

BRIEFS



PTC AWARDS \$175,000 FOR RESEARCH

The Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council has announced allocation of funds to Penn State for the 1998-99 fiscal year. The \$175,000 research grant brings to almost \$2.5 million the council has donated to Penn State over the years. The funds will support research projects in the departments of agronomy, entomology, and plant pathology. It will also support eight scholarships and awards granted to undergraduate and graduate students.



PA. SCHOOLS SIGN AGREEMENT

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Penn State University's two-year Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program has worked out an articulation agreement with Penn College of Technology which allows all graduates of the two-year turf program to complete an associate degree. Penn College of Technology is a Penn State affiliate located in Williamsport. The agreement allows any certificate program graduate to continue studies at the Williamsport campus. By completing two semesters and required classes, the student would be awarded an associate degree in landscape technology with an emphasis in turfgrass management. For further information, contact Rich Weilminster at Penn College at 717-320-8038, extension 3534, or George Hamilton at Penn State at 814-865-3007.



PURDUE GETS \$146,000

INDIANAPOLIS — At the Midwest Turf Expo here, the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation (MRTF), whose mission is to support turfgrass research and education at Purdue University, presented a check to the Purdue Department of Agronomy for \$146,000 for annual support of the turfgrass program, and an additional check for \$100,000 to help complete the W.H. Daniel Turfgrass Research and Diagnostic Center. Steve Frazier of the Links Group was given the 1999 Distinguished Service Award, the highest honor given by the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation. The award is presented to an individual who has gone above and beyond the call of duty for the turf industry of Indiana. Next year's Turf Expo will be held Jan. 18-20 in Indianapolis. For more information, contact 765-494-8039.

New England Turf Show presents solutions

Take-all patch may have met its match, says Rutgers professor

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — After three years of research, Dr. Bruce Clarke of Rutgers University has developed a new approach managing take-all patch that introduces new management practices, and recommends properly timed and rotated cultural practices.

Since identifying *gaevmannomyces graminis* in the Pacific Northwest in the late 1970s, superintendents on bentgrass golf courses have struggled to control what they commonly call take-all patch. The perennial root disease, which is identified by large doughnut-shaped patches of damaged turf, is especially difficult to combat because by the time symptoms are evident, the disease has been present for six to eight weeks.

Knowing that, however, is one of the keys to controlling take-all

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Pebble Beach's safety program reduces on-course accidents

By ANDREW OVERBECK

PROVIDENCE, R.I. — Working with the theory that every accident could have been prevented, Pebble Beach Vice President of Resource Management Ted Horton has developed a workplace safety program he feels every golf course could use.

"You must have the mindset that every single accident could have been prevented and that you as the superintendent have the opportunity to prevent them," Horton told an audience at the New England Turfgrass Conference and Show here.

His latest program, STOP for Safety, emphasizes observation skills on the part of superintendents and works to improve communication between superintendents and their employees.

"This program ensures that the entire workforce will be

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Baker's Dozen:
Young crew keeps
The Links atop pack

By TERRY BUCHEN

WILLISTON (RAY), N.D. — Nicole Baker once rode her horse on this land, enjoyed picnics here, grew up. Today she may be the youngest golf course superintendent in the country, charged with maintaining the standards of a golf course named No. 2 Best New Affordable Course in the country when it opened in 1996, and striving to establish her place in a man-dominated profession.



"Some people were skeptical that a 21-year-old woman superintendent with a 19-year-old assistant could do the job," Baker said. "But with our previous experience and what my assistant, Cory Anderson, calls 'a young course with young minds,' we have prevailed with good success."

Indeed, The Links retains its ranking



The 8th hole, a par-3 with a backdrop of the North Dakota Buttes.



as No. 1 in North Dakota, and, in 1998, was given a 4-1/2 by *Golf Digest* in its listing of Places To Play.

"There was pressure from Day One to keep the course's ranking up as we were rated No. 2 Best New Affordable

Course in the country in 1996 by *Golf Digest*," Baker said.

How does a young leadership continue such high standards?

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Chad Wilson, from Iowa State University, disassembles an irrigation head during the year-end Intern Olympics at Country Club of the Rockies.

Finish the season with an Intern Olympics

By KEVIN ROSS

EDWARDS, Colo. — Many golf course operations have developed strong internship programs through various turf universities throughout the United States and abroad. We host four interns per season at Country Club of the Rockies. The interns become a valuable part of our management team. Our club benefits greatly from their dedication and willingness to learn.

At the end of their internship — usually late-August — we have a final staff barbecue. During this barbecue, we have what is now known as the Intern Olympics. The interns perform three events and other staff members judge or score the events.

The first event, the Irrigation Head Challenge, is to disassemble, then reassemble an irrigation head. Each intern is timed, then judged for proper assembly.

The second event is the Hose Reel Challenge. The interns are required to sit on a utility vehicle at the start, then go to a hose reel, hook it into a quick coupling, roll the hose out 75 feet, fill a 5-gallon pail completely, then roll the hose back up and disconnect the QC. This event is also

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KIRKLAND, Wash. — OB Sports has formed a new consulting division under the direction of agronomist Tom Christy, director of golf course maintenance for the company.

OB Sports, headquartered in Kirkland, owns eight courses and manages facilities in Arizona, California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and Texas.

As part of the new service,

OB Sports forms agronomy consulting division

Christy will visit each property on a regular basis and will establish a customized golf course maintenance program. If necessary, he identifies and hires a first-class golf course superintendent to implement the program. Weekly updates and periodic visits to the property ensure that quality turf

conditions and cultural practices are established.

Christy, who joined OB Sports in 1998, previously worked as a superintendent at courses in California, Washington and Oregon. He is the recipient of the Golf Course Superintendents Association Environmental Stewardship Award and was the Or-

egon Golf Course Superintendent Association's Superintendent of the Year in 1995. He is a two-time president of the Northwest Turfgrass Association, a charitable trust that raises money for turfgrass research.

Ironwood Country Club in Palm Desert, Calif. and The Reserve, a 36-hole facility near Port-

land, Oregon, are among the first two clients to sign maintenance contracts. In addition, the courses already on the OB Sports Trail will continue to receive the benefit of Christy's expertise.

Members of golf courses under contract with OB Sports also enjoy the privilege of membership in the OB Sports Trail, which allows preferred starting times and discounted fees at all OB Sports-managed facilities.

Take-all patch

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patch, according to Clarke, who shared his findings at the New England Regional Turfgrass Conference and Show here.

Under Clarke's regime, the first step is evaluating the health of the affected soil. "The symptoms occur when the soil has a high pH between 6.5-8.0," he said.

Therefore, in order to control the disease, you must first control the pH of the soil, said Clarke. Over three years, Clarke found best results when using acidifying fertilizers. The optimum pH, he said, is around 6.0.

This approach works even better in combination with a sub-surface application of magnesium sulfate, according to Clarke. In the study, magnesium was applied in April-May at a rate of 1-2 tenths of a pound and then repeated every six weeks. This was found to be extremely effective in reducing disease and strengthening turf.

"Reducing the pH and adding magnesium goes hand in hand with combating take-all patch," said Clarke. "It enhances the plant's natural defenses against the disease and the magnesium is toxic to the fungus."

Compaction must also be controlled since shallow rooting and stressed turf leave the plant wide open to the disease. Therefore, Clarke recommended that the turf be aerified in the spring and fall, but emphasized that it should not be done when symptoms are evident on the turf.

As the aerifying method suggests, timing is key in controlling take-all patch. According to Clarke, the best time to attack the disease is from October to November—before the disease goes into dormancy but after the symptoms have shown themselves—and in the spring before the disease begins to take hold again.

"You can affect potential infections that may develop in the winter or early spring by doing two fall applications and one spring application," said Clarke.

In tandem, these approaches have proven to reduce the impact of take-all patch. Clarke expects that new fungicides using strobilurin chemistry and new turf injection equipment will increase the superintendent's ability to fight take-all patch.

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Safety saves

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taking positive steps toward ensuring workplace safety," said Horton. While he has shaped the program specifically for Pebble Beach, which has 1,700 employees, five golf courses, 5,300 acres and two major resorts, Horton maintains that the practices can be used by courses of any size.

Built around what Horton calls the Safety Observation Cycle, "the program helps to change behavior in regards to safety as well as helping your observation and communication skills to take positive steps to ensure safety," he said.

The program has five steps. The first involves deciding to stop and take a look at what an individual worker is doing. The second is stopping to observe the individual and to see if they change their unsafe behavior. The next step is to act, to talk to the individual about what it is they are doing that is a potential safety risk.

The fourth element focuses on positive reinforcement. "When you recognize safe behavior," said Horton, "you are sending a signal that safety is important."

The fifth step involves report cards which are used to consistently discuss workplace safety and what can be done to ensure that workers are acting safely.

Ultimately, Horton has found that the program improves communication between the superintendent and his workers and motivates workers to behave in a safe manner. The program, however, must be followed rigorously if it is to be effective.

"If you walk by someone who is being unsafe and you don't correct them, then the standard has been set that other employees are going to emulate and adhere to," Horton said.

Further, safety must be given the same importance as job efficiency and cost, a lesson Horton learned the hard way.

While hurriedly completing course preparations for a tournament, one of his workers drove a utility vehicle through a roped-off area in order to save time. The cord got caught on the cart and ripped out a stake that went flying into the man's face damaging one eye and his dental work.

Horton admitted that accidents do happen, but said he has found that the STOP program, when properly followed, is a success.

"Clearly, it has shown that injuries and incidents are reduced 50 to 60 percent, and when you multiply that into workers compensation, the cost of injuries and lost work time, we are talking about significant savings," Horton said. "Additionally, safety awareness increases, communications skills improve, as do supervisor and management skills."

Stahl, Bodnar earn top honors among Penn State grads

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. — Penn State University's 40th Golf Course Turfgrass Management Program class graduated 33 students on March 6 at a ceremony held at the Nittany Lion Inn here.

Dr. John "Trey" Rogers III of Michigan State University delivered the keynote address.

Jonathan R. Stahl was presented the Penn State Alumni Outstanding Student Award

as well as scholarships from the Trans-Mississippi Golf Association and D.M. Boyd Co.

Kim M. Bodnar was selected by fellow classmates to receive the Zimmerman Memorial Award for Outstanding Turfgrass Student, sponsored by Lesco, Inc.

Scholarships and awards were also presented as follows:

Rene Hadley and Christopher E. McPherson also received Trans-Mississippi

Golf Association scholarships. The Penncross Bentgrass Growers Association awarded scholarships to Lucas C. Fowler, Rene Hadley, David J. Kuypers, Christopher E. McPherson, Alan Peterson and Shawn B. Werley.

Joel H. Erickson was given the Duff Shaw Memorial award, while Lucas C. Fowler earned the Myles Adderly Technical Report Writing Award, sponsored by Denis Griffiths and Associates.

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