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## ORGANIC FERTILIZER

Lambert is experimenting with fertilizer applications late in the year and is seeing more root growth come spring. Photo: Nassau Country Club



calcium and iron, which he applies every two weeks. In August, he makes another application of granular fertilizer while continuing the liquid fertilizer applications. In the fall, he makes the fourth granular fertilizer application.

In the fairways, granular applications are made every six weeks, and liquid fertilizer applications with organic amendments, calcium and iron are made every two weeks.

In the rough, granular fertilizer is applied three or four times a year. No liquid fertilizer is applied in this area.

Liquid applications, which are considered spoon-feeding, are made with Toro boom sprayers using fan nozzles because they push the fertilizer down into the thatch layer, Lambert says. The fan nozzle is better than the nozzles that apply product in bubble form, he says. Any time the turf looks weak, there might be additional liquid fertilizer with organic amendments applied to try and strengthen it.

Lambert, who became a superintendent in 1986, makes his fertilizer applications early in the morning after the grass is cut because the crew needs to get out of the golfers' way. Four sprayers go out – two 160-gallon units on the greens and two 300-gallon units on the fairways. If there's downtime after the greens are completed, the tees are fertilized.

If there's no down time, the tees are fertilized the next day.

After all fertilizer applications, Lambert posts signs on the first and 10th tees and in the pro shop to alert members about them.

Lambert, who has been at Nassau since 1984, credits his fertilizer program with helping suppress disease.

"I used to be worried about anthracnose," he says. "We're a busy club with a lot of traffic, and the carts don't have much place to go. So I need to keep the grass growing to avoid anthracnose. We have had a little bit of anthracnose on one green and on one fairway. Other than that, I don't see it."

Aside from Companion and Essential Plus, which include amino acid and gibberellic acid, Lambert is testing a new product from Growth Products called Performance 18-3-6, a synthetic fertilizer with organic ingredients as well as soy bean extract, which is supposed to make bentgrass grow sideways and help fill in areas.

Lambert started using liquid fertilizer about 10 years ago and Growth Products fertilizer five years ago. He takes advantage of the company's early-order program and purchases all the liquid fertilizer in December. He purchases the granular fertilizer from The Andersons in December as well.

"This year, because the price of fertilizer

has increased, I bought all the fertilizer I need for next year at once, and I'll store the granular fertilizer," he says. "Usually, they bring it to me throughout the year. But the Growth Products fertilizer is delivered throughout the year as I need it, starting in the spring."

Overall, Lambert is satisfied with his fertilizer program, although he is trying to improve his green downtime after aerification.

"I've had a problem with aerification holes not closing up fast enough to get the greens back into play, so I'm experimenting with using some products after we aerify," he says. "I apply eight ounces of Pro-Formance Ultra with Companion, Essential and Xtra Iron before and after aerifying to help close the holes faster."

Lambert star tines his greens throughout the season, which leaves turf plants weak. He plans to apply different amounts of liquid fertilizers and organic combinations before star tining to keep plant vigor up to improve recovery.

Lambert also is experimenting with applying Companion and Essential together late in the season, around December. As a result, he has seen tremendous root growth in the spring.

"They're the best roots I've ever seen," he says. **GCI**





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**Tim Moraghan** is principal of Aspire Golf Consulting in Long Valley, N.J. He can be reached at [tmoraghan11@comcast.net](mailto:tmoraghan11@comcast.net) or 908-635-7978.

## INSIDE THE ROPES

**Q** What cultural practices did golf course superintendent John Zimmers implement at Oakmont Country Club this past June to reach firm greens, and how long did the process take?

**A** The USGA maintains U.S. Open Championship putting surfaces firm and fast. Because the club has 100-year-old-soil greens, the draining capacity required improvement and firming for daily play and championship guidelines. Immediately after Zimmers arrived at Oakmont, he began a five-year, subsurface soil modification program. This process, which is ongoing at Oakmont, includes:

1. A deep drill-and-fill process for all greens. The holes created are back-filled with sand.
2. Deep-tine aerification with three-quarter-inch solid tines.
3. Standard hollow coring using pedestrian aerifying units. All cores were removed and holes were filled with sand topdressing, which was hand brushed into all holes.
4. Sand injection using the Dryject units that produced aerification holes in the root zone and filled them with the sand material.
5. After coring, green surfaces were verticut with a less aggressive unit using the smallest width cutting blades to reduce the impact to mounding and surface contours and avoid scalping.
6. To move water down further and away from the surface, Zimmers hired a contractor to install the subsurface drain lines to pick up all water before it reached the low points of each green. For those who watched the U.S. Open, the nongreen lines visible on the surface were the subsurface drain lines.

**Q** What steps did Russ Myers, CGCS, take to reduce the heat stress to the putting surfaces as he prepared Southern Hills Country Club for the PGA Championship?

**A** Southern Hills is situated in a “pocket” with trees surrounding many of the putting surfaces throughout the golf course. Of course a critical element contributing to healthy putting greens in the heat and humidity typical of Tulsa is proper air movement across each surface. Myers had less than a year to remedy the issue. While the club agreed to remove a certain number of trees, there still was a need for increased air movement. Additionally, Tulsa experienced its wettest season in many years. The solution was to install large fans for air circulation. However, the challenge was to provide power to operate the large fans. Myers resolved the issue by following this process:

- First, he initiated a limited tree-removal program near greens that had the poorest growing environments.
- Next, he researched the costs to install power and wiring. Evaluation of equipment, boring, wiring, labor and scheduling costs was six figures.
- Following this thorough investigation, Myers decided Southern Hills should purchase the boring equipment. He mapped a route, contracted an electrician, positioned the fans based on a sunlight/shade impact study. And for championship requirements, he provided mobile fan units to be removed during play and repositioned each night, if necessary, to avoid any Rules of Golf concerns.
- Since the greens are built to USGA guidelines, he installed subsurface air conditioning to aid venting air through the subprofile.
- Finally, Myers increased his aerification program to reduce and modify the organic matter build up and increase gaseous exchange within the putting green profile.

**Q** At the 2006 U.S. Open Championship at Winged Foot Golf Club, the USGA instituted its successful graduated rough concept to balance the penalty for missing

the fairway. Even at a lower height of cut, the primary rough still produced a stiff penalty. What was superintendent Eric Greytok’s program for rough renovation?

**A** A thorough tree survey was conducted for the entire property, evaluating the short- and long-term health of the trees, as well as the planned rough renovation. With membership approval, all dangerous, diseased, damaged, selective evergreen and nonindigenous species were removed gradually to produce a better growing climate.

Championship fairway and rough contour lines were established to serve as a guide for Greytok. The fairway turf to be converted to rough was stripped, removed and resodded to match the upcoming rough turf selection. The plan included a siding process, as well as an overseeding program.

Surface preparation began, starting with a proper nutrient plan, drainage installation and additional irrigation (drainage and irrigation was difficult because of the rock ledge under the turfgrass) for the overseed to establish.

Multiple overseeding, using perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass, was conducted in the fall and the spring of each year leading up to 2006, beginning in 2003.

The 2004 U.S. Amateur served as an evaluation to review fairway and rough contour lines, which would be modified further for the 2006 U.S. Open. All changes were finalized by fall 2005.

Mowing widths and heights of cut were established by the USGA in the fall 2005 and tweaked slightly in spring 2006.

Entering the U.S. Open, the rough was healthy, thick and ready. The first pass of graduated rough was mowed each day at three inches, the next step at six inches, and beyond that, the rough was not cut for the entire championship. **GCI**

*Editor’s note: If you have questions about course set-up or maintenance related to golf tournaments or events, e-mail Tim Moraghan at [tmoraghan11@comcast.net](mailto:tmoraghan11@comcast.net).*

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**Terry Buchen**, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 38-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at [terrybuchen@earthlink.net](mailto:terrybuchen@earthlink.net).

## Pick it up and go

**B**uilding a grass-clipping cart with used materials already in inventory can make collecting and transporting grass clippings easy and inexpensive.

Rich Reimers Sr., equipment manager at Sunnybrook Golf Club in Plymouth Meeting, Pa., used the front tires, wheels, bearings and axle from a 1970s Jacobsen Greensking triplex greensmower as part of the cart. Reimers used a driveshaft as a tongue-and-hitch combination to hook the cart to the tow hitch on the back of a Jacobsen LF 3400 fairway mower. To hold the trash container in place, he welded a metal bracket made out of used bedknives, 1.5-inch-by-1.5-inch angle iron and three-quarter-inch-diameter steel pipe. The plastic trash container was bolted onto the metal bracket with five-eighths-inch diameter bolts, nuts and lock washers. The container was purchased 10 years ago from Bayhead Products Corp. in Dover, N.H., for \$100.

The total labor time to make the cart was about four hours, and there was no cost for the used materials already in stock.

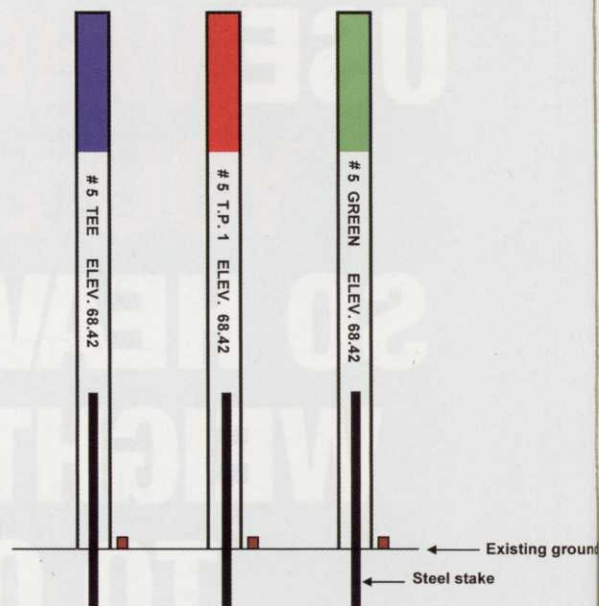


## Identify it easily

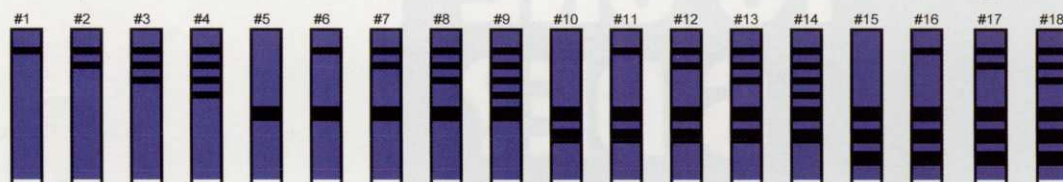
**D**uring new golf course construction, greens, tees and turning points on the par 4s and 5s usually are identified with 4-inch-diameter PVC pipe monuments placed vertically 20-feet high so they can be seen from a distance.

The PVC pipe is slid over a snow-fence-type metal post. The top 1.5 feet of each PVC pipe is colored-coded: blue for tees, red for turning points and green for greens. Usually, the hole number is written on the sides of the pipe with a Sharpie-type felt pen, but it can't be seen from a distance, so a person has to walk or drive to any of the poles to verify what hole they're on.

I developed this hole-numbering system – using a Roman numeral concept – so the hole number can be seen from a considerable distance. The larger black bands at the top of each PVC pipe represent the number five, and the smaller black bands represent the number one. All a person has to do to know what hole he's on is total the number of black bands. GCI



Buchen system of golf monument numbering



## Travels With Terry

Globetrotting consulting agronomist Terry Buchen visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He will share helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits – as well as a few ideas of his own – with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.



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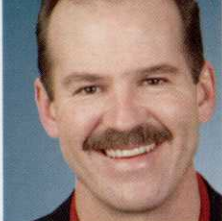
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**Pat Jones** is president of Flagstick LLC, a consulting firm that provides sales and marketing intelligence to green-industry businesses. He can be reached at psjhawk@cox.net or 440-478-4763.

## AU REVOIR, STEVE

**T** rue to form, Steve Mona called me exactly at the appointed time of our scheduled call. I'm sure he's been late for things during his 14 years at the helm of the GCSAA, but I've never witnessed it.

He's doing his farewell tour with the media and the GCSAA's various constituencies before he moves on to bigger – or at least new and better paying – things this spring. I'm sure you've read or will read several articles in which he recaps his time in Lawrence. It's a no-brainer topic for those of us in the media.

So I contacted him to get a different take on his transition from the world of turf to the World Golf Foundation. As usual, despite me not always being a cheerleader for everything the association does, he obliged me willingly. I was certain he'd have prepared notes for our call. I also knew that he'd have three things in mind. Having three talking points is, perhaps, Steve's trademark.

A little history: I knew Steve before he moved to the Emerald City in 1994 to take the reins of a troubled association for which I had then worked for seven years. I met him at various golf events in his role as head of the Georgia State Golf Association. All I knew before that was I liked him. He was smart and looked like Opie from Mayberry.

The GCSAA was going through a tumultuous transition at the time. The previous c.e.o., John Schilling, was on his way out. John was a good man who'd taken an association on the verge of bankruptcy, legal peril and general calamity and built it into a quite respectable and profitable middle-size player in the industry. Unfortunately, he had worn out his welcome, and the board was seeking a replacement.

I'll never forget the weekend of the contentious and bizarre first-ever chapter delegates meeting at the fancy new headquarters building in Lawrence. I was the only staff member allowed in the building – and that was just to give tours to delegates – and I was hiding up in my office trying to ignore the hollering and harrumphing oc-

curing downstairs. All of the sudden, I saw someone familiar walking by my office with a couple of GCSAA board members. It was Steve Mona. The proverbial lightbulb went off over my head, and I realized a new era had begun. That new era included:

- A much more buttoned-down, business-like atmosphere;
- Growth from 70 employees to a high-water mark of more than 120 employees;
- Commensurate growth, then leveling off, of revenues and membership;
- An emphasis on chapters and their needs;
- The evolution of the GCSAA Show to the GIS;
- Massive expansion of the GCSAA's foundation, now called the Environmental Institute for Golf; and

**But the organization stabilized, grew, matured and prospered under his leadership. Every member benefited from that.**

• A governance transition from the board/committee-driven model that started in 1994 (which was killing the jobs of many volunteer leaders) to a staff-driven model with metrics and benchmarks.

But, the era included several challenges:

- Awkward relationships with the industry that pays the bills for its operations;
- Increased competition from independent magazines and decreased spending on marketing by manufacturers;
- Turnover among the staff, particularly the sales and marketing group that fuels the operations of the association; and
- An ongoing sense the staff remains insulated from the real world of the rank-and-file members.

But when we talked a few weeks ago, instead of reviewing the collective organizational accomplishments or shortcomings of his tenure, I asked Steve what he felt most proud of in terms of his personal leadership. Predictably, he talked about three things:

First, the association's stature within the golf community: "It has improved dramatically. It's gratifying to see the respect the association commands now and how that's helped how our members are perceived. I've said it a million times – a rising tide lifts all boats."

Second, the way the staff relates to members: "We have 110 people who get up every day thinking how they can help members. When I go to a superintendent gathering, 99 percent of comments are about how great the staff is and how responsive they are."

Third, successfully recruiting major figures from outside the golf course maintenance industry: "We were able to look outside and find people (Greg Norman, Herb Kohler, etc.) who were very interested in what we were trying to accomplish and were eager to help. The fact that we now have so many friends from so many walks of life throughout the golf world is gratifying."

Steve is the last person to claim his time at the GCSAA was perfect. The last several years – he was challenged to meet the board-mandated benchmarks and began to explore other job opportunities – probably weren't comfortable. But the organization stabilized, grew, matured and prospered under his leadership. Every member benefited from that.

He'll be at the Golf Industry Show to cap off his farewell tour, but his successor might not be named by then. He frets a little about causing a hiccup in continuity of management even though he gave the board six-months notice. Nonetheless, he seems ready to go.

"It's the right time for someone else to come in with new ideas and reenergize things," he says. "That said, a huge part of my heart will always be with the GCSAA and our members."

And part of ours will always be with you, Steve. Thanks ... and au revoir. **GCI**