a lot smarter than they were 15 years ago. They're not tire-kicking, grease-monkey grass cutters."
— Todd Gray, director of finance programs for golf and turf leasing at John Deere Credit.
The Full (Of It) Monty

First, it was professionals complaining about the difficult conditions at Carnoustie. Then, it was complaints about the course condition at Medinah. Now, it's European players saying fans shouldn't be allowed to cheer for their team in the Ryder Cup.

If professional golfers want to be considered athletes, they need to play under adverse conditions. Colin Montgomerie was one of the worst offenders at the Ryder Cup, proving that France isn't the only country to produce w(h)ine. Monty made an annoying habit of backing off 2-foot puts every time a baby belched in the tri-state area. We think Peter King of CNN/SI summed up his display best:

"Colin Montgomerie ought to shut up, stop glaring at the crowd and play golf. The Ryder Cup was fun to watch, but Montgomerie was a wuss throughout. What is so horrendously unsportsmanlike about a crowd that is rabidly rooting for the home team and cheers when a foe misses a putt? Golf is so ridiculous about these things. Imagine Yankee Stadium, after Roger Clemens strikes out Chipper Jones in the World Series, being silent. Join the real world, Monty."

You Know You've Made It as a Superintendent ...

. . . WHEN THEY NAME A SALAD AFTER YOU ON THE CLUB'S MENU

At Doral Resort and CC in Miami, you can stop by Champions Sports Bar & Grill after playing 18 and munch on Dan Dupree's Greens Keeper Salad, featuring romaine lettuce, garlic croutons, parmesan cheese and caesar dressing.

Now, if you don't like the green speeds, you can go looking for Dupree. But if you don't dig the greens, as in the salad, go looking for the chef. Club rules.
Scanning the Web

One of the questions publisher Pat Jones asked me before I took this job was whether I needed to have a great golf game. He said, “No, but you better be willing to learn.” That got me to thinking: Where on the Web could I find tips to improve my game before I humiliate myself on the links as I play my way through my duties here? Here are a few Web sites I checked out that might help us all improve our games:

- [http://www.tagagolf.com](http://www.tagagolf.com) — TAGA stands for “The Amateur Golf Advisor,” and for a serious duffer like me this site was golf tip Nirvana. Not only does the page begin with overall tips on bettering your golf game if you're a beginner, but it breaks the game down into grip, power, stance, balance and other topics for the more experienced player. You can also buy golf clubs, self-help books and other golf paraphernalia at this site. Bookmark it.

- [http://www.golf-edge.com/tips.html](http://www.golf-edge.com/tips.html) — Designed by LPGA teaching pro Lisa Ann Horst, this site may not help more experienced golfers, but beginners will find it useful. Much of the site focuses on the mental side of the game, and the physical fitness and nutrition sections will help golfers at all levels stay in playing shape throughout the year.

- [http://espn.go.com/golfonline/index.html](http://espn.go.com/golfonline/index.html) — Given the high-powered name behind this site, I expected far more than I got. It's text intensive, and the pale, off-white background makes what's there hard to read. If you can find the tips, it might help your game, but it's a lot of work to get there.

Scanning the Web is compiled by Frank H. Andorka Jr., Golfdom's associate editor. When he's not out working on his golf swing, you can contact him at fandorka@advantstar.com with future column suggestions or sites you think he should visit.

Greens Around the Gills

RESEARCHERS DISCOVER CREEPING BENTGRASS DISEASE

University of Maryland researchers have discovered a new disease for superintendents to worry about on their creeping bentgrass putting greens.

The disease, at pretime unnamed, can easily be confused with copper spot and/or Microdochium patch. It more frequently attacks sun-exposed areas than shaded sites. Symptoms initially appear as small, reddish-brown spots 1/2 inch to 2 inches in diameter. The centers of these spots are tan or gray and are often sunken, resembling ball marks.

While the disease was discovered in July on a green at the Hartefeld National GC in southeastern Pennsylvania, it was also sighted in Virginia, Maryland, Ohio and Illinois, usually during the warm and dry conditions in August and September.

Researchers at the University of Georgia say they suspect the disease, which was also spotted there in July, is caused by fungus.

The disease, though spreading, has not affected all courses.

"We haven't experienced anything like that here," said Doug Davis, CGCS at the Broken Arrow GC in Lockport, Ill. "As a whole, our greens have been relatively healthy this year."

Graffis Glorified

It's nice to know our bloodlines are impeccable, especially when the kudos come from a fellow industry magazine.

Herb Graffis, who started Golfdom magazine in 1927, was listed No. 3 on Golf World's Top 10 Golf Writers of the 20th Century in July. Graffis also started a second golf magazine called Golfing, as well as ghostwriting Tommy Armour's classic instruction book, "How to Play Your Best Golf All the Time." Most important, to those of us who write about the industry, he teamed with Grantland Rice to found the Golf Writers Association of America.

Graffis joined such esteemed authors as John Updike, P.G. Wodehouse and Bobby Jones on the Top 10 list. Only Wodehouse and Bobby Darwin ranked higher than Graffis.
Dumb, Dumber ... Dumbest

SUPERINTENDENTS STRIKE BACK

By Jerry Goldiron Jr., CGCS

Superintendents take more criticism than Notre Dame's head football coach, with less reason. Since we find ourselves at the mercy of Mother Nature more often than Al Roker, the circumstances that create golfers' perceived problems with the courses are often beyond our control. That's why, at first glance, Geoff Shackelford's "Dumb and Dumber, Superintendent Style" column in the May/June issue hit some of us so hard. It's frustrating to see that sort of criticism in print — especially at a glance, which is sometimes all we busy superintendents have time to do.

That said, the column hit closer to home than most of us want to admit. I've been a superintendent for more than 20 years, and I've experienced almost all of the situations that Shackelford outlined. But if you put aside personal pride and reread the column with an unbiased eye, it was funny — damn funny. And remember: Golfers have provided us with our own personal "Dumb and Dumber" material for years. If I earned a commission for every golfer's comment that split my sides with its complete lack of understanding of what it takes to run a golf course, I'd be retired to Jamaica by now. So as painful as Shackelford's comments might have been at first glance, we must realize that golfers have repaid us tenfold.

With the help of my staff, friends, fellow superintendents and TurfNet buddies, we devised a David Letterman-style list of comments that golfers (not to mention golf professionals, television announcers, turf magazine editors and witty golf writers) have made to superintendents that have had us roaring with laughter. Sit back and enjoy:

10. Golfer to superintendent — "Can you cover the bunkers with plastic so when you irrigate — or when it rains — the sand will stay dry?"

9. Irate golfer to topdresser operator — "Stop! Stop! Can't you see you're losing your sand load all over the green?"

8. Golfer after watching the U.S. Open on TV: "Could we install some straight lines from the tees at our club so the players will not get lost (referring to dew walks)?"

7. Message left on superintendent's answering machine by a member after a major flood hit the area: "Do you not realize we have a city water valve to fill the irrigation lake? Someone on your crew has left the valve on too long, and it is flooding the golf course and surrounding community."

6. Golfer to the superintendent: "The new coolers you put out on the course are great, but the ice water is a little too cold."

5. Grounds chairman asks superintendent during a major drought: "When it rains, could we somehow get a huge plastic bag or balloon to capture the water for storage and later irrigation use?"

4. After a heavy rain, the golf professional asks: "Is it cartpaths only today? I suppose I
will have to cancel my playing lesson."

3. Golf writer interviewing superintendent during course renovation: "How many inches do the greens sink each year after aerification?"

2. Golfer to irrigation technician while repairing a sprinkler head: "I thought the reason we installed an automatic system was so it would never break or need repair."

And finally, my all time favorite, heard from a well-respected TV announcer at a major tournament:

1. "The green committee has gone too far this time, instructing the greenkeeper to install those fans around the greens to cool the members."

With gems like these to keep us amused on cold winter nights, it’s probably not too much to ask us to have a sense of humor about ourselves, too.

Jerry Coldiron Jr. is a CGCS at Boone Links/Laseng Pointe in Florence, Ky., and a member of the Golfdom Advisory Staff.