

HOW DROUGHT-PROOF IS TIFSPORT BERMUDA?



It Recovers Faster With Less Stand Loss Than Other Fairway Grasses

These dry conditions could be with us for a long time, so you need to be thinking about your options. Like most bermudagrasses, TifSport has evolved over hundreds of thousands of years and has developed a set of built-in defenses against drought-induced stresses. No fairway grass is going to survive forever without water, and during periods of prolonged drought, TifSport may thin out. But it recovers faster, with less stand-loss,

especially when compared to other popular fairway grasses. Give TifSport a shot. It was bred to make aggressive come-backs from severe drought conditions. Your members will love the way it looks and plays, and you'll love the way it manages. TifSport can only be sold as certified sod or sprigs, and only by licensed members of the TifSport Growers Association. For more information call 706 542-5640 or visit us on the web at www.tifSPORT.com.

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and displaying signage, we have recently begun to map all of our protected tortoise habitat areas with GIS so we can monitor populations of the tortoise and also monitor the travel of tortoises throughout their habitat. We hope to complete annual surveying and will be sharing our survey results with the J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge (our neighbor), The Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation and the City of Sanibel, all of which are very dedicated to the protection of the Gopher Tortoise.

You can accomplish this at your own club. Your county has Georeference photographic mapping of your property that you can purchase in digital form. Once you have this photography, GPS points can be layered on top of the map by using appropriate software. Each burrow location or whatever you're mapping can be referenced with a GPS point. Our mapping was done by wildlife research

REMEMBER THESE FACTS...

- This "keystone" species helps support several other animals in its community.
- High and dry habitats are where you will find them.
- Burrows can be crushed by foot traffic alone so be careful where you step.
- The primary reason for the gopher tortoise being endangered is a loss of habitat.

- Tortoises need to roam freely, so limiting obstructions is important to their welfare
- Tortoises cannot be moved from one community to another due to URTD, which can affect an entire tortoise population. You can make a difference in the survival of the Gopher tortoise on your course and in your community.

volunteer through the local Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation. Other wildlife research organizations in your area may be able to help in your efforts.

Upper Respiratory Tract Disease of Tortoises

An upper respiratory tract disease of tortoises has been observed in Florida as well as in the Western US, Georgia

and Mississippi. This disease is highly contagious and is passed from one tortoise to another by close contact. In many situations, the threat of spread of this disease has limited the availability of tortoise relocation. Established colonies can be drastically affected if a diseased tortoise is introduced into the population. Never introduce or remove/relocate a tortoise from its known habitat.

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34 Marriott Courses to Become Sanctuaries by Year's End

Marriott Golf is requiring 34 of the company's managed golf courses throughout North America and the Caribbean to become Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries, by the end of 2008.

Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries are part of a systemwide commitment by Marriott International, Inc. to promote environmental stewardship.

Marriott's Audubon Certification mandate program includes famed golf destinations such as Doral Golf Resort & Spa, in Miami; Royal St. Kitts Golf Club in the British West Indies; and Shadow Ridge Golf Club in Palm Desert, California, among others.

Doral, host of the 2008 WGC-CA Championship, March 20-23, became the first-ever Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary in North America to host a World Golf Championships event.

"Marriott Golf is proud to be part of the company's broader green initiatives by supporting Audubon Certification, golf's environmental gold standard," said Robert Waller, senior director of grounds, Marriott Golf. "Our goal is to engage our guests and associates from around the world in this unique process and to further our commitment to promoting the game of golf in an eco-friendly way."

Marriott International has been actively involved in energy conservation since the 1980s. Recently, Marriott's headquarters in Bethesda, along with its timeshare division based in Orlando, replaced more than 2.5 million pieces

of Styrofoam and plastic utensils with those made of potato ("SpudWare™"), sugar cane and cornstarch, all fully biodegradable within an average of 100 days. These industry-leading efforts have been recognized by the EPA, which awarded Marriott its 2008 Sustained Excellence award and placed the Energy Star label on more than 200 of its hotels (the most of any hotel company).

To date, and in advance of the 2008 mandate initiative, Marriott Golf maintains six properties that operate as Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries, five in Florida:

- Stone Mountain Golf Club in Stone Mountain, Georgia
- Doral Golf Resort & Spa in Miami
- The Ritz-Carlton Members Club in Sarasota
- The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club in Jupiter
- Grande Pines Golf Club in Orlando
- The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club, Orlando,
- Grande Lakes in Orlando

Each of these properties has achieved certification through a variety of methods, including the development of water conservation plans; converting formerly managed turf into wildlife habitat; constructing nesting boxes for native birds; the creation of butterfly gardens, and much more.

"We are elated with the level of commitment Marriott is showing by mandating Audubon Certification across their portfolio of golf courses," said Kevin Fletcher, executive director of Audubon International. "This program directly enables golf courses to



Part circle heads and aquatic plantings help protect the golf course waterways providing an environment where wildlife can thrive

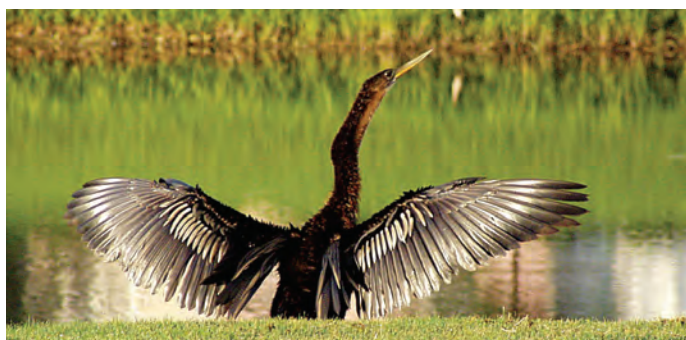
protect the environment by improving the quality of land, water, and air, along with conserving natural resources and protecting wildlife habitats. These proven environmental management practices will help preserve the natural heritage of the game of golf for many generations to come."

GRANDE VISTA NEXT

The next property to become Audubon certified will be Grande Vista Golf Club, a nine-hole golf course and 32-acre practice facility and part of The Faldo Golf Institute in Orlando.

Throughout the past year, Grande Vista has implemented a variety of programs to demonstrate its commitment to environmental stewardship. Highlighting the property's efforts is the creation of a nature trail that runs throughout the property and hosts a number of native Florida plants. Each plant is identified with a post that describes the plant in details and serves to educate guests.

Moreover, Grande Vista has worked to provide habitats along streams and lakes that provide food and shelter for wildlife and 35 acres of habitat area has been protected throughout the property.



Often called the "Snake bird" or water turkey, an anhinga sunbathes on the 11th hole at Grande Pines.

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Fleet and **Symphony** offer turfgrass safe formulation chemistry and the most advanced hydrophobic coating remover which actually translocates organic coatings that cause hydrophobic conditions and prevents soils from wetting uniformly, corrects the basic cause of localized dry spots (LDS), and solubilizes Humic substances.

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UF/IFAS Field Day Scrapbook

Photos by Joel Jackson

Moving the UF/IFAS Field Days from July to May was a good move weather- and comfort-wise and much appreciated by the crowd of industry professionals who attended the annual event in Gainesville and Citra.

If I had any disappointment it was that I was not aware of a single county or city representative in attendance to learn about new grass varieties, water use or nutrient leaching and runoff. All these topics seem to be on the front burner and yet no one bothered to come and ask questions.

That is the hard part for most turf professionals to swallow: when the politicians start making rules without good science behind them. It's right here at the Envirotron and Plant Science Center. Come and get it!



Dr. Billy Crow is still on his Quest for the Holy Grail – an effective alternative to Nematicur. By the way EPA extended the sale of Nematicur until Nov. 30.



Dr. Jason Dettman-Kruse discussed the pros and cons of artificial turf versus natural turf. He said the fake stuff loses its credibility when it too has to be watered just to keep it cool enough to play on.



Dr. Eileen Buss admits she thinks that turf is bug food. Here she shows off a bunch of trained hunting bill bugs.



Fertilizer Guru Dr. Jerry Sartain has only been researching the fate of fertilizer for 30 years or so. When the Dr. says very little nutrients run off a site, why won't people listen?



Geneticist Dr. Freddy Altpeter, left, discusses the way genes can be used to create new Florida Friendly grasses.



Dr. Phil Harmon has been busy. New grasses have bred some diseases we haven't normally seen down here before. Don't forget the Rapid Diagnostic Service at UF. Get those samples ID'ed in 24 hours.



The Master Moisture Monitor, Dr. Michael Dukes seeks the best ways homeowners can water lawns more efficiently. He says only one day a week on St. Augustine can be a gamble.



From bermuda to zoysia, Dr. Kenworthy is putting scores of grasses through their paces to find varieties that might work more effectively in Florida.



Dr. Laurie Trenholm has been one of the most visible BMP crusaders around the state. She knows how much nitrogen is leaching through the lawns. When you apply it right, it isn't much.

THE PRIDE AND THE PASSION

It's a Family Affair

By Joel Jackson

I've heard of mom-and-pop businesses before, and even husband-and-wife medical and legal practices, but it is rare to find a husband-and-wife working at a golf course as superintendent and assistant superintendent. It would take a couple of very special people to pull that off, and Gary and Debbie Smither are two just such people.

Gary "Cutter" Smither has been the superintendent at the Misty Creek Country Club in Sarasota for the past six years. Debbie's role as assistant superintendent evolved from her work on the crew when Smither's former assistant Jim Baldwin left a few years ago. But we need to back up a little bit for some history.

Many of you may remember that "Cutter" was one of a handful of superintendents who were perennial contenders for the championships of our state events like the Poa Annuu Classic and Crowfoot Open, etc. Cutter's contemporaries for golf dominance were Joe Ondo, Fred Klauk and Mark Henderson back in the day. So Smither was a good competitive player.

Smither met Debbie, his wife-to-be, on a golf course. She was a top amateur golfer in her own right, qualifying twice for the USGA Ladies Amateur making it to the second round one year and the quarterfinals of the USGA MidAm another time. Carrying a scratch or better handicap in her prime, she entertained ideas of joining the LPGA tour.

After they began courting, Debbie got a job on Smither's crews when he worked at Bent Tree and at the TPC at Prestancia. She always wanted a family life which was a factor in not pursuing the rigorous travel demands of the lifestyle of a professional golfer. After marriage and their first child came along, Debbie "retired" from course

work for 13 years to be a fulltime mom to her three kids, Chris, Jackie and Michael.

Now Chris and Jackie are out making their own way and Michael is in his last years of high school, so Debbie went back to work part time at Misty Creek. The original intent was to work in the office, but she says that lasted one



Gary and Debbie Smither make a hard working, passionate team as superintendent and assistant superintendent at the Misty Creek C.C. in Sarasota. Photo by Joel Jackson.

day. She wanted back outdoors on the course.

Smither says, "As a good golfer, Debbie has a passion for the game and knows what a good course setup should look like. She respects what a superintendent must know and do to accomplish good playing conditions and I respect her golfing ability and love of the game."

Debbie said, "I love being outside. I'm a perfectionist and I have a good eye for what needs to be done or when the turf looks like it needs attention."

The two have parlayed that mutual respect for each other, the game and the club that they have forged a working relationship that Smither says the club recognizes at their annual meetings.

Smither explained, "The club recognizes and appreciates the hard work, passion and ultimate results we have achieved. That is very rewarding from our perspective."

Debbie has mastered all tasks on the crew from operating all the equipment to spraying and helping to manage the irrigation system. In fact, one of her key duties is to be the H-2-O manager right now during the dry conditions.

Debbie added, "When I'm on the fairway mower, it is amazing what you can see from just that slightly elevated viewpoint versus being at ground level." She is another critical pair of caring eyes to help make sure the course is looking its best.

They both commented, the whole crew has been on the job for over six years and everyone has his specialized jobs and knows what to do and how to do it very well, so the crew doesn't need any micro-managing.

Even though they "work together" they aren't literally together all day long. So when they go home they can enjoy family time and similar interests like their love of college football, basketball and golf together.

Perhaps the toughest part of this unique team is scheduling vacation time. Obviously the traditional role of the assistant is as the back up, go-to person when the superintendent is gone. That just doesn't fit in this scenario. Accordingly Debbie says, "Three-day weekend trips work best for us. Two-week trips aren't practical. I do go home to Ohio to see family and Gary joins me for only part of the time, so we stagger our away time."

Smither says, "I don't need much down time. If I can get away for a day or two that is enough to relax and enjoy the break in routine. We hope to get back into playing competitive golf again, perhaps in the Florida State Golf Association Mixed Team events."

For now, the biggest question from Misty Creek members about the unique husband-and-wife team seems to be "Does Debbie really have a better golf game than Gary?" We will leave that one for the 19th hole.

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PHOTOS TO THE EDITOR

Wildlife Abounds on the Naples National Golf Club

Superintendent Terry Woods was kind enough to share his drought

emergency management tips in Hands On for the Spring issue, and

his assistant, Bill Wiggins, sent some photos of wildlife on the course.



Eagle Claw is a brand of fish hooks. Now you know why. Photo by Bill Wiggins.



Naples National Golf Club, where the deer and the “antelope” play. Well at least the deer.