

MIDWEST BREEZES

Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*



The Ratings Game

I recently had a chance to go on a special golf trip with my good friend Tim Scott from Stoney Creek Golf Club. Tim serves as a Golf Course Panelist for the magazine publication, *Golf Digest*. Tim has been serving in this capacity for 10 years. His job as a Panelist is to contact and travel to golf courses that wish to be rated. He then plays the course and rates it. There are very specific criteria involved on the ratings sheet. Courses are rated on: shot values, design variety, memorability, conditioning, aesthetics, ambiance, walkability and resistance to scoring. Tim then tabulates his scoring on a rater sheet and sends them in to *Golf Digest*. *Golf Digest* tabulates the totals from its Panelists throughout the country and "voila," an annual top 100 list is born. Courses are also rated within the state. Private and public courses are rated separately. Many courses have made renovations and changes over recent years due to the changing golf equipment technology and normal course wear and degradation. Some courses are new. Almost every big name club you can think of is on Tim's list. Each club needs a minimum of 35 ratings per year to be considered. In this the ultra competitive, prestige driven

business and struggling economic climate, naturally everyone wants to be on the top of the list.

Our rating trip was to a relatively new, ultra exclusive, private club, located about 3 ½ hours downstate in Marshall, Illinois, just south east of Champaign. The course is called Canyata (pronounced can-YaY-tuh). Canyata means "back-woods" in the local Native American language. Canyata was ranked 7th in the state in 2007 and was the 2nd best new private course in the country 2005. Tim called up Jerry Williams who serves as Director of Golf for both Canyata and another course called Iron Horse in Tuscola, Illinois. Jerry set us up for an afternoon tee time on a beautiful autumn day on which he would play with us. We found the entrance to the club after an adventurous drive (have you ever rode with Tim?) into rural central Illinois. We were met in the very small parking lot by Rich Erickson. Rich is the Superintendent at Iron Horse Golf Club. Rich would also play with us on that day. We then loaded up the wagons and drove past Mr. Forsythe's (the owner) luxurious and spacious log cabin residence. We drove up to a small log

(continued on next page)



Canyata, located in Marshall, Illinois and designed by MAGCS member Michael Benkusky was ranked second best new private course in the country in 2005 by Golf Digest.

cabin clubhouse where we were met by Jerry. He had lunch waiting for us. After lunch, we helped ourselves to tees and yardage books and then headed over to the practice range for a few warm up balls. We were running a little late but that was not a big concern because there was only one other group scheduled for the day. Canyata only has about 400 rounds played on it per year. At this time, Canyata has no members. Future plans do call for a small membership by invitation only.

Canyata is a Michael Benkusky design, built by Lohman Construction. The site is excellent for golf with a combination of native hardwood forest, rocky ravines, lakes and pastures. The course sits on 1200 acres. There are some excellent elevation changes that make for dramatic views and challenging shots. There are no homes or roads on the site and there never will be. Naturally, Tim had to play the back tees and I reluctantly agreed. The back tees play to 7250 yards. The rating is 76.0 and the slope is 149. Fortunately for me the course design features fairways averaging over 50 yards wide. It is designed to be playable and fun. There are a total of six sets of tees for all levels of players. As we moved around the course I was struck by the lack of

divots, ball marks and general wear and tear like we see on most courses. There was no cart directional signage or cart rules because there are so few carts in use. The large, undulating L-93 greens were a challenge to putt. Pace of play was not an issue. The next tee time was 48 hours later.

It was a thrill and a treat to play a course like Canyata. It offers a very unique golfing experience. I enjoyed the challenging design and great playing conditions of the course. It is a world class golf course. Donald Spinner is the Golf Course Superintendent and he does a wonderful job.

Everyone who works at a golf course understands the significance of the ratings by the various magazines, architects, authors, golf experts etc. Those ratings are very important to club members and the general public. All golf courses offer a unique playing experience as no two are the same. What really makes one course superior to another? Certainly some sites are better than others. Elevation changes are important but not essential. St. Andrews in Scotland, one of the top rated courses in the world has very little elevation change. Does having an ocean view make for a better designed golf course? Were the classic architects "better" than today's modern architects? Does it matter how many major championships the course hosted?

All golf courses at any level offer recreational opportunities for people to play golf. Ratings aside, the people we play with and the enjoyment of the game played in the great outdoors is really what it's all about. It's a great form of recreation that can be played for a lifetime. It can be played by different skill levels and be competitive. Unfortunately, in a Prom Queen Contest there can be only one winner. That doesn't mean the other girls are losers. All of us in the golf industry are fortunate to be part of a great game. We're all winners. Canyata is definitely a Queen. **-OC**



TECHNICAL TIPS

Ted Soenksen, Wilmette Golf Club



Tip 1

Removing a Stubborn Clutch Belt **Equipment:**

Club Car gas powered utility or golf car.

Problem:

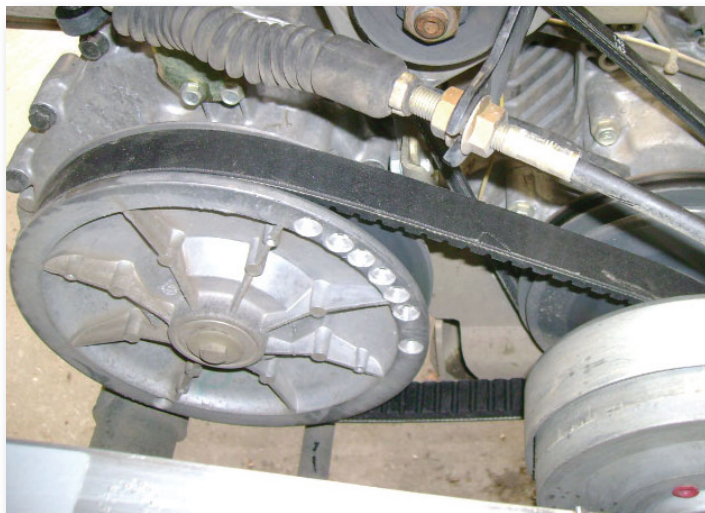
On a newer vehicle that still has stiff motor mounts the clutch belt can be difficult to remove.

Solution:

With the bed in the up position, for ease of visibility and plenty of travel space, run the vehicle in reverse until the secondary clutch starts to open allowing the belt tension to change.

Then hit the brakes abruptly to stop the car with the clutches still in the drive (open) position. Belt tension is now lessened. This will allow the easy removal of the clutch drive belt.

This is definitely a time saving tip that is not in the manual. Courtesy of JB of Nadler Golf Car Sales.



Tip 2

There is a Reason Santa Checks his List Twice. **Problem:**

Servicing Identical Machines at the Same Time

Background:

I have been servicing small engines (lawnmower engines specifically) for about thirty years! This truly did happen to me and just this year.....

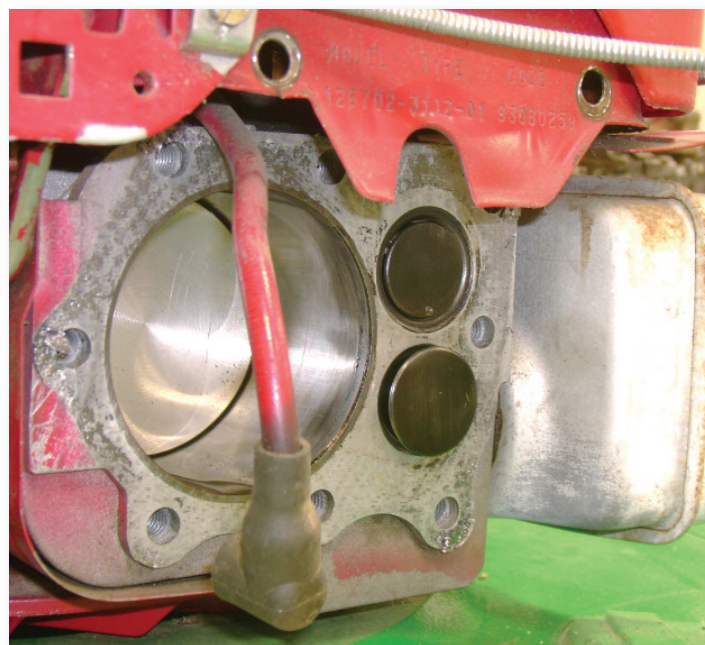
At the end of the cutting season I began a regimented program that I composed and followed as best I can. I had all the hand held or manually operated equipment, cleaned, serviced, and placed into storage for the next season. In order to complete this project, all of this "smaller and like" equipment is staged in the maintenance shop.

While servicing eight rotary trim push mowers, one after the other, something happened.

When servicing noted trim mowers, it is customary to empty and clean out each fuel tank. I then service the engines as required (air cleaner, engine oil, etc.) finishing up with valve service to each. (Interruptions are part of our work, and I mention this only to reduce some of the blame.)

While I was reinstalling the valves on one of the mowers, (mentioned interruption occurred) and it just so happened that I placed the exhaust valve into the intake seat and vice versa. I discovered this mistake this fall when I found the mower in the back of the storage area full of stale fuel. It was pushed aside unknown to me. I pulled the starter rope and the engine turned over easily, way too easily. The bright side to this tale is that I did prove that it is possible to lap each valve, install the exhaust valve into intake seat (and vice versa), assemble keepers, and adjust clearances. One more positive note, I didn't have to sharpen and balance the blade on this mower either.

Anyone else want to own up to a story like this? **-OC**





THE BULL SHEET

John Gurke, CGCS, Associate Editor



December 2008

MAGCS welcomes the following new members and wishes them all the best in the coming new year:

Michael Bremmer, Class C, Brynwood Country Club

Gary Larson, Class E, Redline Golf and Sport Sand

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The Illinois Professional Turfgrass Conference is upon us (December 10 through 12) at a new location that is much more accessible to all MAGCS members. The Schaumburg Convention Center is on 1551 North Thoreau Drive in Schaumburg, IL (just off I-90 and Rte. 53), providing easy access from all directions. With over 90 exhibitors on the trade show floor and more than 50 educational presentations, this year's conference promises to be an event not to be missed. The IPTC is sponsored by the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation and the following supporting sponsors: Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAGCS), Northwest Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association (NWIGCSA), Central Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association (CIGCSA), Southern Illinois Golf Course Superintendents Association (SIGCSA), Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS), Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA)—Illinois Chapter, Turf Equipment Technicians Association (TETA), and Illinois Professional Lawn Care Association (IPLCA). See you there (SYT).

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Shameless endorsement, perhaps, but I gain nothing from doing it—if you have HD TV and haven't really cruised all the channels, do yourself a favor and try these. First, Chicago's own WTTW has possibly the best HD picture out there, and

(continued on page 17)

DATES TO REMEMBER

December 8-11 – 42nd Annual Ohio Turfgrass Conference & Show at the Greater Columbus Convention center in Columbus, Ohio.

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December 8-12 – Michigan State University Turf School in East Lansing, Michigan.

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December 10-12 – 2008 Illinois Professional Turfgrass Conference at the Schaumburg Convention Center in Schaumburg, IL.

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December 12 – Deadline to guarantee conference hotel rates for the 2009 GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in New Orleans, LA.

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December 17 – Annual West Side Holiday Party at Salt Creek Golf Course in Wood Dale, IL, **Gary Hearn** host.

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December 30 – Deadline to register and receive Conference and Show credentials by mail.

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January 15, 2009 – Deadline to receive the advanced registration rate for the 2009 Golf Industry Show in New Orleans.

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February 1-3 – GCSAA National Championship and Golf Classic in Gulf Shores, Alabama.

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February 2-7, 2009 – GCSAA Education Conference and Golf Industry Show in New Orleans, LA.

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February 3-4, 2009 – GCSAA and Habitat for Humanity special work days in New Orleans.

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February 5, 2009 – MAGCS Hospitality Reception at the Loews New Orleans Hotel at 300 Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70130.

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February 17, 2009 Annual Assistant Winter Workshop, Midwest Golf House, Lemont, IL.

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March 11, 2009 – Chicagoland Forum presented by the Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents (CAGCS) at Naperville Country Club in Naperville, IL, **Tim Anderson, CGCS** host.

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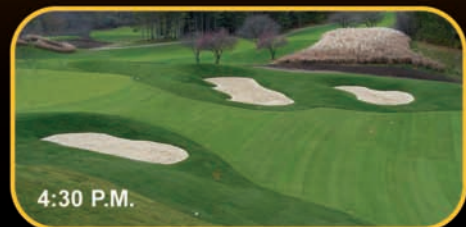
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offers countless awesome program choices. My faves, aside from the great nature stuff, are the shows with Rudy Maxa and Rick Steves and Art Wolfe which showcase their travels to faraway places that we all dream of visiting but rarely are able to realize. It's escapism at its best, and it's free! Oh wait—it's not free, but it's still cheaper than actually going there. Oh, wait—just got my cable bill. Coulda gone to freaking Ankara for less than this. Crap. By the way, Paladium HD is another one to spend the night with—great concert music in a much more comfortable chair.

If you're going to New Orleans in February, think about packing a pair of crappy shorts and tennies. Before the show opens, GCSAA and Habitat for Humanity are teaming up to bring people together to help with the rebuilding of post-Katrina New Orleans, and they need your help. John Ekstrom is putting together Team MAGCS for this worthwhile cause, which will gather on Wednesday, February 4th at 7:00 AM at the New Orleans Convention Center for a day of house-building and RE-building of hurricane-ravaged neighborhoods in Louisiana. Call John to be a part of this great and noble cause—815-922-0587, or email him at johne@hinsdalegolfclub.org.

If you are actually interested in attending either the Ohio Turfgrass Conference & Show or the Michigan State University Turf School (mentioned above in Dates to Remember), here are the contacts: www.ohioturfgrass.org or 888-683-3445 for the Ohio deal, and www.turf.msu.edu or 517-355-0271 for the (duh) Michigan thing.

The members of MAGCS send their deepest condolences to the family and friends of Heath Peterson, who died unexpectedly on November 12th. Heath was assistant superintendent under **Paul Bastron, CGCS** at Glen Flora Country Club.

MAGCS members in print: Several members of our brethren were spotted in OIP's (other industry publications) recently. **Ed Fischer, CGCS** (Old Elm Club) was featured in the September issue of *Club & Resort Business*, chiming in on the benefits of tree removal programs to improve turf conditions. October's *Golfdom* magazine had an article titled "Been Around" which highlighted several "old-time" superintendents, including Cog Hill's **Ken Lapp**. At 72 years of age, Ken has not slowed down a bit, having recently overseen the big renovation on the Dubsdread course. Last but not least, **Dan Charlton** was the subject of an article in the October issue of *Golf Course Industry* titled "Weather Watcher" about the web-based monitoring system he employs to achieve peak efficiency in the grounds maintenance operation at Evanston Golf Club.



Ed Fischer



Dan Charlton

MAGCS members NOT in print: These MAGCS members were NOT in print recently, nor did they do anything of significance that deserves mention; but their evil twins WERE in print and I just felt it important to point out. Okay, it's been a slow news month.



NOT John Otis



NOT Dave Radaj

From GCSAA, we have learned that the winners of the 2009 Colonel John Morley Award (formerly called the Distinguished Service Award) will be Mark Esoda, CGCS, the late George Hamilton, Ph. D., and Monroe Miller. Esoda is the superintendent of the Atlanta Country Club, and formulated a best management practices template for Georgia superintendents that was endorsed by the state's EPA and continues to serve as a guideline for water use and conservation across the country. Hamilton, who dies in 2004 at the age of 43 after a yearlong battle with pancreatic cancer, was a turfgrass professor at Penn State University. Among his accomplishments are his development of Penn Mulch and the first calibrator for rotary spreaders (Penn Pro), and his training of more than 500 students in golf turf management. Miller is the retiring superintendent of Blackhawk Country Club in Madison, Wisconsin where he has spent the last 36 years, and has been serving as editor of Grass Roots—the Wisconsin GCSA's bi-monthly newsletter—for the past 24 years. The awards will be presented at the Opening Session of the 2009 GCSAA Education Conference in New Orleans on February 5th. Congratulations to these highly deserving gentlemen.

Also from GCSAA, these live webcasts will be offered this month:
December 3—Environmental Management Systems with Debbie Swartz
December 11—Managing Nutrient Budgets in the Face of

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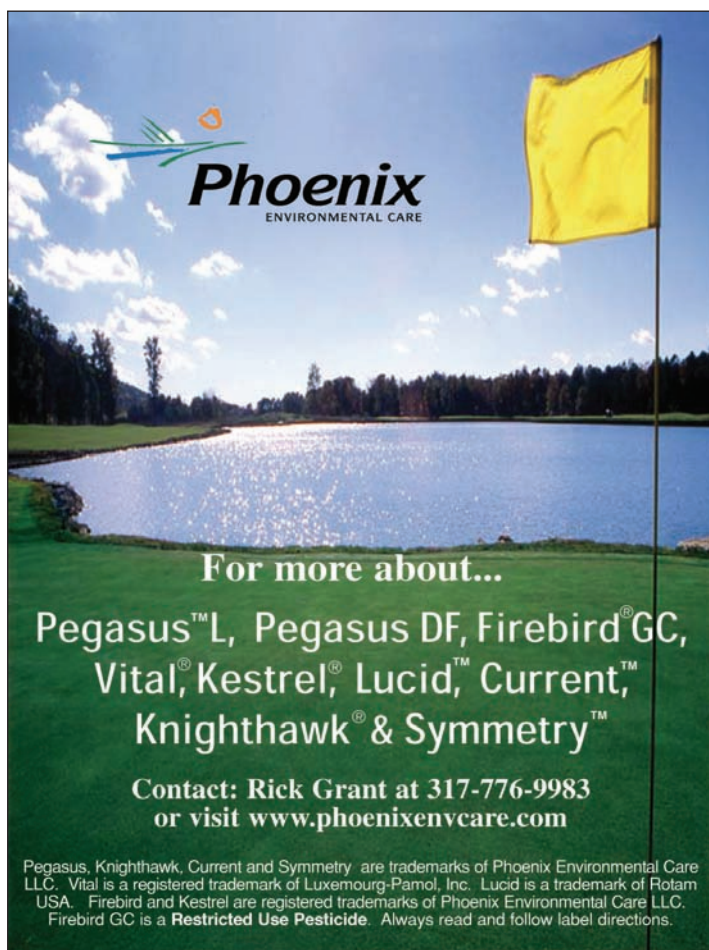
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Rising Prices with Jason Dettman-Kruse, PhD.

December 16—Bringing More Golf to Your Community with Dwayne Dillinger, CGCS.

Webcasts are presented in partnership with Syngenta Professional Products, and are funded by the Environmental Institute for Golf.

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Further news from GCSAA—if you attend the Experience at FarmLinks programs in Sylacauga, Alabama, you will be eligible to receive CEU's (continuing education units). The Agrium Advanced Technologies' fertilizer technologies presentation gets you .45 education points, and the On the Course Tour will net you another .30 EP's for a total of .75 CEU's.
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The last(?) golf event of the year was held on October 16th at Indian Lakes Resort, where the esteemed alumni of the University of Illinois gathered for the cleverly-named University of Illinois Turf Alumni Golf Outing. Host superintendent **Chuck Barber** and his faithful dog Hunter provided a great venue for the day, and everyone in Illini Nation in attendance were treated to a great day of casual golf and good times. Thanks go out to Chuck and the fine folks at Indian Lakes, as well as to the many alums who donated prizes, including John Anderson of Arthur Clesen, Bob Bethel of Lebanon Turf Products, Tim Hoyt of Monsanto, Matt Kregel of the Club at Strawberry Creek, Greg Rounds of Sunset Ridge Country Club, Scot Spier of Arthur Clesen, Brian Winkel of Syngenta, and Paul Yerkes of John Deere Golf. Thanks to you all for a fine time!



Host Chuck Barber with "the kindest thing to trod upon his greens during the day"—his dog Hunter.



L. to R: A bunch of orange and blue guys who may or may not have attended the U of I.

'Tis the season of giving, isn't it? As you probably know, MAGCS has been accepting donations for the Community Crisis Center in Elgin. The Center, founded in 1975, helps those in crisis due to domestic violence, sexual assault, or economic circumstances. Donations were accepted at the Midwest Turf Clinic at Medinah Country Club on November 5th, and continue to be accepted at all Chicagoland John Deere Landscape Service Centers. PLEASE feel free to drop off your contributions of the following needed items: Powdered laundry detergent, fabric softener sheets, dish-washing liquid, dishwasher powder or liquid, paper products including towels, facial tissue, and toilet paper, dish cloths, towels, and sponges, along with any non-perishable food products. Also in the spirit is Floratine, who is helping St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital through its "Real Men of Greenness" program. Each time you visit floratine.com and listen to these stories that salute superintendents, or download or forward a story to a friend, Floratine will make a donation to the hospital. And then there's these guys, whose donations to our holiday dinner tables give new meaning to the phrase "give 'til it hurts."



OK, I took this really cool picture of this turkey and had to use it somehow

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The 56th Annual Midwest Turf Clinic was held at Medinah Country Club on November 5th with **Curtis Tyrrell, CGCS** serving as our new host. The theme of the day was "Going Green," and the slate of presenters was terrific. See the Midwest Breezes section for a recap of these fine educational presentations. After the lunch break, several yearly awards were presented to some very deserving recipients, starting with the presentation of the Ray Gerber Editorial Award to **Tim Anderson, CGCS** and the Fred D. Opperman Editorial Award to **Dr. Derek Settle**. Capping off the ceremonies was the President's Award for Meritorious Service, which was bestowed upon a surprised **Eddie Braunskey**, who humbly accepted by saying, "I deserve this." The day wound down with keynote speaker Pat Hughes, the WGN radio play-by-play man for the Chicago Cubs, entertaining the crowd with his stories about the season, his thoughts on the future of the Cubs, and a few of partner Ron Santo's foibles. Still unknown is whether Enos Slaughter played for the 1945 pennant-winning team, as **Jimmy Frels** so confidently asserted in order to win one of Pat's Broadcasting Legends CD's. Outgoing president **Dave Braasch** then did the ceremonious gavel pass to new president **Tony Kalina**, and the day's activities came to an end. Many thanks to Curtis and everyone at Medinah, to the people who put the day together, to the guests who took time out of their day to

(continued on page 21)

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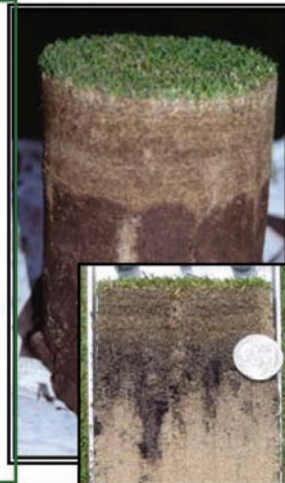


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