

we can. Once we get past June, it takes much longer for the grass to recover if you really tear it up. We continuously run pencil tines and Hydroject aerification to keep it open for air and water.”

Geoff confirmed what I have learned so far, and what Rick Tatum so eloquently stated three years ago on ultradwarf management when he said, “Managing these new grasses takes a new approach that becomes prescription management. You can’t automatically do the same thing to all 18 greens anymore.”

Joel Jackson

South Florida Supers Welcome Challenge of Managing New Grasses

By Jim Walker, GCS

Joel asked me for an interview article of a couple of South Florida superintendents about their ultradwarf- or paspalum-management programs. Armed with my guidelines, I take off across the Causeway and past the big hotels to see my pal Joe P. on Indian Creek Island and chat about his Mini-Verde, which was planted last summer.

First I want to congratulate Joe on receiving the Distinguished Service Award at the FGCSA Past Presidents dinner in May. It doesn’t seem possible that it has been 27 years since I sent him to the book store to buy Dr. James Beard’s *Science of Turf-grass* textbook.

Joe’s Tifdwarf greens have always been the best I ever played in South Florida, so why the change and what led you to pick Mini-verde?

“Three issues prompted our move to an ultradwarf: First, the existing greens were 11 years old and were showing signs of mutation. The organic matter buildup of the past 10 years was making it more difficult to maintain the Tifdwarf, and the competition of other

clubs switching to ultradwarfs dictated we go that direction.

“We picked Mini-Verde because the UTEP (University of Texas at El Paso) trials seemed to show it was the best grass, plus we had been running our own trials with TifEagle and didn’t like some of the things we saw.

“Our goal speed with Tifdwarf was 9 feet-plus, and now with the MiniVerde, it is 10.5-plus. We were mowing the dwarf at .125 in. and the MiniVerde is .100 to .110. We are using 25 to 50 percent less nitrogen with the new grass, vertical mowing more, rolling more, and top dressing more.

“On the top-dressing front, we have switched materials and installed a sand silo to store our material. It comes in dry, is kept dry in our silo and therefore has a better chance to penetrate the canopy of the Mini-Verde and get off the surface.

“We have an inboard/outboard irrigation system and the watering patterns for the new grass are similar to the old, with the exception of more hand watering on the new turf.

“We brought Earl Elsner in, who is a nationally recognized expert on ultradwarfs, to help us with our cultural-practice protocol and it was very interesting and most helpful. He felt since we were maintaining our Tifdwarf in a similar fashion to MiniVerde requirements, we did not need to change much.

His one word of advice was that most people with ultradwarfs do not top dress enough. I picked up another tip which has proven to be helpful from another South Florida superintendent who is managing Tif-Eagle, and that is to quad-tine once a month including the winter season with quarter-inch solid tines. Thanks, Mr. Sbarro.

“I am very happy with our decision to go with Mini-Verde. It is a more vigorous grass at the low heights of cut and provides a superior putting surface.”

OK, Joe. I guess that’ll have to do until we start playing the Super Heavy Duty Ultra Green Peach Fuzz being developed at a local laboratory run by this Doctor of Moon Dust from Outer

Space.

On the way back from Joe’s, I drive south on Old Cutler Road, and make a left turn at the big bend on 136th street to see Robert Wethy, who just re-opened Deering Bay Yacht and Country Club, now sporting a complete paspalum renovation. Course designer Arnold Palmer was on hand for the opening ceremony which Susi and I attended, and happily watched Mr. Palmer drive the first ball off number-one tee.

Now Rob, just a little background. Deering Bay used to be Kings Bay, which was designed and built by Mark Mahannah in 1959. In 1991, Arnold Palmer redesigned the course. It was planted with 419 tees, fairways and roughs, and had Tifdwarf greens. Why the change from that to paspalum?

“Our course is located directly on Biscayne Bay, and during the dry winter and spring months, turf quality would suffer. We were a perfect fit for paspalum. After much research, and test plots, SeaDwarf was chosen as the grass for our entire course.

“I have observed that our paspalum loves water and I have to be careful not to let things dry out.

“We use less nitrogen than we did with our Tifdwarf and more potassium and calcium. The new grass also loves micro-nutrients and uses them rapidly based on our tissue samples which are taken every two to three weeks.

“I have had no problem achieving the same green speed with paspalum as our bermuda. We had some disease pressure this winter, and found solid-tine aerification and top dressing every two to three weeks was a big help. When the weather warmed up, we sprayed Gibberellic acid on the greens and an immediate, positive response occurred.

“I am sure that managing the paspalum will continue to be a learning experience even more intense than what I faced before, and what we all face daily, managing the different types of grass on our courses in South Florida. Learning as we grow, and growing as we mow is all a part of the golf course management business that veteran superintendents come to love.”



Secured five-gallon bucket holds weeds and/or trash. Photo by Darren Davis.



Two 1/4-inch eye bolts and a 21-inch strap with an S-hook secure the bucket. Photo by Darren Davis.

SUPER TIP

The Bucket List

By Darren J. Davis

If you have read some of my previous “Super Tip” columns you know that I thoroughly enjoy visiting my peers at their place of employment, and as I have often stated, I would be hard-pressed to recall a visit/tour that I did not pick up a “Super Tip” or two.

On a recent tour of one of my contemporary’s courses, I spotted a rack of five-gallon buckets. I was told that each staff member was required to take his assigned bucket daily and fill it with a specified number of weeds. I liked the idea and decided to slightly

modify the concept for use at Olde Florida.

One of my concerns with storing the buckets outside was the potential for a water-filled bucket to become a mosquito breeding ground. I surmised that we could drill holes in the bottom of each bucket to release rainwater, but with the strong winds that often accompany storms I concluded that we might be continually picking up the buckets off the ground.

Another challenge I foresaw was how to keep the buckets from rolling around or bouncing out of the utility vehicles. My solution to these potential problems was to secure the five-gallon buckets in the bed of each of our Club Car utility vehicles.

The first step in securing the buckets

in the utility vehicles was to drill two 1/4-inch holes, 12 inches apart, in the side of the utility vehicle bed. In each hole a 1/4 x 20 stainless steel eye bolt was inserted with a stainless steel washer placed on each side of the bed.

The eye bolt was then fastened in place with a stainless steel nut. To hold the five-gallon bucket in place, a 21-inch EPDM strap with “S” hook ends is used. The cost of the hardware was less than \$4 per vehicle and the straps were less than \$2 each.

Another benefit to having the buckets in the utility vehicle beds is they can be used as trash cans, consequently keeping trash separate from grass clippings or other organic material placed in the beds of the utility vehicles.



Exterior view of the mounted bucket. Photo by Darren Davis.

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Mark J. Woodward, CGCS, becomes the first superintendent to become permanent CEO.

Woodward Named GCSAA's New CEO

Mark J. Woodward, golf operations manager for the city of San Diego has been selected chief executive officer for the GCSAA.

His selection by the GCSAA Board of Directors came after conducting a national search to replace Steve Mona, who became the chief executive of the World Golf Foundation March 3. A familiar face to GCSAA, Woodward has been active as a committee participant, a director and 68th president of the association in 2004. He is in his 30th year as a GCSAA member and became a certified golf course superintendent in 1986. He is the first superintendent to serve as GCSAA's permanent chief executive.

"We were extremely pleased with the quantity and quality of candidates that were interested in the position. Without a doubt, Mark presented the best fit for the association," GCSAA President David S. Downing II, CGCS said. "He is a talented individual with myriad skills that will serve him, the membership, the association, the industry and the game well. He has a strong track record of service to GCSAA and success as a golf course superintendent and an administrator. His efforts have earned him rave reviews in bolstering golf operations for the city of San Diego."

In San Diego, Woodward developed a five-year business plan that generated an additional \$3 million in revenue from 2006 to 2007, including the implementation of the Advance Tee Time program that added \$500,000 in the first year. His department has hosted many high-profile events, including three junior world golf championships, three city amateur championships, three PGA Tour events and the upcoming U.S. Open – on top of the three golf facilities annually hosting 260 golf outings. His plan resulted in creating 20,000 additional tee times for the public golfer. Woodward implemented a management plan that has produced drastically improved course conditions and enhanced environmental stewardship.

Woodward did not assume the job until July 1 because, Downing said., "It was important that he saw to completion the U.S. Open. It is a wonderful celebration of the game and it was only fitting that he finished his integral role in conducting the event."

Woodward came to San Diego in January 2005 after serving 31 years in various capacities with the Phoenix suburb of Mesa, Ariz. His last position there was parks and recreation administrator, which included the oversight of two golf courses, a tennis facility, the Chicago Cubs spring training home, a minor league baseball training site, a park ranger program and a cemetery. He is a 1974 graduate of Arizona State University with a degree in environmental resources and holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of Phoenix.

In addition to his past volunteer service to GCSAA, Woodward is active in the National Institute of Golf Management sponsored by the National Golf Foundation. He joined the NIGM board of regents in 1992, serving as its chair in 1999. He was a trustee for the Environmental Institute for Golf, serving as secretary in 2004.

Woodward has a strong golf-course-management background. He began his career as an assistant

golf course superintendent at Mesa's Dobson Ranch Golf Course, helping to construct the layout. Two years later he became superintendent and in 1987 assumed the additional duties of managing Mesa's Riverview Golf Course. His grandfather Jay is one of only three superintendents to have been inducted into the Arizona Golf Hall of Fame and was one of 11 GCSAA members to be recognized for outstanding service at the association's 50th anniversary celebration. Other family members to have served in the superintendent profession include his son Matt, son-in-law Cody Swirczynski, a cousin, Mike Pock, and Pock's sons, Ernie and Jay.

Woodward, 55, is a native of Phoenix. He and his wife Amy have six children including Mark's son Matt and his daughter Erin and Amy's daughters, Rachel, Christine, Nicole and Jessie. They currently have seven grandchildren.

USGA UPDATE

One Season Ends, Another Begins

By John Foy

DIRECTOR, USGA FLORIDA REGION

Traditionally in South Florida, the winter golf season comes to an end shortly after Easter and subsequently there is a fairly rapid decline in play and the summertime course maintenance season begins.

With a very early Easter this year, moderate to heavy play continued through April, but it is also being reported that total winter season rounds were reduced relative to previous years. The current state of the economy is definitely having an impact, and when combined with significant increases in fertilizer and other basic material costs, course managers will be challenged to continue to provide a level of overall conditioning and quality in keeping with golfer expectations and demands.

As discussed in Web updates, the prolonged drought continues to be

TPI Honors Trenholm With Inaugural Award

Dr. Laurie Trenholm, associate professor/Extension turfgrass specialist at the University of Florida was the recipient of the very first Turfgrass Educator Award of Excellence presented by Turfgrass Producers International.

"Dr. Trenholm's efforts to educate such a broad audience is reflected in her involvement as head of the Florida Urban Turfgrass Program," said TPI Executive Director Kirk Hunter, also noting "her commitment to the Florida Consumer Fertilizer Task Force Subcommittee, her ongoing research in stress physiology on landscape grass species and the teaching of Green Industries Best Management Practices to lawn-care professionals throughout Florida."

"She has been the face of UF/IFAS turf science research at myriad city and county commission meetings bringing science and research data to the attention of local lawmakers and regulators in the discussions of fertilizer and water issues," said Joel Jackson, executive director of the FGCSA.

In addition to working with county Extension faculty members and educating the state's Master Gardeners at training conferences, she also participates in a wide variety of industry-related associations and organizations. Her frequent participation at turfgrass and/or lawn care conferences, seminars and community events, many of which are outside the state of Florida, reflect an immeasurable contribution to educating others with fact-based science. Among the many issues she has addressed are lawn care for drought conditions, pest control, water conservation through sound irrigation practices, appropriate fertilization issues and overall environmentally-friendly lawn management practices. As a result of her

efforts there has been a heightened awareness on matters that will have a positive impact on our environment for generations to come.

Dr. Trenholm has also been one of a select group of turfgrass Extension specialists from universities around the country who have met annually with representatives of TPI to address a wide variety of topics including advancements in research, environmental concerns and ways in which to enhance communication and build greater awareness of the environmental benefits of turfgrass to the general public, landscape professionals, educators, garden writers and government decision-makers.

A native of Rochester, N.Y., Dr. Trenholm received her B.S. in turfgrass science from University of Florida's Fort Lauderdale REC in 1994, her master's degree in turfgrass physiology from UF in Gainesville in 1996. She received several scholarships from the Florida

Turfgrass Association. She earned her doctorate from the University of Georgia's Department of Crop and Soil Science, researching turfgrass stress physiology and wear tolerance of seashore paspalum and bermudagrass.

She has been a member of the faculty at the University of Florida since 1999. She is a member of the Golf Course Superintendent's Association of America, The Agronomy Society of America, the Crop Science Society of America, the Florida Turfgrass Association, the International Turfgrass Research Society, Turfgrass Producers International, and the Florida State Horticultural Society.

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a major concern at all golf courses, except those fortunate enough to have unrestricted irrigation sources. Although with each passing month, there have been incremental increases in the amount of water available for irrigation, which has naturally helped.

As a result of timely winter rainfall, on April 18, the South Florida Water Management District returned to Phase II (30 percent reduction) restriction from the earlier Phase III (45 percent reduction). Yet, Turf Advisory Service visits have been made to several courses where a lack of sufficient water has already caused significant problems and a pronounced deterioration in turf health and quality.

With mild to warm temperatures throughout the winter, there has been no real slowdown in plant parasitic nematode activity. This has exacerbated drought stress problems and caused additional turf loss. With fairways and roughs, recovery from drought stress and nematode damage will be extremely difficult without regular and adequate rainfall. The start of the summer rainy season cannot come soon enough.

Most courses in Central and South Florida are implementing routine summer cultural management such as core aeration and aggressive verticutting of putting greens, tees, fairways, and roughs. These practices will always be unpopular with golfers because of the inconveniences caused, but accomplishing them on a timely basis is critical for promoting the resumption of active turf growth and recovering from the cumulative negative impacts of the winter season.

There are inevitably requests and demands that cultural management programs be delayed because during May, the start of reciprocal play and annual summer membership programs can help increase play and, in turn, revenues. The importance of timely initiation of cultural management programs cannot be over emphasized and the adage, "pay me now or pay me later" certainly applies in this situation. Furthermore, with reduced availability and/or increasing costs of pesticides, fertilizers, and other materials, there is

2008 PLANTS OF THE YEAR

The program promotes the use of superior Florida plants. Chosen for their unique blend of versatility, consumer appeal, ease of maintenance, pest and disease resistance, geographic use, ease of propagation and plant availability, these plants are standouts for Florida landscapes. Here are two Florida Friendly landscape plant suggestions for your course and grounds.

BLUE GINGER

Scientific name: *Dichorisandra thrysiflora*

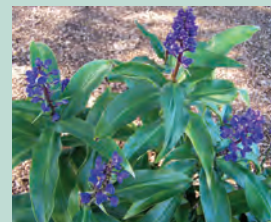
Zones: South, Central and warmer areas of North Florida

Mature Height and Spread: 4-5 ft. tall and 3 ft. wide; can reach 8 ft. tall

Classification: Perennial

Landscape Use: Deep purplish-blue blooms grow on 6-10 in. spikes in summer and fall. Tropical glossy green foliage with succulent stems spread slowly underground, creating a dense mass with a tremendous show of blooms. While commonly referred to as blue ginger, "ginger" is a misnomer, as the *Dichorisandra* is actually related to the plant commonly known as the "wandering jew." It grows well in part to full shade with moist, well-drained soil. Mealy bug is the only significant pest issue. This is a great addition to almost any Florida landscape.

Propagation: By cuttings.



MIMOSA

Scientific name: *Mimosa strigillosa*

Zones: North, Central & South

Mature Height and Spread: Typically 6 - 9-in. tall x 3 - 5-ft. wide

Classification: Mass planting, ground cover

Landscape Use: Specimen and butterfly attractor

Characteristics: This reliable and vigorous low-grower is a Florida native and drought tolerant, growing in moist and dry soils. It produces pink, ball-shaped flowers in the warmer seasons which attract butterflies. The foliage is delicate looking with small, compound leaves which draw back when touched and fold up at night, yet are durable enough to walk on, park on, drive on and even mow. The leaves also provide butterfly larva with food. In sun or shade, it grows best when well watered. With virtually no major insect or disease problem, this ground cover is a winner.

Propagation: Easily by cuttings or by seed

The Florida Plants of the Year program is administered by FNGLA: 800-375-3642; www.fngla.org



even greater importance and need for agronomically-sound, basic practices and programs to maintain a healthy turf and good quality conditioning the majority of the time.

Bayer Names Wright Southwest Florida Rep

Adam Wright joins Bayer Environmental Science as field sales representative for the golf market in southwest Florida.

Prior to joining Bayer, Wright was the director of golf course operations for Laurel Oak Country Club in

Sarasota. He also served as a superintendent at Greystone Golf & Country Club in Birmingham, Ala.

A graduate of Tennessee Technological University, Wright holds a bachelor's degree in agriculture, agronomy and crop sciences. He is currently enrolled in the University of South Florida to earn his master's degree in business.



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— Jeff Taylor, Golf Course Superintendent
Boca Pointe Country Club



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After millions of years...

The Gopher Tortoise Needs Your Help

By Kyle Sweet, CGCS, SANCTUARY G.C.

Oh, how times have changed for the gopher tortoise.

As a young child growing up in Zephyrhills (yes, where that great bottled water comes from), I had the opportunity to grow to know gopher tortoises very well. Believe it or not, we raced them. Although slow, the racing was entertaining and held annually at a local fair. Our stealthy reptile, Lord Baltimore as affectionately named by my dad, was directionally challenged and after his rookie appearance



Josh Sweet with one of The Sanctuary's largest tortoises that inhabits a protected tortoise habitat area alongside the 13th hole. Photo by Kyle Sweet, CGCS.

was released back to the pasture lands where he was found. At that time, Gopher tortoises seemed nearly as common as the ever-present mourning doves in open pasture lands throughout central Florida.

Upon arrival to Sanibel Island, many years later, I was quickly educated in the importance of the gopher tortoise while working around several biologists and consultants during the development of The Sanctuary Golf Club. I thought I was educated in the industry after years of experience and a degree, but this was a learning experience that has continued for the past 15 years while I have been actively involved in gopher tortoise habitat understanding and

management. As a golf course manager, course staff member or just interested citizen, you can make a difference with this gentle, important animal.

THE GOPHER TORTOISE

The gopher tortoise, *gopherus*

polyphemus, belongs to a group of land tortoises that originated in North America 60 million years ago, thus making it one of our oldest living species. They are found throughout Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama and eastern Louisiana. It is a plain-looking turtle, being either dark tan or gray. Their front legs are broad and flat and are excellent for digging while its rear legs closely resemble the shape of an elephant's.

Identification of this tortoise is very important. All tortoises are turtles, but not all turtles are tortoises. With this in mind, a little education with your staff and members can go a long

way and can save a small tortoise from mistakenly being put in a lake or pond when happened-upon on the course.

THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME

The Gopher tortoise digs and lives in burrows. The burrow provides protection from predators, freezing weather and fire. The burrow, ranging in depth from 3-20 ft. deep and averaging 30 feet long, provides not only a safe and temperature-moderated home for the tortoise, but plays a role in the entire wildlife community where it resides. Just to name a few, snakes, frogs, mice, fox, skunks, opossums, rabbits, quail, armadillos, burrowing owls and lizards will share the burrow with tortoises or utilize old abandoned burrows.

As habitats are adversely affected, tortoises will dig multiple burrows. Loss of food sources, changes in water table levels and burrow disruption are also a few causes for tortoises moving out.

LATE BLOOMERS AND A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

The Gopher tortoise doesn't reach sexual maturity until 10-15 years of age. At this age, the shells are typically about 9 inches long. As it matures, the gender of the tortoise can be easily determined by viewing its plastron (underbelly). The male's will be concave while the female's is flat. The tortoise's courtship begins in the spring and the females nest between April and

July. Typically, the female will lay an average of 5–6 eggs very close to the their burrow openings in the loose soil generated from creating their home, which is defined as the “apron.”

After nearly three months, the young will hatch and their gender will be determined by the temperature of the soil where the nest incubated. Hatchlings are 1-2 inches long and grow about 3/4-inch per year. The hatchlings are much brighter in color than adults and, unfortunately, very few young tortoises survive to reproductive maturity. At 6 -7 years old, tortoises are able to thwart most predators but, at this age, domestic dogs, raccoons and man are its biggest adversaries.

FOOD AND WATER

Gopher tortoises are vegetarians but not at all picky about what plants they eat. You are most likely to see tortoises foraging in dry, open areas in the early morning or late afternoon during the

Another SW Florida Tortoise Habitat

South of Kyle Sweet’s Tortoise habitat on Sanibel Island lies the Old Collier Club in Naples. Highlights of the Fazio-designed layout include ample native areas and connecting wildlife corridors. Seldom does a guided wildlife tour go by without participants seeing a gopher tortoise den or several of the critters crawling about. During a recent visit this 3-1/2-inch juvenile tortoise was spied venturing about. Superintendent Tim Hiers said during this vulnerable soft-shelled stage in their lives, crows are their chief predators. The good news is that Hiers reports a 70-percent increase in the gopher tortoise population since the course opened seven years ago.



summer months. They feed mainly on low-growing plants that require abundant sunlight. Landscaping with native plants on your course or home

will help ensure that proper food is available for the tortoise.

Tortoises are seldom seen drinking water. Rather, they get the water they



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need from their diet and also have the ability to gather rain water to drink when water travels down their burrow. During extreme drought conditions however, tortoises have been seen drinking puddle water following rain showers.

HOW YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITY CAN HELP

Today's desire for communities in pristine natural habitats combined

Gopher tortoise habitat in the Sanctuary Golf Club is clearly marked. Photo by Kyle Sweet, CGCS.



with less and less available dry upland, have caused the gopher tortoise to be detrimentally impacted and classified as a species of concern. It's important to know what that means. By definition, a species of special concern is one where a population reduction of at least 20 percent has been projected or suspected to be met within the next 10 years or three generations, whichever is longer.

You can help by first identifying that tortoises are on your course and in your community. You may know this already from laws that are in place to protect the habitats of tortoises throughout Florida or just from your own observations. Once you know they are there, their habitats will need to be maintained. The typical forest fire cycle, that helps to maintain the open habitat needed by the tortoise, is seldom a reality in a residential community or on the course. However, with proper trimming and mowing, the same effect can be achieved in areas that tortoises

need to thrive.

Education of golfers and residents is very important. Keep people and dogs away from the sites where burrows exist. Foot traffic can crush shallow burrows, destroy egg clutches when laid near the burrow opening, and break or disturb important vegetation that the tortoise relies on for its diet.

<SUBHED>Implementation, what can you and your club do?

Education must be reinforced by identifying the tortoise areas and keeping people out. We have installed 4x4 posts and roped around all of The Sanctuary's protected gopher tortoise habitat areas and have also identified these for our membership with vinyl signs. These areas are marked as environmentally sensitive lateral hazards where golf balls cannot be retrieved if they are hit into these areas. A one-stroke penalty is incurred and the player must take a drop.

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