

GOLF COURSE NEWS

THE NEWSPAPER FOR THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

A UNITED PUBLICATION
VOLUME 5, NUMBER 10
OCTOBER 1994 • \$4.50

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Turf and money can be saved by refusing to cut cups on the practice green. See "Off the Record" 16

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Big management firms shying away from RTC

By PETER BLAIS

DANIA, Fla. — The expensive due diligence process and sometimes inflated bidding involved in recent Resolution Trust Corp. auctions of golf properties may scare away potential bidders in the future, according to some golf industry experts.

"ClubCorp wasn't there. Neither were Cobblestone Golf, Fairways Golf, KSL Enterprises and Kemper

Management," said Jeff Woolfon, an associate with CB Commercial Golf/Resort Properties, which marketed Palm-Aire Spa Resort & Country Club and adjacent Oaks Golf & Racquet Club here for the RTC.

"All the big players you'd normally expect just weren't there," said Woolfon.

The only big-name management company to take part in the sealed bid/out-

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Researcher: Effluent yields better turf, with less water

By LYNN TILTON

CHANDLER, Ariz. — Wastewater produces better turf growth and can cut annual supplemental water needs on an Arizona golf course by as much as 22 percent, according to a turfgrass and wastewater expert.

Dr. Charles Mancino of the University of Arizona unveiled the positive results from his research findings at Turf Talk, an annual event sponsored by Garden Valley Distributors of Phoenix and attended by 150 superintendents and others.

"With effluent water, we get better turf growth on an acre foot less of water," Mancino said. Before being used, effluent should first be settled out, clarified and subjected to aerobic digestion to reduce carbon-dioxide levels, he added.

"Water thus treated is very low in carbon and is

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AUDUBON HONORS HIERS

Ron Dodson (left), Audubon Society of New York State president, presents Tim Hiers — superintendent at Collier's Reserve — the first John James Audubon Environmental Steward Award. See page 13 for details.

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DIAMOND IN THE ROUGH?

Boulders occupy the rough bordering the dramatic 16th hole at Diamond Run Golf Club, a private 18-hole course which opened for play in Ohio Township, Pa. — 11 miles northwest of Pittsburgh — in mid-September. For more information on this Gary Player Design and a complete listing of the nation's new course openings, see page 24.

Despite public outcry, Florida DEP backs course conversion

By MARK LESLIE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The public is upset. Ditto, most local and county government officials. But the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has spoken and won't budge in a

struggle over the 250-acre Fort George Island and its golf course designed by Donald Ross.

The 18-hole Ft. George Island Golf Club, nine holes of which were designed by Ross in the 1920s, is a landmark to the golf world. But not to the Florida DEP, which has decided to make public lands available for "resource-based" as opposed to "user-oriented" recreation. Resource-based recreation means passive use, such as parks, nature trails, hiking, bird-watching and picnicking. User-

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GOLF COURSE



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Shop Talks mean face-to-face sell

By HAL PHILLIPS

ORLANDO — Vendors place the highest priority on speaking directly with potential customers during sales calls, via telemarketing or inside a trade-show booth.

At Golf Course Expo exhibitors will have another opportunity via "Shop Talks," vendor-sponsored presentations that showcase solutions to golf course problems, feature their products and services, and address critical industry issues.

Exhibit hall and conference attendees are able to

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Effluent makes for better turf, researcher says

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good for the environment," he said.

In Arizona, the average annual application is five acre feet of water, Mancino said.

"This year, just 3.6 acre feet of wastewater provided acceptable turf quality, while it took 4.6 acre feet of potable water to get the same benefit," he said. "In other words, you can get the same quality of turf with far less water when you use low-quality wastewater in your irrigation program."

"With nutrients in low-quality wastewater, it is like spoon-feeding your turf."

One problem can be excessive nitrogen levels. "We've seen it so high that ryegrass crashes quickly in July," he said. Yet, the extra nitrogen is great for transition into Bermudagrass during the warm season.

Mancino cautioned: "The quality of your wastewater depends on the quality of your ground water. Tucson, for example, has high-quality ground water, but Chandler has a much lower quality."

"In fact," he added with a smile, "Tucson wastewater is of a higher quality than the ground water in Chandler."

...

After 130 years of chemical development, the trend is back to organics, Vigoro Industries Vice President of Research and Development Bob Rehberg told attendees.

"The '90s can best be typified as the 'polymer years' because plastic-coated fertilizers is the technology of the future," said Rehberg, who credited both environmental and production concerns for the shift in focus.

With polymer coatings, slow-release fertilizers are a reality, which is especially important with cool-season grasses.

Rehberg emphasized that superintendents need to match their fertilizer program to the growth patterns of their turf. Warm-season turf has fairly constant growth throughout the summer months, whereas cool-season grasses have peak growth in the spring, and to a lesser degree in the fall.

Regarding nitrates, he said: "Your body produces more nitrates than it takes in because nitric oxide, an essential neurotransmitter, is broken down to nitrates. The no-effect level of nitrates on adults is in excess of 300 parts per million. Nitrates are found in all fruits, juices and vegetables which are known to be beneficial to human health. We need to be concerned about pollution, but 10 parts per million is a very low level compared to levels that could cause a problem. The exception is infants to six months, due to their nitrate sensitivity."

He said poly-coating nitrate formulations yield a slower release and a more thorough uptake by grasses. "The shape of the nutrient-release curve should

be a consideration in every fertilizer program," he said.

He cited three basic release patterns of all fertilizers: first order, square root of time, and zero order.

First-order fertilizers are used for instant response. They provide a spike in release right after application. Square-root-of-time formulations have a smaller release spike after application but offer a higher level of nutrient release over a longer period. This is ideal for mid-season applications, he said.

'In other words, you can get the same quality of turf with far less water when you use low-quality wastewater in your irrigation program. With nutrients in low-quality wastewater, it is like spoon-feeding your turf.'

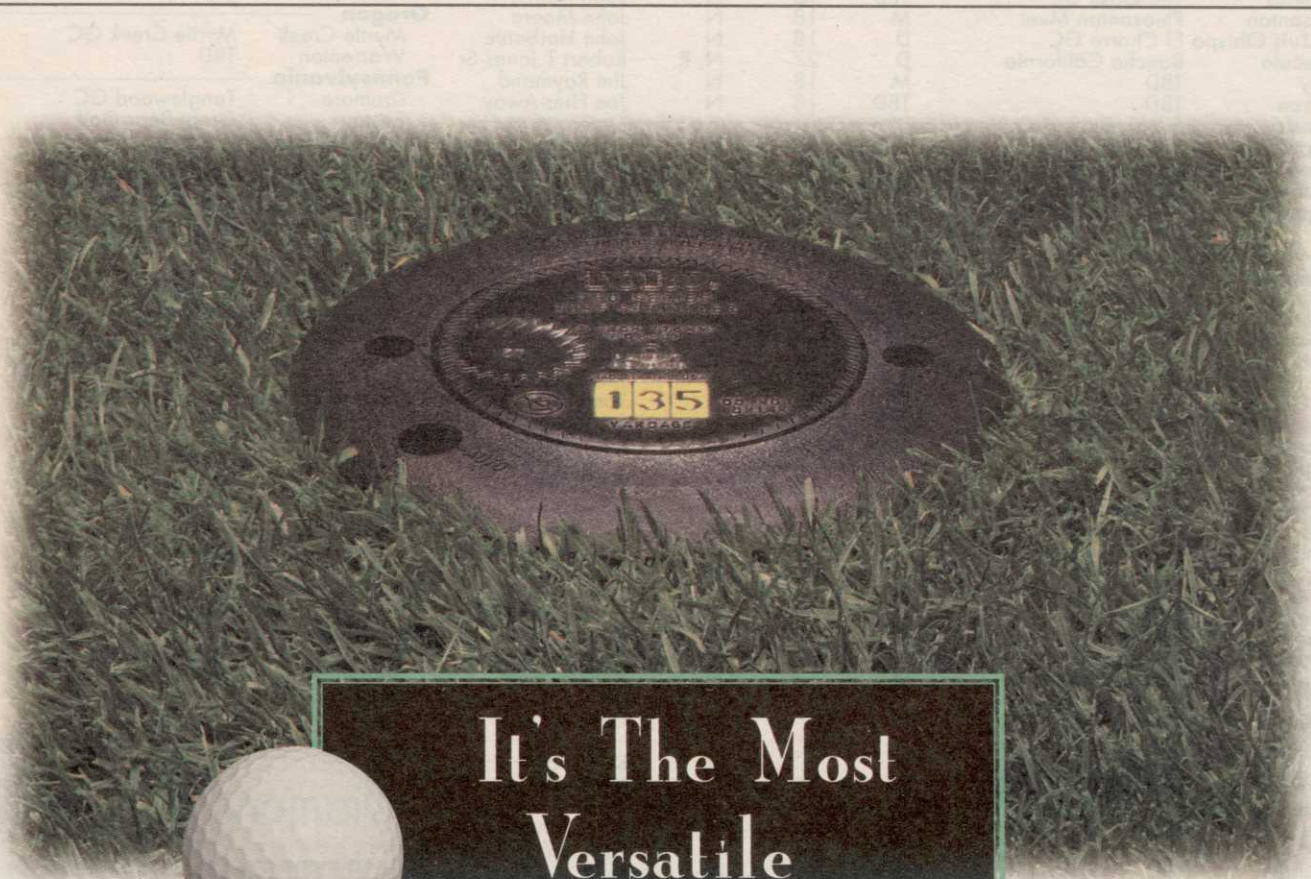
— Dr. Charles Mancino

Zero-order release provides a plateau of release, and is best used in the fall and winter for cool-season grasses, especially from iso butylene di-urea [IBDU] which releases in cold weather. "Zero-order formulas give you better control of potential disease problems due to less flush growth," he said.

Examples of zero order are IBDU and polymer-coated products — but not polymers over sulfur-coated urea, which is a square-root-of-time formulation. These fertilizers release about the same amount from one day to the next, producing a more consistent growth pattern, Rehberg said.

He said release rates of polymer-

coated fertilizers are controlled by thickness of the coating, or additives to it, depending on the product. "Coated products exhibit temperature-dependent release," he said. "You will get a greater release when it's warm, and a slower one when it's cool. The principle is to match fertilizer release to plant nutrient needs." He said proper programming of slow-release fertilizer products can deliver the best possible plant growth with minimal potential for nutrient runoff or ground-water contamination.



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