

Chicago's "Gentle Ben"

by Dudley Smith

A dear friend of the Midwest Superintendents, Ben O. Warren, passed away on August 20th in Tucson, Arizona. In recent years he had suffered from heart disease, colon cancer, and most recently Alzheimers disease. The tired old machine just ran out of oil. Ben Warren was 82.



In 1938 Ben started Warren's Turf Nursery and built the business into the world's foremost sod producer. We are familiar with only the local Palos Park and Sullivan, Wisconsin farms.

In World War II Ben was decorated with the Bronze Star for gallantry as a Marine Medic in the South Pacific campaigns. He helped surgeons sew up the wounded while dodging Japanese machine gun fire.

A quiet man with an inquisitive mind, if Ben could not find what he needed; he built it. Ben Warren held eleven patents. I remember the automatic cut-off on the sodcutter (Ryan), the field harvester that rolled the sod and fed it to a conveyor (Brouwer), a shredder that cut bent sod into stolens, and washed bluegrass sod for Dr. Bill Daniels Prescription Athletic Turf. Ben let me use an old Ford dumptruck modified with a PTO Royer to blend our own topdressing.

The office wall at Warren's Turf was adorned with many plaques, but in his barn out back you saw his next invention.

Many years ago, I gave a talk at Penn State about 11:00 a.m. on the problems and mishaps of working with student labor. It was a humorous slide presentation that had even Grau, Musser, and Duich laughing. Ben Warren was the next speaker, "Updating the Sod Industry" at 11:30 a.m. Ben approached the podium and said, "I can't follow an act like that. Let's go eat!" Standing ovation!

Another year I had three new greens to sod before snowfall. Ben said that his Toronto C-15 sod was not mature enough to market, he urged me to hold off until spring. He offered to fly me to Sullivan to inspect the bent sod. When we approached for a landing, we were almost killed as thousands of startled Canada geese took flight.

Ben respected two professors, Dr. Reed Funk, Rutgers University; and Dr. Richard Smiley, Cornell University. He even sponsored two of their graduate students. We know the students today as Dr. Bill Meyer, Oregon seed geneticist; and Dr. Hank Wilkinson, Illinois pathologist. Ben Warren was a very generous person.

When the Illinois Turf Foundation was founded in Champaign-Urbana, who was a charter member and the organization's first president? When the Musser International Turf Foundation was founded, who was the treasurer for over ten years?

(cont'd. page 17)

Their Approach
To Boosting Potash.



Our Approach
To Boosting Potash.



Improved disease tolerance. Enhanced drought resistance. And a complete, balanced feeding. In a homogeneous mixture to ensure uniform nutrient distribution. Country Club 8-4-24 simply outdistances the competition.

Country Club
8-4-24



Territory Account Manager:

Brian McGuffin
Homewood, IL
(708) 957-7954

MARIANI 
LANDSCAPE / DESIGN-BUILD-MAINTENANCE®
300 ROCKLAND RD., LAKE BLUFF, IL 60044
(708) 234-2172 Fax: (708) 234-2754

SPECIALIST IN:

Club House Landscape Design/Build:

Design and installation of specimen plant material for high priority areas. Design and installation of perennial, annual and wildflower displays.

Complete Expert Maintenance Service:

Use Mariani to renovate and rejuvenate shrubs, ornamentals and all landscape areas as you dedicate your precious time on the golf course.

(Gentle Ben cont'd.)

When Paul Butler built his monster golf links in Oak Brook, he selected Art Benson, Sr. and Ben Warren as his turf advisors. The fairways would be sprigged with a new dwarf hybrid bluegrass, Warrens' A-20; the greens would be stolonized with Toronto C-15 bent. How distressing it must have been for Ben Warren to hear the touring pro's cursing as they hit "flyers" from his bluegrass fairways. Follow that with the downfall of Toronto C-15, as it succumbed to the dreaded bacterial wilt disease. Ben related, "This means the end of vegetative creeping bents, but ... tomorrow is another day."

In 1982 at the National Turf Conference in New Orleans, President Mike Bavier presented Ben Warren the GCSAA Distinguished Service Award.

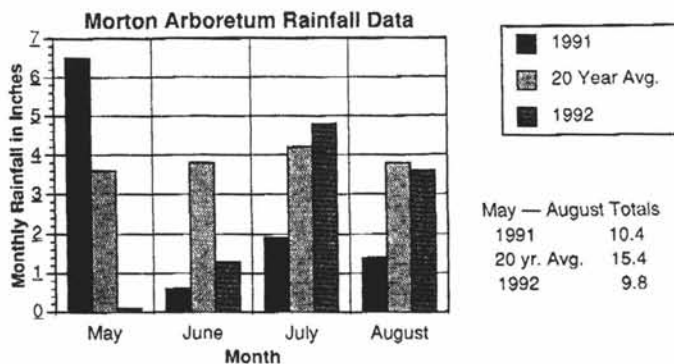
A quiet, attentive scientist, "Gentle Ben" was a giant in our turf profession.

His widow is our former MAGCS executive secretary, the charming Dorothy Carey Warren. Please write Dorothy at her home: 1900 W. Sage, Tucson, Arizona 85741.

The Season of 92 — What Happened?

by Rex A. Bastian, Ph.D.
Hendricksen, the Care of Trees

The spring and summer of 1992 have been another "abnormal" year. If we look at the rainfall data from the Morton Arboretum, we can see that 1992 was indeed very dry. Weather patterns greatly affect pest populations. This is not new information, but I would like to discuss a few principles that we should remember concerning the relationships between tree pests and the weather.

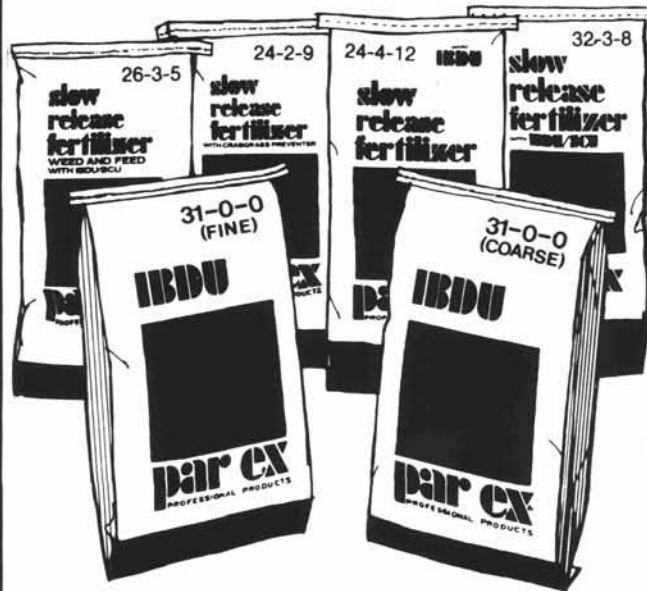


We observed quite a decrease in tree diseases this year compared to last year. As with turf, most tree diseases are caused by fungal pathogens. As arborists, the most bothersome diseases we deal with are the scabs, rusts and anthracnoses. Scabs and rusts cause the most problems on crabs and hawthorns. Anthracnose diseases cause the most problems with sycamore, ash and maple.

(cont'd. page 18)

par ex
The Ex Stands For Excellence

Why the EX STANDS FOR EXCELLENCE in professional turf care.



Par Ex is the only professional fertilizer line containing IBDU, undisputedly the finest slow release Nitrogen source in the world.

IBDU gives you the highest level of WIN, or Water Insoluble Nitrogen.

IBDU delivers all of its Nitrogen in a single growing season.

The Nitrogen release rate of IBDU is generally affected by only two factors: soil moisture and granule size.

Slower release makes Par Ex products perfect for your Fall Fertilization program.

Fewer applications are required, labor costs are cut.

The salt index of IBDU is the lowest of all commonly used fertilizer materials.

IBDU fights nitrate pollution because very little Nitrogen is lost through leaching or volatilization.

Choose from over 60 different product formulations.

Territory Manager
Thomas E. Skinner
Keokuk, IA
319/524-8912

par ex
The Ex Stands For Excellence