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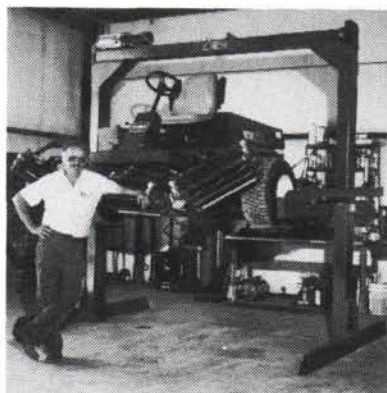
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Don't Burn In My Backyard

(continued from page 20)

dust in the air, plus many more days of dust, than the few days involved in the burning of the fields. However, it is hard for people to understand that fact, and they insist on the no burning.

You may ask how long does it take a new variety to get to the marketplace? Well, it may take from eight to fifteen years to make it to your golf course. There are a number of ways to find a new variety; one would be to find a good-looking prospect growing someplace where it has had no maintenance and yet is doing quite well. The old Merion bluegrass was found on the Merion Country Club in Pennsylvania. Old cemeteries are a favorite place for researchers to look, for they are not maintained; and for a grass to survive, it has to be good. Another way is through hybridization of different good-looking varieties.

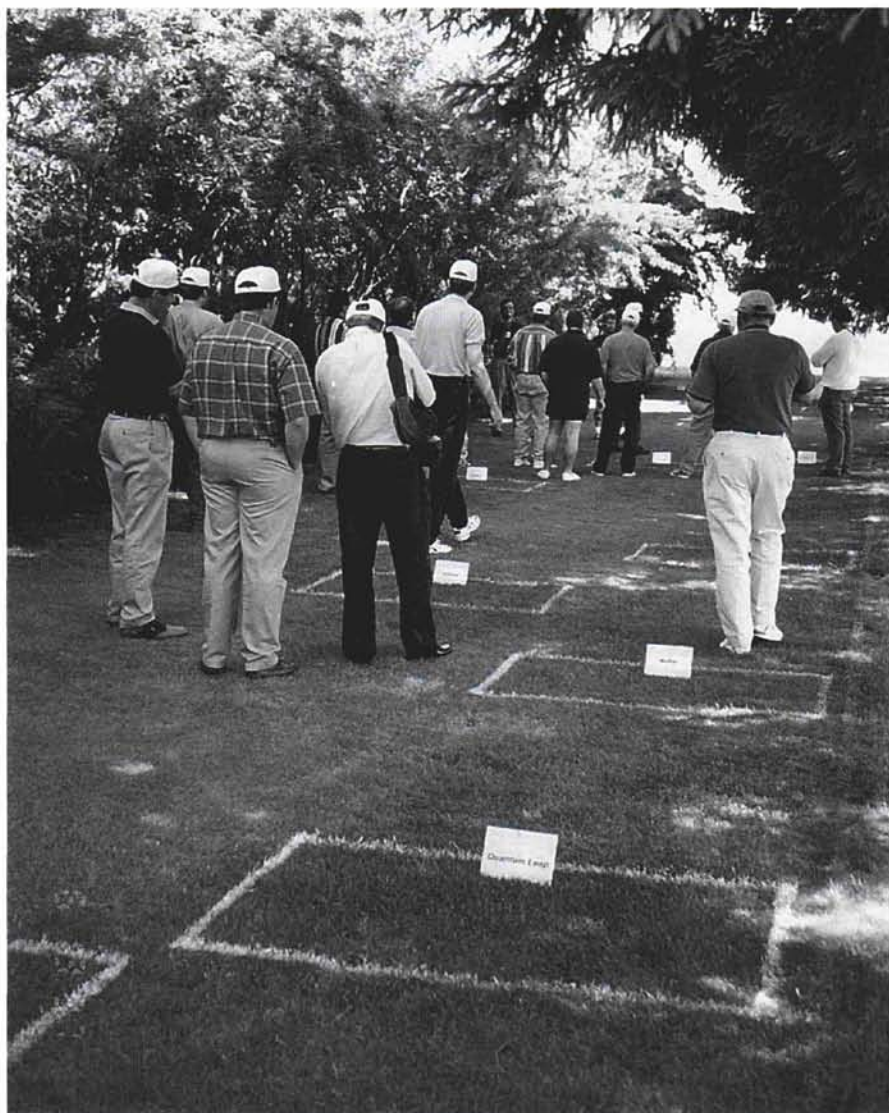
A grower may have up to 200,000 varieties in their research greenhouse. Out of that number, maybe only five to thirty may make it into production some "x" years down the road.

Once the plant survives the research greenhouse screening, it is transplanted out into the fields, where it is spaced three to four feet from the other varieties. Once again, it will come under a selection process where 99 percent are weeded out. At this point, it may be selected to go back into the greenhouse to be hybrid with some other good-looking plants that have a characteristic that they are looking for. This procedure may be repeated for a couple of years to keep hybridizing the better qualities into the grass plant. Then from the field where they have been growing in clumps, seed will be hand harvested, and that seed will be planted in another plot

(continued on page 24)



Greenhouse test plots



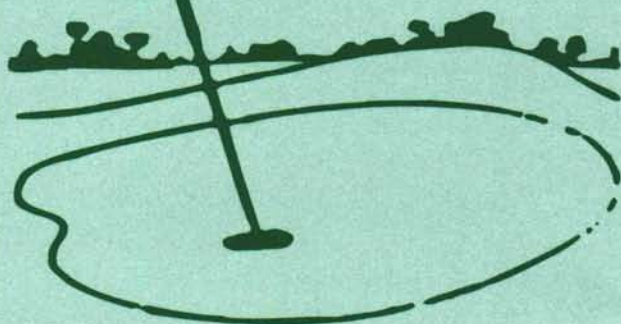
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Don't Burn In My Backyard

(continued from page 22)

in a 2- by 15-foot row to increase seed production. If the plant survives this stage and looks like it will produce enough seed to meet the requirements (bluegrasses with the newer varieties need to produce 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of seed per acre for the growers to consider growing them), they again are hand harvested. From here the seed is planted into research plots that measure 3 by 5 feet. The seed is also distributed across the country to other testing sites in various climatic conditions.

As an example, with bluegrasses, there may be 8,000, 3- by 5-foot plots all with different varieties. Out of all of those plots, the growers will be lucky to get three to five new varieties into production. But from those varieties that look very good to the grower, they have to pass the NTEP trial sites and be highly rated before the grower will start production.

How long does it take?

1. Find a good looking variety.
2. First year, grow in the greenhouse.
3. Second year, plant in clumps in the field.
4. Third year through "x" number of years, the plant may be taken back into the greenhouse and then back into the fields.
5. Maybe in the fifth year through the eighth year, it will be planted in 3- by 5-foot plots.
6. After the survival of the 3- by 5-foot plots, it may be entered into the NTEP trial sites.
7. Somewhere around the eighth to fifteenth year, the seed will be grown for production and possibly have seed for that fall.

The bluegrass seed producers are looking for grasses which have a dark green color, are low growing, have narrow blade widths, are disease resistant, will take a 1/2-inch cut and can produce 1,000 to 1,500 pounds of seed per acre.

In the past, some of the newer varieties would only produce 300 to 800 pounds of seed per acre. That meant growers had to have a lot of acreage planted to get a decent harvest, and the price of the seed was higher due to the short supply and higher demand. Growing seed that produces more seed per acre in the production fields means a larger supply and a lower price per pound—a good situation for all concerned.

Some of the newer varieties I saw in the plots were truly outstanding. When compared to the present ones we have now, there is a dramatic improvement. The seed industry has made great strides in the last few years. In the next couple of years, we will also have endophyte-enhanced bluegrasses. We now have many endophyte-enhanced fescues and ryegrasses to choose from, and we should all make an effort to purchase these newer grasses. Buying an endophyte-enhanced grass variety is the basic IPM approach. ■



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A View From The Divot Crew

U.S. Senior Open,
Olympia Fields
Country Club



LeAnn Scott
Arthur Clesen, Inc.

For over ten years, I have avoided working on a golf course again for exactly that reason—it is work! But after nearly a decade of sitting behind a desk, I decided to put the agronomy degree back to work and volunteer on the grounds crew during the U.S. Senior Open at Olympia Fields Country Club. After reviewing my credentials, Dave Ward appropriately placed me on The Divot Crew. He must have figured that there was no machinery involved, and the potential for damage was minimal. Dave must have been in contact with my previous employers.

From Tuesday through Saturday, our crew of around fifteen dutifully followed the last group of the day filling the some-

(continued on page 28)

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A View From the Divot Crew

(continued from page 26)

times large divots with a dyed green sand. The USGA required that the divots were filled level and left no footprints. This may seem like a rather tedious and mindless job (turns out, it was) but The Divot Crew perfected it to an art form. A highlight for The Divot Crew was recovering a divot made by Arnold Palmer, no kidding. How they knew that Arnie himself had made this divot is still a mystery.

As it turned out, one of the best parts of being on the divot crew was getting a brief glimpse behind the scenes at a major golf tournament grounds crew. By the time the tournament week rolled around, all of the years of preparation were over and were paying off. Only the daily maintenance

*There were around
thirty grounds
crew staff with
seven volunteers who
ranged in experience
from a potential
hazard (myself)
to turf Ph.D.s*

was left. Everyone knew their job and also knew how important that job was.

There were around thirty grounds crew staff with seven volunteers who ranged in experience from a potential hazard (myself) to turf Ph.D.s (Dr. Tom Voigt and Dr. Wolf). All told, it was a long week with rather low pay (being a volunteer and all), but I can't say enough for the grounds crew from top to bottom. Not only did they know their job and their golf course extremely well but were a pleasure to work with. Considering the long hours these guys had put in the last few months, there was a lot of camaraderie and pride in what they had accomplished. A special thanks to Enrique, Efrain, Dude, Oscar, and the rest of The Divot Crew. ■

ARE YOUR TREES UP TO PAR?

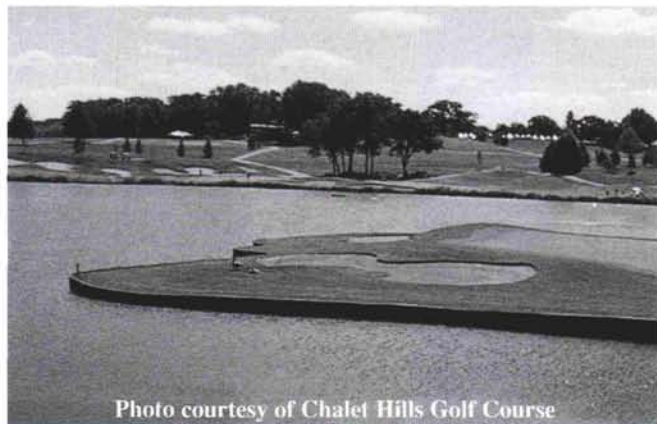


Photo courtesy of Chalet Hills Golf Course

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the Bull Sheet

DATES TO REMEMBER

August 4 — John Deere Team Championship at LaGrange C.C.

August 14 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Bartlett Hills G.C.

August 20 — University of Illinois Field Day.

August 24 — MAGCS family outing and Kane County Cougars baseball.

September 22 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Ruffled Feathers G.C.

September 29 — ITF Northern Golf Day at Glen View Club.

October 6 — MAGCS monthly meeting at Eagle Brook G.C.

November 4-6 — Penn State Golf Turf Conference, State College, PA. For information, call 814-863-1017.

Televised coverage this past summer showed the world what great golf courses we have in the Chicagoland area. Starting the end of May, Kemper Lakes G. C. with Doug Quiram as superintendent hosted the Ameritech Open; at the end of June, the U. S. Senior Open was held at Olympia Fields C.C. with Dave Ward as superintendent; and to finish the national broadcasting, the Motorola Western Open started in early July at Cog Hill G.C. with Ken Lapp as superintendent.

All of the courses received rave notices from the press and the players. It was great PR for the Chicago area. We all can be proud of our fellow superintendents and their crews who went all out to show the world what an excellent area this is for golf. Thanks, guys, for a fine representation of our profession.

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Tom Robinson at Ravinia Green C.C. has a project this year installing drainage lines all over the course. The budget for this is \$25,000, and all work is being done with his own crew.

One day this past spring, the way Tom tells it, a coyote started to attack his dog; but for anyone who has seen his dog, it looks like a coyote, and maybe the real coyote was only trying to be friendly and start a romantic relationship.

Be sure to take advantage of the University of Illinois Turfgrass, Nursery, Landscape, and Trial Garden Field Day, August 20, 1997. For more information, call Tom Voigt, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, 217-333-7847.

The MAGCS will be putting together a bus trip to the University of Illinois Field Day on August 20. The northern bus

will leave from the Woodfield Mall movie theaters at 6:30 a.m. A southern bus will leave from the Holiday Inn in Mattson at 7:30 a.m. There will be refreshments on the bus: rolls and juices in the morning and soda and beer on the return trip at a cost of about \$25. Call any of the following people for more information and to make reservations: Peter Leuzinger, Randy Wahler, or Dudley Smith.

Another upcoming field day is the 1997 Michigan Turfgrass Field Day, August 28, 1997, at the Hancock Turfgrass Research Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. For information, contact Kay Patrick at 517-321-1660.

The deepest sympathy of the members of the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents is extended to the Leuzinger family on the death of DeeAnn's mother, Virginia Frey, on July 5, 1997.

For sale, best offer: Cutlass 50W, 4-8oz. packets/case, 23 cases; Cushman rotary brush #885262-8410; Cushman Greensaver; LF-100 Turf Groomers, 5 complete sets. Call Pete Kiraly, Hilldale G.C., 847-884-6868.

Jim Holtschult of Evanston G.C. is finally going to get a new maintenance building. It will be 12,000 sq. ft., all heated. Half will be storage space and the other half will be shop, offices, lunchroom, showers and a grinding room. The building will be 60 by 200 feet, pre-engineered steel structure.