

# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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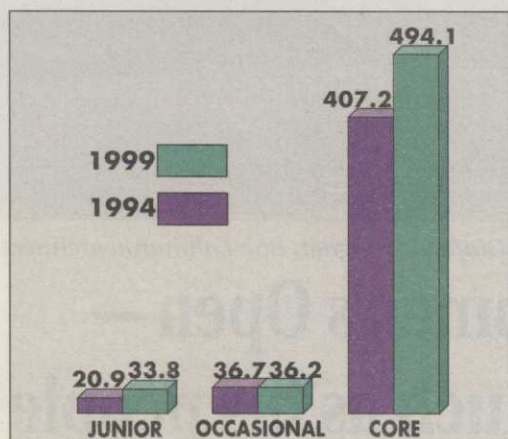
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### TOTAL ROUNDS PLAYED (MILLIONS)



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,

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## 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,

Continued on page 30



# Beetle

Continued from page 1

and has been seen as far west as Rochester, N.Y. The chafer also has struck in Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts and elsewhere in the region.

"Most of the entomologists in the Northeast are looking at the chafer now," said Swier, a Ph.D. entomologist with the University of New Hampshire's extension service. "We don't know of anything effective enough to totally wipe them out. They will keep on moving as long as there are areas that have good, fibrous roots."

Many golf course superintendents are unaware of the threat, Swier said, because the invasion has been spotty. "It's not in every course," he noted. Also, because the insect prefers to fly at night, it's not often seen. Consequently, the beetle can inflict its damage long before it comes to a superintendent's attention.

Superintendent Tom Rowell, at Cochecho Country Club, in coastal Dover, N.H., is a case in point. He had no idea what was killing his rough two years ago. "At first, the bad spots were few and minor, and I didn't think too much of it," he said. "But then the damage got worse."

A few days later, Rowell began noticing large, unfamiliar beetles on his greens early in the morning. He sent a few specimens to Swier, who identified them as European chafers.

### CHAFER'S LIFE CYCLE

Swier has been conducting field trials on the insect for the New England Regional Turf Foundation (NERTF). "We're looking at the correlation of life cycle with degree days, so we can predict the stages of the chafer in the ground for better timing of insecticides," he said.

The adult chafer emerges from the ground in June and flies up to the trees to mate. The female then drops to the ground in search of suitable soil to lay the eggs. "They tend to prefer soil slightly on the dry side," Swier said. "That's why, on golf courses, you will more likely see them in your drier areas, where there might be some ledge, or perhaps in unirrigated roughs. But that doesn't mean you won't also see them on irrigated fairways."

As the eggs transform into grubs, the larval chafer burrows into root zones and goes to work. "They are larger than Japanese beetle grubs, so they eat more," Swier said. "Also, they are more cold-tolerant. The Japanese beetle grub might stop feeding by late September and start burrowing down to spend the winter, but the chafer grub will feed into early November.

"Also, in the spring," he said, "they are the first ones to come back up from the depths of the soil and start feeding on grass roots. They'll come up as early as February or March in the Northeast. The roots haven't even had a chance to start growing, and the chafers are already at work. They will feed right through May, and then start turning into the pupal stage. But

when they emerge as adults, in mid to late June, they feed little if at all.

"After they mate and lay their eggs, they die," Swier added. "Superintendents will tend to see the dead bodies on low-cut, maintained grasses."

### NOTHING BUT DIRT

The beetle can cause extensive turf damage. Last year, for example, a major infestation

plagued Dover, N.H. The chafers hit early and they hit hard. By the time the snow cleared that spring, many lawns were completely devastated.

"It was the talk of the town," said Rowell, the Cochecho superintendent, who was inundated with questions from club members. "We had entire lawns without a single blade of grass. They were nothing but dirt. You could turn

down any street in Dover, and lawn after lawn was totally destroyed. They also wiped out entire cemeteries."

At Cochecho, Rowell had treated isolated areas of the rough in 1998, but the chafer made another run at the course last year. Bird activity alerted him to the threat.

"Once the snow was gone, the

Continued on next page

**B**SMOOTH **B**COMFORTABLE  
**B**EFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**POWER  
**B**QUIET **B**EFFICIENT **B**SL  
**B**EFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**POWER  
**B**QUIET **B**SMOOTH **B**SL  
**B**EFFICIENT **B**CLEAN **B**POWER  
**B**SMOOTH **B**COMFORTABLE  
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**B**QUIET **B**SMOOTH **B**SL

## THE NEW **B**SERIES LIGHTWEIGHTS





## Destruction

Continued from previous page

crows started really tearing up the roughs trying to get at these huge grubs," he said. "They are big and hard to control if you don't get to them when they're young. The thing is, you're not looking for any damage that early in the season, but there it was. We'd never had grub problems

in the rough—not enough to treat, anyway—and then all of a sudden these guys came along."

### TREATMENT OPTIONS

In field trials conducted for the NERTF, Swier has tested various insecticides against the chafer. His research shows that Merit, by Bayer Corp., is very effective. A new pesticide called Meridian, made by Novartis, is due on the market later this summer. Swier said Meridian looks

promising. "The materials we have will control them at 90%," he said, "but they're not effective enough to wipe these insects out completely."

He's also studying the efficacy of halofenozide, the active agent in Scott's Grubex and in Mach 2, produced by RohMid LLC, a joint venture between Rohm and Haas and American Cyanamid.

The insecticides being used on the pests have very low risk

to other species because they target a growth hormone specific to the European chafer, Swier said.

"Generally speaking, one application—either granular or liquid—will do the trick, when done in June or earlier. Some superintendents have used Merit in May, also, with acceptable results," he said. "A preferred time is closer to the egg-laying period, just before or after they come out of

the ground. That way, you have a maximum amount of chemical available at the time when the grubs are first hatching.

Swier said the recommended applications range from two pounds per acre for Grubex and Mach 2, down to 0.4 pounds per acre for Merit. The forthcoming Meridian, he said, will allow the lowest level yet—0.26 pounds per acre.

"We're looking at a variety of formulations, many of which are granular and which can be incorporated into fertilizers," Swier explained. "The fertilizer is mixed with the insecticide as a pre-made formulation. That way a superintendent can fertilize and kill grubs at the same time."

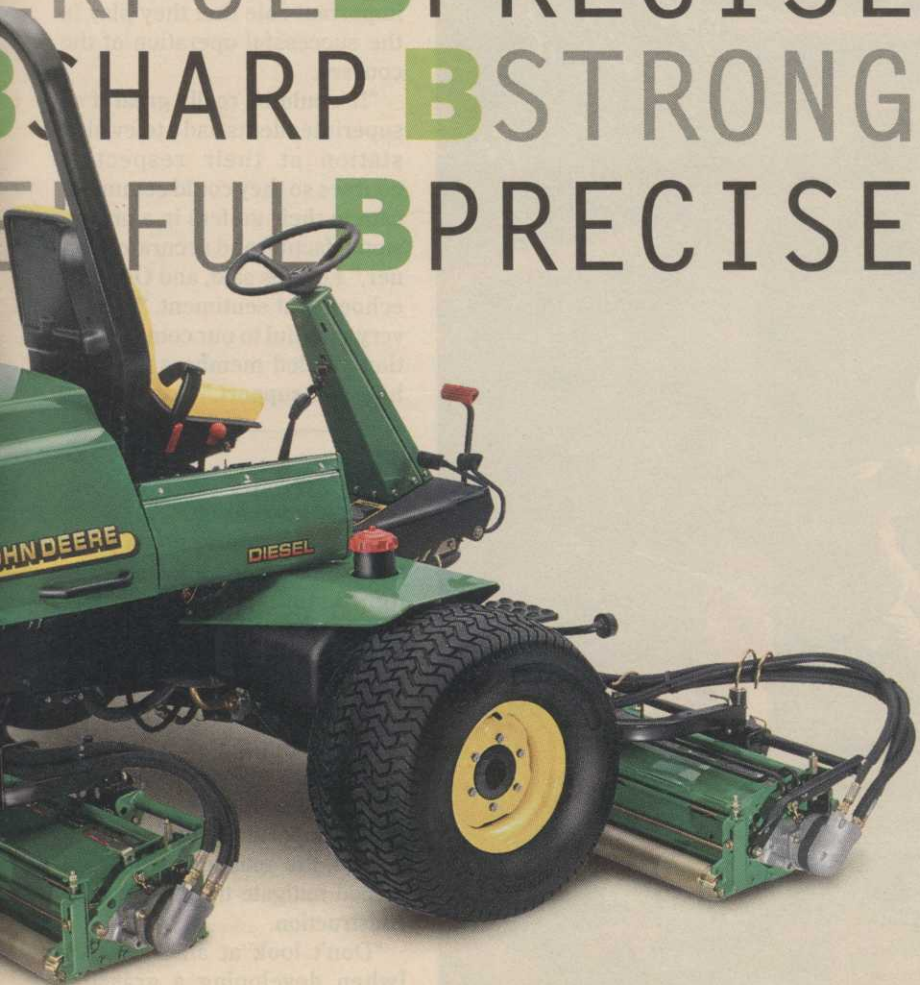
At Cochecho, Rowell has been spraying fairways with Merit and Mach 2. "I've been alternating between the two, because these pesticides are new and nobody knows if the chafer will build up resistance," he said.

That combination was effective last summer. Cochecho, right in the midst of Dover's severe chafer outbreak, lost only 4,000 square feet of turf to the beetle, mostly on mounds that tended to be drier than the rest of the fairway. "Other than that," Rowell said, "we kept it at bay."

On his rough, Rowell is staying with Merit, because Mach 2 is not recommended for unirrigated areas. He calculates the cost of defending against the European chafer at about \$100 per acre. "The cost of golf just went up," he said. ▽

## WHAT A FAIRWAY MOWER SHOULD BE.

**B** SHARP **B** STRONG  
**E** RFUL **B** PRECISE  
**E** EK **B** POWERFUL  
**E** RFUL **B** PRECISE  
**B** COMFORTABLE  
**E** RFUL **B** PRECISE  
**B** SHARP **B** STRONG  
**E** RFUL **B** PRECISE



Excellence has a new letter. The new John Deere 3215B Turf System I and the 3235B Turf System II take lightweight fairway mowers to new heights of efficiency, cut quality, and grass collecting. Both machines boast new 22-inch bed-knife-to-reel cutting units. These units have larger reel motors than the previous generation for improved power. (The 3235B can be equipped with ESP cutting units for use in lush, warm-season grasses.) A new yoke and ball joint design on the cutting units improves grass collecting. And the cutting units can be easily removed for servicing. A more efficient new triple pump has 12-tooth gears for a lower internal pressure drop and improved flow dynamics. A standard electric fan drive improves engine cooling performance while reducing sound levels to an all-time low. And to cap it all off, both the 3215B and 3235B sport new streamlined, fiberglass hoods. To see the new John Deere Lightweight Fairway Mowers in action, call 1-800-537-8233 for your free video today. Then call your local John Deere golf & turf distributor.

## Blackstone

Continued from page 6

repair the leaks in the irrigation pond's liner. Fall rains and hurricane season helped to mitigate the drought conditions and allowed Snyder to oversee the entire course.

"The seed went in well in the fall ... and we had good weather this spring, which has helped," he said.

The course held its grand opening at the end of May and has received rave reviews and high levels of play.

"The grass still has to fill in a bit. By July we should be in good shape," said Snyder. "Now I can finally put the construction equipment away and concentrate on doing some of the agronomic work that is necessary. Rees Jones is coming up soon and he wants to make it perfect and bring this course to the top. We've got the design and the resources now to do that."

Snyder and his staff are now finishing the putting green and doing landscape work before getting to the final task—building a maintenance facility. ▽

