

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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INSIDE

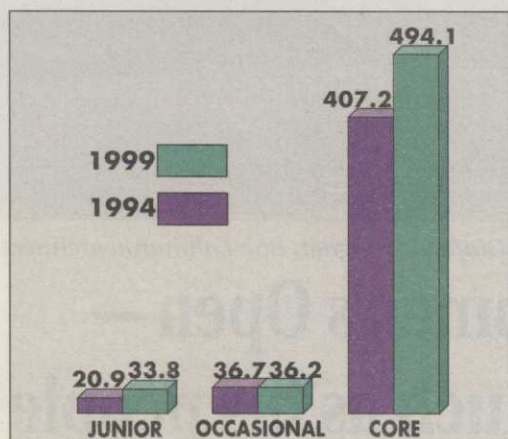
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TOTAL ROUNDS PLAYED (MILLIONS)



Rounds played in 1999 reached the highest point ever (564 million), according to the 2000 edition of the National Golf Foundation's Golf Participation in the U.S. study. For more on the NGF study, see story on page 3.

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PERIODICAL



Architect Tom Fazio on site at the Virginia State Golf Association's Independence Golf Club. When the course opens next summer, it will have a 9-hole Kid's Course. For more on this story, see page 19.

Eco-terrorists strike Pure Seed test farm

By JAY FINEGAN

HUBBARD, Ore. — An underground eco-terrorist group styling itself the Anarchist Golfing Association attacked Pure Seed Testing Inc. here last month, smashing into greenhouses, overturning and stomping on experimental grass plots, scattering identification labels, and spray painting such slogans as "Nature Bites Back."

Crystal Fricker, director of research and new president, estimated damage at about \$500,000, but said the value of projects destroyed in the raid could easily have run over \$1 million. "It's hard to put a value on it," she said. "We've lost years of research."

The Federal Bureau of Investigation swung into action quickly, assigning 10 agents to the case. At press time, no arrests had been made.

The vandals stole onto the 110-acre research farm



Damage to Pure Seed's experimental grass plots.

during the night. "They hit two different greenhouses and went across 70 acres of the farm, hitting different nurseries, pulling up plants, cutting the heads off plants, and dumping 200 pots of ornamental grasses collected from around the world," Fricker said. "They left little clues that they had been everywhere — golf balls embossed with their insignia: a circle-A anarchist symbol,"

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dot-coms primed to revolutionize market

By ANDREW OVERBECK

While the buzz surrounding the launch of several Internet-based business-to-business ventures earlier this year has faded, work behind the scenes continues as these high-tech companies clamor to define strategies, attract vendors and buyers and get up and running. In the meantime, web-savvy superintendents are beginning to embrace the concept of purchasing goods on-line.

New players have also burst onto the scene in recent weeks, bringing the total of superintendent specific



Rhonda Knipp

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Jack's back in Monterey

By ISAAC HILLSON

MONTEREY, Calif. — In the charged atmosphere of the weekend before the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, Jack Nicklaus made some noise a few miles east as he unveiled his latest course design.

Pasadera Country Club is set inland, just east of Laguna Seca Public Course and a few miles from the ocean. Cut into the familiar brush-covered hills of the California countryside, the course caters to the recently rich forty-something retirees of the booming San Francisco Bay area and offers some relief from the unpredictable fogs of the coastal areas of the Monterey Peninsula.

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Destructive beetle spreading fast through Northeast

By JAY FINEGAN

BRETTON WOODS, N.H. — An unusually pernicious turf-destroying beetle, the European chafer, is marching briskly through Northeastern states and appears poised to extend its range. Speaking to superintendents

from Maine and New Hampshire at the Mount Washington Hotel here, entomologist Stanley R. Swier said the chafer can do "a phenomenal amount of damage."

Swier also expressed concern that the insect may be on the verge of a breakout phase. "The chafer will lay its eggs in potted nursery plants, and these plants will be shipped around the country," he said. "They can also be carried by cars and trains. They emerge by the millions in late June, and they'll fly right into vehicles. When you look at



European chafer depositing eggs.

the routes of major highways and rail beds, you see the chafer following those tracks. It's getting a free ride from place to place."

The brown, inch-long beetle, a native of central Europe, first appeared in the United States in 1940, when it turned up in Newark, N.Y. Its advance from there had been gradual. Now, however, the insect has spread as far north as Portland, Me., and southern Canada,

Continued on page 10

Course owners, IRS negotiate

By A. WASHBURN

CHARLESTON, S.C. — The National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA), working with the national accounting firm KPMG, met here recently with officials of the Internal Revenue Service to seek more favorable tax treatment for golf courses. At issue was a 45-year-old tax regulation dealing with real estate depreciation which, course owners contended, failed to account for the construction and maintenance costs of modern layouts.

Revenue Ruling 55-290,

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Pure Seed attacked

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with a butterfly."

Pure Seed Testing is owned by Bill Rose, who also owns Turf-Seed Inc. He said his company will have to absorb the loss because insurance covered only seed and seed stock, not experimental plants.

E-MAIL COMMUNIQUE

In an e-mail communique to the company and media outlets, the Anarchist Golfing Association wrote that "the biotech industry usually hides behind the racist aura of feeding the Third World. But as you can see, these crops are grown for profit and the pleasure of the rich and have no social value."

The message continued: "Grass, like industrial culture, is invasive and permeates every aspect of our lives. While the golf trade journals claim that golf courses provide suitable habitat for wildlife, we see them as a destroyer of all things wild."

The anarchist group apparently believed that Pure Seed was conducting genetic engineering work on grasses, Fricker said. "The irony of it is that those were all naturally bred grasses they destroyed, having nothing at all to do with genetic work," she said.

"We were doing one risk-assessment project to determine if it's wise or safe to introduce genetically altered grasses into the environment," she added. "And in fact, our data were showing that we should not have open-pollinated transgenic bentgrass, and that we need to go towards something like male sterility, so that the gene won't be carried in the pollen. That's what they attacked - the research that would have proven their point, and maybe stopped some of this."

"We were the only company doing that sort of research," Fricker said. "There are some companies producing genetically altered products without doing the research. In our opinion, she said, "they hit the wrong place and shut down something I think they might have supported."

Fricker seemed particularly disheartened by the loss of her research work on experimental varieties of grasses. The vandals destroyed a strain of tall fescue that survives a low pH factor, she said. They hit another tall fescue that is resistant to brown-patch disease - a major disease in the Southeast and even in California. They also ruined a salt-tolerant perennial rye grass and a creeping fescue that was naturally tolerant to Roundup.

"We'd been working on some of these things for six years," Fricker said.

Researcher follows anti-golf groups

Barry Clausen, a specialist in eco-terrorism, said there are several groups in the country that see golf courses as "an evil." Clausen, of Redding, Calif., has written a book, soon to be released, called "Burning Rage - The Growing Anger Within My Country." He said the movement is led by people "who think all mining is bad, all logging is bad, all golfing is bad. They recruit high school and college kids, who get brainwashed, and the result is the kind of destruction you see at Pure Seed."



A golf enthusiast himself, Clausen said the attackers "probably didn't care that no genetic research was going on. It's about sabotaging golf courses. They hate golf courses, because in order to build them you have to tear up natural areas."

According to Clausen, golf courses have been on the eco-terrorism hit list since 1995, when the *Earth First! Journal* advocated sabotaging courses and described how to do it.

"There are numerous courses across the country where they have blown up the greens," he said. "At one resort in

Washington state, they tore up nine greens and then put a stink bomb in the ventilation system during a convention. There was also a bombing on the PGA Tour, in Akron, Ohio, where a bomb went off in a trash can and two people were injured. PGA officials said a kid had thrown an M-80 in there, but it was a bomb. I got the reports from Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms."

In the 1995 *Earth First! Journal* article, entitled "Golf Course Maintenance," readers were told that golf "is the sport of the aristocrat and the poser aristocrat." Among the "tips" offered by the anonymous author were these:

- "Forget all that you've heard about pouring gasoline or Roundup on the greens. Don't even bother carving up the tees or stealing golf carts. Just cut off that IV from the aquifer." It detailed exactly how to destroy irrigation systems.

- "Hit the greens first, and repeatedly."

— Jay Finegan

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