



Weeds In Our Midst - Some Management Strategies

By David Wienecke, Agronomist, USGA Green Section

Weeds of all kinds are on our minds as we consider our year past and new year to come. Surprisingly many of the more challenging weeds are from the areas normally out of play on the golf course.

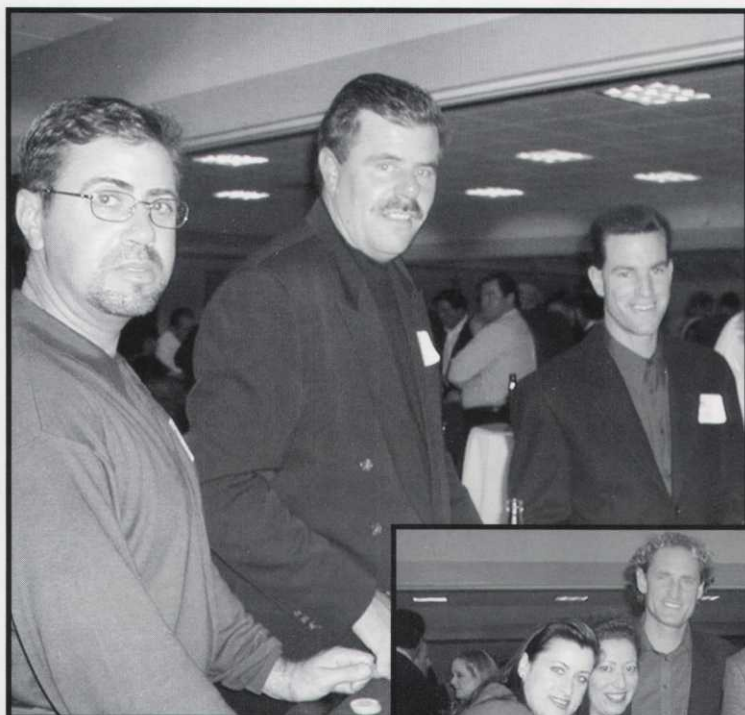
Nicotiana glauca also known as Wild, Indian, or Tree Tobacco is a plant found worldwide. University of California at Riverside botanist Andy Sanders says his colleagues find this plant all over the world. Tree Tobacco originally was an import from South America and is well adapted to most environments of the southwest. The plant reproduces only by seed and is found typically in disturbed sites as a classic opportunist. This is a plant that is drought tolerant but grows

best when provided supplemental water from irrigation overspray. Reduce or eliminate any supplemental water and you save on water and stress the weed. Tree Tobacco is not frost tolerant so pray for a good frost if you want to get rid of this plant. Since our last frost was five years ago, other management methods are needed for control. Avoid disturbing the soil since this will allow seeds left in the soil to produce new plants. Occasional pruning to prevent seed formation is another way to avoid new plants from being produced. While it may seem that it grows like a weed, the plant is not very competitive with most other plants. Any mowing, pruning, or herbicidal treatment done during the year will keep the plant stressed and make it even

less competitive. The deep green heart shaped leafed plant can grow over 6 feet tall under ideal growing conditions. Repeat *Roundup*TM treatments will knock it back but it will regrow so don't count on herbicidal treatments to eradicate it. It typically takes 2-3 years of management pressure but diligence will be reward you as the plant becomes progressively less of a problem. Planting native plants will enhance habitat and also provide additional competition for the weed.

Another weed from the fringes is *Arundo donax*. The Spanish brought this plant to us during the colonial period. Many of the mission walls in the southwest were built using *Arundo donax* as reinforcement. The plant

originally comes from the Mediterranean region and was imported to us without any natural enemies or animals that evolved with it. Water is needed for this plant to grow and it uses a lot of it. *Arundo donax* has been found to use three times the water of most other plants. Remove the water and the plant will not survive. When water is available, this plant will grow so thick that no animal can get through it or use it for shelter. The thick foliage is also very tough and no animals are known that feed on it. The plant spreads vegetatively and no seed is produced. Nelroy Jackson, retired weed scientist who has led the fight against *Arundo donax* in our region says *Rodeo*TM or *Roundup*TM is the best ways to control this noxious riparian weed. /



Mike Souza, Mike Ligon, and Jason Green



Above: Ray Davies, Blake Swint, Jennifer Babbitt and Tim Powers



At Left: Trish Hill, Laurie Gentry, Mike, Ken and P.J.