

Diversity proves to be the root of longevity in many turfgrasses

The ghost of Toronto C15 lives on, ever pushing superintendents to seek a genetically diverse stand of turfgrass, according to Skip Lynch of Seed Research of Oregon.

The tale of Toronto C15, a vegetatively propagated creeping bentgrass, is simple — and devastating. “It dominated the market for a couple of years,” said Lynch, Seed Research’s marketing director. “Then, suddenly, out of nowhere a disease started eating Toronto everywhere. Greens were going — everything. They called it C15

Decline — a bacterial disease that the cure cost more than renovation.

“It turned out the monostand was the absolute monostand. There was no genetic diversity like today’s bentgrasses have.”

Researchers — and superintendents — have learned from the experience. Penncross bentgrass, for instance, is three entirely different plants. Providence is five, Cobra has seven plants in it, Cutter six, Crenshaw five. “Those are varieties, but in the strictest sense blends,” Lynch said.

A superintendent “planting bluegrass in the rough will specify three different varieties. Why? He’s trying to get a genetically diverse stand,” he said.

Lynch added that the idea that a superintendent “seeds a stand once and never goes back is a mistake some people make. But they learn the mistake very quickly. You can always, always, always improve a stand — whether it’s increasing the population of the stand, or by adding genetic diversity by going out and putting in some new genetic.”

— M.L.

Delhi adding nine for students

Continued from page 11
former roommates.

The new nine holes will join an existing nine-hole track and give students hands-on experience in a number of areas.

“During construction, the students will work right along with Clark Cos., actually constructing bunkers and greens,” Haight said. “Down the road, they will get the basics done before we open. Then they’ll build bunkers and other work for years.”

“We also have a master plan that calls for modifications to the front [existing, 30-year-old] nine,” from tee and green renovation to irrigation system improvements, Smith said. “The beauty is, those modifications can be made over time, with no impact on play whatsoever.”

“By adding this nine, we’re able to integrate the course into the program and build a stronger program,” he added.

With the prospects of the new course, Delhi College has already seen an increase in turfgrass and landscape architecture students. Whereas 27 students were enrolled in the Department of Plant Sciences last year, the college anticipates an enrollment exceeding 35 this year.

“We have seen a significant increase in interest, particularly in the golf course operations program in the past year,” Smith said. “We relate that directly to the unique projects we’re about to undertake.”

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If all proceeds perfectly, Smith said the new nine should open in July or August 1996. In the meantime, Haight is busy raising money and equipment for the course and classes.

The school’s first Golf Education Fund Tournament raised \$25,000 — half from individuals and half from companies in the golf industry, Haight reported.

The college has produced a promotional video for students and potential donors, said Haight, adding that he is busy talking with companies that are prospects for providing seed, drainage tile, irrigation systems and other items needed for the project.

The New York Turfgrass Association is among those donating \$25,000 toward a hole, which will be dedicated in the donors’ names.

“Clark Cos. has ‘stripped a gear’ to make it affordable for us,” he said. “And they have already done the shaping of the greens and tees of the first three holes.”

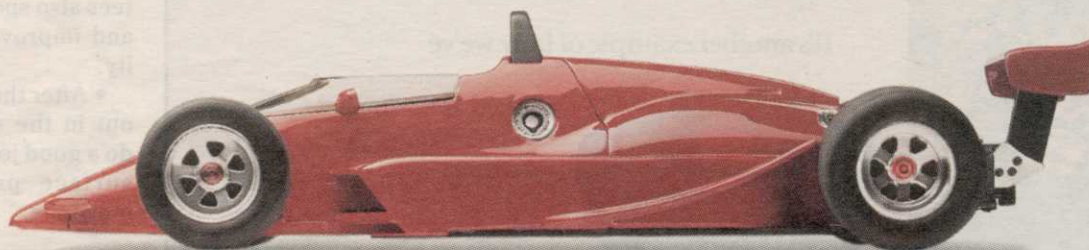
The track winds through woods and around ponds and streams and open cliffs.

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Meanwhile, Delhi is holding a dedication ceremony for its new Turf Education Center at 1:15 p.m. Aug. 16.



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