



FTGA UPDATE

### Cisar Passes Turf Liason Baton to Working Group

At the Florida Turfgrass Association's March 24 board meeting in Gainesville, UF/IFAS Turf Coordinator, Dr. John Cisar passed the responsibility of industry liaison to the Turfgrass Working Group headed by Dr. Bryan Unruh.

Under the IFAS reorganization instituted by UF/IFAS Vice President Mike Martin, each commodity group served by IFAS has developed a working group of faculty members. Turf is no exception and Drs. Unruh, Trenholm, Miller and Nagata make up the core leadership of the Turf Working Group.

In a special presentation ceremony by Dr. Martin, congratulations and thanks were expressed to Dr. Cisar for filling the industry-requested turf coordinator role. We add our thanks to Dr. Cisar and look forward to his continued contributions in turf research as part of the new Turf Team.

#### 48th Annual Conference

As we move into summer, the FTGA office staff and conference and show committee members are wrapping up the list of speakers and topics for the 48th Annual Conference and Show Aug. 14-16 at the O'Connell Center on the University of Florida campus in Gainesville.

This year all of the classroom education has been moved to the O'Connell Center or just across the street in the Florida Gymnasium Building. No more cross-campus hikes to catch a concurrent session or workshop. Park at the garage next to the O'Connell center and you're set!

This year the Trade Show will kick off with an afternoon and evening grand opening and reception on Tuesday, August 15th from 5 to 8 PM. This format has been gaining widespread popularity at other trade shows and

## 2000 Florida Plants of the Year - Part 3

*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: Ficus TooLittle

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Ficus benjamina* 'TooLittle'

**HARDINESS:** Low to medium light

**MATURE HEIGHT AND SPREAD:** At one year old the plant is 12-24 inches high and 8-10 inches wide.

**CLASSIFICATION:** Ornamental foliage plant

**LANDSCAPE USE:** Bonsai or small topiary

**CHARACTERISTICS:** This true dwarf ficus can be distinguished from the regular benjamina by its unique small curled leaves and tight internode space.

This is a chance mutation that was discovered in 1988. Ficus 'TooLittle' is a full plant with approximately 7-10 times more leaves than its parent benjamina. The numerous leaves give

'TooLittle' its dense appearance. 'TooLittle' is currently being grown from tissue culture and its small size makes it a good candidate for bonsai. The large sparse roots under the soil can be exposed to add to the bonsai effect. The 'TooLittle' also lends itself well to use by the small topiary foliage market.



### COMMON NAME: Golden Jasmine

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Cestrum aurantiacum*

**HARDINESS:** Zones 8-10

**MATURE HEIGHT X SPREAD:** 8 feet tall and wide

**CLASSIFICATION:** Landscape shrub

**LANDSCAPE USE:** Specimen or mass plantings

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Bright orange-yellow flowers in spring and summer.

The sprawling habit of this shrub and be contained by light pruning. Orange-yellow flowers are attractive to butterflies. This fast grower blooms continuously from spring to summer, requires full-sun or partial shade and tolerates drought and poor soil. It may die to ground in colder zones, but recovers quickly in the spring.



### COMMON NAME: Mahogany Fern

**BOTANICAL NAME:** *Didymochlaena truncatula*

**HARDINESS:** Zones 9-10

**MATURE HEIGHT X SPREAD:** 2-3 feet tall, upright

**CLASSIFICATION:** Tropical upright fern

**LANDSCAPE USE:** Ground cover for medium to dense shade

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Rich mahogany new growth enlivens the dark green glossy mass of foliage

This ground cover flashes a glossy green foliage with contrasting bronze new growth reminiscent of Autumn Fern, but more upright. Mahogany Fern grows best in shade and evenly moist conditions.



gives attendees a chance to enjoy a libation, some snacks and take in the trade show at the same time.

The FTGA leadership is counting on all segments of the turf industry to support the conference and show. While golf course superintendents have been key in this effort in the past, our numbers have been tailing off the last couple of years.

With universal issues facing the total turf industry these days, the FTGA Conference and Show will be a good place for everyone to gather and join forces.

There are plenty of moderately priced hotels west of campus located at exits 75 and 76 on I-75. Last year I stayed at the Red Roof Inn for only \$34.50 a night. There is also a cluster of hotels on U.S. 441 (SW 13th St.) south of campus.

There is also a new DoubleTree Hotel on campus at the corner of SW 34th St. and Hull Rd. This will be the



At the FTGA's Spring board meeting in Gainesville, Dr. Mike Martin, vice president of IFAS presented Dr. John Cisar with his thanks and a plaque commemorating his service as IFAS Turf Coordinator for the past two years. Martin announced that IFAS is now installing a Team Working Group approach to communicate with various industry commodities. Dr. Bryan Unruh will be the chairman of the new Turf Working Group for IFAS. Photo by Joel Jackson.

site of the GCSAA Leadership Seminar. All of these locations are just minutes away from the O'Connell Center.

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UF/IFAS OVERSEED FIELD DAY

## Combined Event Draws Crowd

Superintendents from as far away as Naples and Miami took advantage of the combined Overseed Field Day and FTGA board meeting to visit the turf plots to make seed variety evaluations and listen to research updates at the G.C. Horn Memorial Field Laboratory and the Envirotron Research Laboratory.

Out at the G. C. Horn turf plots Dr. Al Dudeck reviewed the 1999-2000 Overseed Trial results. Dr. Jerry Sartain updated data on his cool season turfgrass fertility research and Dr. Grady

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New UF/IFAS faculty member Dr. Carol Stiles was introduced by Dr. Everett Emينو at the IFAS Overseeding Field Day held in March. Stiles's specialty is turf pathology and she is looking for input from superintendents on their current disease problems. Photo by Joel Jackson.

## 48th Annual FTGA Conference and Show

### Monday, Aug. 14

- 8:00 AM Registration
- 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Workshops (2 hours each). Topics include: Weed ID & Weed Control; Lawn, Trees or Shrub Maintenance; Turfgrass Insect Control; Ornamental Troubleshooting; Sprayer & Spreader Calibration; Sod Production; Landscape Beautification; Vertebrate Pests; Personal Protection Equipment; Pest & Weed Control in Sod Production.
- 2:30 PM University Tour (Includes the Envirotron, athletic fields, turf plots)
- 12:00 PM to 6:00 PM Golf Tournaments
- 6:00 PM to 10:00 PM Toro Corn Boil on the Touchdown Terrace

### Tuesday, Aug. 15

- 8:00 AM Registration
- 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM Equipment Technician Seminar. Buses to Lake City CC.
- 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM GCSAA Leadership Series Seminar - .35 CEU's available.
- 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM Long Grass Concurrent Sessions. Topics include: Sod Certification; Annuals; Athletic Field Management; Biostimulants; Florida Fertilizer & Seed Laws; Worker Protection Standards; How To Legally Hire An Employee; Pest Control In Outdoor Structures. Some of the Monday Workshop topics will be presented in a condensed format.
- 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM UF/IFAS Research Reports
- 1:00 PM to 2:30 PM Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon
- 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM UF/IFAS Research Reports
- 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM Protecting Our Natural Resources. Special presentation by Wes Skiles. John Wildmon helped in this project which was filmed and shown on the A&E cable network.
- 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM Reception and Trade Show Grand Opening

### Wednesday, Aug. 16

- 8:00 AM Registration
- 8:30 AM to 11:30 PM Short Grass Concurrent Sessions. Topics include: Crisis Management Plan; Management Practices for USGA vs California Sand Based Greens; New Seashore Paspalum Grass. Some of the Monday Workshop topics will be presented in a condensed format.
- 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM Trade Show Open

Miller demonstrated the methods used to determine damage to soccer field turfgrass based on cleat design.

There were plenty of replicated plots of seed varieties and fertilizer combinations to give the audience a good look at performance differences.

Dr. Everett Emينو, assistant dean of research administration, introduced the newest member of the IFAS turf team, pathologist Dr. Carol Stiles. Dr. Stiles didn't waste any time getting her feet wet as she distributed a questionnaire asking for turf disease input from the attendees.

Then everyone traveled over to the Envirotron where Emerald Island Turf served up another delicious barbecue lunch. Those guys are putting a lot of miles on that tow-behind grill. Mr. McCall, thanks for the grub.

Before lunch, however, there were more turf plots and greenhouse experiments to check out dealing with *Poa trivialis* seeding rates, nutrient concentrations and leaching, light intensity and cutting heights on ultradwarf greens, soil amendments, tropical signalgrass and torpedograss controls and shade tolerance of St. Augustine.

Principal investigators on these projects include Drs. Grady Miller, Laurie Trenholm, Jerry Sartain, Russell Nagata, John Cisar, and Bert McCarty; plus researchers Jan Weinbrecht, J. R. Higby, Ray Snyder, Travis Shaddox, Jason Kruse, Eric Brown, and Jeff Edenfield.

Attending one of these field days is always a good reminder that turf research is on-going and time consuming. There's very little instant gratification in research. It is a body of work in progress that takes our continual support.

#### USGA REGIONAL SEMINAR

## Topics Are Up, Attendance Down

The 2000 USGA Regional Conferences held in Palm Beach and Tampa this year were chock full of interesting information as usual, but



Scott Gillihan, Director of the Colorado Bird Observatory told the audience at the USGA Regional Conference in Tampa that golf courses have an opportunity to send a very positive message about bird habitats to the general public. Photo by Joel Jackson

USGA officials were disappointed the attendance numbers were down from previous years.

The presentations this year offered a wide variety of topics. Some of the maintenance highlights from the Tampa conference:

•Behind the scenes of a major championship - Tim Morahagn, director, USGA Championship Agronomy, had this to say about charges that the USGA tricks up U. S. Open courses to run up the scores, "Some people say we try to embarrass the best players in the world. We say we try to present conditions which identify the best players in the world."

•Regrassing: It's more than picking the right variety - Chris Hartwiger, USGA agronomist Southeast and Florida Regions, focused on making sure greens locations had adequate sunlight to grow grass. He talked about plotting sun and shade patterns before you install the new turf. Other-

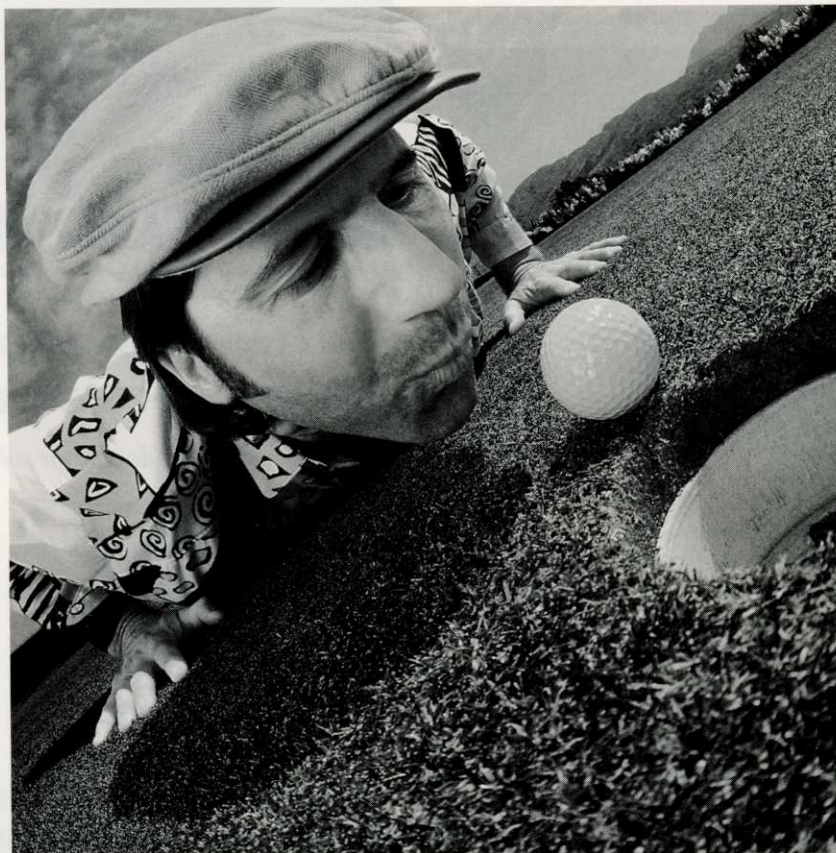
wise the new grass will be doomed to fail as well.

•Digital Imaging: See it before you do it - Keith Harpp, USGA agronomist Mid-Atlantic Region had a great presentation of how superintendents and clubs can view projects before and after the fact on screen to avoid mistakes discovered only in hindsight.

One example was the planting or removing of trees. Computer software makes it possible to install and grow a tree to see the effect it will have on shot values on a digital picture of your golf hole.

•Sharing your golf course with birds - Scott Gillihan, director of the Colorado Bird Observatory had a very hopeful message for golf courses. He has come to regard golf courses as one of the best potential habitats for birds as they become the obvious refuges in the urban sprawl.

He went on to say that domestic cat



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Dr. Bryan Unruh, IFAS Extension Specialist at the West Florida Research & Education Center in Milton presented an update on his research into Methyl Bromide alternatives at the USGA Regional Conferences this year. Photo by Joel Jackson

## Drought Outlook Worse Than 'Severe'

The winter, spring, and early summer are the normal dry season in Florida. However, since late fall of 1999, a large portion of the state has not received any significant rainfall. A recent assessment published by the Climate Prediction Center has more than two-thirds of the state rated as being in a D2+ condition. D2 is the designation for a severe drought condition and the + indicates that the forecast calls for further intensification.

With day and night temperatures building, water requirements of turfgrasses also are increasing quickly. The net result experienced at a large number of courses around the state is growing problems maintaining a uniform green turf cover.

The base bermudagrass turf cover of Florida golf courses is considered to have excellent drought resistance. Bermudagrass is able to survive prolonged dry periods by going into a dormant stage, and then breaking dormancy when adequate soil moisture redevelops. As the bermudagrass enters into dormancy, it quickly loses its green color, but an acceptable playing surface still can be maintained.

Of greater concern at this point is completing the transition process out of winter overseeding cover. With hot daytime temperatures, any remaining overseeding material will quickly burn out. If the base bermuda is under drought stress, recovery will be prolonged.

The following is a review of some basic agronomic principles about managing grass during a drought.

1. **Control traffic.** Heavy traffic on grass under wilt/drought stress can cause permanent damage. Restrict traffic to paths, minimize traffic on roughs to the extent possible, do not allow crossover or the "90 degree rule," and even encourage walking.
2. **Raise mowing heights** and mow less often. After all, the grass should be growing slower.
3. **Use plant growth regulators.** Where

*As the bermudagrass enters into dormancy, it quickly loses its green color, but an acceptable playing surface still can be maintained.*

appropriate, apply or continue using growth-regulating chemicals. These products can reduce water use rates by as much as 30 percent.

**4. Pest management.** On a positive note, insect (mole cricket) and disease activity is reduced.

**5. Fertility.** Defer fertilizer applications, especially granular, readily available nitrogen materials, until the weather moderates. Guard against stimulating too much growth. Sprayable forms of fertilizers can be beneficial when applied in a timely fashion. Maintaining adequate potassium is helpful for increasing stress tolerance.

**6. Irrigation water quality.** Regardless of the source, it would be advisable to check the irrigation water for sodium/salt build-up. In several locations, salt intrusion is a growing concern.

**7. Renovation/Reconstruction.** Rethink renovation or reconstruction projects. In general, do not disturb the turf unless you have the ability to irrigate these areas. Be patient, wait for better weather, and monitor district and local regulations covering renovation and turf establishment.

Remember that all golf courses represent the turfgrass industry and the game of golf. Respect irrigation regulations and requests for voluntary conservation. While individual conditions vary, we are in a serious drought, and unfortunately no relief is in sight. Hopefully, these points will help golf courses manage their turfgrass through a difficult period. If any specific questions arise, feel free to call our office at 561-546-2620. Good luck and let's pray for rain.

JOHN FOY  
Director, Florida Region

predation accounts for 300 million bird deaths a year. Gillihan has authored a book titled *Bird Conservation on Golf Courses: A Design and Maintenance Manual*.

The book is available from Ann Arbor Press, 800-487-2323. It makes a great companion to Ron Dodson's book, *Managing Wildlife Habitat on Golf Courses*, also available from Ann Arbor Press.

•Methyl bromide and ultradwarf updates - Dr. Bryan Unruh, assistant professor UF/IFAS extension specialist told the audience that while a couple of products hold out some hope for being used as a fumigant, nothing has come along yet that matches methyl bromide's effectiveness.

He also reported that California representative Richard Pombo has introduced bill H.R. 4215 to try to delay the ban on MeBr until 2010 to give scientists more time to develop a viable alternative.

Until something is found, MeBr production will decrease and product will become more expensive as we head toward the current ban date of 2005.