

would cut anything, it was very time-consuming and often took more than a week to get around the course just once.

With the 80s and 90s, the practice of wall-to-wall irrigation became much more common and with it the areas of turf to be maintained increased dramatically. The large, gang-reel mower, with gear drive and hydraulic power, could not only cut these expanded areas of fine turf, but could get the job done in a timely fashion.

By now the investment in these areas once considered to be "rough," became merely an area of fairway with a slightly higher cut. Such high visibility and attention now needed the same management approach used on other areas of the course, aerification, fertilization and pest control in the "rough" had become the norm.

Now in the early 21st century has come the introduction of the new age of the rotary mower. These units, now with multi-gang capabilities, ease of maintenance, and superior cutting abilities have started many of us to rethink some of our options in maintaining the "rough."

The tremendous success of programs such as the Audubon International Signature Cooperative Sanctuary Program have propelled many courses to take a strong look at alternative grasses and plantings in the "rough," as well as other areas of the course. With the advent of our new equipment options and the abilities they have we may indeed be going "Back to the Future" in maintaining the "rough."

By Chuck Calhoun

Roughing It at the Gainesville Golf & Country Club

We use a combination of reel and rotary mowers to cut our 70 acres of rough. Our arsenal consists of two Toro five-gang reel mowers, one John Deere three-reel trim mower, one Progressive TriDeck rotary mower and one Jacobsen 72-inch, out-front rotary mower.

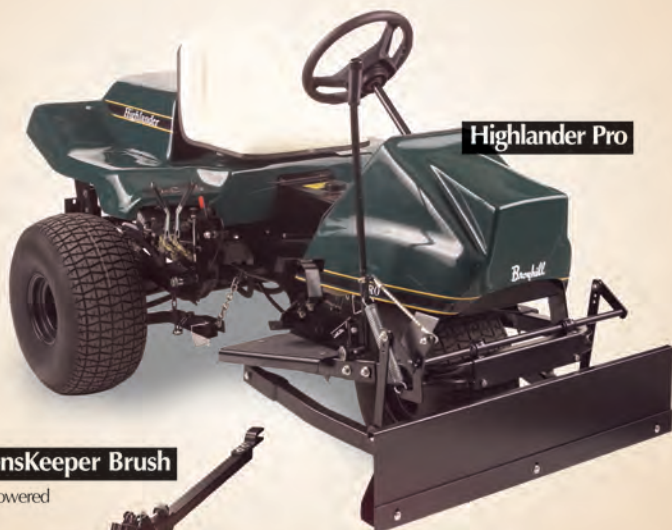
Historically we used the five-gang units to mow the bulk of the roughs and it took about a week. In 1998 we began hosting a Nike and later Buy.com Tour events and we were required to overseed the course wall to wall. Because the overseeded roughs needed to be maintained at four-plus inches we purchased the TriDeck Rotary to achieve that height requirement specified by the PGA Tour.

Today we no longer host the tour event and we needed to justify having this mower in our inventory.

We began mowing our bermuda roughs with the TriDeck and found that it was very efficient

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We began mowing our bermuda roughs with the TriDeck and found that it was very efficient and productive cutting our previous mowing time in half. It comes in very handy during the rainy season because we have very heavy soils and it may not be possible to mow for several days and it's easy to get behind. When the course dries out, we go out with the rotary and gradually take the grass back down without scalping.

It is also very efficient at mulching up pine cones, pine needles and leaves. Wow, what a labor saver that is, and the rotary costs less to maintain mechanically than the reel mowers.

The only negative thing we have experienced with the rotary is a higher noise level because of the high-speed blades. Scalping is not an issue because we still use the five-gang and three-gang mowers to mow and trim around the greens and tee slopes, bunker mounds and landscape beds. The reel-type mowers are also used to mow out the walk paths from tee to fairway and the intermediate cut around the fairways.

Last but not least, the 72-inch, out-front rotary is used to trim around the trees to put a finishing touch on the rough-mowing program. We maintain a height of cut about 1.5" inches because

that's the height preferred by most of the members.

All of the rough we maintain now is in play so there are no plans to eliminate any of it. We have numerous native and natural areas on our course, which are enhanced by our proximity to the Paynes Prairie State Preserve.

We fertilize the rough two or three times annually depending on rainfall. If we fertilize too much, we could wind up in the hay business pretty quickly. While heavy clay soils can become too wet to mow sometimes, the slow-percolating soil helps prevent leaching of nutrients and our fertilizer applications last longer and can result in savings.

Our biggest insect problem in the roughs are mole crickets and sod webworms. Our budget is more adequate than it used to be, which allows for more control options like Chipco Choice, Merit and some mole cricket baits for spot-treating hot spots. These products work very well for us. Fire ants used to be a problem but we broadcast fire ant bait products twice a year at label rates and we have pretty much put out their fire.

The course is over 40 years old and the shade from our grand old trees and compaction in



Buddy Keene used a combination of reel and rotary mowers in his roughs. Photo by Joel Jackson.

high-traffic areas can create some weed problems. We found by applying Ronstar and Barricade pre-emergent herbicides in the spring and fall, we can get effective control of goosegrass, crabgrass, Poa annua, and volunteer ryegrass. All post-emergent work is done by spot-treating large weed patches with a boom sprayer and small scattered clumps with 2-gallon and 14-gallon portable sprayers.

Our roughs consist mostly of Ormond bermudagrass, which is dinosaur by today's standards. We have to be careful with the herbicide rates because the Ormond is more sensitive to some of the products. It is also slow to come out of dormancy in the spring and slower to recover from cultural practices like aerification and verticutting, so we are careful not to beat it up too badly. However, once the weather warms up, it grows aggressively like any other bermuda and keeps us "roughing it" all summer.

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Super Tips

Shedding Some Light on Several Situations

Darren J. Davis

When James P. Whalen, golf course superintendent at Calusa Pines Golf Club in Naples, accepted his current position at this nationally ranked club, he quickly realized he was “in the dark”... in the dark on some of his greens that is. Whalen, a graduate of Lake City Community College, has been employed at Calusa Pines since July of 2003. His prior employment includes stints at a few other well known clubs - Olde Florida Golf Club and Augusta National Golf Club.

When Whalen was hired, he was informed of a few greens that had been a challenge the previous season. After analyzing the situation he swiftly came to the conclusion that excessive shade created by several very tall, stately pines was the culprit, and the specimen trees would continue to pose a problem in the future.

Since removal was not an option, he went in search of other possible solutions. That's when Whalen turned to his equipment manager, John Patterson. According to Whalen, Patterson, an employee of the club since 2001, is his “go-to” guy. With their two heads put together, it did not take long for a light bulb to go on. The solution was grow lights mounted on portable towers.

The grow lights were purchased from Precision for just under \$600 and are attached to an aluminum pole that can be raised up to 12 feet. The pole assembly is affixed to a 4x4 trailer, also constructed by Patterson. On the bed of the trailer is mounted a 2700-watt generator purchased from



The grow lights are attached to an aluminum pole that can be raised up to 12 feet.

Northern Tool and Equipment Company for approximately \$500. The fuel for the generator is supplied by a 6-gallon marine fuel tank also mounted on the bed. The metal for the trailer and pole was purchased locally for approximately \$300, bringing the total cost of the portable grow light towers to around \$1,400.

For one-person transfer, Patterson also installed hitches to the back of the trailers so that

they can be towed in tandem. Whalen preferred the portable, trailer mounted units to “fixed” units as they provide flexibility to move if other areas develop the need for additional artificial sunlight.

Whalen said he anticipates using the light towers from mid-November until March 1 each year. The light towers are placed near the shaded greens after golf play is finished and just prior to sundown each day. Although pleased with the results



The lights are powered by a 2700-watt generator with fuel supplied by a 6-gallon marine fuel tank, both mounted on the bed of the trailer.

to date, he is the first to point out that the grow lights are not a cure-all; they are just one of the tools in his arsenal. He also credits his success this year on the trouble areas to an intensive hand-watering regimen, limiting overhead irrigation use to an occasional deep irrigation associated with a granular fertilizer application. He feels that his foliar spoon-feeding program also played a role in keeping those shady areas healthy.

Whalen found additional uses for the lights that helped justify the expense. In winter - his busiest golfing period - the trailers can be pulled behind a utility vehicle with a greens mower trailer towed behind the light tower, allowing employees to get a jump on play by mowing a few greens before the sun rises. The towers have also been used to provide light for repairing late-night irrigation blow-outs. Whalen says he's sure other uses will arise.

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Cap X in Hard Times

Hats off to the Super Savers

Over the past twenty-something years, I have had the pleasure of working with some great superintendents and suffered the frustration of working with some bad ones. Like any profession, there are bad apples who can leave a bad



taste in the mouth of the owner. You know the ones... come in at 8 a.m., work until 4 p.m., spend most of that time complaining about lousy equipment and yelling at their staffs. I call them the Blamers.

Whenever there is a problem, they blame their staff, me, the weather, customers, course construction, their

dog and anything but themselves. These are the guys who make me very nervous when they say, "WE need some new equipment." All of a sudden it's "WE." The problem is the person is never straight with me about their operation so it is hard to take his or her word for it. So the inquiry begins. Why do WE need it? How old is the machine? Do a productivity analysis on a new machine (that one kills them). Can we get by with repairing the old one? If you don't have confidence in your superintendent, then Cap X (Capital Expense) becomes a much bigger problem than usual. The usual problem is where to get the money to buy it.

Then on the flip side of the coin is the superintendent who bears the weight of the world on his shoulders. There's no bull. When these people need something done, they guide and direct their staffs thru the processes. They solve problems rather than create them. Their staff respects them and they have little turnover.

This individual comes to the owner like this: "You know we've talked about it before and we have nursed that piece of equipment along, but looking forward we are going to spend more money piecing the thing together.

"What a relief! He or she has done the productivity analysis, meaning the cost to repair vs. the cost to replace... obtained quotes from sales persons who are not their relatives, and even looked at financing and used equipment as an alternative.

Combined with our down time while it is being fixed, it will cost more money than replacing it this year. I have looked at replacements and have three quotes from Orange, Green and Red. They all have financing available. I have also looked at used equipment and have found a piece in good shape with only "x" amount of hours on it. I will piece the current equipment along until you let me know what you want me to do."

What a relief! He or she has done the productivity analysis, meaning the cost to repair vs. the cost to replace, combined with the increase in work the crew will be able to do with the new machine. They have obtained quotes from sales persons who are not their relatives and they have even looked at financing and used

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2004 Plants of the Year

In an on-going effort to promote the production, sale and use of superior Florida-grown plants, the Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association is pleased to announce the 2004 selections of the Florida Plants of the Year. This program was launched to promote under-utilized, but proven Florida plant material. These proven ornamentals are selected on an annual basis by a group of growers, horticulturists, retailers, landscape professionals and University of Florida faculty.

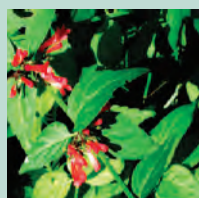
For a plant to be considered a Plant of the Year, set criteria must be met. Selected plants have good pest resistance, require reasonable care and are fairly easy to propagate and grow. The award winning plants must also exhibit some superior quality, improved performance or unique characteristic that sets it apart from others in its class. Here are two 2004 selections for your consideration:



Needle Palm. Photo:
Leu Gardens, Orlando

Common Name: Needle Palm
Botanical Name: *Rhapidophyllum bystrix*
Hardiness: Zones 7-11
Mature Height and Spread: 5' - 8" Tall x 6' wide
Classification: Native Palm

Landscape Use: Understory, specimen, border, erosion control, foundation or massing
Characteristics: Slow-growing cluster palm makes a dark green mound of palmate leaves growing in sun or shade. Long dark needle-like spines develop at base and cover trunk.



Red Russelia. Photo:
Leu Gardens, Orlando

Common Name: Red Russelia
Botanical Name: *Russelia sarmentosa*
Hardiness: Zones 8b-11
Mature Height and Spread: 5' Tall x 5' Wide
Classification:

Flowering shrub/Perennial
Landscape Use: Specimen plant or border
Characteristics: Covered with bright red tubular flowers for all the warm months and is a butterfly attractant. Masses of splendor arching stems create a mounding appearance

'DEALING WITH JERKS AND KNEE-JERK REACTIONS'

by Dr. Patt Schwab

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equipment as an alternative. The only thing for me to do is to figure out where to get the money to pay for it.

The superintendent who approaches all capital repairs with this attitude is valuable at any time but most importantly at this time in the industry when more courses are being built and fighting over sales, which is decreasing the average course's revenues. With the superintendent having this approach to all Cap X, in the end you have a better product for less money.

Thank you Super Savers.

Bill Stine

Editor's note: This Owners Outlook column is a semi-regular feature and part of a cooperative communications-exchange effort between the FGCSA and FGCOA to share information and concerns. In February 2005, at the national level, the GCSAA and NGCOA will hold a joint Golf Industry Show in Orlando and our worlds will move closer together, as they should. Hopefully, we are getting a little head start.

USGA Green Section Florida Regional Update Recovering From Mid-Winter Course Conditions

We have passed the halfway point of the 2004 Florida winter season. After a slightly rough start for some during the late fall and early winter, typical mid-winter conditions are being found during TAS visits around the state.

Normal winter season wear-and-tear is evident, but appropriate and acceptable course conditioning is being provided. On a positive note, temperatures and day length are increasing and becoming more favorable to the resumption of sustained bermudagrass growth, and with this it should be possible to produce some recovery and improvement in course conditions.

Along with direct turf injury and wear, another consequence of heavy winter season traffic is soil compaction. As compaction increases, moisture and oxygen infiltration are restricted, which in turn limits growth and recovery. Aeration of high traffic areas and putting



John Foy

surfaces is encouraged to help relieve compaction and promote a faster recovery response. Water injection cultivation or aeration with small diameter solid tines causes very minimal surface disruption and provides two to three weeks of relief.

The biggest obstacle to winter aeration is often scheduling needed maintenance practices when peak play is occurring. At a growing number of facilities, course closures for maintenance are being allowed during the winter season, which is very beneficial in providing top quality conditions.

The winter and spring months also are the Florida dry season, and below-average rainfall (3-inch deficit as of March 15) has been recorded throughout the central to southern portion of the peninsula. While far from the drought conditions of a few years ago, limited rainfall is starting to present some management challenges. The combination of increasing temperatures,

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Additional care must be exercised with supplemental irrigation to avoid the onset of drought stress, especially at courses where winter overseeding is practiced. Juvenile overseeding, lack drought tolerance and can be thinned quickly by drought stress. Through the spring, closely monitor for drought stress. Daytime irrigation may be necessary to prevent a fast transition of the overseeding cover.

Until rainfall occurs on a regular basis, salt accumulation in the upper rootzone can be a problem. Even with irrigation sources that have low to medium salt content, a progressive build-up in concentration levels can occur. Thus, it is a good idea to monitor with soil sampling and, if needed, schedule flushing or leaching irrigation cycles.

This regional update, and others written by the Green Section staff, may be found on the USGA Web site at www.usga.org/green.

John Foy, Director



GCSAA News New Governance Model Will Save Officers' Time and Jobs

I'll be anxious to see how the new governance model works out as the GCSAA board members turn over the details of running things to the staff under the direction of Steve

Mona our CEO. It's a worthwhile idea since the travel time away from work for a sitting officer or board member ranges between 30 and 100 days a year. That's too long to be away from work and keep your job. Just look at the job changes of former officers. This just makes sense, and might get more people involved.

The 2004 budget and strategic initiatives

- Good news for superintendents looking for a job. The GCSAA's online Employment Referral Service is now free.
- The association is budgeting \$175,000 for television exposure for continuing its national outreach campaign.
- The association will be developing plans for more diversity within the organization's membership and improving international opportunities.
- Florida had two research projects approved in the Chapter Cooperative Research Program. Dr. Lawrence Datnoff will be looking at management of *Bipolaris* and *Curvalaria* on ultradwarf greens, and Dr. Billy Crow will be studying the best timing for nematocide applications based on soil temperatures, nematode



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