



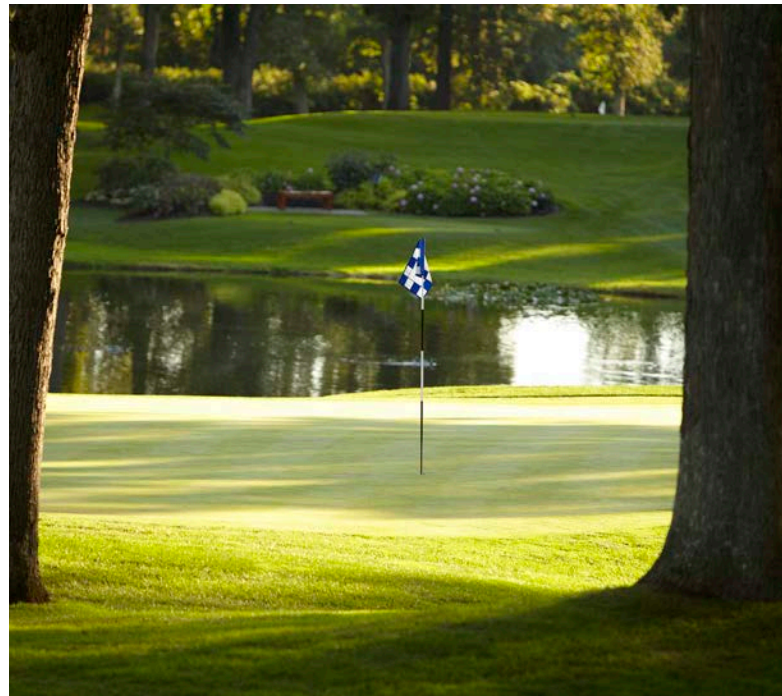
ALL PHOTOS OF EVCC: PIRRELLO DIGITAL IMAGING

During his tenure at the club, Ron's main focus has been to alter the growing conditions of these problematic greens, and he knew the only way to do that would be to remove the competition from the existing trees. After bringing in tree specialists and getting the membership behind the idea, Ron was given the green light to remove trees surrounding one of the most problematic greens. This helped immensely with the growing conditions; however the greens still had issues with drainage. In 2000, to rectify the drainage problem, Ron had XGD drainage installed on his six worst greens. After improving drainage significantly on those six greens, the club decided over the next two years to go ahead and have XGD installed in the remaining greens as well. These greens still had issues due to shade and root competition from trees.


Ron again was given the go-ahead to remove trees around two more of his problematic greens. Combined with the XGD drainage and the lack of competition from trees, these two greens are performing great each and every season.

Ron says "From that day on, those two greens are now the best greens on the course." After seeing these two greens perform so well, Ron has, over the past 11 years been able to slowly remove trees around his problematic greens. The practice of reducing tree competition with the Poa annua greens, combined with proper cultural practices has seen these greens improve each year.

In 2006 the club went through a substantial renovation. The overall length of the course was increased, and the total amount of bunkers was brought up to 104. Along with increasing length and bunkers, the course also added additional drainage and constructed six new tee complexes. Nine



additional tee complexes are slated to be completed over the next three years.

Ron credits his success and the club's excellent playing conditions to his staff, especially his Assistant Superintendents, Brian Stout and Brian Kalal. When talking about Brian and Brian, Ron says "The membership is extremely proud and happy with the course, they are a big reason why." During the fall when not on the course Ron can be found cheering on the Wisconsin Badgers, and Chicago's second favorite sports team, the Green Bay Packers. 

*Image Left: The fourth hole at EVCC has a huge green guarded by well placed bunkers and a little water. It can make par elusive if not careful.*





Charles Anfield, CGCS, *Heritage Bluffs Golf Course*

# Organics, Composting, and Soil Health

The MAGCS returned to Calumet Country Club for the April Meeting after getting rained out in 2012. It was a glorious spring day that featured a wonderfully conditioned golf course and some excellent education.

Jeff Leuzinger, Sales Manager for Pearl Valley Organix, provided an informative overview on all things organic.

What is organic? The definition seems to be something different to everyone. By definition it is material that is comprised of both carbon and hydrogen. In the "organic food world" it has become synonymous with a very strict scrutiny of ingredients and processes that make up an organic product. In turf, the term has come to define a few different things: soil amendments, soil conditioners and fertilizers. These products are comprised of mainly: bio solids, animal products/proteins, yard waste, food waste, and animal manures.

Products that are OMRI (organic material review institute) listed have a very strict quality control approval process. This is a "stamp of approval" that designates the product as passing the test for organic food use.

Some organic turf products must be composted or broken down first before the product is ready for market.

The benefits of composting are:

- Reduces the weight to volume ratio
- Decreases carbon/nitrogen ratio (C:N)
- Kills weed seeds

The process of composting must maintain specific carbon and moisture parameters. This requires monitoring for specific temperatures and times to rotate compost. The process typically takes between 45 and 60 days for final product. Good compost is well decayed and stabilized. It has low soluble salts with a pH range between 5 and 8. The C: N ratio should be 15-25:1.

Jeff gave a brief overview of soils and the benefits of organic matter in the soil. The benefits of an organic soil are based around the food web within the soil. Good soil structure is a very dynamic system.



*Jeff Leuzinger offered tours of the composting facility at Pearl Valley Organix to any MAGCS member. Just give him a call and he'd be happy to show you this interesting process.*

The food web includes: bacteria, fungi, protozoa, arthropods and nematodes.

**Bacteria:** Decompose organic material. They convert energy into other forms. They assist in nutrient cycling, disease suppression, provide antibiotics and nitrogen fixation.

**Fungi:** These decomposers grow as long threads to stabilize soil structure.

**Protozoa:** Feed on bacteria and fungi. They regulate bacteria populations and assist in disease suppression.

**Nematodes:** Not much is known about these creatures and their role in the soil. They feed on plant parts, algae, bacteria, fungi and other nematodes. There are beneficial species. Not all nematodes are a problem for the turfgrass system.

**Arthropods:** These are "bugs" that feed on other life in the soil. They release nutrients as waste product.

Jeff ended his presentation by reminding us to pay attention to soil life. Balance is the key to healthy and productive soil and consequently healthy plants. @



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## The Cleaner

We know in golf course maintenance that if we didn't do the daily work like raking bunkers, mowing greens, string trimming, and more the golf course would be a mess. A finely manicured golf course is no "accident," it takes a lot of team work.

A good maintenance program is always best served in small consistent doses. That way you don't wind up with the "big cleaning over haul." It's kind of like cleaning the kitchen floor. If you sweep and mop regularly, it's not a big deal to keep clean. If you don't do the work, a thick gunk build up is created from spilled food and drink, tracked in dirt, and other stuff from the outside world. Then it's down on your knees, scrubbing it by hand. A shiny kitchen floor is a lot like a golf course; they are expected to be clean and neat. When it's done up right, it looks so "money." Often times maintenance is only noticed when it is not completed.

Cleaners come in many shapes and sizes. Often times cleaners work at odd hours like the dark of night or the crack of dawn when no one's around. No one wants to see the cleaner do their dirty work.

We have these cleaners at Heritage Bluffs Public Golf Club, but I'm not talking about my crew.

Enter the ultimate cleaner *Cathartes aura*, common name Turkey Vulture. It means "purifier bird" in Latin and gets its common name from its resemblance to the male Wild Turkey. It is also known as a turkey buzzard or just plain buzzard. This bird has my respect. It's by no means a pretty bird. Some might say its down-right ugly. But as it has been said many times over, beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

We have this flock that hangs out on a ridge overlooking a gravel pit on property south of the golf course. It's not actively being mined anymore. Who knows how long it will remain a gravel pit? For now the land lays quiet.

I see these birds just about every morning. As a group they gather overlooking the pit, serene, quiet and unmolested. Just "chillin." They are good neighbors to have. They rise at dawn together and wander over to the golf course to and stretch their wings. They are big birds and they have a sizable wingspan. They hang out a while on the turf and in the trees overlooking the pond with the egrets, geese and ducks before "launch en mass" and separate to fly out to the far reaches of the county in search of food.

I was so enamored by this bird I did some quick research on my large neighbors via the internet. I feel like Cliff Clavin from the hit television show "Cheers" but here goes:

- It is the most widely spread of the new world vultures. It ranges from southern Canada to the tip of South America. It is not related to the Old World vultures of Europe, Africa and Asia. It looks almost identical because of convergent evolution, where natural selection similarly shapes unrelated animals adapting to the same conditions.
- Inhabits a variety of open and semi open areas including subtropical forests, shrub lands, pastures and deserts.
- It is a scavenger feeding almost exclusively on carrion.
- Finds food with its sharp eyesight and a keen sense of smell. It has the ability to fly low to detect gases produced from the decay of dead animals.
- In flight it maximizes the efficiency of its large wingspread (6 feet) by riding the thermal updrafts.
- Lacks a syrinx, the vocal cord of birds. The only vocalizations it makes are low hisses or grunts.
- They roost in large communities. Nesting sites include: caves, hollow trees and thickets.
- Each year it generally hatches a couple of eggs. The chicks are fed by regurgitation.
- Has very few natural predators
- Protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918.

I always enjoy seeing the birds glide back home when they arrive after a hard day of "cleaning the land of sorrow." Collectively, they gather and roost. Who knows what they might be discussing among themselves? I'm sure they would have some cool stories of nasty looking road kill they found or perhaps near misses with high speeding cars and trucks.

Thank you Cleaner. You are welcome on our golf course any day my wise old friend. Relax, refresh yourself with a drink and feel free to linger about on the lush green turf. For tomorrow, is another day. @



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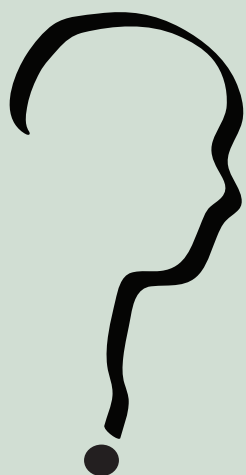
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## Eric Reed, BTSI

How well do you know Eric? Eric Reed of BTSI took a few minutes to fill out the Midwest Personality Form online and submitted these answers. If you are interested, please take a minute and do the same.

**MAGCS Member Since** 2005

**Birthdate/Place** 1982, Libertyville IL

**Current Residence** Chicago (West Loop)

**College/Degree** University of Illinois - Horticulture with specialization in turf management

**Fiancé** Kim

**My Favorite Childhood Memory** Going to work early with my dad and playing 36 holes before the first groups hit the back nine, and then whipping out the fishing pole for the rest of the afternoon

**My Personal Hero** My Dad

**My Professional Mentors** Mike Bavier, Mike Seifken, Roger Ogalla

**Favorite Actor** Brad Pitt

**Favorite Musical Performer** Led Zeppelin (all-time) Current - Black Keys

**Favorite Restaurant** Any good steakhouse

**Favorite "Pig Out" Food** Lou Malnati's deep dish

**Favorite TV Show** Breaking Bad

**Favorite Color** As a turf guy, I should say green, but it's a close second to blue

**Favorite Professional Sports Team** Chicago Cubs

**Favorite Pro Athlete** Greg Maddux

**Favorite Pro Golfer** Rory

**My Handicap Index** 9 something and climbing

**My Favorite Place to Play Golf** Eagle Ridge in late October

**My Best/Most Memorable Round** Tied for a hole in one in 2006 with a terrible other 17 holes, but probably most memorable was shooting par in a big meet for Mundelein High School at Countryside GC

**The Most Interesting/Exotic Place I've Been** Grand Cayman islands, Jamaica, Cozumel

**The Book I've Been Recommending Lately** On Course magazine, naturally!

**The Last Great Movie I Saw** Moneyball

**In my Spare Time I Enjoy** Golf, watching a lot of sports, and taking in a few adult beverages with good company

**Three Words that Best Describe Me** Always be laughing

**What I Enjoy Most about My Job** Interacting with so many different kinds of people in the industry and learning more from those who paved the way and have years of experience than I could ever learn in a book or classroom.

**What I Enjoy Least about My Job** Driving and traffic mostly. And the occasional sleep deprived grumpy customer

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Eric Reed all thumbs up.

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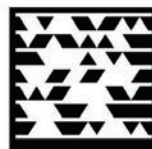
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