

BRIEFS



CRENSHAW TO GET OLD TOM AWARD

PGA Tour great Ben Crenshaw will receive the 1997 Old Tom Morris Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America. The presentation will take place Feb. 11 in



Ben Crenshaw

Las Vegas at a banquet during the association's 68th International Golf Course Conference and Show. GCSAA President Bruce R. Williams said Crenshaw's actions over the years "exemplify what is best about the game. From his activities as a collector to his passion for the integrity of the game, Ben's obvious love of golf is an inspiration."

SOUTHWEST SHOW SCHEDULED

PHOENIX, Ariz. — The 19th annual Southwest Horticultural Trade Show will be held here Sept. 5-6, featuring a full-day seminar on reclaimed irrigation water and several educational sessions. Sponsored by the Arizona Nursery Association, the event will display products specifically designed for the desert areas of Arizona, New Mexico, California and west Texas. The annual Xeriscape Conference, continuing education units, marketing panel and grower short course are part of the event.

FOUTY OVERSEES EXPANSION

NORTHVILLE, Mich. — Expansion is underway here at Downing Farms Golf Course and Michigan State graduate Mike Fouty has assumed the position of superintendent. Work on an additional nine holes began in January along with improvements on the original course. The 3,120-yard Harry Bowers design will incorporate wetlands and hardwoods. A 3,000-square-foot clubhouse is scheduled to open in July.

GCSAA OPENS WEB SITE

A new World Wide Web site makes information available to the general public about course management. The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America site address is <http://www.gcsaa.org/gcsaa>. The initial phase will focus on the environment. Starting July 1, GCSAA members will have a private Member Services area they can log into at their convenience. GCSAA has also added a new e-mail box — infobox@gcsaa.org — to gather feedback and answer questions.

Budget-cut threat to NTEP awaits Congress

By MARK LESLIE

BELTSVILLE, Md. — The air of neutrality and objectivity surrounding the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program would be in jeopardy if the U.S. Department of Agriculture redirects its support to other areas of its Agricultural Research Service (ARS), according to NTEP National Director Kevin Morris.

The reason, Morris said, is that NTEP would have to move to new quarters outside USDA's research station here, where it uses office, laboratory and greenhouse space and feed and equipment storage areas.

NTEP first observed the threat of lost funding when President Clinton submitted his 1997 budget to Congress in April. While it gave the USDA a small increase, it cut NTEP support.

The USDA gives no actual funds to NTEP, which in effect is a subcontractor whose employees are paid entirely through fees to its users. Rather, USDA's support is indirect, in that \$55,900 is set aside on paper to pay rent and indirect costs at the facilities here.

More important than the finances, Morris said, is "this partnership

between us and the USDA. The USDA puts out a small bit of support and they get a lot of benefit from it, being able to say how much they've done for research. What NTEP gets is the credibility of running a national program associated with an unbiased, neutral organization — not for industry. It's a danger that people perceive us to [work for industry].

"There is a whole air of neutrality that is hard to put a value on and could be threatened by moving from here."

With many domestic and foreign visitors coming to the facility, NTEP

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Old vs. new ryes like night and day

By MARK LESLIE

BELTSVILLE, Md. — Rest on your laurels in the ryegrass breeding industry and you'll get run over. That's the message from the latest National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) trial results which show the top ryegrass cultivar in the previous test is ranked 23rd in 1996.

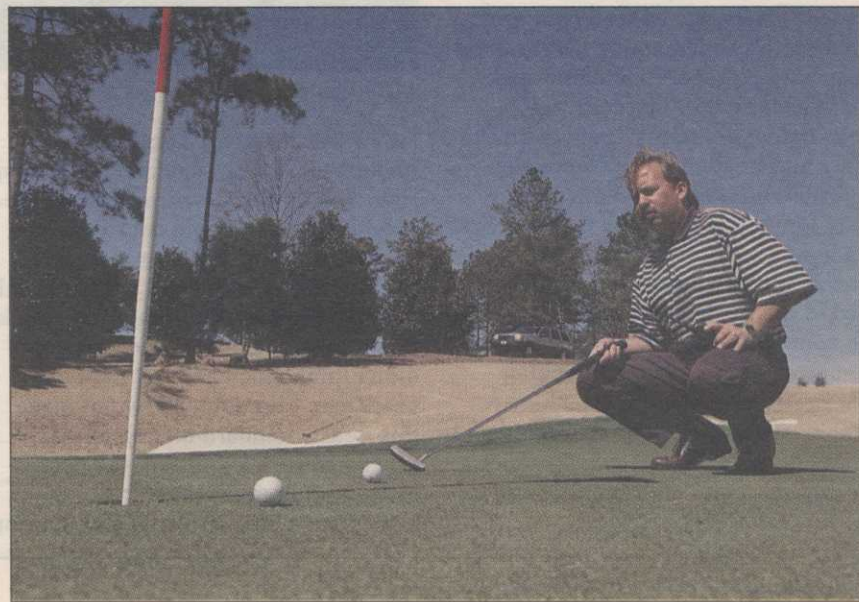
"The difference between those [new and old tests] is like night and day," said NTEP National Director Kevin Morris. "They're improved aesthetically (dark green and dense) and some have better persistence" — that is, in relation to disease resistance.

"Mow ryegrasses at one-half inch, using no fungicides in Maryland and you will kill a lot of them," he said. "But ours persisted quite well through last summer. We do irrigate them... But just looking at them this spring, most people are surprised at the differences — even besides color and density. It's easy to see."

The No. 1 ryegrass in the previous trials — Prizm — ranks 23rd this year, and the previous 4th-ranked cultivar — Brightstar — is 37th this time around. None of the other leaders are even in sight except the previous 7th-ranked Cutter, now 42nd.

Asked if the higher ratings in this latest test are due to more use of endophyte in the ryegrass cultivars, Morris said: "Endophyte relates to insect resistance, and surviving under adverse environmental conditions like low water use. My guess is, it's more that they are generally improved for disease resistance and persis

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Randy Waldron makes it a daily chore to check the consistency of the roll in his greens.

Waldron's aim: Picture-perfect

By TODD L. SENTELL

ALPHARETTA, Ga. — Eighteen holes in the morning, another in the afternoon, perhaps a third 18 on the way home, dinner, then a Little League game. It's all in a day's work for Randy Waldron, director of golf courses and landscaping at The Golf Club of Georgia.

His walkie-talkie surgically attached and his sharp eyes are constantly on the peel, Waldron oversees the club's

Todd L. Sentell is a golf writer and the Golf Club of Georgia's director of sales and marketing.



54 holes of golf, managing all this incredible nature and for making sure it's all perfect. Very, very perfect.

There are Creekside, Lakeside and — up the road where he lives overlooking the 18th fairway, White Columns Golf Club.

"I hate it when he [Waldron] plays golf," says golf courses superintendent Tim Reinagel, shaking his head. You'd think Reinagel and his lieutenants would love it when the boss is out of the office for a few hours. But that's not the way it works around here. If

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Georgia's Carrow the Doctor of Stress for turf

Dr. Robert Carrow is a professor of turfgrass science in the Crop and Soil Science Department at the Griffin Station of the University of Georgia and is an integral part of the university's nine-member turf research team. He received a Ph.D. in Soil Science from Michigan State University in 1972 and has done research at the University of Massachusetts and Kansas State University. His areas of research emphasis are turfgrass drought resistance mechanisms and water conservation, plant nutrition/soil fertility and turfgrass wear/soil compaction stresses. He has written more than 200 articles and is co-editor of two turfgrass science books.



Dr. Robert Carrow University of Georgia



Golf Course News: What has your work shown in terms of such environmental stresses as drought and salinity? Traffic stress? Water conservation strate-

gies? Why are these issues important?

Robert Carrow: Whether a turfgrass persists in the field depends on its tolerance to the stresses imposed on it. Environmental stresses include high/low temperature, excess/lack of water and low light intensity. Pest stresses include diseases, insects/nematodes and weeds. Use stresses include close mowing, soil compaction from traffic and wear from traffic.

I have concentrated on two primary areas and within each tried to develop several strategies to cope with the stress.

Drought resistance/low water use is the first. We've identified which turfgrass spe

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Communication cited as No. 1 issue in renovations

WOODSTOCK, N.H. — Superintendents' roles vary dramatically during renovation projects, but "the most important responsibility shared by all is communication," according to Marvin Armstrong.

Armstrong, a golf course architect from Franconia, told a joint meeting of Maine and New Hampshire superintendents at Jack-o-Lantern Resort here:

"The essence of any project is communication. Plans and specifications are the architect's tools for communicating with the contractor. The superintendent can

use these and other tools to keep players or members and particularly pro shop staff informed."

The pro shop staff has "the greatest opportunity to discuss the course with players and members," he said. "If they understand and are happy with the plans, there's a better chance the project will be successful."

The size and type of project can influence the scope of the contract documents required and the extent of the superintendent's involvement, Armstrong said.

However, although "municipal jobs require the most extensive documents," they sometimes remove the superintendent entirely from responsibility, he added.

"The other end of the scale might be a privately owned course that would do much of the work themselves and 'sub-out' shaping or other tasks which they lack skills or equipment to do. Most often, the superintendent is asked to be the owner's representative and the general contractor or coordinator of the entire work," he said.

Endangered NTEP draws support

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also gains stature by being located at the largest agricultural center in the world, Morris said.

"Could we do this work somewhere else?" he asked. "Probably. Would it be as effective? I don't know. Are we going to go out of business because of this? No, probably not, because there is a need for what we do. But leaving here would be a major disruption."

Morris is considering other options for his offices and turf testing plots. But he does not like the prospect of moving to, say, a university.

"We could go to a university," he said, "but we pay universities to do work for us. Universities are very competitive and I don't know how it would work to have a group associated with a university paying other universities."

Meanwhile, "the House or Senate could restore [the cut]," said Dan Domingo, budget development branch chief for the ARS here. "It's just a proposal to fund some of our high-priority research we have in the agency."

"We are asking for increased research in food safety, genetic resources and biodiversity, biological control of pesticides in soil biology, waste management and IPM [Integrated Pest Management], trying to find alternatives to methyl bromide, increase work in integrated farming systems..."

"I question why we didn't fit into IPM," said Morris, explaining that NTEP's testing of turfgrasses greatly affects plant maintenance practices.

"My justification is the bigger picture," he added. "The turfgrass industry is a \$30-\$35 billion-a-year industry and they think so little of it that they've reduced the funding to a proposed zero in 1997. It doesn't make sense. We have at least 50,000 square feet of brand-new, state-of-the-art greenhouse space built with joint funding from the USDA and the green industry."

"More than 30 people here are working on crops and ornamentals. They're here because the USDA thinks they are important. We don't have one turfgrass person in all of USDA."

Domingo could not corroborate the number of USDA crop and ornamental researchers, but did say: "When this project was proposed for termination, the topic of the importance of the turfgrass industry was not discussed. It is not a question of whether turfgrass is important. We feel the federation [NTEP] has the ability to assume these costs now."

The USDA has received "a lot of pressure" to restore support to NTEP, Domingo said. "We have answered a lot of letters. Those letters have been forwarded to the House and Senate, who will have to make the decision."

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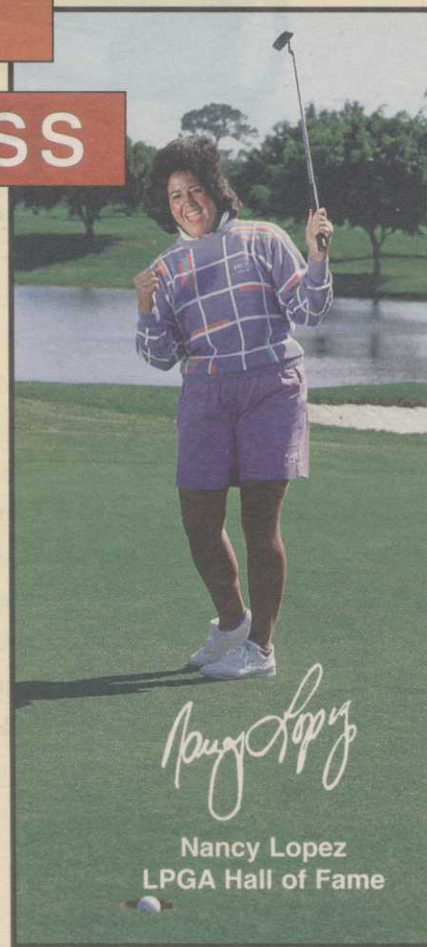
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