

BRIEFS



POSTER PROGRAM AVAILABLE

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has developed a campaign to educate golfers about commonly misunderstood aspects of course maintenance. Composed of a three-poster set, the campaign will inform golfers about aerification, application of fertilizers and chemicals, and golf car restrictions. "Effective communication with golfers is extremely vital to the success of a superintendent's operation," said GCSAA President Randy Nichols. "This poster series will be an important tool in achieving that success." Each poster includes an explanation of the topic and is UV-coated so the superintendent may write in a specific schedule or other information, and wipe it off for re-use. It was designed for use in the pro shop and/or locker room.



Randy Nichols

GOOSE ROUND-UP

The Colorado Department of Wildlife has tentatively planned its annual goose round-up to begin around the end of June. More information is available from master driver Dick Kingman, an associate member of the Rocky Mountain GCSA, at 303-470-8237.

PESTICIDE HOTLINE CUT BACK

The federal Environmental Protection Agency has announced it has reduced the hours for its toll-free hotline to the National Pesticides Telecommunications Network [NPTN]. The telephone hotline — 800-858-7378 — is now available from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays through Fridays [Central Standard Time]. It was previously a 24-hour, seven day-a-week service.

RUTGERS NEWSLETTER CANCELED

Rutgers University's Cooperative Extension Service has canceled its *Insect-Disease-Weed Newsletter* after two years of paid subscription service. People wishing to receive the information normally published in the newsletter should call the Extension's Bulletin Board Service at 201-579-0985.

ASPA READIES CONFERENCE

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The American Sod Producers Association will conduct its Summer Convention & Field Days here, July 14-16, stressing credit and collection policies that can make or break a business. The event, centered at the Opryland Hotel, will include the educational program July 14, tours of the Thomas Bros. Grass Co. farming operation, and equipment demonstrations July 15 and 16. More information is available from the ASPA at 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Ill. 60008.

Tall fescue breakthroughs may eliminate overseeding

By MARK LESLIE

The golf industry stands at the edge of an age in which extraordinarily stress-tolerant tall fescue turfgrasses will be available and may eliminate the need for overseeding in the South.

"What you're seeing is a brand-new era and a totally different germplasm base of new fescues that will come out [in the marketplace] in the next three, four, five years," said Dr. Ronny Duncan of the University of Georgia's Griffin Experimental Station. "We will have a whole new generation of stress-tolerant tall fescues that will perform over and above [current] material."

Duncan reports "significant advances" made "very fast" by breeders of tall fescues.

After just one cycle of breeding, Duncan has had "a hundred-fold improvement in adaptability to acid soil and stressful environments," he said. "It's like night and day."

"I'm already in the second cycle [of breeding], and if I make half as much progress in the second cycle as in the

first, we are really going to have some well-adapted material."

Duncan and other turfgrass breeders in the South are building on the great progress made in the transition zone by the long-standing research program of Dr. Reid Funk at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Funk said "very much more" research is being done on tall fescues.

"With the development of turf-type tall fescues, it was demonstrated we could make significant improvements in lower growth, better wear tolerance, finer leaves and more attractive appearance," Funk said.

"Current varieties are doing a superb job in much of California, a good job in areas that don't have extreme summer stress," he added. "They are doing an excellent job in Mediterranean climates of southern Europe."

Robinson said seeds being tested in China and Austria are "looking pretty good."

Tall fescue breeding programs have always been done north of Virginia and

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Bottom line: TGIF must sink or swim on its own

By PETER BLAIS

Checking through requests in the Monday morning Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) message box:

- Any information on broadleaf weed control in the Northeast.
 - Written justifications given to club boards of directors in requesting an outside architect to oversee course renovations.
 - Information on the relationship between geotextile liners and bunker sand consistency.
 - Examples of successful bioremediation techniques for maintaining golf course lakes and ponds without chemicals.
 - Everything on basidiomycetes — a fungal growth related to fairy rings.
- This is the type of information superintendents, students, golf industry manufacturers and researchers commonly request from

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OF BIRDS AND TREES

From trees to birdhouses, Pinehurst Resort & Country Club's maintenance staff is becoming more wildlife-friendly. Above, Gerald Lee plants longleaf pine seedlings on Course No. 2. The resort bought 500 of the seedlings from the U.S. Forestry Service. Half will be planted to replace trees lost to lightning and insects. The other half will be grown larger before transplanting. At left, Steve Nagy checks a bluebird house on the 16th hole of No. 2 — one of 20 bluebird houses that have been installed over the resort's seven

courses. The Eastern Bluebird was once one of North Carolina's most common songbirds. Reportedly, man's activities and several severe winters have caused the decline of North Carolina's bluebird population by as much as 90 percent. Now the bluebird is said to be making a comeback, due largely to conservation efforts. Nesting sites, such as those installed at Pinehurst Resort, are believed to be crucial to the bluebird's continued survival. The resort's maintenance crew has also installed wood duck boxes on the No. 6 and No. 7 courses.

Modifying spreaders, adding drains

By TERRY BUCHEN

FERTILIZER SPREADERS

We have modified our 36-inch stainless steel drop fertilizer spreader slightly so we can "see where we are going" while applying granular fertilizer and pesticide applications after the greens and tees have been mowed and/or the dew has left for the day. We used a Toro/Olathe Rake-O-Vac plastic sweeper "finger" that is folded in half and bolted near the bottom of each leg. As the person

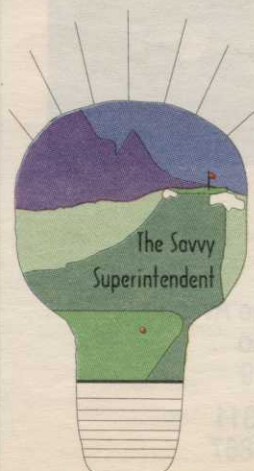
applies the granular materials, the plastic "fingers" lift up the turf enough so they know exactly how much to overlap for a near-perfect, skip-free application. The fingers have to be pushed back to their original shape occasionally to apply enough pressure to the turf surface. It works quite effectively when the turf surface is dry and seeing the wheel-overlap marks is difficult.

CATCH BASINS

We are fortunate to have a

main line drainage system on most of our golf holes which consists of PVC sewer pipe ranging in diameter from six to 12 inches. At each low point in the fairways and roughs is a concrete vertical "catch basin" with a metal 18-inch removal steel grate on top. As each main line and lateral four-inch drain line connects into their respective catch basins, the hole made in the concrete is patched with an instant concrete mix.

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National turf information source on its own

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Michigan State University-based TGIF.

It's also the type of information turfgrass professionals will have to seek elsewhere if TGIF can't attract the \$75,000 in subscriber fees and donations needed annually for the turfgrass data clearinghouse to stand on its own two feet.

"We're in an evolutionary period," said Peter Cookingham, project manager of MSU's Turfgrass Information Center,

which oversees TGIF's 26,000 reference materials and the estimated 600 new items added quarterly.

"The U.S. Golf Association co-sponsored TGIF with Michigan State about 10 years ago. They split the cost 50-50 with us. If the USGA hadn't stepped in, the data base never would have been assembled. Now it's time for TGIF to stand on its own."

TGIF has taken several steps to make that happen.

NEW COMMITTEE FORMED

First, it established an external advisory committee last year to promote TGIF's services. Headed by Medinah Country Club grounds manager Dan Quast, the 12-member board includes USGA officials, industry manufacturers, university researchers and others in the golf course industry.

The USGA spent \$650,000 on TGIF over the past 10 years to make all the turfgrass information ever published available to anyone in the world, Quast said.

"The USGA did a great job," said Quast, who agreed to head the advisory committee at Cookingham's urging. "But the industry seemed to take the attitude of 'Let the USGA do it', instead of getting behind the program.

"TGIF represents 10 years of funding and 30 years of research. It would have been a shame to lose that."

The advisory committee held an informal gathering at this winter's International Conference and Show in Anaheim, Calif., and will conduct a formal meeting at MSU in early June.

FEES CHANGED

The second thing TGIF has done to increase revenues is change its fee structure. USGA-member clubs traditionally paid less than non-members. Now all individuals will pay the same \$75 per year subscriber fee.

"That's about what you'd pay to attend one regional seminar," Quast said.

Of TGIF's 200 subscribers, 60 to 70 percent are superintendents, Cookingham estimated.

"I find the information very valuable for the things I do here [Medinah]," Quast said.

Foundation, association and corporate rates are also available.

College students use the research for term papers or doctoral theses, Quast explained. It also helps researchers avoid duplicating previous efforts, a waste of limited resources.

Universities can sign on for \$500 yearly with no per-hour, on-line charge, Quast said.

"I wrote to all the regional superintendent associations last year asking them to sponsor their local universities," he added.

Regional associations can become members for an annual fee of \$250 to \$1,000, the amount dependent on membership size. The association receives the new quarterly index of available materials, a monthly newsletter and a \$10 per-hour, on-line discount (\$20 per hour is the normal fee) for association members. The quarterly index will be mailed to all subscribers beginning in June.

Corporations can sign on for \$300 to \$8,000 yearly, depending on the number of users and terminals tied into the system.

Non-subscribers can access TGIF's data base for a slightly higher per-hour fee than is available to members.

EASIER ACCESS

TGIF is also trying to increase its customer base by making information more readily available.

"One of the things many people don't realize is that you don't have to have an on-line computer to use TGIF," Quast said.

Data is also available by fax, phone or mail by calling the toll-free number — 800-446-TURF.

"We need more folks to be involved if this is going to continue to work," Cookingham said.

The O.J. Noer collection was the foundation for TGIF. Noer, considered one of the pioneers of turfgrass research, was an agronomist from the 1920s through the early 1960s, working primarily for the Milwaukee Sewage Commission.

Michigan State received his collection in the mid-1960s. During his tenure at MSU, Dr. James Beard indexed Noer's collection and the works of other turfgrass researchers.

The Turfgrass Information Center combined Beard's work with contemporary research collected through USGA funding to form TGIF.

Some golfers think that

golf course super-

intendents have

it made.

If they only knew.

They'd be shocked to learn the demands and complexities of your profession. And amazed, for example, at how much hard work and long hours it takes to create superb greens with mowers set within a thousandth of an inch.

Toro knows. Our Greensmaster® 1000 and 3100 greens mowers were born of your dedication to keeping those greens superb.



Greensmaster® 1000. Superintendent rated the world's best walk greens mower.

It's another example of how we've worked as partners with three generations of golf course superintendents. To provide you with the precision engineered tools you need to create exceptional playability and beauty.

Because we share your dedication.



Helping You Put Quality Into Play.™