

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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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 at Falmouth (Maine) Country Club.

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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



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.

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

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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.

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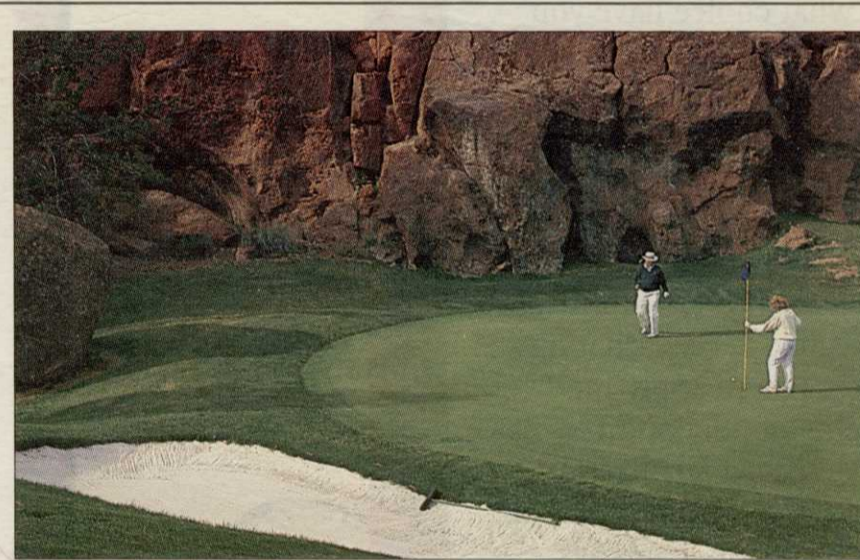
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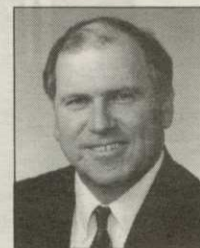
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BETWEEN A ROCK...

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.



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

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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

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Turf breeders taking bentgrasses to new heights of excellence

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in quite some time," said Steve Tubbs, vice president of Turf Merchants in Tangent, Ore.

The heat-tolerant bents — notably Cato and Crenshaw out of Texas A&M, are doing quite well," Tubbs said, "and it's been the rebirth of bentgrass market."

In the meantime, the developer of Penncross — Penn State's Dr. Joe Duich, who has worked longer than anyone on creeping bentgrasses — is touting several

new creeping bents ready for release in the fall of 1995 that are finer, darker, denser than any before them.

"It is absolutely going to antique some of the older bentgrasses," said Tubbs.

"These look too good to be true. They are so superior to anything out there now....," said Bill L. Rose, president of Tee-2-Green Corp., which controls Penncross and its sisters. "There's nothing ever perfect. We're looking for the

Improvements are 'absolutely going to antique some of the older bentgrasses.'

— Steve Tubbs
Turf Merchants

monster to jump out and bite us. But so far they look spectacular. Three-year-old greens with no disease despite no use of

fungicides in the climate of North Carolina is pretty impressive. We are putting out new tests in different climates to see if there are any problems we're not aware of."

Rose also pointed to density as another major factor in the new varieties.

"They are twice as dense as the commercial varieties we have now," he said. "We think that's a real benefit in providing a near-perfect putting surface. We think the density will keep poa annua

from encroaching on the greens.

"With fumigated new greens, done properly, we don't think poa will get established. We haven't proven that but it is a theory that seems very real to us."

"The Holy Grail," Tubbs said, "is that creeping bentgrass that will live year-round in Florida."

Turfgrass breeders are taking that challenge, too, by the horns, sometimes mixing cultivars to their advantage.

For instance, Seed Research of Oregon combined Providence and SR 1020 to get Dominant. And Engelke said Cato and Crenshaw will be marketed this summer as CNC by both Lofts, which has the license on Crenshaw, and Pickseed West, which has the license on Cato.

In the Dominant mix, SR 1020 is more heat-tolerant and more susceptible to dollar spot.

The CNC mix is "a complement of strengths," Engelke said. "Crenshaw is susceptible to dollar spot and Cato is resistant to it... Crenshaw is aggressive growing and has excellent traffic tolerance and recuperative abilities. Cato helps keep it from being too aggressive and reduces its thatching tendency."

But how hot can it get?

"One of the most successful Cato plantings is outside Houston," Engelke said. "Bentwater Country Club has had nine holes planted with Cato since 1991 and just planted another nine."

Key to the bentgrass breeders' success against heat is developing a stronger root system — one that will persist under higher soil temperatures and retain the ability to cool itself.

"With the old standard bearers, in the heat of summertime the root system would decline drastically," Engelke said. "Then the superintendent would have to use alternative management practices, such as syringing and fungicide applications."

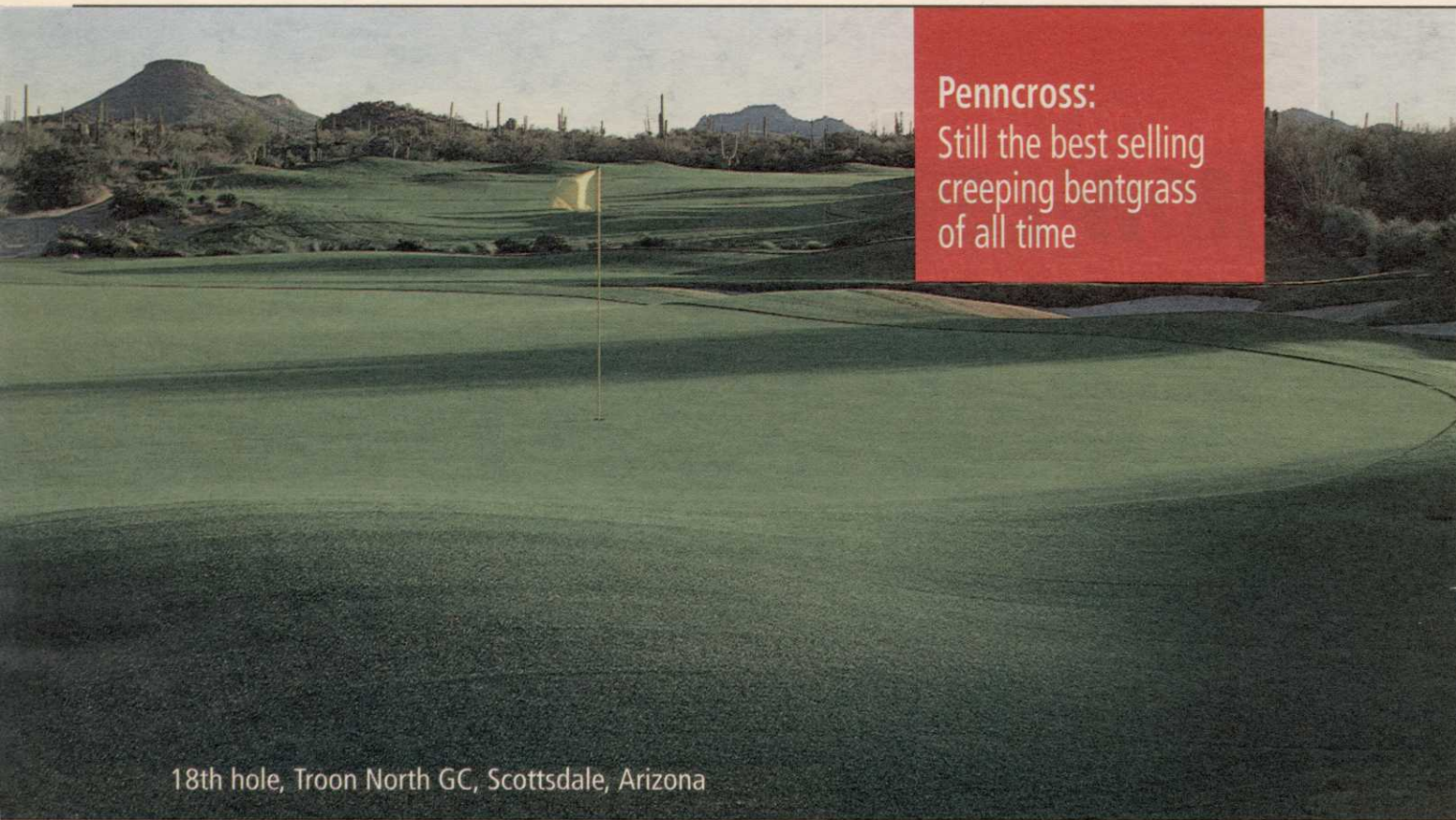
"With a good strong root system, the plant is able to better handle heat. Because it is cooling itself, you put less moisture in the soil canopy and naturally have less problems with disease."

Another major improvement with improved disease tolerance, he said, is that diseases take longer to develop.

"Therefore, the superintendent can be more proactive rather than having to be reactive. He doesn't have to drop everything and get out the fire hose or fungicide tank. He can plan his schedule and go into a curative rather than preventive program," Engelke said. "There lies one of the critical aims we have in reducing the cost of maintaining bentgrass — environmental costs as well as financial obligations back to the club, laborwise, fungicide and everything."

Within the next year, Texas A&M also hopes to release a new bentgrass with increased salinity tolerance. A derivative of Seaside, it is being tested as Syn 1-88.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



Penncross:
Still the best selling
creeping bentgrass
of all time

18th hole, Troon North GC, Scottsdale, Arizona

Penncross' Heat Tolerance Is Legendary. Equally Important, It Endures Winter Storms, Snow And Drying Winds.

The southern U.S., particularly the desert, is known for its hot, dry summers...most certainly a challenge for a cool-season grass. With sound management

storms, hail, ice, snow and desiccating winds that could undo less hardy grasses. Penncross has proven itself time and again when taken to the extremes.

So, it's equally important to make sure your choice of a putting green grass will survive the winter months, too.

Since 1955, Penncross has seen service under every imaginable management practice, and has survived every possible wear, mowing height, and climate consideration.

As one superintendent put it: "Sure, I'd specify Penncross again...even with the new bents available... because I know how to manage it, and how it will

perform year after year".

Penncross establishes fastest, recovers from damage most rapidly and putts consistently.

Plus, all Penncross is certified. It's produced by Oregon's best growers and marketed by Tee-2-Green Corp. through reputable distributors.

It's no wonder Penncross is the most widely used creeping bentgrass in the world!



practices and adequate water, Penncross has become the year-round choice on traditionally bermudagrass courses.

During the winter season, parts of the south endure severe

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