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future direction of the association. The membership has every right to expect the board to keep the impact of inflation in operating costs from creating shortfalls as a normal part of doing business. As part of those efforts, GCSAA will continue to explore and try additional sources of non-dues revenue.

In contrast, failing to prevent future dramatic dues increases would be counterproductive to membership growth and retention strategies.

Why increase dues when the investment reserves are over \$9.5 million?

The investment reserves have two specific purposes: (1) to provide major funding for planned future needs and (2) to prevent significant interruption of member benefits, services or programs caused by a significant unanticipated event. It is both financially prudent and responsible for an organization like GCSAA to have this level of reserves in order to operate successfully and maintain viable options for future planning.

If the proposal were adopted, the board would consider the financial health of the association and other relevant economic indicators when reviewing options to increase dues or not. This review would, of course, include consideration of the investment reserve levels.

Have other associations tried a similar indexed dues pricing strategy?

Yes, there are other associations that have implemented an indexed dues increase process with positive results and few pitfalls. These organizations report that their respective memberships embraced the change after some initial reservations and have experienced almost no negative impact regarding decreases in membership or dissatisfied members. The most numerous comments on developing a successful process include demonstrating that the membership will not lose control (Board of Directors to be held accountable and increase not to exceed a fixed amount) and keeping it simple.

Credit: GCSAA Web site

Plants of the Year

Here is the final Plants of the Year series for 2006. The plants selected for this program have been found to be good performers in the Florida environment and require less maintenance and inputs. Here are two specimens for your consideration. Go to www.fngla.org for more information and suppliers who carry these plants.



Common name: Yellow African Bulbine
Botanical name: *Bulbine frutescens*
Hardiness: Zones 9B -11
Mature height and spread: 14-16 in. tall with 24-30 in. spread
Classification: Flowering Perennial
Landscape use: Massed perennial for color or as an accent
Characteristics: Bulbine prefers full sun, has light green succulent foliage, and produces ever-blooming stems of many star-shaped yellow or orange flowers late spring to early summer. It can withstand a light frost but should be protected. In South Africa, the sap in the leaves is used for healing puposes.



Common name: Amethyst Falls Wisteria
Botanical name: *Wisteria frutescens* 'Amethyst Falls'
Hardiness: Zones 5-9
Mature height and spread: 10 – 15 ft. in height
Classification: Vine, flowering perennial
Landscape use: Beautiful trained over an arbor, or espaliered against a building. Ideal as a containerized specimen.
Characteristics: A woody deciduous vine whose shiny dark green pinnate leaves have about 15 leaflets. The blue-purple flowers appear in young plants, are carried in short clusters, and have a light fragrance. This cultivar is not as aggressive in its growth as the parent species or any other of the wisterias, does not make seeds, and is recommended for the smaller garden.

Photos from Leu Gardens

Mirasol's Most Popular Pairing



Talk to Tad Altman, superintendent of the Arthur Hills-designed Sunset Course and the Tom Fazio-designed Sunrise Course at the Country Club at Mirasol in Palm Beach Gardens Florida, and you'll get a brand new take on the Honda Classic's most popular pairing. "Most folks think that the thousands of spectators who come out every year, are here to watch the golf, but if you ask me, they come to look at my grass! Our picture perfect TifEagle greens and lush TifSport fairways and roughs are as sweet as Tiger's swing. And equally hard to take your eyes off of."

Altman's specialty is building challenging courses, and the pros love these two. More importantly, so does the membership. And why not? As Altman said in a recent interview, "We could do a PGA tournament here any week of the year, with just a week's notice." Altman comes from a Tifdwarf/Tifway background, but he's sold on the superiority of these two new and improved bermudagrass varieties. "Nothing can touch TifEagle for playability. And I'll put my TifSport tees, fairways and roughs up against anybody's." For more information about these two "UGA Turfgrass Team" releases visit:


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EPA's Comments on Turf Use of MSMA

Editor's Note: The following excerpt is taken from the 70-page EPA Decision on Organic Arsenical Herbicides.

The full document is available from the URL address in Dr. Phil Busey's report also in this section. The FGCSA along with other turfgrass researchers and associations have sent comments to EPA regarding their decision. Be sure to inform your club officials if the loss of this product will affect your weed control program.

From the EPA Decision Document, page 41:

2. TURF

"Turf uses for the organic arsenical herbicides include grasses grown for seed, lawns, ornamental turf, sod farms, turfgrass and turf grown for sod. Many alternatives exist to control

weeds on turf including fluzifop and dithiopyr for postemergence control and dithiopyr or pendimethalin for preemergent control of crabgrass. The primary manner in which grass weeds such as crabgrass and dallisgrass can be effectively controlled is through the maintenance of a high quality turf such as is the case in almost all golf courses. However, when chemical control of weeds is needed, typically, two or more alternative chemicals would be required to achieve weed control comparable to the organic arsenicals. Preemergence products are typically highly effective at controlling crabgrass seedlings. However, the post emergent alternatives for the organic arsenical herbicides either control a narrow spectrum of weeds, or they are not effective on the more difficult grass weeds like dallisgrass (*Paspalum dilatatum*). Thus multiple herbicides used in combination can be considered a direct replacement. Alternatives vary in price from slightly

less expensive to considerably more expensive than the organic arsenicals.

"Because there are both chemical and non-chemical alternatives available and any additional costs of using the alternatives will be borne by those using and benefiting from the improved turf, EPA concludes that the benefits of organic arsenical herbicide use on turf are not compelling in light of the possible cancer risk to the general population from drinking water contamination due to the use of these compounds."

MSMA Declared Ineligible for Reregistration

By Philip Busey, Ph.D.

(via e-mail to turfgrass professionals)

On Wednesday, August 9, 2006 the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a reregistration decision that MSMA, DSMA, CAMA, and Cacodylic Acid (organic

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arsenicals) are ineligible for reregistration. The decision was published in the Federal Register and supporting documents are available online (links below). There are 60 days for public comment and to file objections, ending October 10, 2006.

The EPA summary is remarkably brief and unambiguous. In its decision, all uses of MSMA, DSMA, CAMA, and Cacodylic Acid are ineligible for reregistration. EPA intends to take action to revoke tolerances and to cancel the registrations of pesticides containing MSMA, DSMA, CAMA, and Cacodylic Acid. MSMA is an herbicide used for grass weed control in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass turf, as well as in some cool season turfgrasses. In bermudagrass turf in Florida (e.g., golf courses and sports fields), MSMA is used for postemergence control of grass weeds, especially goosegrass, crabgrasses, and tropical signalgrass.

Most use of MSMA on Florida golf

courses is reportedly by spot treatment. Foramsulfuron (trade name Revolver), diclofop-methyl (trade name Illoxan) and metribuzin (trade name Sencor) are possible herbicide alternatives to MSMA for goosegrass control, used individually or mixture, depending on the situation.

There are no alternative selective postemergence herbicides available for control of mature crabgrass and tropical signalgrass weeds. Other methods for controlling grass weeds in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass turf include preemergence herbicides and cultural management — the use of mowing, watering, and fertilization practices to reduce goosegrass infestation.

See <http://tinyurl.com/jjjaw>
OR
http://www.epa.gov/oppsrd1/reregistration/methanearsonic_acid/



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This photo shows no fewer than 11 wading birds foraging in this natural setting. They don't mind the duck weed. Photo by Kirsten Conover.

Changing Perceptions *...One Small Step at a Time*

By Kirsten Conover

Perception sometimes overrides the reality of a situation, especially within the realm of golf course maintenance. Green speed is an example of this phenomenon within golf. An example outside of golf is the idea that golf courses are bad for the environment and are major abusers of fertilizer and water.

This perception is a stubborn idea that continues to persist despite data and information to the contrary. To attempt to change the collective mind of the general public is an overwhelming proposition but to change the perception of the membership at a golf course or individuals is a little less daunting. However, maintaining a golf course to specified standards takes a great deal of time and leaves little opportunity to tackle other issues. Or does it?

One obvious step to address the environmental issue is to join Audubon International and become part of the sanctuary program. Budget constraints or lack of interest may preclude partici-

pation in this program for some clubs but there are other ways to increase environmental awareness on a course without great expenditures of time or money. At Royal Poinciana Golf Club we try to incorporate environmen-



There may be plenty of out-of-play areas on a course where installing lower-maintenance native landscapes can save time and money and enhance the environment. Photo by Joel Jackson.

tally friendly practices into our regular maintenance work.

When it is time to trim the palm trees on the course, we hold a few trees off the list. The fruit and fronds will provide food and shelter for animals.

We recently released a rehabilitated screech owl that immediately took advantage of a booted, untrimmed sabal palm.

Fox squirrels also utilize the dense foliage to nest and raise young. Rather than cut down dead pine and cypress trees, we snag them to allow for perching and nesting sites for birds. This past winter a peregrine falcon made short work of a songbird on the top branches of a dead cypress tree in the rough on the seventh hole of our Cypress course.

Snagged pines also provide osprey and bald eagles with prime perching sites. Woodpeckers and screech owls nest within the cavities of the dead pine trees.

Instead of hauling downed palm fronds or tree limbs back to the organic dumpster, we create a small brush pile in an out-of-play fringe area. This will create habitat for small mammals like rabbits or foxes. Take a fallen palm tree and instead of cutting it up or hauling it away, place it in a shallow section of a pond or lake to provide sunning areas for turtles or hunting platforms for wading birds.

Aquatic plants like duck potato or

pickerelweed along lake banks provide forage areas for wading birds and cover for nesting birds like moorhens (see photo). These plants can also help regulate the health of the lakes by absorbing nutrients and reduce the time and money required to maintain these aquatic areas.

Allowing these areas to remain natural, duck weed included, creates pockets of wilderness that animals utilize seemingly unaware of the human activity around them. As the wildlife increases and becomes more visible on the course, perceptions may begin to change in the membership and it may become easier to make other changes.

There may be an area on the course that requires time and money but is really an area that does not impact play. It may now be easier to suggest removing the turf and replacing it with plant material that does not require fertilizer, water or mowing. Fakahatchee or cord grass or native plants like firebush or wax myrtle



A couple of turtles enjoy sunning themselves on this fallen palm tree that isn't cut up and hauled away. Photo by Joel Jackson.

work well in areas that require minimum maintenance. This is a win/win situation with the reduction of time and effort from the maintenance standpoint and an enhancement of the environment.

During renovation, we asked for wetlands to be included in the plan. The membership gave its okay. One benefit of the wetlands was the increase of the wood duck population on the course. Prior to the renovation we were lucky to see one pair of wood ducks during the year. This year five pairs visited on a consistent basis and two pairs raised their

young in the improved areas. Granted there are many golfers who don't know a wood duck from a decoy but if just one member or golfer has a positive environmental experience on the golf course, and they tell someone about it, then perhaps a perception has been altered.

We have the opportunity every day to positively influence how people view the environment and we can do this subtly through regular maintenance practices with a few environmentally friendly methods incorporated into the routine.

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FTGA, Allied Associations Fund More Than \$150,000 for Florida Turf Research

Editor's Note: The FGCSA has partnered many times with the FTGA and has received matching funds from GCSAA before, but this year marks an unprecedented level of cooperation for common goals. You will see that several projects are addressing future pest-control options in light of soon losing several longtime products like Nema-cur and MSMA.

By Betsy McGill

The Florida Turfgrass Association, in cooperation with several allied turf and golf associations, announced the allocation of funding for research grants in excess of \$150,000 over the next two years.

Cooperating associations include the Florida GCSA, Florida Turfgrass Association, Florida Sod Growers Cooperative, Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, and the Club Managers Association of America.

The grants will advance research in the turfgrass industry covering such diverse subjects as irrigation water use; insect, weed and nematode control; turfgrass breeding and best management practices for a culturally diverse

workforce. Funding recipients are Florida-based researchers at the University of Florida and Lake City Community College. Projects funded:

Rapid Turfgrass Disease Diagnosis Assistantship: a one-year start-up funding grant to hire a research assistant in order to expedite rapid turnaround of disease diagnostic processing at the UF-IFAS Florida Extension Plant Disease Clinic (FEPDC) in Gainesville. The facility allows turfgrass professionals to send samples for evaluation. This \$23,961 grant was funded by the FTGA and FGCS

Best Management Practices for a Culturally Diverse Workforce: a one-year project to be conducted by Bruce Witt at Lake City Community College. The objective of the study is to create a Best Management Practices manual for golf course superintendents and other turfgrass managers who work mainly with foreign-born or English-as-a-second-language crews. This \$13,805 study was funded by the FTGA, FGCSA and the CMAA.

Breeding Turfgrasses for Improved Performance and Reduced Maintenance: a one-year project to be spear-



Dr. Kevin Kenworthy describes the newly funded UF turf-breeding program at the July 19, 2006 IFAS Field Day and grand opening of the new G.C. Horn Turf Research Field Laboratory at the UF-IFAS Plant Science Research and Education Unit just south of Gainesville.

headed by Dr. Kevin Kenworthy at the University of Florida in Gainesville. The objective is to build and advance the turfgrass breeding program at UF in order to produce new grasses for use on Florida golf courses and home lawns. This \$40,000 study was funded by the FTGA, FSGC, FGCSA and the Palm Beach Chapter of the FGCSA.

Evaluation of Soil Moisture &



Chapter fund raisers like the Annual Bud Quandt Tournament make it possible for Bill Kistler (right) external vice president of the Florida West Coast GCSA to present a \$3,000 check to FGCSA President Craig Weyandt at the FGCSA Annual meeting in Orlando.



FGCSA Association Manager Marie Roberts accepts the annual donation of \$3,000 from Dale Mitchell and Richard Colyer from Golf Agronomic Supply & Handling. These annual contributions from GASH now total \$56,000.



FGCSA President Craig Weyandt, accepts a \$5,000 check from Rip Phillips, external vice president of the North Florida GCSA. The funds were the result of this year's NFGCSA Research Tournament held at the Pablo Creek G.C.