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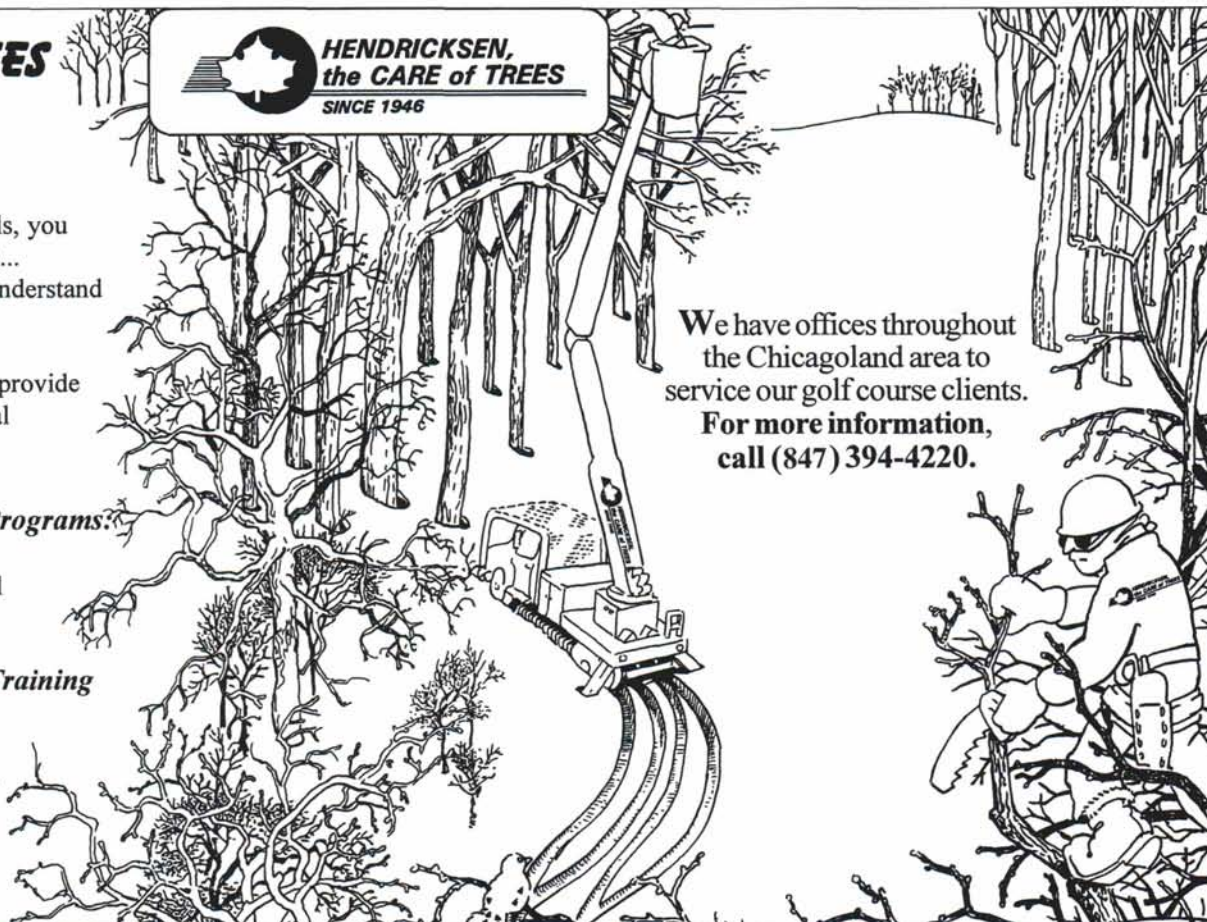
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Winter Mulching Helps Trees Prepare for Growing Season

It's the middle of winter, and there's nothing you can do to care for your trees until spring, right? Wrong. Applying mulch to the soil around trees in winter is a way to give them some "tender loving care" while they endure the Midwest's cold, harsh weather. You can apply mulch any time there is no significant snow cover.

"Think of mulching as giving your trees a blanket to keep them warm," says Larry Hall, vice president of Hendricksen, the Care of Trees. Mulch consists of organic materials such as wood chips, ground up corn cobs or composted leaves. As well as keeping root zones warm in winter (and cool in summer), mulch helps conserve moisture in the root-zone area. It even helps sustain microbes in the soil that help tree roots absorb water and nutrients.

A healthy root system is key to having a healthy tree. There is no question that mulch enhances and aids the root system. While many homeowners prefer to have grass

around their trees, grass roots actually compete with tree roots for water and nutrients. Since most of a tree's roots are in the top 12 to 18 inches of soil, grass roots can be aggressive rivals. Mulch helps give trees the advantage.

Hall suggests spreading a 2- to 4-inch layer of mulch around trees. For small trees (with trunks under 8 inches in diameter), the mulch should begin about 4 inches away from the tree base. This protects the bark from rodents that might otherwise burrow into the mulch and feed on the base of the tree. For larger trees which are not susceptible to such damage, the mulch can begin directly at the base of the tree.

For trees of all sizes, mulch should extend outward in a circle, ideally as far as the branches reach. But while mulch is good for trees, it is harmful to grass. So for those who wish to maintain grass beneath their trees, the mulch should only extend as far as possible without interfering with the lawn.

Some turf may need to be sacrificed, however. If grass is in an area that should be mulched, such as at the base of a large tree, place the mulch directly over the grass. Do not remove the grass, since digging could harm the tree's roots.

When mulching with fresh wood chips, be sure to apply fertilizer over the top of the mulch. This provides nutrients for the microorganisms that will decompose the wood chips. Without fertilizer, the microorganisms will use nutrients from the soil around the tree roots, reducing the nutrients available to the tree – and partially defeating the purpose of the mulch. Use 1 to 2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of mulched area.

Mulch is available through a number of sources. Many municipal forestry departments and commercial arborists provide wood chip mulch free of charge. Home and garden centers also sell a variety of mulches.

For a free pamphlet on mulching, call Hendricksen, the Care of Trees at 847-394-4220. ■

Wilkinson-Kane Report...

(continued from page 12)

ease. This staggering figure also points out the importance of both turf diseases and fungicides to the golf industry.

THE BOTTOM LINE!

Diseases are a major concern to the golf course superintendent, and a tremendous amount of energy and money are spent on these diseases each year. If a single fungicide application costs \$3,000 per course, and if research could reduce the number of fungicide applications by one each year, it would be a savings

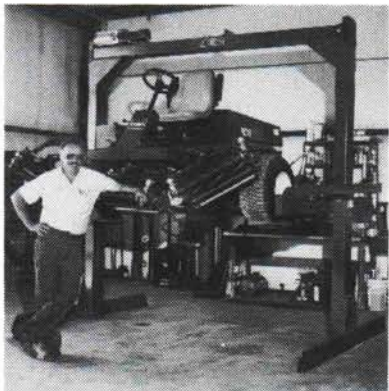
of one million dollars. How can this be accomplished? Support research! Currently, the Illinois golf industry donates about \$10,000 for disease research. This means that for every dollar you spend on fungicides, a donation of one-tenth of a penny is currently being made. Golf course superintendents are great supporters of research because they understand how it can advance turf disease management. We all need to think of ways to increase support for research, as more support will mean faster development of better disease management tools. The information from this survey clearly shows that

turf diseases are important, and with more research will come better alternatives for managing them.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT WE NEED YOUR INPUT: FILL OUT AND RETURN SURVEY CARDS!

Acknowledgments: We thank Loretta Ortiz and Tess Wilkinson for their assistance in preparing and organizing the data, preparing the figures, and editing the text. ■

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IPM...

(continued from page 16)

no plant protectants are used. This nursery is home to over 35 varieties of creeping bent. Each variety has its own characteristics. Cultivars within turfgrass species differ in their relative susceptibilities to various diseases. Some are more susceptible to Dollar Spot *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa* than others. Some more susceptible to Brown Patch *Rhizoctonia* than others. Observing these key plants gives us an early look at what we may see in the field due to their high susceptibility as a disease host.

Observing other species of grasses grown on site can also help in early forecasting. Plots of perennial rye grasses that are susceptible to Pythium blights may be observed for disease development. If Pythium is seen on these grasses, and conditions favorable for Pythium development contin-

ues, other less susceptible grasses may develop disease symptoms. Observing symptoms on these susceptible plants will give an early indication that disease development is likely elsewhere if favorable conditions persist.

DISEASE FORECASTING MODELS

Our Metos weather station has three prediction models for turf diseases, Pythium Blight *Pythium aphanidermatum*, Brown Patch *Rhizoctonia solani*, and Dollar Spot *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa ssp.* The predictive models are based on complex mathematical calculations to estimate severity and timing of disease events. The calculations include information collected from sensors of air temperature, soil temperature, rain or irrigation, relative humidity and length of leaf wetness. These predictive disease models are used as indicators of favorable environmental conditions for dis-

ease. They do not account for inoculum pressure, species or cultivar resistance to disease, fertility or future weather (environmental) conditions that may or may not favor further disease development. Ultimately, it is the turf manager who makes the decision on disease pressure verses needed controls.

TESTING

Effective testing is conducted. Periodic tissue testing coupled with annual soil testing is done to assure proper nutrient balances. Water testing is done once every three years with our new water source. Our old water source was high in sodium; and at that time, annual testing was done. Diagnostic tests are done to identify or confirm what pathogen is responsible for the symptoms. In our annual operating budget, we have a separate account just for testing fees.

(continued on page 26)



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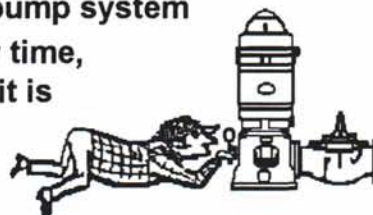
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IPM...

(continued from page 24)

NETWORKING

Consulting with other professionals is very helpful. Finding what other golf course superintendents or university professionals are seeing in the area often indicates what I may soon be seeing.

COMPUTERS

The use of computers has helped us in many ways. From our computer in the office, we can access our weather station and bring up degree day figures, raw weather information, disease forecasting models, evapotranspiration, soil temperatures and moisture. The computer has also helped us in the very important task of note taking. Two complete sets of drawings are scanned into our computer. Each set is a hole-by-hole drawing to a scale of

1 foot to 100 feet. One set has our irrigation and drainage; the other is used to map "hot spots." The computer is also used to go on-line. Several golf course superintendents' bulletin boards are accessed which helps greatly in networking with others. There are several services available over the wire also, one being the Turfgrass Information Center at Michigan State University. This reference allows me to research topics quickly. ■

Part 2 will continue in the January 1997 issue.

the Bull Sheet

(continued from page 18)

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.....
Congratulations to Tim Anderson, the new superintendent at Prestwick C.C. who has replaced Dick Trevarthan, who is retiring. Dick will be around for a few months as a consultant and help with the changeover. Tim was the assistant at Naperville C.C. We all wish Dick an enjoyable and happy retirement.

.....
Steve Cummins at Lake Barrington Shores is looking for a mechanic. Call 847/382-3252 if interested.
.....



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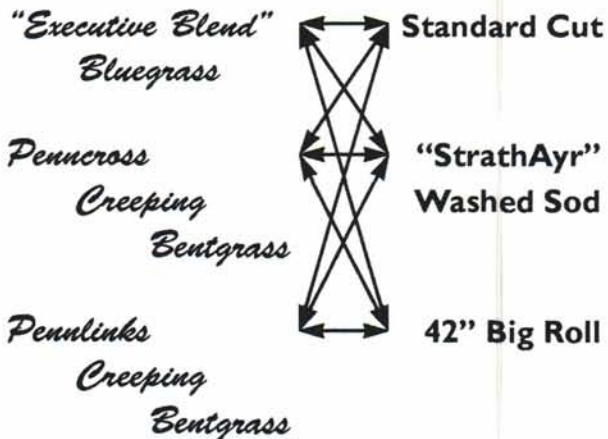
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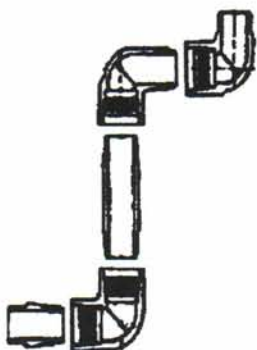
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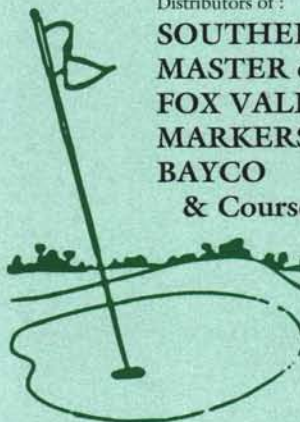
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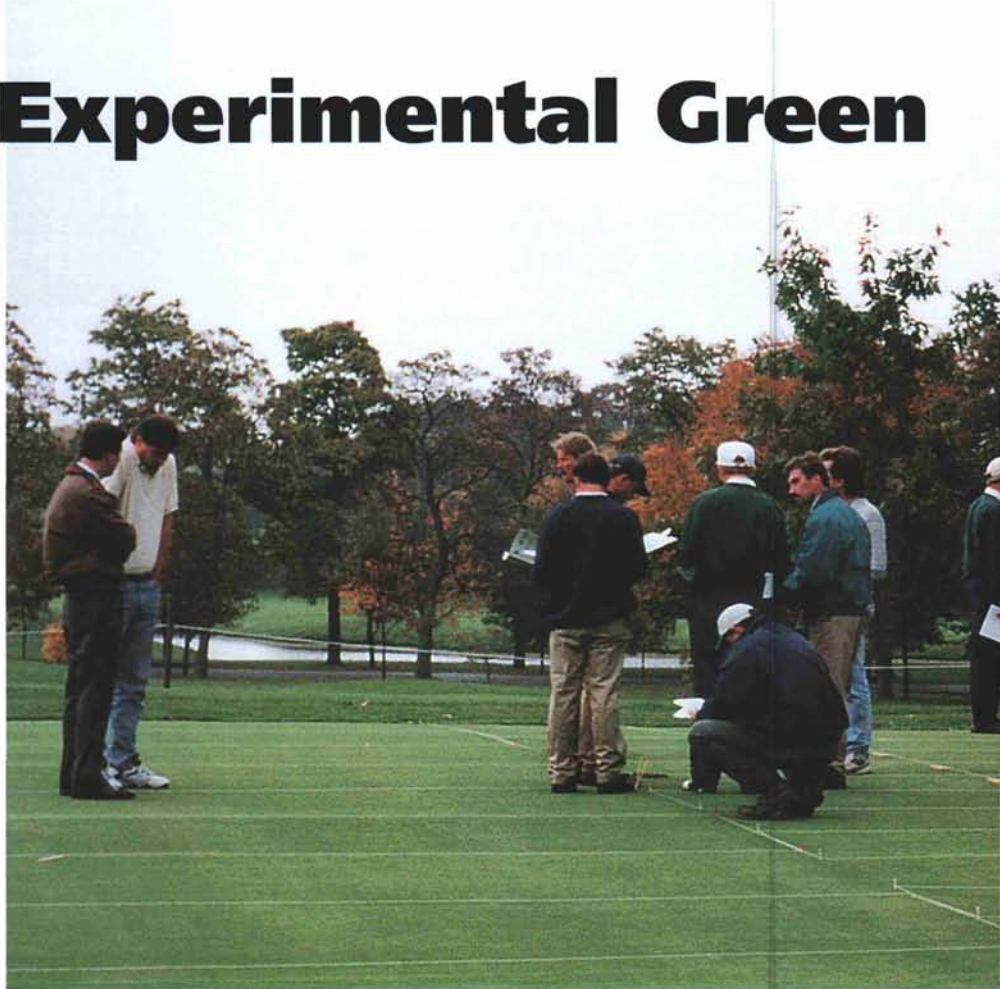
Cantigny Experimental Green

Mini-Field Day

Brian Bossert
Bryn Mawr G.C.

On October 16, more than sixty people enjoyed the first (annual?) mini-field day at Cantigny Golf Club. Those in attendance scoped out the progress of the experimental green and the research projects that have been conducted thus far. A big thanks to Randy Kane for all of his hard work. Additionally, Tom Voigt and Tom Fermanian made the trip from the land of the Big Ten basement to lend their expertise. It's great to have such cooperation within the allied forces. No one went away hungry as hot dogs and chicken breasts were grilled (deeply charred in some cases) by expert Rich Mika and rookie grill master Brian Bossert.

If anyone is interested in the results of the trials and tests, please contact Randy Kane at (630) 954-2753. He has everything nicely compiled in notebook form. ■



Photos by John Meyer

Left to Right: Tony Rzdski, Dr. Randy Kane and Scott Witte. Tony built the experimental green while he was the superintendent at Cantigny along with the design and input of Randy Kane. Scott Witte has assumed the care of the green since he became superintendent after Tony left in 1995.