

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Back to School

Architect Damian Pascuzzo says it's time the industry reeducates itself on what a course should be 11

Targeting the End-User

The Kansas green industry has tapped a new research financing source: Golfers themselves 13

Golf Course Expo

Keeping pace in *The Public Arena*: Bringing maintenance, management and suppliers together 46

Off the market

Last mercury-based pesticide, Calo-Clor, obsolete this month

By HAL PHILLIPS

Whether or not you agree that mercury-based pesticides pose tangible threats to the environment and their applicators, the last of this chemical breed will disappear from the marketplace this month.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has canceled the registration of the mercury-based pesticides Calo-Clor and Calo-Gran, as voluntarily requested by Grace-Sierra Crop Protection Co. (The request was made last year and Grace-Sierra has since been purchased by The Scott Company.)

Reactions in the golf course industry vary widely, as some applaud the move and some decry it. Either way, superintendents in Northern climes are searching for new ways to treat pink and grey snow mold.

"A lot of guys use [Calo-Clor], and I imagine a lot of guys are stockpiling right now," said Kevin Ross, superintendent of Falmouth (Maine) Country Club.

Continued on page 39



Grower Charlie Mitchell (from left), Penn State University's Dr. Joe Duich and Oregon State University field inspector Ivan Hagen get a first-hand look at the current bentgrass crop.

Bentgrass Report
Page 23

New cultivars show great promise

By MARK LESLIE

The hot button in today's world of bentgrass breeding is heat-resistance, and a half-dozen superior new cultivars entering the marketplace will reportedly antedate some of their ancestors.

While turfgrass breeders and superintendents await the final results, this month, of the last five-year national bentgrass test, they know one thing: The new leading bentgrasses are finer, darker and denser than the old standard bearers.

Expecting the newest cultivars, planted in test plots last fall, to be even better, Dr. Milt Engelke of Texas A&M said: "We've

made one first good step. We're getting a biologically stronger plant. The new generation of bentgrasses is going to give much better uniformity and less tendency to segregate.

"We're concentrating more now on taking the desirable genes for disease-, heat- and insect-resistance and putting them into single [seed] populations."

The Penncross-PennLinks-Penneagle line out of Penn State has dominated the bentgrass market for three decades. But "suddenly, just within the last year more new bentgrasses have been released than

Continued on page 22



PROTECTION THROUGH STYROFOAM?

Kevin Ross of Falmouth (Maine) Country Club displays his Styrofoam innovation for protecting irrigation heads from the rigors of northern winters. See "On The Green," page 14.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

Dr. Jackson: Sod the golfer, cut grass higher 13
Turning winter kill to your advantage 15
The Savvy Super modifies bunker rakes 17

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Golden Baja: Nicklaus on the Sea of Cortez 10
Don Knott ascends to ASGCA top spot 27
Golf reps present suggested ADA guidelines 31

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Environmental debate delays Kiawah sale 33
GreenVisions making mark in Midwest 33
New player: Signature International LP 34

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

Seed legislation pending on PVP and VNS 37
Scotts honors GCSAA at The Tradition 39
What's new in the marketplace 42



BETWEEN A ROCK...

The geologically striking 13th hole at Aubrey Glen Golf Course, a new Bunny Mason design now open for play in Bend, Ore. For a complete listing of new courses and those still in planning, see page 30.

Seven-course project planned for Virginia's I-64 corridor

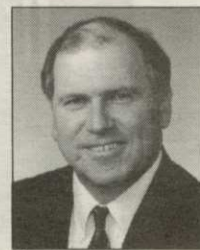
By PETER BLAIS

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — The state's largest landowner and one of the major operators of golf courses in Myrtle Beach, S.C., have joined forces to develop as many as seven golf courses along Interstate 64 between

Williamsburg and Richmond. Chesapeake Corp. of Richmond and The Legends Group of Myrtle Beach tentatively plan four courses, a residential subdivision and possibly a pari-mutuel horse racetrack on 10,000 acres in New Kent County. Construction of the first course is scheduled to begin in early summer and could be ready for play by September 1995, according to Peter Johns, special projects manager for Chesapeake subsidiary Delmarva Properties.

Closer to Williamsburg, the 7,200-acre Stonehouse

Continued on page 29



Jim Scott

Jim Scott takes the reins at NGCOA

By PETER BLAIS

Enhancing golf's image, forging closer ties with other golf associations and promoting more facilities for entry-level players are among the goals of new National Golf Course Owners Association President Jim Scott.

"Right now our biggest challenge is overcoming the negative environmental perception surrounding golf courses," said Scott, whose family owns and operates five golf courses and a hotel in Augusta, Mich.

"It's hard to imagine the game would have grown as much as it has if it had such a negative environmental effect. But no one seems to want to talk about the positives. It's up to us to do it."

Us doesn't mean just course owners, but all members of the Allied Associations of Golf, the 23-year golf industry veteran said. He noted in particular the efforts of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America to improve golf's environmental image and

Continued on page 35

Inaugural Scotts Tradition of Excellence award to GCSAA

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) was presented the 1994 Scotts Tradition of Excellence Award at the Tradition golf tournament here in early April. Stephen F. Mona, executive director and CEO of GCSAA, accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

Scotts established The Tradition of Excellence Award to recognize the outstanding achievements among golf course superintendents in advancing the science of course maintenance and in making golf the best it can be.

"When considering who the recipient of the

first Scotts Tradition of Excellence Award should be, the choice was obvious," said Scotts Company's President and COO Ted Host.

"The GCSAA has sought through its membership to sustain the highest standards for performance, professionalism and innovation in the world of golf course management.

"Through this award, we are recognizing the contributions of all golf course superintendents who have made the golf industry in this country the finest in the world, and we salute them for bringing out the excellence in all of us who serve it," Host concluded.

Last mercury-based pesticide pulled

Continued from page 1

perintendent at Falmouth (Maine) Country Club. "I don't use it and I'll tell you why: For any sort of disease management, I like to use the least toxic product available. This stuff [Calo-Clor] comes with a skull and crossbones on it."

"It does carry the danger label," confirmed Greg Wahl, national accounts manager for Scotts. "Mercury is a carcinogen, and you have to remember that mercury has been eliminated from most everything. Batteries may have a little

mercury in them, but that's it."

Calo-Clor and its granular cousin Calo-Gran were the last mercury-based pesticides still registered for use in the United States. They contain the active ingredients mercuric chloride and mercurous chloride. Approximately 21,000 combined pounds of these two pesticides were used annually, according to EPA.

Under terms of the cancellation action, Scott may sell and distribute products labeled for release or shipment on or before June 25 of last year until June 24, 1994. Retailers and other distributors may sell these products until their stocks are exhausted and users may use them until their supplies are depleted.

Dr. Noel Jackson, the renowned University of Rhode Island agronomist, isn't convinced that mercury-based products are harmful when applied on golf courses.

"The amount used on golf courses is extremely limited," Jackson explained. "And most of the mercury is tied up in the soil profile. It doesn't move laterally. It doesn't leech. Whether you think of that as an environmental danger, that's up to you.

"I don't."

Patty Knaggs, head superintendent at Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn., can't argue with the product's effectiveness.

"It's superb," she said. "But I won't stockpile it, though I had the opportunity to do so. I'm just as happy to face the real world."

...

Regardless of where you stand on the mercury issue, superintendents who used Calo-Clor and Calo-Gran are searching for alternatives. Wahl said Scott is "currently working on a couple of compounds to replace them."

Ross endorses a combination of Daconil and Chipco 26019, as well as a combination of Daconil and Curalan.

Knaggs said she has also found success using the Daconil-Chipco combination, though it's significantly more expensive than Calo-Clor and about "80 to 90 percent as effective."

On another front, Ross made an interesting discovery this year.

"This past winter I tested Banner, which has looked real good," said Ross. "The spots where I used it are spotless this spring, and this was one helluva year for snow mold.

"Daconil, on the other hand, has been around forever. But no one's every used it for snow mold. It works great."

The problem with systemic fungicides like Banner — not to mention Bayleton, Rubigan and Turemec SP — is overuse. Both Ross and Jackson agreed that excessive spring dollar spot application might build a tolerance to the fungicide, precluding its use when you really need it — in the summer.



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