



## FTGA Launches Grass-Roots Fund-Raising Campaign

The FTGA and the University of Florida have joined forces for a turf research fund-raising program dubbed, "Golfers For A Better Environment." The idea stems from FTGA Public Relations Director Don Benham's experience with a similar successful program instituted by the Michigan Turf Foundation and Michigan State University.

After a couple of dress rehearsal presentations to the board of directors of the Gainesville Country Club and the Florida Turfgrass Association, Benham and Nell debuted the program to representatives of 15 country clubs in the Boca Raton area Feb. 8. David Court, CGCS and Mark Jarrell, CGCS helped the FTGA office with contact names and David's club, Boca Lago, served as the host for this inaugural presentation of the program.

The Golfers For A Better Environment program is designed to encourage grass roots golfers to participate in turf research to accomplish several goals:

- (1) Provide a means for golfers to help preserve and protect their club's most important asset, the golf course.
- (2) Provide independent public funding to study environmental impacts of turf management products and practices.
- (3) Provide a consistent base of support for turf research rather than depending only on annual event sponsorship and attendance.
- (4) Provide factual evidence to rebut sensational, negative and misleading media accounts about golf courses.
- (5) Develop a significant golf constituency that can have political influence when regulations affecting golf courses are under discussion.

The premise of the program is very simple. Each club's board of directors is being asked to consider a convenience billing to their membership of an annual \$5.00 donation to the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation.. The goal of hav-

## 2000 Florida Plants of the Year - Part 2

**Editor's Note:** The Florida Plants of the Year program was launched in 1998 and has been beneficial to both consumers and growers. Purchasers are introduced to under-utilized but proven Florida plant material. The plants are chosen each year by a committee of horticulturists, nurserymen, educators, landscape architects and other members of the horticulture industry representing Central, North and South Florida.

### Common Name: Red Buckeye

**Botanical Name:** *Aesculus pavia*

**Hardiness:** Zones 4-8

**Mature Height X Spread:** 15-20' tall and 10-12' wide

**Classification:** Landscape shrub or small tree

**Landscape Use:** Specimen or grouped in light shade

**Characteristics:** Deep red flowers in April-May contrast with dark green leaves, and produce shiny brown fruit that contain three orange seeds.

A deciduous large shrub or small tree, palmate foliage blooms in early spring with showy red terminal flowers that attract hummingbirds. A native that thrives in light shade and moist soils, this shrub makes brown shiny nuts, like a chestnut, which split to reveal three orange seeds that germinate fairly easily.



### Common Name: Sweetspire

**Botanical Name:** *Itea virginica* 'Henry's Garnet'

**Hardiness:** Zones 5-9

**Mature Height X Spread:** 4-5' tall and 6' wide

**Classification:** Landscape shrub for massing

**Landscape Use:** Mass plantings in sun or shade, adaptable to wet or dry conditions

**Characteristics:** Drooping fragrant inflorescences of white flowers make a show in mid spring. The fall color is a brilliant reddish purple.

Semi-deciduous Florida native that has arching branches to 4 feet with brilliant red fall color. The shrub has white terminal flowers on weeping spikes in the spring. Spreads underground by runners. It grows well in full sun or partial shade and thrives in wet areas.



### Common Name: Ficus Alii

**Botanical Name:** *Ficus binnendijkii* 'Alii'

**Hardiness:** Thrives in medium to high light

**Mature Height X Spread:** Height ranges from 2-20', average being 6-8'

**Classification:** Ornamental foliage plant

**Landscape Use:** Plant gives a northern look to interiors

**Characteristics:** Similar to sister plant, "Amstel King" the 'Alii' has narrower leaves and a broader fuller look.

The word 'Alii' is Hawaiian, meaning "Chief" for the broad top of the plant. the 'Alii' formerly known as *Ficus maclellandii* 'Alii' thrives in medium to high light. The slender dark leaves make this plant appealing both to interior plantscape and home market. There are three types: the bush, the standard tree and the braids.



ing hundreds of thousands of people involved by giving individually is much more powerful than just a club writing a check from a budget line item.

The current format of the computer-generated presentations has Benham introducing the program with a little background on the FTGA and then he introduces Dr. Nell who talks about the UF/IFAS Florida First role, mission, accomplishments and current programs. Then Benham brings it home with accounts of his experience as a former club president and green chairman and the success of Michigan's program and why it was so important and effective.

At the conclusion of the presentation and question and answer period everyone is given a folder with a hard copy of the basic information and how to participate.

The clubs that do participate will be sent an update twice a year to post on the club's bulletin board or include in their newsletters to keep the contributors ad-

vised of the various projects under way.

Three very positive things happened at Boca Lago that day. First Benham and Nell were invited to make their presentation to the monthly meeting of Palm Beach Green Chairmen the following month. Second, one club official gave Benham three names of people he thought would be interested in hearing the program. Third, we finally began to take our message to the people instead of holding another choir practice.

It may be too soon for hearty congratulations, but we did get some great news that raises our hopes for the program. While everyone was in New Orleans for the GCSAA Conference and Show, Cheryl Stocklin of the FTGA Office sent Don Benham a two line fax. The general manager of the Boca Lago CC called to say that 1100 members of the club had pledged to the Golfers For A Better Environment Program. Since returning home, Don has written follow-up letters to the other attending clubs

and has had several follow up calls inviting him to meet with clubs' boards of directors.

This is just the first step in a journey of a thousand miles, but it is definitely a good beginning. Congratulations and thanks to Don Benham and Dr. Nell for their time and energy devoted to this fund raising project that may soon become a vital sustaining part of our industry.

#### FTGA Seminars

At last count FTGA's Regional Seminar Series held in January and February reached out to 1,264 attendees around the state, a 2 percent increase over last year's figures. This year also saw FTGA Vice President Erica Santella inviting members of the Nitrate Remediation Working Group to attend to hear Dr. John Cisar's presentation on nitrate leaching results from the IFAS Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program.

JOEL JACKSON, CGCS

FGCSA Director of Communications

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NEWS RELEASE OF NOTE

## Phosphorous Acid OK'd as Plant Nutrient Material

The Florida Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services has recognized a new plant nutrient in the form of phosphorous acid.

Since 1995 the Department investigated claims from the agrochemical industry that phosphorous acid may actually be used as a fungicide against Pythium and Phytophthora sp. and petitioned the Department not to recognize phosphorous acid as a nutrient. But after an exhausting five-year study and review, the Department agreed phosphorous acid meets the definition as a plant nutrient and approved its use as such.

The scientific journal, *HortTechnology*, will publish in the near future a peer-reviewed article that quantifies and demonstrates a beneficial plant growth response attributable to phosphorous acid.

Not to be confused with traditional

phosphoric acid, phosphorous acid is more water-soluble and can be readily taken up by the plant when applied as a foliar spray. Phosphorous acid is used at far less dosage rates than phosphoric acid and is recommended for supplemental use when there are high demands for phosphorous, such as, new root and shoot growth, flowering and fruit production.

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*Editor's Note: Phyto-Fos is the trade name of the new phosphorous acid product available locally. For more information contact Ted Owen, Upstart Products, at 800-203-5629.*

NEWS RELEASE OF NOTE

## Lease Program Allows 100% Irrigation System Financing

Golf courses can finance the entire cost of Flowtronex PSI's pumping

systems, including the cost of freight and installation, thanks to a unique leasing program just unveiled by the company.

Flowtronex PSI's preferred lease rate schedules provide flexible monthly payments for pumping systems. Not only do these plans make Flowtronex systems affordable for almost any course, they preserve working capital and conserve existing bank lines to boost profits and stretch dollars, says Flowtronex PSI Marketing Director Willie Slingerland.

"Lease payments also can be written off as business expense," says Slingerland. "And the additional profits realized by better investments can cover monthly lease payments. That's a win-win situation."

Slingerland said some of the advantages of leasing that golf courses should consider are:

Conserving existing bank lines—Leasing frees up bank credit for working capital, discount purchases, or to use in short-term emergencies.

Preserving working capital for greater

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profits –Companies can earn more by investing in inventory or other gainful opportunities, rather than tying up hard-earned profits in long-term equipment purchases which will depreciate in value.

**Affordability** – Golf courses can acquire new equipment conveniently and affordably, when budget restrictions might not allow for purchasing the equipment

“We can finance almost any course’s equipment needs with flexible lease packages that run anywhere from 24 to 60 months,” Slingerland says. “And a simple credit application is all that is required to set up an Express Lease for systems costing up to \$100,000. We can finance systems up to \$1 million with a more extensive financial report. Approval usually takes only a day or two.”

Flowtronex PSI can structure the lease/finance plan to fit any course’s need, such as providing for deferred payments for courses under construction and not yet earning income, and skip payments for courses closed during winter months.

With more than 8,000 golf course installations worldwide, Flowtronex PSI is the world’s largest manufacturer of water pumping systems for the turfgrass industry.

WILLIE SLINGERLAND

Flowtronex PSI Communications

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**Editor’s note:** As a rule, we do not run news releases on new products, companies or personnel. Exceptions are made from time to time solely at the editor’s discretion when new technology or services are announced that offer new turf management options to our readers.

FLORIDA AUTOMATED WEATHER NETWORK

### Current Weather Data

### Available From IFAS

The Florida Automated Weather Network (FAWN) is composed of 16 automated weather stations located at UF/IFAS Research and Education Cen-

ters and Extension Service Sites in Central and South Florida.

Its mission is “to provide accurate and timely weather data to a wide variety of users.” Because of the importance of weather in agriculture, every effort is made to have data collected and reported every 15 minutes.

Each site collects the temperature at 2, 6, and 30 feet, a soil temperature at 4 inches, wind speed and direction at 30 feet, relative humidity, rainfall, barometric pressure and radiation. Leaf wetness will be added soon. The information is transmitted to Gainesville where it is then distributed through the Internet (web site <http://fawn.ifas.ufl.edu>—There is no “www” in the address) and by way of a voice data system (see below).

Weather information is essential for agriculture and natural resource management. Although the initial motivation for the development of FAWN was a real-time data collection and delivery system for agriculture, interest and re-



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quests of the data have come from a wide variety of users. Water management districts, emergency service agencies, National Weather Service, private forecasters and private industry such as construction, service, manufacturing, etc. are interested in the data.

Growers are encouraged to use FAWN and provide comments so the system can be improved. Plans call for expansion to North Florida, improving the database, linking models such as chemical movements in soils, minimum temperature predictions, DISC (decision information system for citrus), and others.

FAWN INTERACTIVE VOICE SYSTEM	
LOCATION, COUNTY	STATION NUMBER
Gainesville, Alachua	10
Pierson, Volusia	11
Oklawaha, Marion	12
Umatilla, Lake	13
Tavares, Lake	14
Okahumpka, Lake	15
Apopka, Orange	16
Avalon, Orange	17
Lake Alfred, Polk	18
Dover, Hillsborough	19
Ft. Pierce, St. Lucie	20
Ona, Hardee	21
Bradenton, Manatee	22
Belle Glade, Palm Beach	23
Immokalee, Collier	24
Homestead, Dade	25

*Editor's note: I thought this UF/IFAS based weather network may be of interest as golf courses and urban areas*

*spread. You can cross check the data with what you are getting on DTN or the weather.com sites. Of course for those not yet online, the voice response system might be useful as you flirt with Mother Nature!*

### Interactive Voice Response System

When you travel or you are away from your computer, you can access the FAWN network data through a conventional telephone. To use the FAWN Dial-up system:

- (1) Dial (352) 846-3100
- (2) Enter a two digit weather station number shown in the table below, or a selected location.
- (3) Listen to the latest weather from FAWN.

### NECROLOGY

## Everglades Pioneer Paul Frank Dies

**P**aul Frank, a pioneer golf course developer, manager, superintendent and turfgrass researcher, died March 5 after a long bout with cancer. He was 66.

Except for three years in college (Florida Southern and UF) and two years in Germany with the U.S. Army, Frank spent his entire life in Collier County, where he and his father built the county's second golf course — Hole-in-the-Wall — on their 420-acre ranch in 1958. Fifteen years later, they built Wilderness Country Club where Frank served as superintendent and general manager.

One of the founders of the Everglades GCSA, Frank was a 40-year member of



Janlark 1992 File Photo

the GCSAA and a former director of the FTGA. He also served on the Collier County Planning Board for more than a decade and as a director of Barnett Bank for nearly two.

Frank is credited by many to have "discovered" ultradwarf bermudagrasses in the early 1980s when he propagated a single stolon of a dark, dense mutant of Tifton 328 bermudagrass from his 11th green into a 300-square-foot plot. In 1984, he planted the 11th green with his new grass, dubbed PF-11 in honor of its birthplace.

"Paul's greens were frequently used by scientists at the University of Florida for nematode research and other projects," noted Dr. Phil Busey, UF turfgrass breeder at the Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center.

"He was a pioneer in new grasses and other technology. One of Paul's grasses, PF-11 ultradwarf bermudagrass, has performed the best in several tests... he appears to have been the first to discover and first to adopt such cultivars."

"The golf turf industry will miss the vision and wisdom of this man of old Florida pioneer stock who asked little and gave much to his profession," said Joel Jackson, FGCSA communications director.

Frank is survived by a son, Paul M. Frank, and two daughters, Tamara Frank and Daria Webber.

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