

BRIEFS



NORTH CENTRAL EXPO READIED

ST. CHARLES, Ill.— The Illinois Turfgrass Foundation (ITF) will host the North Central Turfgrass Exposition, Dec. 3-5, at Pheasant Run Resort here. Pre-conference seminars will be offered Dec. 2 at the same location. ITF will hold an awards luncheon, Wednesday, Dec. 4 at which the 1996 ITF Distinguished Service Award will be presented, along with scholarships for undergraduate study. For information contact the ITF headquarters at 11 S. LaSalle St., Suite 1400, Chicago, Ill. 60603; phone 312-201-0101.

IGM HONORS ROWE

MELBOURNE, Fla. — Michael Rowe, superintendent at the Aquarina Country Club here, has earned a Total Quality Management (TQM) award from International Golf Management (IGM) for the overall quality of the course. "The overall quality, conditions, appearance and customer satisfaction at Aquarina is second to none," said Scott Zakany, vice president and general manager. Rowe joined IGM as the superintendent assigned to Aquarina Country Club in August 1995 when the club was in the grow-in stage.



COOK PREPARES AWARDS BANQUET

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. — The Seventh Annual Turfgrass Awards Banquet will be held this year at 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, at Cook Campus Center here. It will honor the 1996 graduates of the Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School, Advanced Golf Turf Symposium attendees, Cook College undergraduate and graduate scholarship recipients, and honorees in the turfgrass industry. For more information, or to register, write the Cook College Office of Continuing Professional Education, P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903; 908-932-9271.

IRRIGATION SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The American Society of Irrigation Consultants (ASIC) has selected three students to receive 1996 scholarships. They are Tim Grey, who is in the landscape architecture program at the University of Florida; Jerry Donaldson, who is majoring in landscape design and minoring in construction management at Colorado State University; and Katy W. Harrell, who is studying landscape architecture at the University of Georgia.

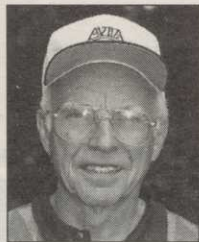
FIRST OF TWO PARTS

Managing personnel a challenge often unmet

By ROBERT D. CHABOURNE

What's the difference between a good golf course superintendent and a great superintendent? "I have no statistics, but when a superintendent fails to move up, or loses the position he has, I feel I'm safe in saying he was probably deficient in some area of managing people," concludes Dr. Donald R. Marion, retired professor of resource economics at the University of Massachusetts (UMass), who teaches personnel management at the annual UMass Winter Turf School.

Marion's message to superintendents honing their skills, and assistant superintendents grooming their resumes, has changed over the years.



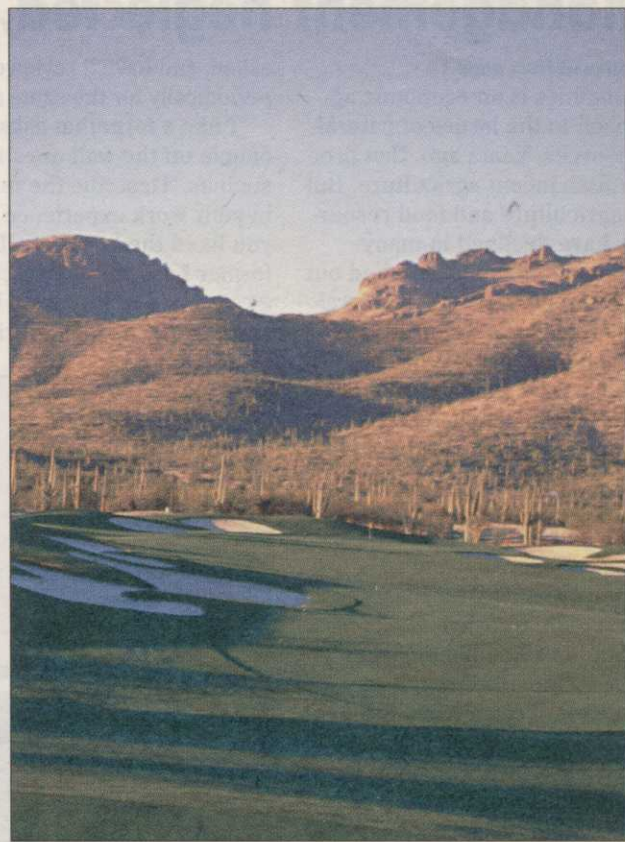
Dr. Donald Marion

"Back in the '70s we used to stress the routing, automating, and mechanizing of tasks as the complete answer to a smooth golf course operation," said Marion. "What's different today is the expanded role of the employee in the workplace." When asked to arrange lists of job considerations such as pay, promotion, benefits, responsibility, job involvement, job security, appreciation, tact in applying discipline, and assistance in dealing with personal problems, workers tend to rate appreciation and the degree to which management involves them in the overall process higher in importance than pay and benefits.

"The teaching point to superintendents is not how their employees arrange their lists," Marion said, "but how they are arranged in comparison to the superintendents' list. Ideally, results that are about the same would predict a smoothly running operation."

Marion, who holds bachelor's and master's degrees in agri-economics from Cornell University and a PhD from UMass, has seen his own field change with the times. Resource

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MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

The Raven Golf Club at Sabino Springs in Tucson, Ariz., integrates wildlife conservation with urban development. The community features nine natural springs, each creating a riparian habitat within the fragile ecological area of the Sonoran Desert. Designed by Robert Trent Jones Jr., the project focused on protecting these areas to ensure they would continue to support a broad spectrum of wildlife and plant species. Desert wildlife species were relocated to natural protected wilderness areas adjacent to the property, or placed with an adoption program. Harris Environmental Group Inc. of Tucson also performed many duties vital to maintaining the ecosystem, including mitigation of the sewer easement and work with the local water company on location of the booster station and reservoir.



Lake Nona Golf Club superintendent Brett Harris (front) chats with assistant Murray Russell, who is operating their street cleaner.

Brett Harris' war on thatch

By TERRY BUCHEN

ORLANDO, Fla. — A street sweeper on a golf course? Yes. Brett Harris, superintendent at Lake Nona Golf Club here, has perfected thatch removal on his 419 Bermudagrass tees and fairways with aggressive tricks of the trade that include using a street sweeper.

"I discovered the Lay-Mor [Street Sweeper] while sitting at a stop light when it was doing street sweeping," Harris said. "I looked at it up close, and what is so unique about it is that the brush is made of 50 percent steel wire bristles and 50 percent nylon brush material. The unit is self-propelled, turns in a short radius and a similar unit can be rented that will fit on the front of a golf course front-end loader tractor."

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Turfgrass, molecular genetics and the future

By MARK LESLIE

EAST LANSING, Mich. — Citing "several-fold results" from the first international Workshop on Biotechnology of Turfgrass, scientists are excited about the future of genetic engineering and biological controls.

"Look over your shoulder and see where we were 10 years ago with bentgrasses, and that [progress] was just with conventional plant breeding," said Dr. Michael Kenna of the U.S. Golf Association Green Section, which co-sponsored the workshop along with host Michigan State University (MSU). "I think we will see some turfgrass varieties in which molecular genetics made a significant contribution."

"We can expect breakthrough after breakthrough very quickly," said Dr. Miriam Sticklen, an MSU biotechnologist who helped coordinate the three-day event. "In a decade there will be a big revolution in turfgrass maintenance, saving time and money and improving the environment."

Already, according to MSU Professor Jan Zeebaart, who spoke at the workshop, there is work on genes that can make grass shorter and thicker. And scientists are researching other genes with herbicide and pathogen resistance.

"We have several other useful genes, but because we are talking about patents, I can't discuss them now," Sticklen said.

Kenna tempered his assessment of the future. Acknowledging that Rutgers and Michigan State have bentgrasses that are resistant to the chemicals Finale or Roundup, he said: "The problem is, the companies that own the patents



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IRONITE SIGNS ON TO SPONSOR INTERPRETATION

LAS VEGAS — Ironite Products Co. has signed a three-year agreement to present the simultaneous interpreting services at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) annual International Golf Course Conference and Show.

The pact begins with 1997's 68th annual event, set for Feb. 6-12 at the Las Vegas Convention Center here. The complimentary service will be available to attendees who want Japanese and/or Spanish interpretations of the session.

It will be provided at the 1997 conference and show for the Innovative Superintendent Session: Part 1 (Feb. 10, 7-8:30 a.m.) and the Concurrent Education Session of Weather Roulette (Feb. 10, 9-11:45 a.m.).

Genetic advances

Continued from page 13

on those genes are not going to spend the money in the turf market, which is minuscule compared to corn, soybean and cotton."

MSU Department of Crops and Soil Sciences Chairman Dr. Boyd Ellis said it is difficult to estimate a time frame for releasing new genetically engineered turfgrasses. "Whenever you engineer

something like this, there is always a discussion and negotiation about how it is released," he said. "We are not in the business of marketing the varieties, just in developing and releasing them."

In the case of MSU's new bentgrass, researchers added a gene, patented by AgrEvo, that is resistant to the herbicide Finale that controls brown patch and dollar spot and kills wheat and other turfgrasses like poa annua.

With a gene patented by Monsanto, Rutgers' bentgrass is resistant to Roundup.

"The problem is that the chemical companies dictate how those genes are used," Kenna said. "The prime market for them is in corn and soybeans. There aren't enough acres of turf to justify it at this time... Besides that, right now Finale and Roundup are not labeled to be used on bentgrass."

But, he added, "if people want products coming out of the production line five or 10 years from now, we have to start working on them now. Some people want to wait for the corn industry to do this and that. But they have. Now we have to focus on turfgrass ourselves."

Kenna said the highest priorities are: genetic mapping; marker-assisted selection; and post-plant resistance.

Genetic mapping will divulge what genes are common in the various turfgrasses.

Marker-assisted selection involves comparing a plant that resists stress or disease or some other enemy with plants that don't survive, and searching for differences in their proteins to identify the genes that allow that plant to survive. This leads to DNA probes that can ensure the genes for that particular strength exist in the populations with which the scientist is working.

Post-plant resistance is similar to marker-assisted selection. A field is inoculated with a pathogen like dollar spot and the plants that survive are checked to discover the genes that make it resistant.

"We can use that information to help us make faster progress in breeding," Kenna said. "If you know what the gene is that [adds resistance], you know the DNA sequence; if you know the DNA sequence, you can make a probe; and, rather than having to plant that experiment out in the field, you can just start probing the plant materials you have and if the gene is there you can say, 'This is dollar-spot resistant.'"

The genetics workshop began with 30 participants "by invitation only" and ended with 96 attendees. Astonished at the popularity, Sticklen said a follow-up in the future would be welcomed.

This one, she said, "had several-fold results.

"One was exchange of knowledge, which was very valuable — people talking about problem-solving, initiating corroboration, that sort of thing. Second was where to go to get funding. Third was the fact that this was international, so we learned what's going on outside our borders. And the last session was a panel on future perspectives.

"We had people from academia, foundations, the private sector and seed companies."



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