

EPA pesticide hotline cuts service

Budget cuts have forced the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Pesticide Programs to reduce hours on its toll-free hotline (800-858-7378) for pesticide poisoning incidents and information.

The National Pesticides Telecommunications Network had been a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week operation until Feb. 1.

The new hours are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Central Standard Time, Monday through Friday.

Holiday service will also be cut and the number of toll-free lines reduced from six to three.

Caller requests for mailed information must be pre-paid before mailing. Faxes will be sent only to callers providing charge card numbers.

Operators will continue to answer questions about human and animal poisonings as well as related areas. Medical professionals are available in emergencies.

Prof declares: Golf courses get bad rap

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — A Texas A&M University agricultural scientist says golf courses get a bad rap, ecologically.

"It isn't really fair to look on a golf course as an ecological desert," said Dr. Robert Green, a post-doctoral researcher in Texas A&M's Department of Soil and Crop Sciences.

Golf courses do have an impact on the environment. At an average of more than 125 acres per 18-hole course, the impact is sizable. And according to the Center for Golf Course Management, course man-

agers spent about \$3.4 billion in 1991 to maintain that acreage.

Green who specializes in the study and management of turfgrasses, said golf links do more good and less harm than many persons think. For instance, the range of cultivation that goes into a typical golf course — closely manicured greens, mowed fairways, unkept roughs and bands of shrubs and trees — is a definite plus for many kinds of wildlife, he said.

"From what I can tell, there doesn't appear to be much degrada-

tion in terms of wildlife," he said. "There is a reduction in the total number of species of wildlife, but for some kinds — particularly birds — golf courses are a real plus."

Green said a study of golf courses and parks in Cincinnati found that birds like finches and sparrows benefit most from the variety of habitat found in golf courses — perhaps more than from conventional municipal parks.

In fact, the potential impact of golf courses on bird populations is large enough that the Audubon Society offers a program under which golf courses can become certified as bird sanctuaries.

And, Green said, construction of new courses is creating more new wetlands than it destroys.

"The first choice is to build the course around existing wetlands," he said. "If they have to use some of the wetland area, then they build twice as much as they took."

Even in other controversial areas, such as water use and conservation, golf courses come out on the plus side, Green said.

"People drive by golf courses and they see all the water being used, and they say, 'They're just wasting water,'" Green said.

Industry consumes about 43 percent of the water used in the United States, he said, and production agriculture uses another 47 percent. Domestic use — bathing, sanitation, drinking, watering lawns (including golf courses) — amounts to about 10 percent.

"They target golf courses when, in actuality, there are other areas that would enhance your probability of saving water," Green said. "This can be a win-win situation for everybody, but everybody has to work together to make it work"

Missouri turf service started

The Missouri Valley Turfgrass Association is working in conjunction with Barbara Corwin at the University of Missouri-Columbia to form the Turf Disease Diagnostic Service for professional turf managers across the state.

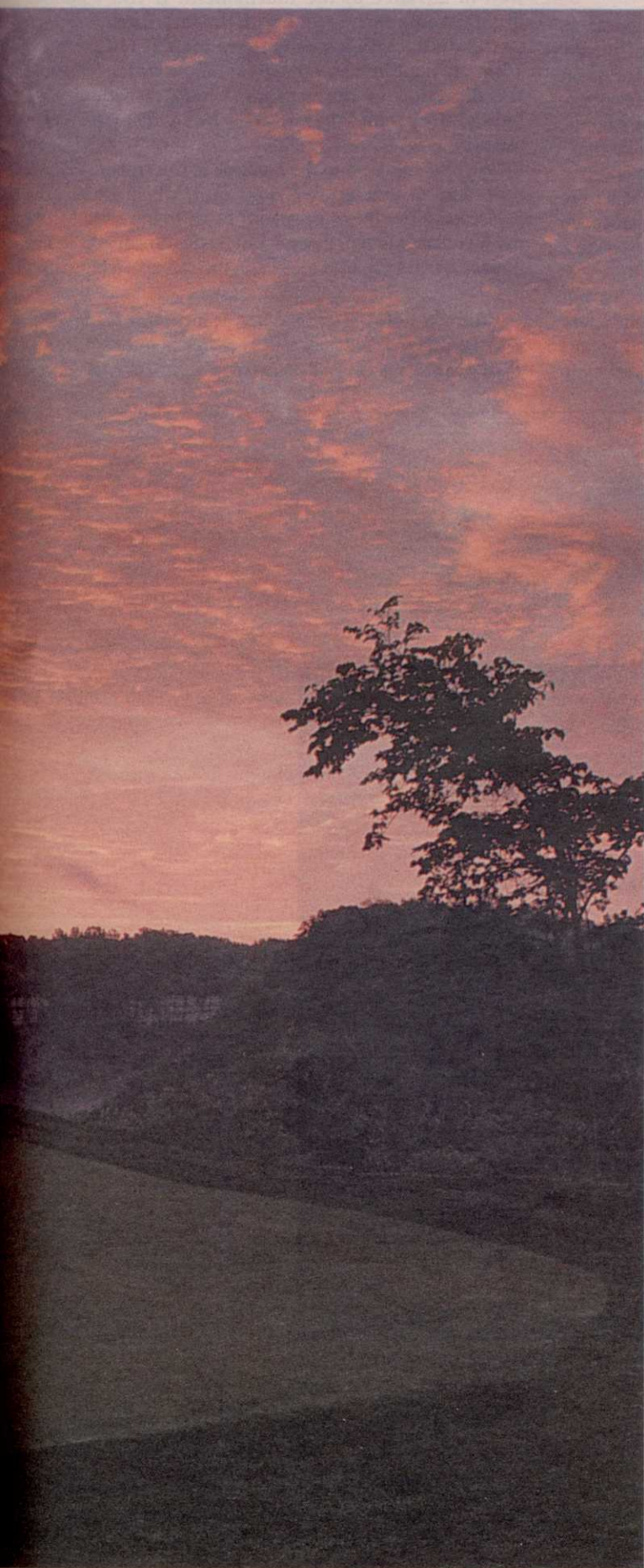
MVTA President Robert P. Deardeuff announced the program which dispatches a plant pathologist to a facility the day of or day after a phone call to the diagnostic clinic.

The pathologist will examine the turf infection firsthand and give a preliminary on-site diagnosis.

"No more packaging up samples and waiting for results," Deardeuff said. "You'll be able to take the proper corrective action immediately."

MVTA members are eligible for a \$50 credit off the \$150 service fee and discounts off lab fees.

The University of Missouri Extension's clinics in agronomy, entomology, horticulture and plant pathology are at 344 Hearnes Center, Columbia, Mo. 65211; telephone 314-882-3019.



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