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Larry Chirico -N- Rolling Green Country Club



Larry and son Kyle.



Larry Chirico will host the Midwest meeting on June 2 at the Rolling Green Country Club in Arlington Heights. Larry has been the superintendent at Rolling Green since February 1995. That year tested even the most seasoned superintendents, let alone a first-year superintendent. In his rookie year besides battling with Mother Nature,

Larry was involved in growing in six new USGA greens and installing a new double row irrigation system and pump station. Larry gives much of his ability to handle such a busy first year to the training that he received from his "mentor" of six years, Danny Quast, the superintendent at Medinah Country Club.

(continued on page 26)

ARE YOUR TREES UP TO PAR?

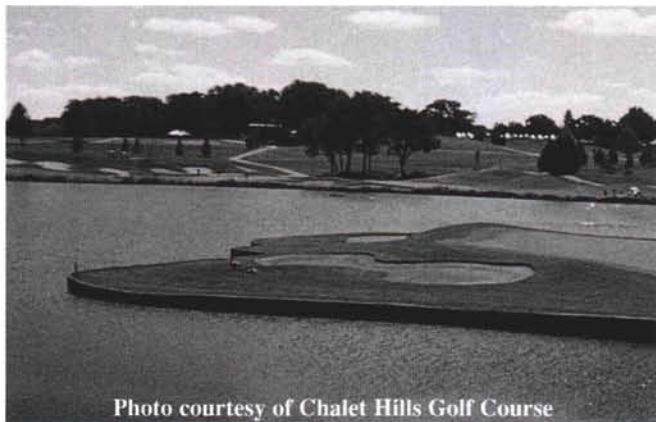


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Pythium Diseases of Turf: Never Underestimate Their Destructive Potential!

Henry T. Wilkinson, Professor
Depts. of Plant Pathology and
Agronomy
University of Illinois
Urbana-Champaign, IL

Before describing how little we know about *Pythium* blights, let me say that there are effective ways to manage your turf so that these diseases do not take your turf and your job. The amount of technical information describing *Pythium* blights and *Pythium* root rots is great, but the number of unanswered questions about these diseases is even greater. The term "blight" is not used casually by plant pathologists. A blight is a term reserved for diseases that rapidly destroy (kill) plant tissue. But not all of the *Pythium* diseases on turf are blights. We now recognize that *Pythium* fungi can attack virtually all parts of the turf plant. Generally, those that attack the foliage (in cool and hot weather) are blights that result in rapid death of turf.

A second group of *Pythium* diseases is that which attacks the crowns, roots, rhizomes and/or stolons. These diseases are generally termed "rotters," because after they infect the turf, other soil fungi and bacteria reduce the diseased plants to a rotten mess.

A third group of *Pythium* diseases is much less obvious and often goes undiagnosed in turf. These diseases can be described as chronic, because they result in reduction of the grass plant but often do not result in death. An

example of this type of disease could be that termed "*Pythium* root dysfunction." These diseases are important, because they can predispose turf to stresses such as drought and heat.

I have painted a pretty bleak picture of *Pythium* fungi, and most superintendents do not regard these fungi as welcome in their turf. However, the *Pythium* fungi are very important for a stable turf ecology. They are capable of breaking down organic matter (thatch) as well as causing disease. It might surprise you to realize that *Pythium* fungi live in all soils and can grow and survive without living turf. In addition, *Pythium* blights are a problem only in turf that we manage. In natural grass swards, the *Pythium* fungi are in balance with the turf ecosystem, and thus do not cause severe disease unless the total ecological system has been upset. For example, flooding could upset or disturb a natural stand of grass and allow *Pythium*, a water mold, to flourish, thus resulting in severe disease. In our managed turf, especially golf turfs, it is important to understand why turfgrass management practices predispose turf to *Pythium* blights.

Are all *Pythium* blights caused by one species of *Pythium*?

The answer is no. First, more than 30 different species of *Pythium* are known to live on turfgrasses. Some do very little damage, while others are capable of causing blights. Presently, there is little information which would

indicate that a significant difference exists among the different types of *Pythium* fungi in terms of how management practices affect the disease severity. However, as more is learned about these fungi, important differences may be discovered. For example, it could be learned that turfgrass plants could differ in terms of their disease resistance among the types of *Pythium* fungi. At one time, it was thought that there was no difference among the *Pythium* fungi in terms of their sensitivity to fungicides. This implies that all of the *Pythium* fungi should be equally sensitive, but this was unproven; and, in fact, it is known that certain species of *Pythium* can change and become more resistant to some fungicidal chemicals.

Do the *Pythium* fungi that cause the most damage to turf in one location of the country (world) differ from those in other locations?

Here, the answer appears to be yes! For example, in the northeast United States, *Pythium graminicola* is the most destructive and prevalent species; but in the Midwest, *Pythium aphanadermatum* is the most problematic. Why this difference exists cannot be explained because many, if not all, species of *Pythium* can be found in most soils!

How do you determine that *Pythium* fungi are causing a disease in your turf?

Diagnosing *Pythium* blights is not trivial. Simply finding *Pythium* in your turf proves nothing.

(continued on page 22)

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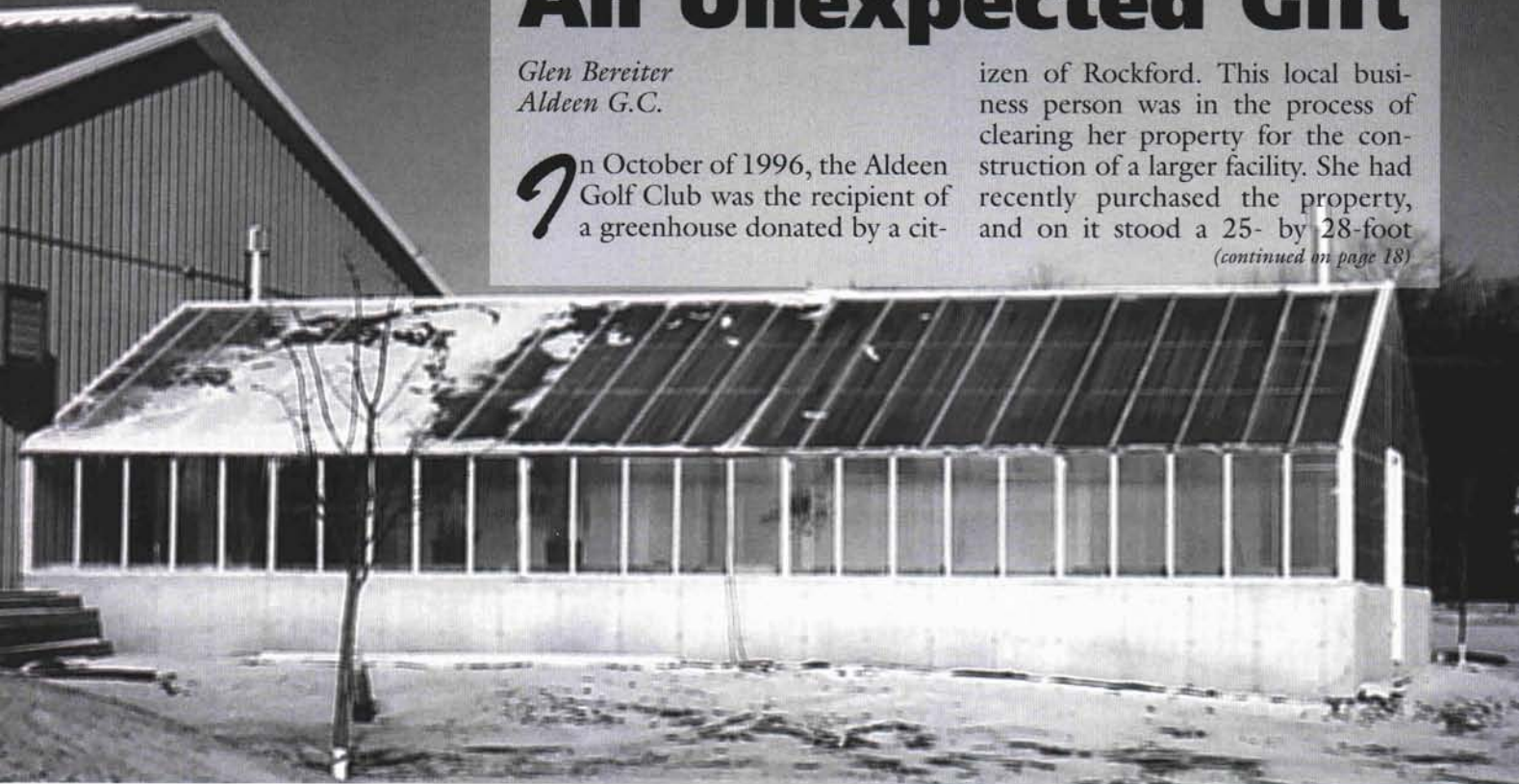
An Unexpected Gift

*Glen Bereiter
Aldeen G.C.*

In October of 1996, the Aldeen Golf Club was the recipient of a greenhouse donated by a cit-

izen of Rockford. This local business person was in the process of clearing her property for the construction of a larger facility. She had recently purchased the property, and on it stood a 25- by 28-foot

(continued on page 18)



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An Unexpected Gift
(continued from page 16)

fully operational, glass greenhouse. Though it looked to be in fairly good condition, she was not in the flower business and decided to donate it to us. All we had to do was to dismantle it and remove it from her property within a week. Upon securing in the neighborhood of \$15,000 for the reconstruction of this greenhouse at our golf course, the OK was given to us; and we had an unforeseen project to complete before winter set in. We chose to place the greenhouse off the back of our existing maintenance facility. This area, though subject to an errant shot from time to time, was an ideal location for deliveries, accessing water, electrical and gas for heat.

Beginning on the 22nd of October with a crew of five men, the task of removing the greenhouse from her property and bringing it to ours began. During this five-day ordeal, an architect was secured in order to suggest

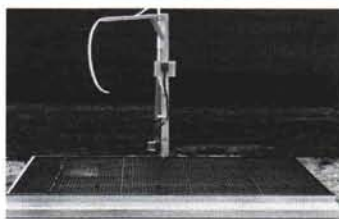


the best and easiest way to attach the greenhouse to our existing building. A concrete contractor, a heating and cooling company, an electrician, and a landscaper were also contacted in an attempt to successfully bring this project to a reality prior to the snow.

By the 28th of October, we had the entire greenhouse disas-

sembled and moved to our property. The concrete contractor arrived mid morning to begin construction on a new foundation. The existing foundation had deteriorated to the point of being unacceptable. Unfortunately, in order for the concrete wall to be built, several trees had to be treespaded out. A 911 call was put

(continued on page 20)



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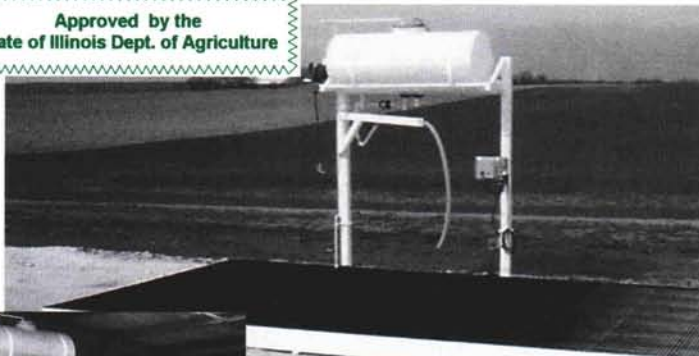
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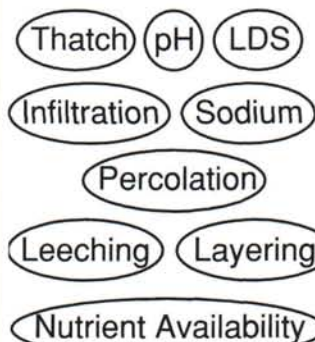
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An Unexpected Gift
(continued from page 18)

in to our landscaper's beeper number; and within the hour, he was moving four trees out of the way. Constructing the foundation seemed to last an eternity, especially when you consider we were running short of time.

Shortly after the completion of the foundation, reassembly began. We made sure that the same individuals that took it apart were available to put it back together again. Though the images of the greenhouse and how it came apart were still fresh in their minds, the reassembly did not seem to go quite as smoothly. There appeared to be an excessive amount of retrofitting. The sawzall and drill seemed to be the tools of choice. I understood the fact that there was to be a certain amount of reconstructive surgery, due to

*At this point in time,
we were faced with
a very important
decision. Do we
assemble the green-
house with the
original glass?
Or purchase a product
called "Lexan"?
As we analyzed
the two options,
it boiled down to
being a relatively easy
decision: Lexan.*

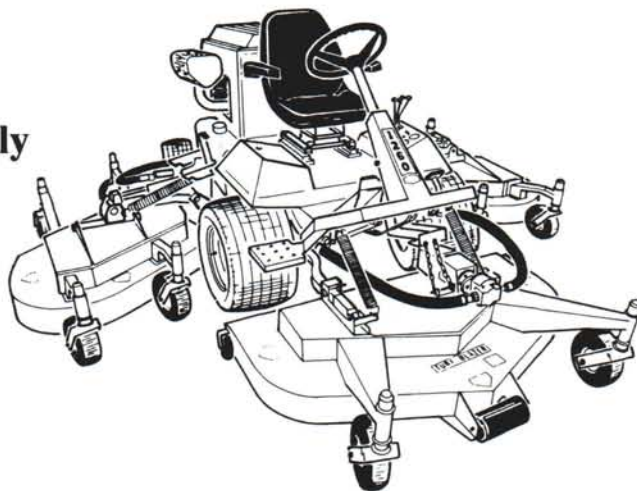
the fact that we were adding a 12-foot extension; however, this was only the first truss to be installed. Fortunately, there were an abundance of parts available from the old site, so they were able to complete all roof trusses.

At this point in time, we were faced with a very important decision. Do we assemble the greenhouse with the original glass? Or purchase a product called "Lexan"? As we analyzed the two options, it boiled down to being a relatively easy decision: Lexan. It is more durable than glass, easier and safer to handle, will resist the impact of a golf ball and can be put up easier and faster than the panes of glass. Also, the other greenhouse in the district will now have large supply of glass to replace their broken panes.

(continued on page 28)

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