

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.

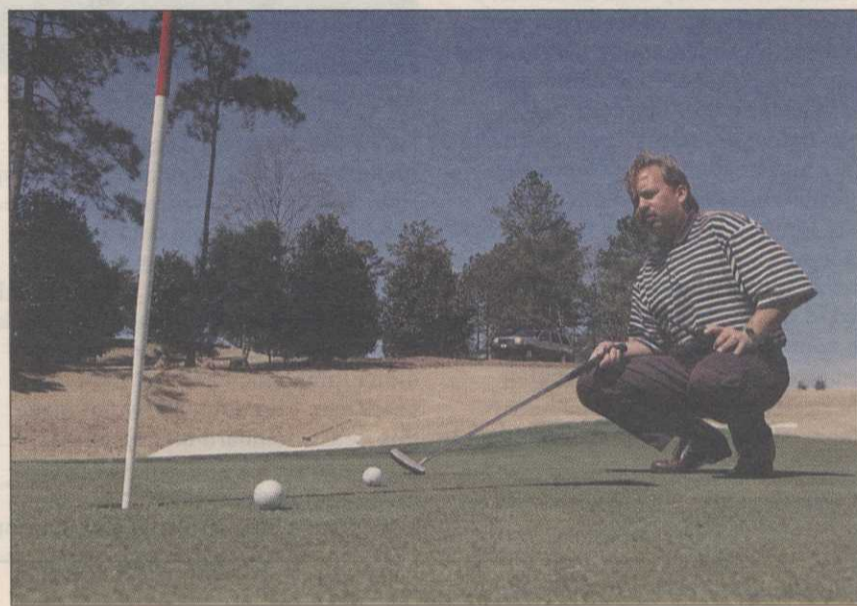
"The difference between those [new and old tests] is like night and day," said NTEP National Director Kevin Morris. "They're improved aesthetically (dark green and dense) and some have better persistence" — that is, in relation to disease resistance.

"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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Waldron keeps GC of Georgia immaculate

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Waldron's not satisfied with the way things look, he presses his walkie-talkie key and barks. But it's the bark of a professional who works just as hard as his crews do and is as fair as he is firm.

Talk with Waldron about this place and his profession: There is deep passion and commitment there. "My guys trust me," he says, "because they know how much I love this place."

When Waldron and his walkie-talkie play golf, the 4-handicapper usually stays right in the middle of the fairway, and somewhere on the green, where the game and a large percentage of maintenance work is performed.

"Actually, as a superintendent," Waldron says, "it is extremely valuable to play our golf courses. You do see things when you play golf. I urge Tim and his guys to play more golf to constantly see it from the golfer's perspective as well."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Waldron came to the Art Hills-designed Golf Club of Georgia from the flat, sandy lands of West Palm Beach, leaving his position as superintendent of Aberdeen Golf and Country Club. It was April 1989 when he came up for a weekend look-see at what was then a primitive Golf Club of Georgia, when the property was on fire with azaleas and dogwoods in bloom. The wide-eyed 30-year-old was overwhelmed: in West Palm Beach, the only thing that frequently blooms is a good sunburn. "I'm a guy who's been in flat Florida all my life," Waldron says. "That was my first impression. How pretty everything was."

A month later, faced with many year's worth of concentration on a world-class, 36-hole project that would require everything he had, Waldron knew he had to bring with him a personal determination, in his words, not to fall on his face. He would come to command 50 employees and a substantial annual budget.

But he was armed with an enormous amount of experience, beginning at 19 when he worked in the backyard of Jack Nicklaus' Palm Beach Gardens estate to when he finished his associates of science degree in golf course operations from his hometown Lake City (Fla.) Community College.

Positions at Los Tree Club, the Landings at Skidaway Island, Palmetto Dunes, Gulfstream Golf Club and Boca West prepared him well. Waldron knew what he was doing, and how to do it, but here's what he faced when he came north while wife Tami packed up the house and baby Michael: a wildly enthusiastic Japanese developer who was setting up the club's eternal reputation by chunking down some big dough, but more importantly, he was offering up some stratospheric standards of quality and design: their names would be Lakeside and Creekside. Waldron had not yet met Hajime Yamazaki, and he was a little nervous. In May 1989, only holes 10 through 14 on Lakeside had been cleared. Indeed, there was a lot to do. A lot to do right.

"It was kind of scary on some days," Waldron says.

Waldron knew this was a magnificent piece of golf property: enormous oaks, pines, dogwoods, wildlife, ponds, lakes, and ancient wetlands covered the landscape and creeks ran through each course like sparkling spider webs. But the mud. The red, wet, sticky mud. Everywhere, the red Georgia mud.

"I had never been exposed to this red mud," Waldron says. "I can remember having to get used to that and how wet it was and all the different elevation changes."

Waldron can remember his first impressions well, but he'd surely like to forget almost flipping over his pick-up truck one day during construction. It was one of them good ol' Georgia mud banks he was screaming down.

Welcome north, brother.

PUTTING LESSONS

His Jeep Cherokee quietly roams the courses — cart path only — in the early morning and late evening. Waldron uses the time alone, with his walkie-talkie, to think and observe the golf courses. He

stops, greenside, and takes his ever-present putter and ball up to the green. He aims anywhere. Tap. He watches the ball roll. "I feel that the greens are where everything starts on a golf course," he says. "I'm constantly out looking for changes, too. If the green doesn't look like it did yesterday — why? Is it a normal environmental condition that affected it?"

Tap. Waldron watches the ball roll again. "As a golf course superintendent, that's what we strive for — perfect ball roll. So when I'm out putting on the green I'm out there to also confirm that we have quality surfaces. And I guess that's one thing I'm known for, and that's being out there alone, looking around and putting the greens. I simply get a lot of satisfaction from looking at the product and seeing my staff do a great job."

Look around. Look at the clean, pristine fairways and greens. The crisp edge of the bunkers and the creeks. To the casual observer, Waldron says, "they think it's all been done." But it isn't done. In his mind, there's more to do. Much more.

"It really never ends," he says. "Our courses are in tremendous shape. In my professional opinion, I just don't think you're going to get any better than this. But right now we're continuing our drainage projects which have been very successful over the last two years. I'd like to put a drain under every wet spot out here because drainage is a big, big goal of ours, so our members can play under all conditions."

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