

BRIEFS



STEELE NEW DEAN AT PENN STATE
COLLEGE STATION, Pa. — Pennsylvania State University will have a new dean of the College of Agricultural Sciences on July 1 — Dr. Robert D. Steele. Steele has been associate dean for research in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and executive director of the Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Nationally known for his research in nutritional sciences, Steele was responsible for the day-to-day operation of the research division at UW-Madison.



HEART OF AMERICA EXPANDS SEMINAR
Following the success of its initial event, The Heart of America Golf Course Superintendents Association intends to continue the Heart of America GCSA Golf and Turf Seminar. Scheduled some time in November, the seminar will either remain a two-day event or expand to three days and will include a trade show. HAGCSA newsletter Editor Jeffrey Elmer reported that many members feel education should be the focus of the organization, and the seminar program will be an ambitious one.

Degree-carrying 2nd assistants a trend of '90s

By J. BARRY MOTHES

The steady supply of educated turfgrass graduates entering the job market year after year has led to more golf clubs and courses hiring degree-carrying second assistant superintendents, according to directors of some of the country's biggest and most highly-regarded college and university-based turfgrass programs.

"I think we've been seeing more and more head superintendents going with first and second assistants," said John "Trey" Rogers, an associate professor at Michigan State University. "They want more qualified people and for a few thousand dollars more [in salary] they can get an educated person as a second assistant. Their enthusiasm can make up for their lack of experience and they're worth it."

Rogers said 30 of the 40 2-year turfgrass graduates at Michigan State this year are headed for second assistants jobs. He pointed out there are real practical advantages for superintendents at clubs and courses who have a full-time second assistant superintendent.

"If you only have one assistant and you lose him, you're in trouble," said Rogers. "But if you have two assistants climbing the career ladder, you'll have a second ready to step in when the first leaves which brings some stability to the program."

The story for college and university turfgrass graduates hitting the pavement in 1997 seems to be much the same as in recent years — excellent opportunities at

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Scott Martin, national coordinator of the Audubon Canada program, speaks to a visitor at Cranberry Resort Golf Course, the first golf course in the country to earn full Audubon accreditation.

Audubon advances with Canadian leader

By MARK LESLIE

COLLINGWOOD, Ontario, Canada — Audubon International (AI) has reached a milestone in its advancement around the globe with the addition here of a national coordinator of The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System of Canada.

When ecologist Scott Martin took charge of the fledgling organization in February it was, first, a learning exercise, and, second, a "test launching pad" for AI as it prepares to initiate organization in several other countries.

"We have been approached by entities in Portugal, Southeast Asia, Aus-

tria, Australia and France about setting up an operation there," said AI President Ron Dodson. "We felt we could not do justice in managing a global environmental program from [AI headquarters] Selkirk, N.Y. Canada is close enough that it can serve to teach us how best to spread Audubon programs on a global basis."

Martin, who has worked at parks throughout Ontario and holds degrees in natural sciences and outdoor recreation, parks and tourism from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, said: "The response has been very good. We will

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Photo by Russell C. Kirk



EAGLEBROOKE OUT FRONT WITH GN-1

GN-1 Bermudagrass, from Greg Norman Turf, covers all the tees and fairways at The Club of Eaglebrooke in Lakeland, Fla. — the first facility to use the grass on all 18 holes when it opened in late 1996. "We're excited to have been the first golf course in the nation using this unique new grass, and are elated to see the TPC at Sugarloaf course [in Atlanta] and now the new Atlanta Braves stadium following our example," said Don Randall, Eaglebrooke's general manager/director of golf. The course was designed by Ron Garl of Lakeland. This 18th green is guarded by water, sandtraps and rolling hills. The body of water in the foreground is 20-acre Lake Eaglebrooke, which comes into play on the 16th, 17th and 18th holes. Garl has also been busy in Costa Rica, among other places (see story page 1).

QA Christians presses on in Ulowa research efforts

Dr. Nick Christians of Iowa State University is an expert in developing naturally occurring herbicides for the turf industry. His major research has been on a byproduct of the corn wet-milling process, corn gluten meal (CGM), which has shown to be effective against 22 different weeds. Christians holds a bachelor's degree in forestry from Colorado State University and master's and doctorate degrees in agronomy from The Ohio State University.



Dr. Nick Christians

Golf Course News: What's the latest news on CGM?

Nick Christians: The major development was the EPA's decision that CGM no longer had to be registered as a pesticide. That opened the door for us to bring on new marketers. The companies and product names that have signed on include Safe Earth Lawn & Gardens, Corn Gluten Meal Weed Control; Rohde's Services Inc., GreenSense; Floyd Rogers, WeedFREE; Manning Agricultural Center Inc., ProPac; Grain Processing Co., Corn Gluten Meal Herbicide; Blue Seal Feeds, Safe 'N Simple; Walt's Organic Fertilizer, Wonderful Weed & Feed; Hardesty Organic Supply, Suppressa; Winton Graf [TBD]. We should be announcing more in a few weeks.

GCN: How has the product been accepted in the golf industry?
NC: The primary market, so far, has been lawn care because of

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Maintenance crews better educated

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the first assistant superintendent and second assistant level, but extremely tough competition for head superintendent's jobs, where 100 to 200 applicants are becoming the norm for head jobs.

"We're not having any problems placing graduates," said David Willoughby, associate professor and coordinator of the turfgrass management program at Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI). Willoughby said almost all the 35 to 50 graduates from Ohio State's ATI this year will be starting as first or second assistants.

"The trend in the industry seems to be that you need to earn your wings," said Willoughby. "Just because you're a whiz student doesn't mean you're going to go right out and be a [head] superintendent. But most of our students are not ready to be head supers right away anyway. They're being trained to move up through the system." Willoughby pointed out there are exceptions, of course, such as a student who may be coming into a turfgrass degree program after five or six years experience on a golf course.

The hottest sector in the golf course industry job market, according to several turfgrass and golf course operations program directors, is for golf course mechanics — or, as they are known more and more, turf equipment managers. However, there's nowhere near the supply to meet the demand.

"We could place 100 of them a year if I had them," said John Piersol, chairman of the divisions of golf course operations and landscape technology at Lake City College in northern Florida. "There are just not enough good programs training golf course mechanics, and I don't mean small engine mechanics, I mean golf course mechanics."

Lake City has had a mechanics program since 1973 and Piersol said he's seen the demand soar in the past six to seven years. Lake City will graduate 27 students with degrees in turf equipment management. Piersol said the group received well over 80 job offers.

"The equipment is so sophisticated and expensive that the golf courses have started screaming for qualified people," said Piersol. He said today's golf course mechanic — or turf equipment manager — has to be a far more broadly skilled person than in the past. "He or she has to be 50 percent mechanic and 50 percent manager. Someone who can

set up a shop, organize a preventative maintenance program, use a computer, train and equip operators, and fix things... But the potential for a skilled, organized person is excellent."

Piersol said he hopes other turf equipment management programs start developing around the country. Officials at Delhi

College in New York visited Lake City to study its program and launched a new program at Delhi last fall. And, as reported in last month's Golf Course News, officials at several Denver-area technical colleges are also looking into establishing some type of degree program for turf equipment managers.

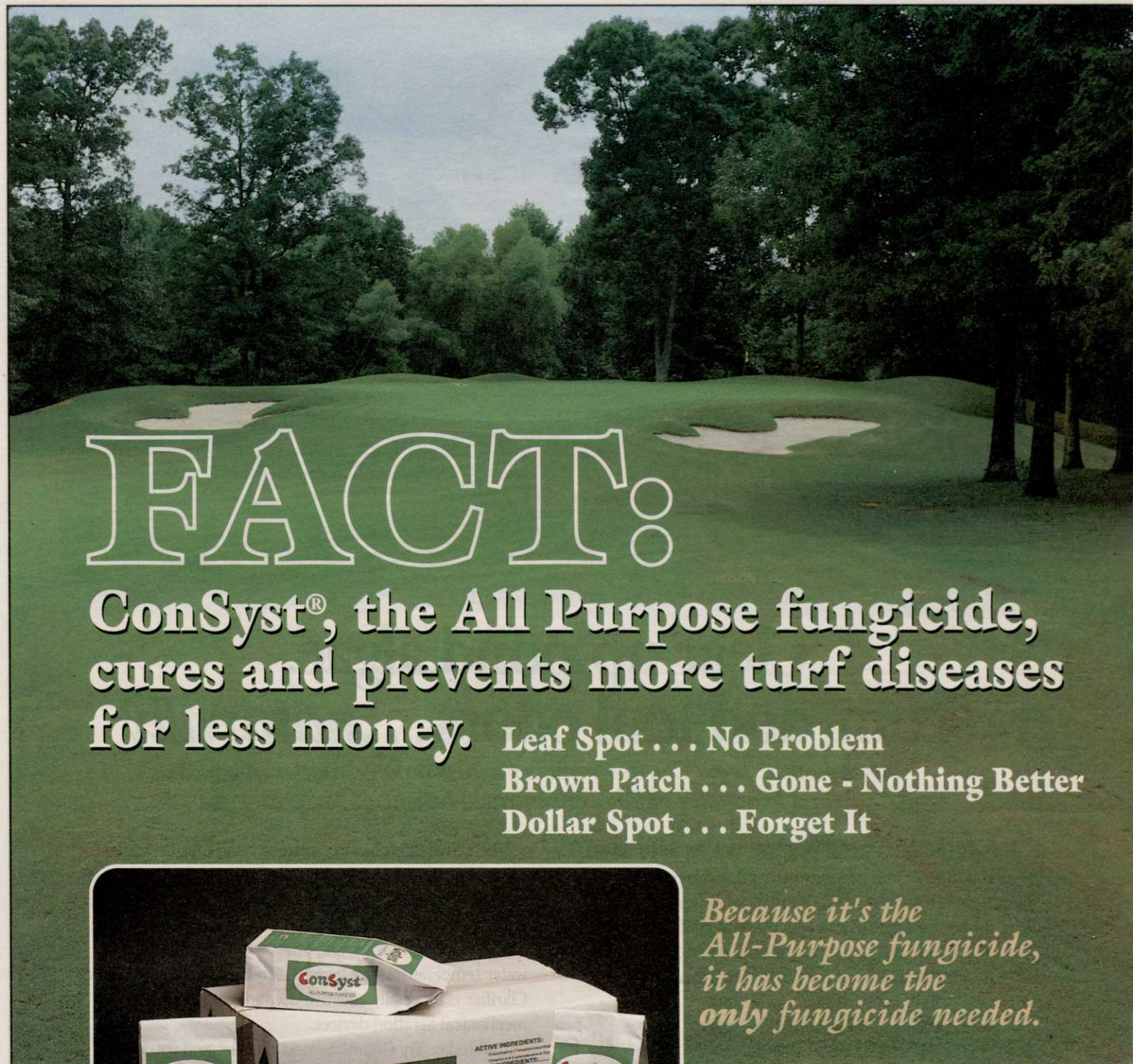
"I hope they're successful," Piersol said. "We can't train all the mechanics in the country, the need is just too huge. There needs to be more good programs scattered around the country. It's a national shortage, there's no doubt about it. It's strange, you've got this big market, with good salaries, but you can't get the students and there aren't enough programs."

And lest anyone think the

mechanic's job is somehow second rate, Piersol, Rogers and others all offered their own version of an unstated truism in the golf course maintenance world.

"If you asked 90 percent of the superintendents who the most important person on the crew is," Piersol said, "he will tell you his right-hand man is not the assistant superintendent."

"It's the mechanic."



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