

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

Sophisticated Irrigation

Fertigation, filtration, acid injection and GPS technology take irrigation into the future 9, 21-23

Something Old, Something New

Renovations and restorations of older and classic courses complement new construction 25



A ROSSIAN TASK MADE EASIER

Poland Spring Golf Club superintendent Dick Fahey, left, and mechanic Ben Perreault hold an original Donald Ross rendering, from 1913, that has aided a bunker restoration at the Maine resort. See story page 25.

COURSE MAINTENANCE

How to repair turf after vandalism 11
Learning available from non-'name' courses, too ... 12
Portable blower also aerates greens 17

COURSE DEVELOPMENT

Sunriver Resort adds John Fought track 3
Carrick, McBroom team up at Niagara Falls 27
Q&A with Renaissance Golf's Bruce Hepner 29

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Walters Golf Management bullish on St. Louis ... 33
Environmental Golf hires McGuire for West 35
Kemper to build, operate facility at former base 36

SUPPLIER BUSINESS

SRO, Advanta team up on breeding 37
Toro signs deal with ClubCorp 38
New products in the marketplace 39-41

New Turfgrass America eyes national market

By A. OVERBECK

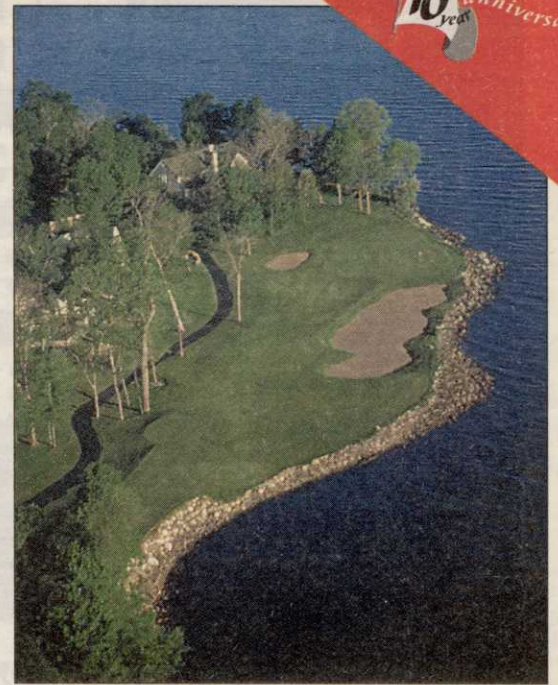
GRANBURY, Texas — In a move to expand beyond their regional reach, three Texas turf companies and a Florida grower have formed an alliance creating a new full-service firm here. The new entity, Turfgrass America, combines Thomas Brothers Grass, Crenshaw and

Doguet Turf and Milberger Turf Farms with Apollo, Fla.-based Elsberry Greenhouses.

While the merger was completed May 14, Milberger and Thomas Brothers have been considering the move for a year and a half.

"As we all looked at the

Continued on page 7



A SHORE BET

Black Brook, which has opened along with its sister track, The Sanctuary Course, is nestled along the shores of Mille Lacs Lake in Minnesota. The courses are designed by John Harbottle in collaboration with 1993 U.S. Amateur champion John Harris and owner Chip Glaser. The Sanctuary Course is geared toward the average player, with shorter yardage than its counterpart Black Brook. Harbottle feels the courses should be "instant classics." See story, page 30.

Z-Net may revolutionize slow-growing grasses

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Tannenbaum Golf Course on Greers Ferry Lake near Heber Springs may have written its name into golf course history when it opened for public play in June. No scoring records were broken. The big story was a process that doubles the speed of growth for zoysiagrass, an excellent turf many superintendents have not used because of its notorious slow growth.

Z-Net, a new patented growing method developed in Japan and brought to America by Winrock



A crew lays down a roll of Z-Net with zoysiagrass implanted in it.

Grass Farm, Inc. here, was used on the fairways and roughs at Tannenbaum for

the first time in America. The new technology produces complete grow-in

during just one growing season — about twice as fast as standard sprigs or plugs, according to Winrock President Frank Whitbeck.

"Z-NET worked beautifully," said Tannenbaum course superintendent Scott White. "We grew in our zoysiagrass fairways and roughs in a little bit longer than the four to six months they predicted. But last summer was a hot summer and it was hard to get anything to grow. Right now it's 90 to 95 percent

Continued on page 31

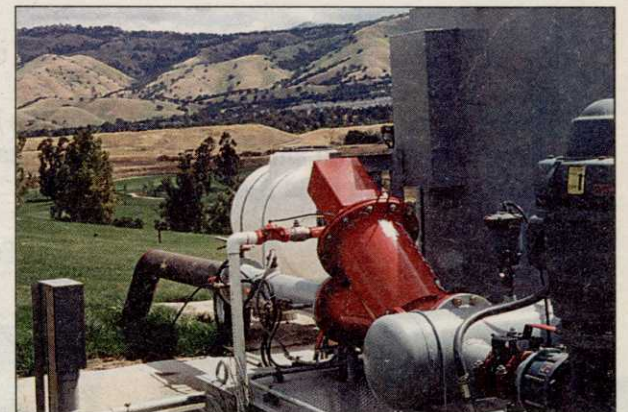
Fertigation, filtration systems said growing in popularity

By PETER BLAIS

Demands for improved playing conditions have led many courses to install fertigation, acid-injection and filtration systems as part of their pumping stations.

Tanks, tubing and controllers for both fertigation and acid-injection systems (which improve water quality) can be rigged up to a pump station at a cost ranging from \$7,000 to \$15,000, a dramatic reduction from the \$20,000 to \$30,000 price tag common just a few years ago, said

Continued on page 22



The red attachment filters water to this pump station.

Country club fertility on a public's budget

By DAVID WILBER

The subject of turfgrass fertility is an ever-changing and often complicated road of twists and turns. But by being aware of several essential areas, turfgrass managers at public, resort and daily-fee golf operations can untangle the knots that might otherwise keep them from having

the best possible fertilizer program.

There is a myth that only the private club is spending enough money to do the fertility management job correctly. From the standpoint of many golf facilities, public and private, fertility management and fertilizer purchasing is often a guessing

Continued on page 18

CC fertility on a public budget

Continued from page 1

game. Any time a guess or any decision is made without all the information in order, a likely result is economic impact.

In short, turfgrass managers need to make sure that every pound of fertility product purchased is giving the best possible result.

Less expensive does not mean cheap. In fact, significant enhancement to fertility programming and economic impact does not always come from simply buying less or seeking inferior products.

Asking a few simple questions can lead to the beginnings of a plan. These questions can be broken down into the following categories and some sample questions:

How You Buy: Are you seeking competitive bids when possible? Are you buying in as much quantity as possible? Are you taking advantage of any discount programs for early- or late-season purchasing?

Who You Buy From: Are you competitive bidding when possible? Are you buying based on true or perceived quality of a line of products? Do you feel you need to use a turfgrass-oriented distributor, or will an agricultural fertilizer dealer meet your needs? Is transportation a significant price impact?

What You Buy: Do you need the technical experience of a distributor or line of products? Do you prefer 50-pound bags, bulk bags, bulk tenders or other means of storage and delivery? Do you desire to look towards composts and other organic-type fertilizers? Do you need slow-release products, dormant feeding or other special fertilization techniques? Do you need mineral products such as lime, gypsum, sulfate of potash, or are you seeking NPK-type fertilizers?

What You Need: Do you regularly use soil testing and other analytical tools? Do you know how to use analysis to track success and failure? Are you running mini-research and trials on your specific situation to compare products, application timing, and fertilization techniques? Do you know the different requirements of fertility for various areas of the golf course? Do you know the differences in cation exchange capacity (CEC)

from greens to tees to fairways? How does water quality impact your situation?

When You Can Apply: Do you have a schedule that allows you to make frequent applications? Do you need to have custom blends made to increase the number of units of material applied for your situation? Are

early- and late-season fertilization opportunities available? Can you water in a morning application, or do you need to apply late in the day to water in? Could fertigation help enhance the opportunity to keep fertility up on a busy course?

All of these kinds of questions can go a long way in helping to check if you are using as much of your resources as possible.

A necessary chore in fertility

When purchasing well ahead of schedule with some flexibility on delivery time, cost saving is usual.

management is the issue of dealing with the equation of price and service. A large impact on fertilizer budgets comes from the

overhead that a distributor or supplier carries. Technical support, while often sadly one-sided in relation to a product line, can be a benefit. But it will always have to be paid for in the price of the product.

Delivery efficiency and method also impact price, as the supplier who can have 10 tons of a fertilizer delivered by forklift the day after it is ordered is likely

Continued on next page

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David Wilber is a consulting agronomist and owner of Wilber Turf and Soil Services in Rocklin, Calif. He works with over 120 courses and clubs in the United States, Scotland and the Caribbean. He can be reached by phone at 916-630-7600 or e-mail at dave@soil.com.

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Country club-style fertility

Continued from previous page
to be charging for that kind of service. If quick service is really needed it may be of value.

When purchasing well ahead of schedule with some flexibility on delivery time, cost saving is usual. Superintendents must seek out their own landing area in the equation of price and service and know that there is a

give-and-take in regards to cost.

Planning the fertilization program is nearly impossible to do without analytical information. Fertilizer suppliers commonly offer soil testing. Superintendents may seek a more independent viewpoint from an independent lab.

Common fuel for the "Private Clubs Can Afford It and Public

Courses Can't" myth is that many private clubs do seek independent analytical services through a qualified soil consultant or other independent means.

Most superintendents report that the savings from this type of consulting advice are significant.

Information from analysis is often found confusing. It should never be a source of anything but answers, and superinten-



Dave Wilber photo

Soil amendments such as calcium from lime can be applied to golf courses. Often, larger quantities are needed which require the use of equipment often used in the agricultural environment.



dents who are left confused by their current testing should recognize this as a need to change. Testing should help in planning preparations, point out change brought on by applications, and monitor progress toward goals. Most importantly, good analytical information should eliminate guesswork.

BEYOND NPK

Balancing soil nutrients through amending means that purchasing must go beyond NPK-type fertilizers. With no doubt, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are very important in both agronomics and economics.

However, minerals such as calcium, magnesium, iron and manganese are extremely important in overall soil performance.

Purchasing these materials may bring the superintendent to new suppliers.

Frequently these suppliers do a good deal of business in production agriculture. Nevertheless, mineral is mineral, regardless of intended use. Prudence in selection for high-quality materials will still yield good prices for soil amendments.

Many times superintendents who are watching their budgets tell me they can not afford to "go organic." On the outside, this is true if the comparison is made between the standard NPK fertilizers and organics based on cost of nitrogen alone.

Looking at products this way may seem to make sense and look like an apples-to-apples view. In most cases, the overlooked issue in looking at the cost of an organic material is the value of carbon as a necessary element for soil performance.

Trials with various composts, granular organic fertilizers, ocean-borne materials and humates frequently show the enhancement of NPK fertilizers through their role in soil conditioning.

Many tight budgets will get great results adding carbon into the fertilization program. The key is remembering that it is not always the product line but the process of soil amending and conditioning.

As a consultant, I work to evaluate each situation from both an agronomic and economic standpoint. Taking a close look

Continued on page 20

More (air) power to you: the first step in getting 'clean'

By TERRY BUCHEN

NAPLES, Fla. — Superintendent Darren J. Davis has started a recent standard operating procedure at Olde Florida Golf Club here, having his crews pre-cleaning all the maintenance equipment with high-pressure air hoses prior

to the traditional cleaning with water.

"We found that using high-pressure air hoses first does a much better job of pre-cleaning our equipment prior to it being



cleaned with a high-pressure water hose and nozzle," Davis said. "Plus, cleaning up dry grass clippings is much easier and has less of an odor than wet clippings."

Olde Florida installed two

air hose reels adjacent to the service road leading into the maintenance complex and an additional one at the equipment wash rack. This second station helps relieve congestion at the end of the work day, Davis said.

Davis chose the Retracta Retractable Hose Reel



Terry Buchen photo

A high-pressure air station at Olde Florida Golf Course.

that has 50 feet of 3/8-inch high-pressure air hose coiled inside. It also has a blow gun with an 18-inch long, 1/8-inch diameter stainless steel wand on the end. The red-colored high-impact plastic hose reel housing swivels from side to side and is attached to the air line with a 3/8-inch black high pressure hose, with a quick coupler connection.

The hose reel is mounted on a wolmanized pressure-treated 4-by-4 post that is 8 feet long. Two feet of the post was installed underground using two bags of Sacrete concrete, said equipment manager Kim Ellis.

Hanging on the front of the 4-by-4 post is an orange-colored safety sign, in both English and Spanish, stating: "Warning — Eye Protection Required In This Area," with a Grainger Plexiglass Safety Glasses Holder for each employee to use.

Country club fertility

Continued from page 19

often reveals purchasing that influences both areas in a negative way. Some top examples I see include:

- √ Using often-expensive slow-release nitrogen incorrectly or when not needed at all can be very costly and easily corrected.

- √ Many so-called "biological" products are not much more than small amounts of mineral, humic material and carbohydrates that are diluted to the point of being highly ineffective.

- √ Selection of a fertilizer blend that is not exactly what is needed instead of shopping around leads to unneeded expense.

Agronomic and economic selection of fertility programming is not just the realm of the club that has a great deal of money to spend.

Public facilities can use the same techniques to plan, choose and purchase a better fertility program. This is a form of stewardship every superintendent can participate in regardless of budget status.



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