

BRIEFS



PESTICIDE GUIDE PUBLISHED

FRESNO, Calif. — The Users Reference Guide to Pesticides, aimed at agricultural and horticultural users, has been released by Thomson Publications. The 200-page book lists products registered in the United States by generic name, followed by different formulations with their tank-mix, adjuvant and compatibility recommendations. It is available from Thomson at P.O. Box 9335, Fresno, Calif. 93791; telephone 209-435-2163.

ASHS ELECTS CLEMSON'S KELLY

CLEMSON, S.C. — The head of Clemson University's Horticulture Department has been chosen research vice president-elect for the American Society for Horticultural Science. Dr. John Kelly was elected by the ASHS membership for his outstanding leadership, involvement in the ASHS and professional accomplishments. He will begin his term in July 1995. Kelly has been a professor at Clemson for nine years and department head since in 1991. He also is director of the South Carolina Botanical Garden.

TESTS CONFIRM TURF COVERS HELP

Turf development research conducted at Texas A&M University is the subject of a new report from Contech Construction Products Inc. Results of the studies confirm that sensitive turfgrasses can be readily protected



against winter elements. One of the objectives of the research conducted by Dr. M.C.

Engelke, associate professor of turfgrass breeding, was to reduce winter dormancy for the emergence of healthier turf after winter seasons. Free copies of the report are available from Contech, Dept. GICH-102, 33 Greenwood Lane, Springboro, Ohio 45066; telephone 800-338-1122 (in Ohio, 800-752-8899).

SOD HOTLINE INSTALLED

Turf Resource Center, a toll-free telephone service, now is available to the American Sod Producers Association's office. The phone (1-800-405-TURF) emphasizes ASPA's developing public relations and education program. Organizations, publications and individuals will be able to obtain listings of sod producers in their area of interest, tips on sodding, and information for possible articles or other facts related to the sod industry specifically, or turfgrass generally.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Winter kill serves spring wake-up call to mid-Atlantic Coast supers

By DIANE MILLER

In the wake of the most severe winter since 1977-78, golf course superintendents from Maryland to New York are reporting the loss of as much as 30 percent of their turf on greens and up to 70 percent on fairways, and some may not open until "well into May."

The blanket of ice and snow that kept area courses closed for as long as two to three months prevents gas exchange around the glass plants, in effect smothering the plant. Superintendents are discovering that under the layers of ice the turf is rotting and black in some areas, giving off a powerful stench once the ice is removed.

Winter injury, including extensive winter kill of poa annua and perennial ryegrass, extends from Baltimore and Washington, D.C., through the Philadelphia area, central and northern New Jersey, and into the Pocono Mountains, according to the U.S. Golf Association Green Section. Much heavier than normal snow mold damage is

being reported through Ohio and Kentucky.

More than 200 golf course superintendents, assistants, greens chairmen, club officials, and course owners from the New Jersey/Philadelphia area met on March 28 at Tavistock Country Club in Haddonfield, N.J., to discuss the ramifications of the severe damage.

The joint meeting of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey (GCSANJ) and the Philadelphia Association of Golf Course Superintendents (PAGCS) opened the line of communication between superintendents, club officials and the USGA.

Jim Sklorusky, Northeast Region agronomist for the USGA, discussed previous years' damage from upstate New York and Montreal. David Oatis, director of the Green Section's Northeast Region, discussed communication with club membership and talked about what superintendents can expect during the

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Judge: Golf balls belong to golfers

Golf balls driven into a lake belong to the original owner, according to a ruling by a judge in Vancouver, Canada.

The decision came in a case prompted by a youth who was retrieving balls from a water hazard. He was accused of stealing the balls, but the judge ruled the balls belong to the golfers, not the course.

Mayfair Lakes Management Corp. maintains a contract with a scuba diving company to recover balls lost in its lake. These balls are valued at more than \$19,000 a year.

The course is considering requiring a waiver from golfers, who would relinquish ownership of balls lost in the lake.



Fourth-grade students take 'teacher' Moore to school



Botany bottle an everyday help

By JIM MOORE

Traveling around the country with the U.S. Golf Association Green Section, meeting out advice to turfgrass professionals, I was surprised when I left my son's fourth-grade class having learned an important lesson myself — one I apply extensively to my research now.

In the midst of my visit, the students showed me the terrariums (they call them "botany bottles") they made out of old two-liter soda bottles.

Turns out, the terrariums are the perfect size for samples I remove from golf greens with a cup cutter to try and

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Jim Moore is a United States Golf Association Green Section agronomist, director of the Mid-Continent region. He lives in Waco, Texas.



COMMENTARY

Travel, turf trouble the consultant's lot

By JIM MOORE

Traveling around the Mid-Continent region, looking at golf courses, trying to figure out what is happening where, the endless writing of Turfgrass Advisory Service (TAS) reports, and way too many fast-food meals. Running in airports, standing in lines, glaring at the jerks who ignore boarding instructions, getting lost everywhere, and figuring out how to turn the lights on in twenty different rental cars.

On the more serious side, there is worrying about the superintendent and course

that are in trouble, wishing you could come up with a magic cure, dealing with the clubs that want more but simply can't fund the improvements, and the constant balancing act between spending time "on the road" and trying to find more time to spend with the family.

After nine years of dealing with these challenges, I have decided the only means of survival (only 20 years to go) is to

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Mount Pinatubo fallout

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust at Clark AFB course

By HAL PHILLIPS

ANGELES, The Philippines — When Mount Pinatubo blew its top here in October 1991, a layer of ash blanketed the 18 holes at nearby Clark Air Force Base, which soon closed its doors for good. In the frenzied retreat from lava and ash, the course suffered another indignity. It was looted: irrigation heads, cups, yardage markers, even door knobs were stolen.

Things have turned around at the site, as

a private corporation — Mondragon International Philippines Inc. — will refurbish the course to anchor a new destination resort. But the ash — which Filipinos call lahar — has created an agronomic poser for turf consultant Neil Noble and Honolulu-based architects Nelson, Wright, Hawthorn.

"They've got a real good loam underneath, but there's a four-inch layer of ash on top of everything," said Noble, an

Ohio State graduate who heads Honolulu-based Environmental Turf Systems.

"The ash is real sandy because this bit fell so close to the actual volcano [about 15 miles]. From a water filtration standpoint, the eruption basically top-dressed the whole site.

"I tested the ash and came up with high levels of phosphorus, potassium and calcium," Noble continued, "which are

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Homemade botany bottle hastens disease growth and identification

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determine what turfgrass disease is causing problems.

Sitting on my desk under my lamp, the bottle's temperature and humidity are just right for the rapid growth of the pathogen, making identification much easier and faster. It also gives me a constant reminder during the day of how much I enjoyed my day as "teacher."

Here's teacher Mrs. Pickins and her class's procedure for

transforming a two-liter soft drink bottle into a botany bottle, or miniature biosphere:

1) Obtain the kind of bottle with its base glued to the bottom, which enables it to stand up.

2) Fill the bottle with hot water and let it stand for 10 minutes. This will soften the glue, allowing the base to be separated from the bottle. If the base will not come loose, refill the bottle with hot water and

soak it in a sink filled with hot water. If all else fails, place the empty bottle in a microwave for 20 to 30 seconds. (Careful, just a little too long and the shape of the bottle will be distorted.)

3) With the base removed, you should now have a bottle with the filler neck on one end and a hemisphere dome on the other. Use a sharp knife to remove the filler neck. Different height botany bottles can be created by changing where you

make this cut. I have found a good height is to cut about 1/8 inch above the point where the bottle starts to taper in toward the neck. I have found this makes it easier to get the bottle back into the base, since the outside diameter of the bottle (at the point of the cut) is slightly smaller than the inside diameter of the base.

4) Using a hole cutter, remove a plug from the area of the green (or other turf area)

where you suspect disease activity. Square off the bottom of the plug, so it will sit flat in the base, and leave the plug about three inches long.

5) Place the plug in the base and carefully push the dome back into the base.

6) Place the completed botany bottle beneath a light or grow lamp.

You will notice that within a few hours moisture will begin to accumulate on the inside of the dome. This combination of heat (from the light) and moisture will promote rapid disease development, helping you to more accurately identify the pathogen.

The botany bottle can also be used to check seed germination, force a dormant turf to begin growth, and aid in identifying various types of grass. Turf can be maintained for months beneath the dome with only a rare watering and occasional "mowing" with scissors.

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One more point. During my talk with my son Travis' classmates, we were discussing how scientists of the future would probably have to learn to grow more food and take care of plants of all types with a lot less pesticides than we must use today.

One little girl raised her hand and asked why scientists don't just put something in the plants that insects would not like the taste of. Here was a 9-year-old, all on her own, voicing one of the "cutting edges" of today's plant breeding efforts — the use of endophytes to combat insect damage.

Next time a fourth-grader wants to give you an idea about anything, it would be worth taking the time to listen.

Semler elected head of Wisconsin GCSA

Mike Semler of Bishops Bay Country Club in Madison has been elected president of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association.

Semler, who succeeded Bruce Worzella of West Bend Country Club, heads a slate of officers that includes Vice President Mark Kienert of Bull's Eye Country Club in Wisconsin Rapid; Secretary Tom Schwab of Monroe Country Club; and Treasurer Patrick Norton of Cedar Creek Golf Course in Onalaska.

Joe Kuta of Hartford Country Club was newly elected to the board of directors, joining re-elected Directors Scott Schaller of South Hills Golf and Country Club in Fond Du Lac, Bill Knight of Ozaukee County Park Commission in Port Washington and Mike Handrich of Racine Country Club.



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SOLID AGRONOMY

Humor, embarrassment a potent combination, Moore relates

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try to find a little humor in every situation. Nothing makes a bad day a little more bearable than getting someone to laugh with you — or even at you.

I have found that some of the funniest situations are those that make you cringe a little when you remember them. The combination of embarrassment and humor is a potent one. One of the best I can remember happening to me occurred early in my Green Section career. I had a couple of months on the staff under my belt and was starting to feel like perhaps I could do this job after all. Brimming with confidence (fragile as it was) I was making a TAS visit on a course in Nebraska. Along for the tour were the green committee, the golf professional, and the superintendent — the usual entourage.

Spouting one agronomic gem of wisdom after another, I lead the group through the course until we encountered a green with two, dark parallel lines crossing the surface. Having personally applied charcoal to many a hydraulic leak, I immediately diagnosed the injury. The superintendent laughed and the others on the visit frowned. I bent down to get a closer look and suddenly the lines moved just a bit. Power line shadows do that when the wind blows. We all had a great laugh but I will admit I have yet to make another visit to that course. I expect credibility may be the problem.

With this job, like most jobs, about the time you are having a few doubts about your ability, something happens to make you feel maybe you are doing some good after all. I recently traveled Dallas where one of the fellows on the visit felt the sand in the bunkers was bad because the ball would not hold the green when blasted out. Those of you familiar with my writing might remember I tend not to have a lot of sympathy with player complaints concerning the sand in the bunkers since they are, after all, a hazard.

However, this fellow was adamant that a requirement of bunker sand should be to allow players to impart backspin on the ball. To demonstrate this failing in the existing bunkers, he dropped a couple of balls and tried to blast out. After skulling a couple, he finally lofted one to the green and sure enough the ball rolled when it landed. Credibility thus restored, he challenged the pro to try a couple. The pro blasted away with all his shots landing on the green and rolling just a couple of feet. The player then reasoned the pro was not of average ability so he then handed the club to the superintendent. Now, I thought, is the time to cringe. Instead, the

super blasted out two shots that stopped even quicker than the pro's. Well shoot, I might as well try to.

Dropping a ball, I quickly reviewed the Johnny Miller sand tips I read in 1971, opened the face, swung outside-in, and lucked out.

The ball actually hit and backed up. Case closed!

Unfortunately, there is a sequel to this story. A couple of weeks after this demonstration of my



Jim Moore

playing skill, as it relates to the agronomic condition of the course, I was on a visit to a course in Mexico. The complaint this time was that the greens did not hold an approach shot — even with a wedge. Careful to pick an uphill

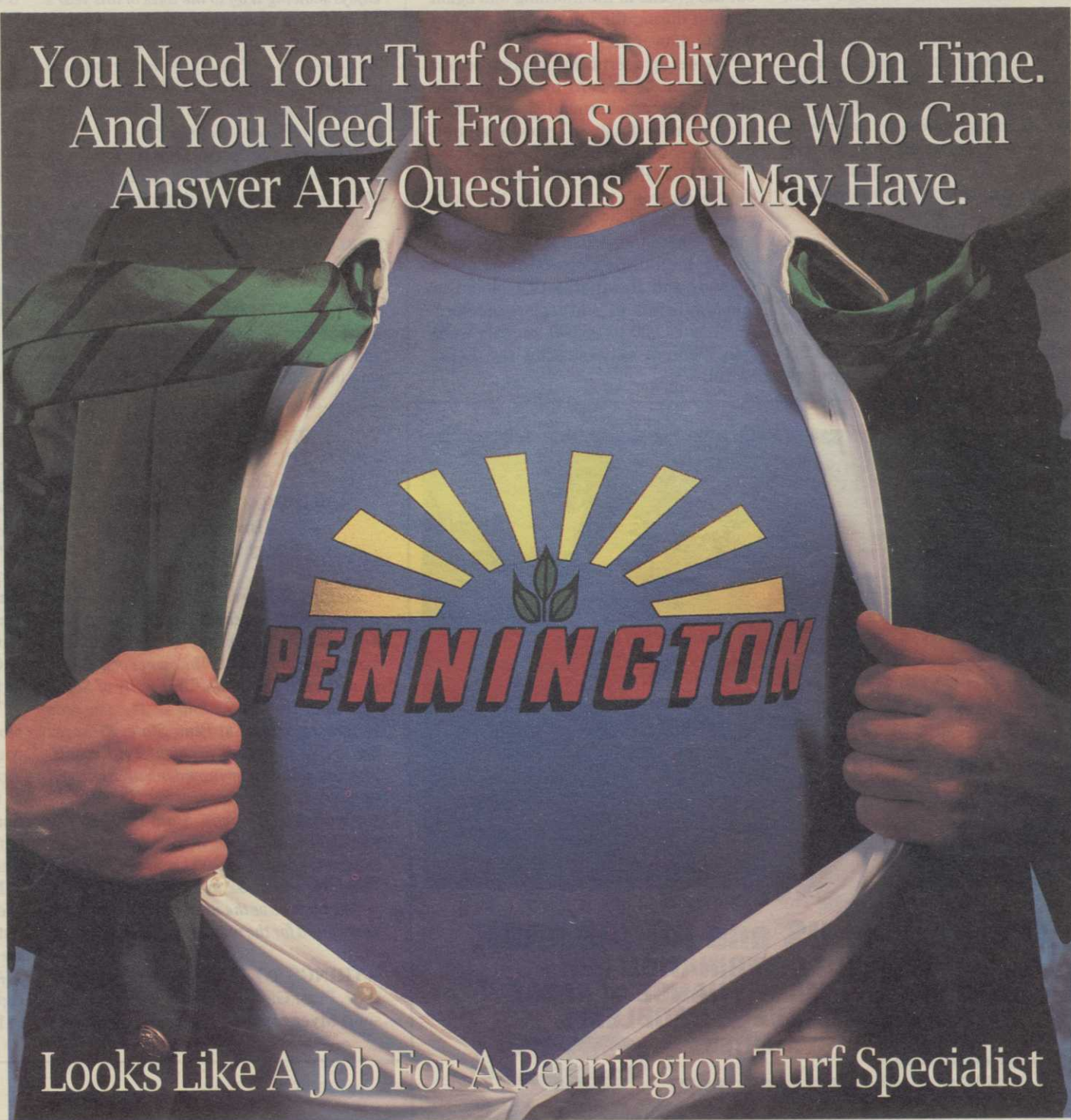
lie, into the wind, and to a green that looked over watered, I decided once again to prove the complaining player wrong by embarrassing him with the fact that even a grass guy can hold the greens.

After shanking the first three shots and nearly hitting one of our group about 90 degrees off line, I gave up and tried to remind everyone I was there as an agronomist — not a player. Big cringe.

DICKISON NAMED TO HALL

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J. — Upper Montclair Country Club superintendent Bob Dickison has been inducted into the New Jersey Turfgrass Hall of Fame by the New Jersey Turfgrass Association. The award is presented annually to a person to recognize their continuing lifetime commitment of dedication, service and achievements contributing to the advancement of the turfgrass industry in the state.

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