



I hope this is the first of many columns that I will be writing to keep you informed of the latest happenings and viewpoints from the Florida Turfgrass Association.

Like many of you I have just returned to sunny Florida from the rain and cold weather in Dallas. I think the weather gods wanted to show us what rain looked like. They overdid it though as some areas around Dallas had flash floods and went under water. Seeing cars stalled with water up over the roofs is a sight we seldom get to see.

While in Dallas, Paul Crawford, superintendent of the Palm Beach Country Club and myself were joined by Marie Roberts and Joel Jackson in a meeting with Hannes Combest, GCSAA director of education and Sherri Kohler, senior manager of chapter seminars.

Together, We Are Making a Difference

We were meeting to see how the GCSAA could help improve the annual FTGA Conference and Show at Gainesville this coming August.

There have been informal discussions in the past with GCSAA about the impact on the FTGA Conference by having the national conference in Orlando every two or three years, and GCSAA has been receptive to discussing how they might assist overcoming that impact. This year we started talking turkey and we are going to work together to see what we can do this year to start making some improvements. GCSAA has a lot of conference and show expertise and we are trying to tap into that with their cooperation to help attendance at our own annual conference and show.

The meeting in Dallas is just another example of the FGCSA and the FTGA working together and getting on the same page with the University of Florida. The University is committed to conducting pertinent, up-to-date research that you as superintendents can use. Water and environmental pressures have put us all together in the same boat. We need research on how much water is filtered and returned to the water supply by golf courses.

We need that research done here in Florida with our soil conditions to prove to others what we already know: golf is good for the environment and superintendents are among the best and most informed environmental groups in the state of Florida.

Benham's Beat

Don Benham
FTGA Director
of Public Affairs



The Regulators Are Listening; Are You Speaking Up?

The time is ripe for industry to take its case to the state and federal regulators. I have witnessed three meetings where regulators are listening to industry's concerns on environmental issues and the regulators are offering advice and guidance on how to find solutions that will satisfy everyone as much as possible.

I sat in on a meeting in Tallahassee in early January with Gregg Storey and Pete Coody of the Bayer Corporation as they discussed a proposed ground water study that would monitor the use of Nematicur on Florida's sandy soil profile.

Members from the Florida departments of Agriculture and Consumer Services and Environmental Protection, working with the Bayer representatives, hammered out a draft that was agreeable to both parties and could be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for the reassessment of Nematicur. The object was to find a method to determine if Nematicur truly posed a threat of ground water contamination.

It was a great example of give and take and compromise that addressed the need to protect the environment and to scientifically and realistically assess the true effects of a properly applied product that is the only effective weapon we have against high nematode populations.

Later in January, at the request of Mike McDavit of the US EPA, I was able to

organize an informal face-to-face meeting of Florida superintendents and McDavit who is in charge of the Nematicur reassessment team in Washington. Dennis Howard of Florida DACS was also present along with a representative from EPA's Region Four office in Atlanta.

What ensued was an honest and open discussion of real-world uses and concerns about Nematicur use, application methods, worker exposure risks, golfer exposure risks and environmental impacts. McDavit openly admitted that it was essential for EPA representatives to get this kind of information to modify and/or validate the assumptions they are using to determine risk.

How effective and valuable are these kinds of stakeholder meetings? I can only tell you that in a follow-up call from Pete Coody a few weeks later, he indicated that EPA's tone and level of cooperation was 180 degrees different. They approved the draft of the Nematicur ground water study with some acceptable modifications and Coody was pleasantly surprised by the level of support and encouragement from EPA.

Meanwhile on another front, we are dealing with growing water restrictions as drought conditions hang on. The FGCSA is working with the Southwest Florida Water Management District with the help of Stuart Bozeman of the Seven Rivers GCSA. Bozeman has vol-

unteered to sit on the SWFWMD's Green Industry Advisory Committee and the Water Conservation Task Force.

The FGCSA is supporting Bozeman's initiative to get SWFWMD to change the language of its water restrictions to abandon the old arbitrary day-of-the-week method of regulating water use. We are advocating a percentage reduction of the consumptive-use permits which will guarantee water conservation, but will allow superintendents the flexibility to water when and where its needed.

We still have some work to do, but the take-home message is that once again the regulators are listening. We are proposing common-sense solutions which are fair, meet the district's need to conserve water and allow golf courses to conduct business for everyone's benefit. The regulators are listening. Are you speaking up. Now is the time to be heard.

JOEL D. JACKSON, CGCS

IFAS UPDATE

Concept Plan Released for UF's New Turf Research Plots

The consolidation of UF/IFAS plant science research in the Gainesville area to the Pine Acres Plant Science Research and Education Unit south of Gainesville provides our turfgrass program with the opportunity to develop state-of-the-art-and-science turfgrass plots.

The new turfgrass plots, when combined with the Turfgrass Envirotron, will give the University of Florida in Gainesville outstanding facilities for research dealing with all aspects of turfgrass (sod producers, golf course superintendents, athletic field managers, pest control operators, landscape managers, homeowners and governmental regulatory agencies) and will expand the potential cooperative programs with faculty in Ft. Lauderdale, Belle Glade, and Milton.

Further, addition of ornamental

2001 Florida Plants of the Year - Part 2

Editors 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. This program is sponsored by the Woody Division of the Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association (FNGA). This group of plants deserves consideration for their drought and stress tolerances and wildlife attraction.

COMMON NAME: Mexican Sage

BOTANICAL NAME: *Salvia leucantha*

HARDINESS: Zones 7-10

MATURE HEIGHT AND SPREAD: 5' x 4'

CLASSIFICATION: Perennial

LANDSCAPE USE: Long lasting color in perennial border or accent plant

CHARACTERISTICS: A drought tolerant perennial with gray foliage. Does best in sun or light shade, has some salt tolerance and is a butterfly and hummingbird attractor.

Blooming for a long time with fuzzy purple/white inflorescence, the velvety leaves are fragrant and unappetizing to insects and disease.



COMMON NAME: Fringe Tree

BOTANICAL NAME: *Chionanthus virginicus*

HARDINESS: Zones 4-9

MATURE HEIGHT X SPREAD: 25' x 15'

CLASSIFICATION: Large shrub or small flowering tree

LANDSCAPE USE: Small specimen tree, good as and understory tree

CHARACTERISTICS: Showy white flowers appear on this Florida native plant before the narrow dark leaves in the spring, spreading a sweet fragrance. The black fleshy drupes (fruit) are wildlife attractors. Half or full sun gives the best growth of this drought tolerant and cold hardy tree.



COMMON NAME: Tropical Wisteria

BOTANICAL NAME: *Millettia reticulata*

HARDINESS: Zones 7-10

MATURE HEIGHT X SPREAD: vine 20' x 30'

CLASSIFICATION: Vine

LANDSCAPE USE: Best use on a trellis, fence or gazebo

CHARACTERISTICS: Fast growing and deciduous woody vine is a late spring/early summer bloomer that does well in full sun of light shade. The compound leaves are cupped and leathery. Pendulous clusters of dark purple flowers resemble wisteria blooms and rebloom often if deadheaded.



COMMON NAME: Emerald Gem

BOTANICAL NAME: *Homalomena 'Emerald Gem'*

HARDINESS: Zones 9-11

MATURE HEIGHT X SPREAD: 8" x 24"

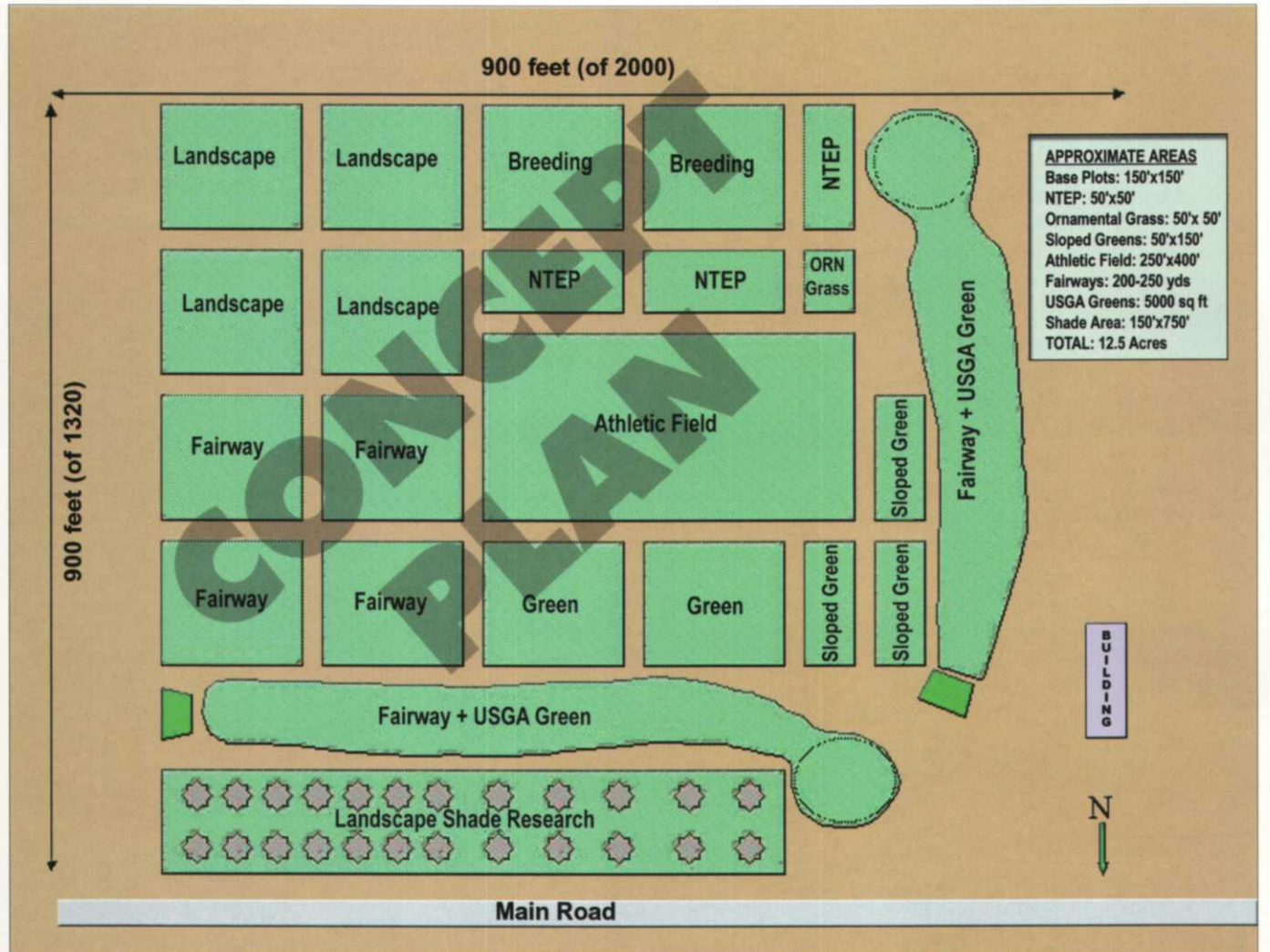
CLASSIFICATION: Aroid foliage plant

LANDSCAPE USE: Can be used in warmer climates in areas with medium shade

INTERIORESCAPE USE: Excellent for interior applications due to its compact shape and durable foliage - also tolerates low light conditions

CHARACTERISTICS: Compact, symmetrical growth habit. Non-vining, self-healing. Foliage is dark green and has a waxed appearance. Heart shaped leaves are 4 inches in diameter. can be grown in 6 through 10 inch containers. Emerald Gem has proven to be disease resistant and tolerant of stress conditions





landscape and urban tree research and extension programs to this site will allow us to bring new landscape management strategies to turfgrass professionals.

Keeping in mind that the following diagram is only a draft proposal, the potential for the Pine Acres Plant Science is boundless.

With ample space to include golf holes and sloped turf areas to scientifically study runoff, real practical, hands-on research can be accomplished on a large scale.

Especially intriguing is the concept of having governmental regulatory agencies getting involved in turf research. What a fantastic opportunity to bring real-world science and fact into the equation when making deci-

sions about the environment.

This initial phase is only about 12.5 acres of a potential 120 acres being considered to be dedicated to turf and ornamental research.

An adjacent 40-acre headquarters and conference facility site is also being proposed to make education and research a one-stop visit for meetings, seminars and hands-on observations. Stay tuned for more news to come out of Gainesville on the Pine Acres Plant Science and Education Unit and how we can all be a part of this great endeavor for the turfgrass industry in Florida.

*This executive summary written by
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