

# Turf schools, turf experts cited as the greatest need in Asia

By Peter Blais

The lack of turf schools and educated turf managers are two of the biggest problems architects and developers face in Asia, according to experts in the region.

"Developers don't always recognize the need for a well-trained superintendent," said architect Ronald Fream, who has been designing courses in the Pacific Basin for 20 years.

"Yet the real work starts when the construction ends. The course is finished and you leave it in the hands of

a 100-man crew with no one with any turf education. It's frustrating."

American professors and golf industry experts frequently give seminars throughout Asia. Dr. Jim Beard of Texas A&M University is one of the most active.

"But sending Beard over for an occasional three-day conference just doesn't cut it. Beard does a good job. But he and a handful of other visiting professors can't do it alone," Fream said.

Korea is probably closest to having anything resembling a U.S. turf school,



Ronald Fream

said Jim Watson, vice president and agronomist with The Toro Co. Watson has spent considerable time lecturing and researching in Asia.

Dr. Ki Sun Kim finished his doctoral work at Texas A&M, Watson said. Sun is teaching turfgrass management and doing extensive research at Seoul National University.

Dr. Joon Ahn is another well-known Korean researcher and educator, according to Associate Professor John King of the University of Arkansas. Ahn was the first to reproduce common Bermudagrass

by tissue culture, King said.

Dr. Young K. Joo at Yonsei University is also teaching and doing turfgrass research, added Professor Nick Christian of Iowa State University.

Christian has conducted seminars in Korea. Asian students have also attended Iowa State. But there is still a lack of qualified superintendents in Korea and elsewhere in Asia.

"The growth of golf has simply outstripped the area's ability to turn out qualified students," Christian said. "I think it will catch up. I wouldn't mind having a few more Korean students here at all."

Korea is farther along in turf research than other Asian countries, agreed Professor Paul Reike of Michigan State University. Several other Korean professors have worked on their Ph.D.s in the United States and are teaching and doing research in their home country.

The Koreans are much more advanced than the Japanese in turf research, agreed Doug Brede, research director with Jacklin Seed Co. and a frequent visitor to the Far East.

"The Koreans have three or four schools with turf teachers and researchers who have been trained in the United States," Brede said. "The Koreans will probably eclipse everyone in the region."

"The Japanese rely on their own educational system to train people. The problem with the educational system is that the work of older educators is never questioned. There is no peer review, so little progress is made."

The Japanese are probably superior to the United States in teaching the basics of chemistry and biology, Brede said. They come up short in practical education, such as taking that knowledge and applying it to turf, which Americans do effectively through turf schools, he added.

Dr. Yoshisuke Maki is the leading turfgrass researcher and educator in Japan, Watson said. The past president of the International Turfgrass Society recently retired from education, although he continues to do consulting work and lectured last fall at a conference in Hokkaido.

The Golf Union is the rough Japanese equivalent of the United States Golf Association, Watson said. It maintains laboratories and field stations near Osaka and helps organize seminars.

Still, students must travel to and train in U.S. turf schools before they are taken seriously, Watson said.

"The Japanese don't want to listen to natives because they feel they know nothing about turf," the Toro executive said. "They look at the United States as having the best golf courses in the world. They want people who have been involved in American courses managing their facilities."

"They haven't had the chance to incorporate course work and research into the golf industry. But I think it will come before long."

Many Japanese students have attended Michigan State University's turf program, according to Professor Trey Rogers. Japanese companies send one or two employees over every year. They gen-

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GOLF COURSE NEWS

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## Harvard Graduate School of Design offers special study in golf course development

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. — The Harvard Graduate School of Design has invited golf consultant Jim McLoughlin to present a mid-June course of study on the general subject of Golf Course Development.

The curriculum will be developed and presented through McLoughlin's two firms: The McLoughlin Group, a golf consulting firm, and Double Eagle Enterprises, a golf development company.

The course is designed for present and future developers, counselors to developers, investors and government regulators/planners. It will ad-

dress defining feasibility studies, minimum site requirements, regulations and approvals, model business plans, the critical importance of master-site planning, public and private financing, construction parameters, sample model schedules and summary reasons why projects fail.

Guest Speaker Thomas J. Boczar is one of the country's leading public finance lawyers and a principal within Double Eagle Enterprises.

Boczar will address the topic of financing public and private golf course development projects.

## N.J. site a challenge to Fazio

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP, N.J. — With major development approvals now in hand, Galloway National Golf Club has begun accepting membership applications, according to Vernon W. Hill, II, chairman of the club at this Jersey shore community just outside of Atlantic City.

Almost three years into the approval process, the \$10 million, 18-hole championship golf course designed by Tom Fazio has received the necessary approvals from Galloway Township, Atlantic County

and the state of New Jersey. That clears every hurdle necessary to get the project underway this year.

"Some of the factors that will make this a very special golf course were among those that held up the approval process," said Hill, "including location in an environmentally attractive but sensitive sea-shore area."

Fazio said it will not be a course "with only one or two signature holes. It will have many outstanding holes, but more significant will be the overall quality of the entire golf... experience."

## Turf schools

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erally spend four or five months at MSU before moving on to another American school, he said.

Rogers and other American educators spoke at a 1989 turf show in Tokyo. Delegates were so impressed that 35 of them later traveled to MSU for a one-day seminar, Rogers said.

Americans have been imported to fill the agronomic gap in Japan. However, they are generally drawn to the higher-paying construction jobs rather than the lower-paying, daily-maintenance positions.

Golf course superintendent is not a high-profile job in Japan. It is not viewed as a specialty, said Dennis Vogt, Dye Designs International's director of maintenance. The pay scale is low compared to other occupations, Vogt added.

"I don't see the situation changing much. The Japanese superintendent will get better as he works with Americans, gains experience, makes trips abroad and attends seminars. But few Americans will work there as day-to-day superintendents," he said.

The situation is even worse in a country like Thailand, Fream noted. The pay is generally low, around \$600 per month. That is not attractive to Americans nor enough to encourage native Thais to seek more education.

Some turf education and research is being done in China, Watson said. Turfgrass research plots are being maintained at the University of Beijing with the help of American companies like Jacklin Seed Co. and International Seeds Inc. Dr. Peter S. Hu, retired director of the Beijing Botanical Institute, has also conducted educational seminars, he added.

"But for the most part, education continues to come from the outside," Watson said.

Even fewer educational opportunities are available in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and the rest of Southeast Asia, Watson said. Americans continue to dominate the construction and better-paying daily-maintenance positions in those countries as well.

Pennsylvania State University turfgrass management graduates can be found on construction sites in Asia, according to George Hamilton, program coordinator.

Occasionally they work on construction projects where they meet local people interested in turf studies. Often they refer them to Penn State and some end up attending it.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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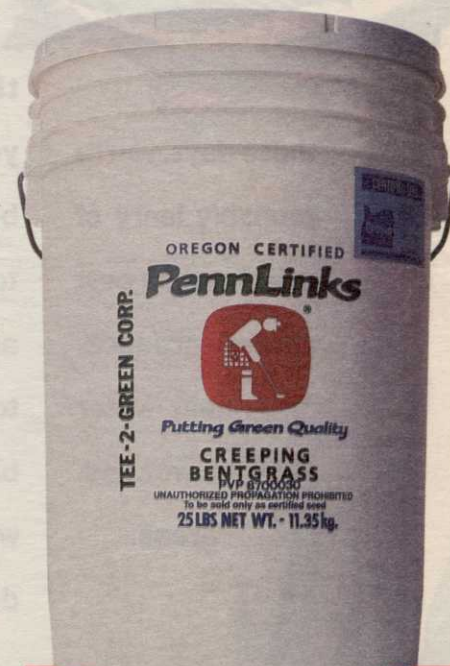
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