

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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COUNTERPOINT

Audubon Int'l thinking big

By ANDREW OVERBECK

HARTWELL, Ga. — On the heels of announcing its "Fifty in Five" initiative, Audubon International revealed yet another ambitious plan to expand its programs during its first-ever industry summit here at Catechee Golf Club Feb. 12. The initiative, titled the Sustainable Communities Campaign, will build on the group's environmental certification of golf courses.

The new plan will dramatically increase Audubon International's profile and will require more participation from the golf industry if it is to be successful.

"We have become known as 'that golf environmental group,'" said Audubon president Ron Dodson. "We want to think really big and promote the principles of sustainability."

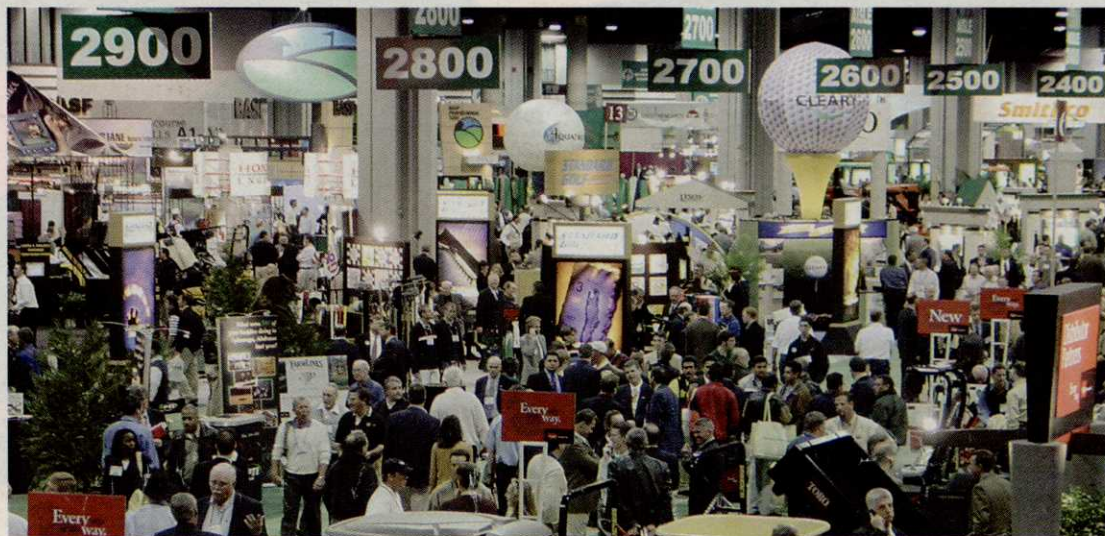
The goals of the sustainability-focused initiative will be to provide adequate supplies of clean water, to maintain and increase biological diversity and to create livable and equitable communities.

Audubon has divided the country into 18 level-one watersheds and will be launching programs in New York, North Carolina,

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GCSAA: Bring on the buying team

Combined show to shorten chain between superintendent and ultimate decision-maker



By merging their shows, the GCSAA and NGCOA hope to attract a larger percentage of qualified buyers beginning in 2005.

By DEREK RICE

ATLANTA — Recognizing the importance of the buying team in purchasing decisions, the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) and the National Golf Course Owners Association (NGCOA) have joined forces to put on the first Golf Industry Show, scheduled for Feb. 11-13, 2005 in Orlando, Fla.

The merger comes at a critical time for the GCSAA show, which has seen a decline in overall attendance. This year, 18,164

people attended the show, approximately 2,500 less than last year in Orlando (20,613), 2,700 less than in Dallas (20,927) and 3,500 less than 2000 in New Orleans (21,686). The 1999 show in Orlando set the high-water mark at 22,623.

GCSAA CEO Steve Mona said the number of qualified buyers (6,045) essentially equaled last year's mark in Orlando. Education seminar attendance reached 6,295, down from the 6,921 chairs filled in Orlando.

One of the main drivers behind

the merger, which the two organizations have talked about for three or four years, was the need to deliver more of those qualified buyers to the show floor, said

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Debate over Roundup Ready bent rages on

By ANDREW OVERBECK

ATLANTA — Scotts and Monsanto are moving ahead with the development of Roundup Ready creeping bentgrass despite several recent challenges.

Bill Rose, president of HybriGene, Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green, announced at the GCSAA Conference and Show in Atlanta that his researchers had officially produced a male-sterile bentgrass plant. Rose contends that this method reduces the risk of gene flow and contamination of tra-

ditional bentgrass varieties during the production process and that using any other method



Bill Rose said that pollen from the Roundup Ready production field could contaminate bentgrass grown nearby. The above photo shows pollen from a Tee-2-Green field.

also took a hit in mid-January when the New York Times reported that certain weeds in row crops were becoming resistant to the widely-used herbicide.

Also in January, the International Center for Technology Assessment (ICTA) filed a lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture to force them to include genetic grasses on its list of noxious weeds. If successful, the group could block the approval of any biotech

would result in gene escape. Roundup Ready technology

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VGM Club signs Yamaha

By DEREK RICE

WATERLOO, Iowa — Golf buying alliance VGM Club has signed an agreement with Yamaha Golf Car to give its members access to discounts on Yamaha cars.

D. Jay Ellis, president of VGM Club, said the agreement came about mostly because of the efficiencies Yamaha has built into its new manufacturing facility in Newnan, Ga.

"We're excited about our relationship with Yamaha and the warranty schedule they use on their golf cars. They're doing some exciting things with their cars, and their plant is phenomenal," Ellis said.

The agreement is non-exclusive, Ellis said, meaning VGM could conceivably

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