

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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LOPEZ NOW AN ARCHITECT

Nancy Lopez, who has consulted on golf course designs in Japan and the Philippines, is embarking on a career in design. See an interview with Lopez, the Old Tom Morris Award winner, on page 31.

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PERIODICAL



OFF-SEASON? YOU BETCHA!

Among other tasks, the crew at The Valley Club in Sun Valley, Idaho, must maintain the club's platform tennis court. See Spring Prep section, pages 28-30.

Roundup-tolerant bent looms on the horizon

By PETER BLAIS

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Scotts Co. is developing genetically modified turfgrasses that are resistant to the herbicide Roundup, a potentially major breakthrough that could make it easier for superintendents to control weeds, according to Scotts researcher Dr. Virgil Meier.

Speaking at the recent Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show here, Meier said a Roundup-resistant bentgrass crop could be ready for harvesting as early as 2003. The Marysville, Ohio-based firm is also researching Roundup-



resistant strains of Kentucky bluegrass and St. Augustinegrass. The bluegrass could be available in 2004.

"This whole area of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) will change how we maintain turfgrass 15 to 20 years from now, starting with the Roundup-resistant bentgrasses and bluegrasses that will be available in 2003 and 2004," Meier predicted.

Scotts has been testing genetically modified

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Valderrama Declaration affirms stewardship

By TREVOR LEDGER

VALDERRAMA, Spain — "What started as a simple exploration of ecology has turned into a major, complex and dynamic program," said Jo Schatten, chairman of the European Golf Association Ecology Unit in his opening address to the U.S.-Europe Golf Environment Summit at Valderrama Golf Club here in November.

Two days later, leaders in golf from around the world were signing the Valderrama Declaration, a statement of intent affirming the golf industry's commitment to environmental stewardship in partnership with such



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Novartis, AstraZeneca to merge, spin-off ag units

By ANDREW OVERBECK

BASEL, Switzerland — Consolidation continues in the agrochemicals industry as the boards of Novartis AG and AstraZeneca PLC have agreed to merge and spin-off their troubled agribusiness units to form Syngenta. The \$15-billion deal combines Novartis' Crop Protection and Seeds businesses and Zeneca Agrochemicals.

According to industry analysts, this move may be the first in another round of mergers. The Syngenta deal may affect St. Louis-based Monsanto Co., which earlier had been rumored to be in talks

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Supers giddy about tourney

By A. OVERBECK

MOBILE, Ala. — The four superintendents hosting their peers at this year's GCSAA Golf Championship are feeling emotions of apprehension and excitement as they start to prepare for the event.

"I'd be lying to you if I told that I wasn't feeling the pressure to look good," said Michael Rienzi, superintendent at Kiva Dunes Golf Club. "To me this is big. I'm more nervous about this than I was about

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The 18th hole at the Falls Course at Magnolia Grove. The course will host the final round of championship play at the 2000 GCSAA Tournament.

GCSAA
show preview
pages 25-27

GTCR commits \$100M to new Husband firm

By PETER BLAIS

CHICAGO — GTCR Golder Rauner, LLC has committed \$100 million in equity financing to back former Cobblestone Golf Group Chief Executive Officer James A. (Bob) Husband and his executive team to start Heritage Golf Group, LLC, a new course acquisition/management firm based in San Diego.

The commitment includes an initial investment of \$50 million, with potential to provide up to \$100 million or more, based on

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Bob Husband

Valderrama Declaration

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bodies as the International Olympic Committee, World Wide Fund for Nature, the United Nations and the European Commission.

The summit was organized by Audubon International and the European Golf Association Ecology Unit, now called Committed

to Green, represented by Ron Dodson and David Stubbs, respectively.

"This is an historic occasion," said Stubbs. "For the first time we have brought together the top officials from the game of golf alongside world authorities in environmental protection, to agree on a common agenda.

"Not only does the Valderrama Declaration set out the principles for a joint approach on environmental issues, but it also specifies direct long-term support for practical programs."

This latter point — the practical application of environmental programs — was a major theme throughout the summit. Most of the speakers emphasized astonishing advances being made in all areas of ecological steward-

ship within the golf industry.

"Cooperative is the key word, not confrontation," Dodson declared. "We must forge partnerships with governments, private industry, golf clubs, individuals, everyone."

Such partnerships were discussed in greater depth and, without exception, the same conclusion was reached: to enter into an agreement with anyone, an education program must be de-

livered in some form or other. This education should be extremely wide-ranging, from direct training of golf industry employees to the demonstration to the public at large of good environmental practice.

Peter Dawson, secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews and a signatory to the Declaration, synopsized the challenge: "To grow and flourish, golf must be a good neighbor and be seen to be a good neighbor."

The public awareness of sound, ethical and environmental practices was widely agreed to be at least as important for the golf industry as the actuality.

The current education programs were shown to be primarily aimed at people in the golf industry. Though they were unanimously accepted as being highly laudable and effective, there was concern that the time had come for a wider, more expansive campaign to increase public awareness of the benefits of golf courses to the environment.

Dr. Patricia Cobb of Auburn University in Alabama pointed out the danger of "preaching to the choir."

That's not to say that the "choir" is fully in tune with the Committed to Green and Audubon standpoint, she said, but rather that a wider audience needs to be included.

Jim Moore of the U.S. Golf Association noted a number of worrying attitudes that still exist within the golf industry and that still need to be addressed with continuing educational programs.

"Architects and developers are often skeptical about environmental programs," Moore said, "because they feel that they are judged guilty until proven innocent, that being 'environmentally sound' costs them money and complicates their lives and some just pay lip service in order to get through the permitting process."

Jo Schatten outlined the progress made by Committed to Green, pointing out: "This is a new movement. Five years ago, who would have thought that so much could be achieved? Then, European golf was seen to be 'public enemy number one,' which was destroying nature and polluting water."

The proof of golf's value to the environment and the recent progress made was brought to life by Paul Rooney, environmental and biological studies lecturer at Liverpool Hope University who recently headed up a three-year research project on the Sefton Dunes in northwest England, an area which includes Royal Birkdale and several other notable golf clubs.

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