

BRIEFS



DIXY LEE RAY HEADLINING

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Dr. Dixy Lee Ray, author of *Trashing the Planet* and recipient of the United Nations Peace Prize, will give the keynote address at the American Sod Producers Association's Midwinter Conference and Exposition at Wyndham Paradise Valley Resort here, Jan. 20-22. A former governor of Washington and chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Ray will speak on "The Science and Politics of Environmentalism." More information is available from the ASPA at 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Ill. 60008; 708-705-9898.

PESTICIDE GUIDE PUBLISHED

The 1993 *Pesticide Directory*, a guide to the producers, products, regulators, researchers and associates in the United States, is now available. Basic manufacturers and formulators are listed with a listing of their products and key personnel. In addition, agricultural colleges that work in pest control, Extension personnel, USDA research stations and independent contract researchers across the United States are listed with addresses. It costs \$49.95 and is available from—Thomas Publications, P.O. Box 9335, Fresno, Calif. 93791; 209-435-2163.

GGCSA ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIPS

The GGCSA 1993 Scholarship recipients were announced recently, following interviews at the University of Georgia, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College and Lake City Community College. Recipients of the \$1000 scholarships include Timothy Cunningham of Norcross, attending the University of Georgia, and Edward Lee Crosby of Omega who will also be attending UGA. Bard Salmons of Athens was chosen as alternate. Each receives a \$1000 scholarship, a plaque of recognition, as well as an expenses-paid trip to the GGCSA Annual Meeting, to be held at Kiawah Island Resort, S.C.



RECYCLING PESTICIDE CONTAINERS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio State University instituted a pesticide container recycling program at its Turfgrass Research Field Day here Aug. 17. Superintendents could drop off their clean, empty pesticide containers, which Grower Service Co. will grind, granulating them for further processing. Eventually, they will be made into new containers or be put to other safe uses. The program was supported by OSU Extension, the Ohio Department of Agriculture and Ohio AgriBusiness Association.

# GCSAA battles being waged behind doors

By PETER BLAIS

The departure of top executives and officials of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America has shed light on a behind-the-scenes battle being waged over the association's future.

The initial public skirmish was fought at last winter's annual meeting when members resoundingly defeated several proposed bylaw amendments and voted out two incumbent board members.

Opponents claimed the bylaw changes would have given the board too much power and diverted attention away from the superintendent by encouraging more non-superintendents to join.

That vote apparently established a battlefield pitting an old guard versus new guard. The old consisted of past expansion-minded presidents, their boards and Chief Executive Officer John Schilling. The new guard is headed by current President Randy Nichols, leader of what many view as the more inward-looking current board.

That conflict was partly responsible for the Arthur Andersen management study that played a role in the resignations of Schilling, senior directors Robert Ochs and Diana Green, and Immediate Past President Bill Roberts.

"The new board feels it is operating from a mandate that it received at the annual meet-

ing. I attended that meeting and heard no such mandate," said GCSAA Past (1990) President Gerald Faubel.

"To pull back when the needs of our members are being met just doesn't make sense. I believe our members are being served better than ever before."

Richard Fahey, president of GCSAA's Maine chapter, sees it somewhat differently.

"There does seem to be a change in the wind," he said. "Exactly why, I don't know. But there is a real difference of opinion out there about GCSAA's future."

"Branching off to attract members, like club managers, bothers a lot of people. We

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# Ornamentals: A wave of the future in golf

By MARK LESLIE

For golf course superintendents familiar with bentgrass, ryegrass, fescues and such, the likes of maiden grass, fountain grass and giant reed grass might sound foreign.

Indeed, some ornamental grasses, like Chinese silver grass, originated on foreign ground.

But as superintendents search for ways to reduce chemical use and labor costs, more may find themselves planting these exotic grasses in the rough, around tee boxes, between fairways.

"They're an excellent plant to have on the golf course," said Richard Kaiser, superintendent of the five-course Fairfield Glade Community Club outside Crossville, Tenn. "Ornamental grasses don't require any attention, compared to shrubs, annuals and perennials. You create aesthetically pleasing areas and have lower maintenance costs."

"There's been increasing interest in ornamental grasses over the last several years," said Dr. Eliot Roberts of Sparta, Tenn., a retired soil and turfgrass scientist who enumerated some of their positives: "No insects, no diseases, no water, no fertilizer after they've gotten started, and no maintenance except to cut them back each year. Able to withstand sub-zero temperatures. Here are plants that will grow from five to 15 feet tall, opening up vistas, then gradually closing them out during the year. They change the colors of the



Giant reed grass, left, shows off its beautiful seedheads, while at right Chinese silver grass fronts plume grass.

landscape."

"I don't know of anyone in the country who's worked with them longer than I have, and I get more and more enthused by them," said Guy Robbins, superintendent of grounds at the University of Tennessee at Martin. "They're fascinating."

Robbins, who in 25 years has never once needed to spray ornamentals for insects or diseases, said he uses them "because of all the things they do for you. One thing, they provide a cheap [aesthetic] show. They give you virtually 10 or 11 months of color."

"By the time people are outdoors in the early spring, these plants are already coming up and growing. So we get early emergence, early interest and early presence. They look good all spring, summer and fall. They have very attractive blooms in late summer and fall. And when we have a hard freeze they turn

brown."

"As soon as the weather starts to cool off the inflorescences start to come out — beautiful, feathery inflorescences," reminisced Roberts, who got his first ornamental roots from Robbins. "They will last late into the fall, even into ice storms and still be beautiful."

Robbins added that many people plant ornamental grasses because of their languid movement and music in the slightest breeze.

Fulton Country Club superintendent Lynn Newton has been assisted by club member Harry Reams, who has made what Robbins termed "a horticultural extravaganza" at the South Fulton, Tenn., course. "We like them, their benefits and the look they give us," Newton said.

While Newton started using ornamental grasses to cover up unsightly areas, he quickly discovered they could

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# Barrier island turfcare presents tough challenges

By MARK SMART

CORPUSCHRISTI, Texas—Good cultural practices are the key to managing a barrier island golf course, according to Carl Suding, superintendent of the recently renovated Padre Isles Country Club here.

The only golf course on the state's 115-mile-long Padre Island, it has been swamped twice during hurricanes and is constantly bombarded by sand, salt and ocean breezes.

"Grass doesn't grow well with so much salt," said Suding, who is vice president of the Gulf Coast Superintendents Association and a board member of the Texas Turfgrass

Foundation. "Turfgrass will tolerate only so much."

The Padre Isles course uses Tifdwarf Bermudagrass on the greens and 419 Bermuda on the fairways. Seashore paspallum grows naturally on the island, but is used only in some of the lower, saltier areas of the course. Suding said he has also experimented with Adelaide, but he promotes Bermuda because of its better texture and color.

To counter the salt Suding recommends paying very close attention to aeration and water management, including drainage

and use of wetting agents.

Padre Isles CC irrigates with effluent water from a nearby wastewater treatment plant. Salt water seepage raises the salinity to 2,500 parts sodium per million.

Care has to be taken not to over-water. "Watering too much will result in standing water, which dries out and leaves salt deposits in the soil," said Suding, "so we have to water as accurately as possible."

He uses gypsum and lime which contains calcium to help displace the sodium in the soil. Aeration helps the salt pass through

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## Extra tips on ornamentals

Ornamentals normally encroach eight to 10 inches a year. That's great for Richard Kaiser, who is using them to fill in certain areas at Fairfield Glade Community Club outside Crossville, Tenn.

And Guy Robbins, superintendent of grounds at the University of Tennessee at Martin, added: "You can get a bunch of them in a hurry."

"You plant one for \$5 and it makes a plant that year. The next year it's several times larger. Then you can divide from that one plant and get several."

For superintendents who want to confine them, Robbins said to cut them back in late February. That, he said, is their "only maintenance."

Superintendent Lynn Newton's crews at Fulton Country Club in South Fulton, Tenn., use hedge trimmers or chain saws and cut the ornamentals off at three inches above ground.

Dr. Eliot Roberts takes an ax to his bigger grasses but said the roots are shallow and easy to reach.

Seeded types won't grow in cold regions, Roberts said.

He warned to not get started with an ornamental grass that has marginal winter hardiness. "You want them to spread and relandscape areas," he said.

*Giant reed, plume grass  
Chinese silver grass all  
produce beautiful flowers and  
seedheads.*

— Dr. Eliot Roberts.



## The lowdown on high grasses

Giant reed grass, plume grass and Chinese silver grass have won the heart of Dr. Eliot Roberts at his home in Sparta, Tenn., where he is still busy experimenting in his retirement.

University of Tennessee at Martin Superintendent of Grounds Guy Robbins singled out maiden and fountain grasses as excellent ornamentals, and warned superintendents that he has been unimpressed with other types, many of which "resemble weeds."

Here's the lowdown, along with a recommendation from superintendent Lynn Newton and club member Harry Reams of Fulton Country Club in South Fulton, Tenn.:

- Giant reed grass: All green, it grows eight to 15 feet tall, sports wide leaf blades, and produces bamboo.

- Plume grass: Also called ravennae grass, it grows seven to 15 feet tall, has narrower blades, has a less heavy stalk, and shines a silver mid-vein down through its leaves.

- Chinese silver grass: It reaches four to six feet high, is very fine and wiry.

All three produce beautiful flowers and seedheads late in the summer, Roberts said.

- Fountain grass: Called pennisetum alopecuroides by scientists, it is "spectacular,"

Robbins said, starting to bloom a tan color in late July.

- Maiden grass (miscanthus): Though there are 25 to 40 types, Robbins has narrowed them down to "some we find more interesting over a longer period of time": miscanthus sinensis gracillimus, miscanthus gracillimus and variegated miscanthus.

"We really, really like miscanthus sinensis gracillimus. That's our pride and joy," Robbins said. "It has a fine texture, fountain-like growth, gets 4-1/2 to 5 feet tall, has a beautiful plume bloom. It's quite showy. It comes up early in the spring. In the winter when we have a hard freeze and it turns brown, it stands erect and the wind moving around produces an interesting sound."

- Hasta, yuca and zebra grasses: Newton and Reams also use these perennials. The broad-leafed hasta has low-greening foliage that blooms late in the year. Yuca's foliage reaches two feet in height, with a long stem that blooms white for two months a year and foliage that remains year-round. Zebra grass is similar to pampus but with a little wider leaf and horizontal yellow stripes. It comes out in early March and gains height and fullness throughout the summer, going dormant after the first frost or two in October and adding "a very nice effect for the winter. It gives a tan color but doesn't deteriorate."

## Ornamentals: A lot for a little in maintenance

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prevent worn spots around tees "where we couldn't control the cart traffic without ropes and chains. So we use them to direct the flow of traffic."

"I don't like chains and posts and ropes to prevent carts from

going to areas."

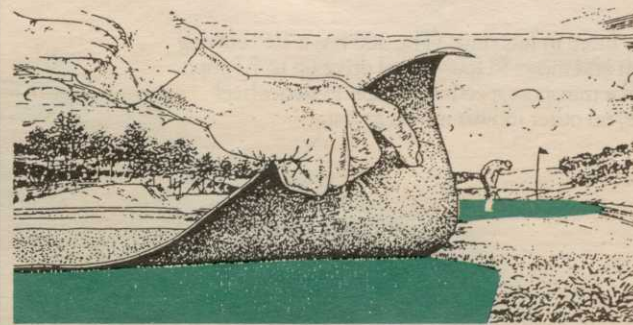
Fulton Country Club's 37 ornamental beds have received "a tremendous amount of praise" from visiting golfers, who have taken the idea back to their home courses, Newton said. He added that he and Reams have

shared information and ideas with golf course officials in Western Kentucky, Western Tennessee, Southern Missouri and Southern Illinois. "Some of our beds are five or six feet wide and 20, 30 or 40 feet long," he said. "Some are 30-by-30."

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