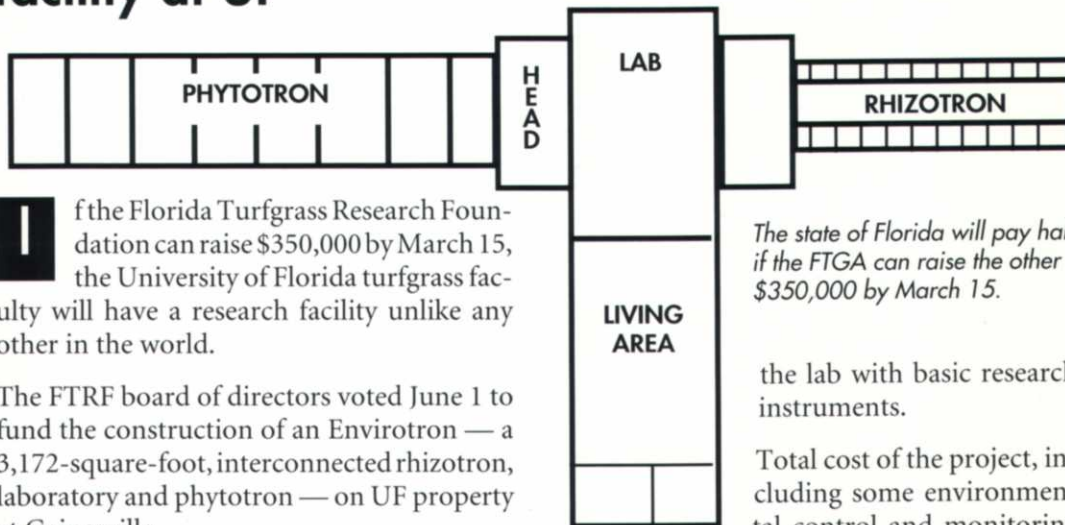


## FTGA wants to fund world-class research facility at UF



If the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation can raise \$350,000 by March 15, the University of Florida turfgrass faculty will have a research facility unlike any other in the world.

The FTRF board of directors voted June 1 to fund the construction of an Envirotрон — a 3,172-square-foot, interconnected rhizotron, laboratory and phytotron — on UF property at Gainesville.

“There are some phytotrons (elaborate greenhouses) around and quite a few rhizotrons (underground facilities for observing roots and soil), but I don’t know of another place in the world that has them both at one spot and all connected to a laboratory,” said Dr. Ed Freeman, a UF plant pathologist. “This facility would put us right at the top of the heap. We’re *very* excited.

“To have such a thing would be a significant achievement for the whole turf industry in Florida.”

In addition to the rhizotron, which will include living quarters for researchers conducting short-term projects or graduate assistants monitoring projects which require frequent checking, the board also voted to construct an automatic, retractable rain shelter for the rhizotron, to purchase turf maintenance equipment, to install an irrigation system and hazardous materials storage area, and to equip

*The state of Florida will pay half if the FTGA can raise the other \$350,000 by March 15.*

the lab with basic research instruments.

Total cost of the project, including some environmental control and monitoring equipment, will be \$700,000.

Under the current state guidelines, The Florida Capital Facilities Matching Trust Fund will match donations dollar for dollar, meaning that if the FTRF raises \$350,000, the trust fund will match the donation.

The money must be raised by March 15 in order for the trust fund to agree to match it before the Florida Legislature, which must then approve the project, convenes April 1.

If all goes well, construction could begin next summer and “we could be seeing some research results within three years,” said Freeman. “I’m no construction expert, but I don’t think it will take that long to build it and we have some projects waiting for the facility that could be yielding some results rather quickly.”

“I want to emphasize that fund-raising for this project will not take the place of our Arnold Palmer Endowment program, which is on schedule and will continue that way,” said Bob Yount, executive director of both the FTRF and FTGA.

“We have had some potential

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**CORRECTION**

*It’s been spelled SARA, SERA and even CERA, but the correct spelling of the federal law requiring facilities which store hazardous materials to notify local emergency planning groups is SARA. The letters stand for Superfund Amendment Re-authorization Act. We picked one of the wrong spellings for a story in the last issue.*

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