

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Scotts, Monsanto get go ahead

In a victory for The Scotts Co. and Monsanto, the Oregon Department of Agriculture has approved an 11,000-acre control area in central Oregon where 400 acres of the two companies' Roundup Ready Creeping Bentgrass will be grown. The joint project has been criticized by area bentgrass growers who are concerned about cross-contamination.

The decision followed public hearings last November and in June. The new variety is enhanced through biotechnology to tolerate Roundup Pro herbicide, which will allow invasive weeds to be controlled without harming the bentgrass.

The research will lead to full production if approval is gained by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Approval could come in either the fall of 2003 or the spring of 2004. Planting within the new control area is expected to begin this fall.

"Superintendents have been forced to co-manage both *Poa* and bentgrass," said Don Suttner, regional technical development manager at Monsanto. "That often means frequent chemical applications to control insects, weeds and disease. Because *Poa* requires more irrigation, they've had to water more often, too. Eliminating *Poa* reduces many of the other inputs superintendents need to worry about."

Environmental Golf joins venture

Calabasas, Calif.-based Environmental Golf, a subsidiary of Environmental Industries, formed a joint venture with environmental consultant, golf course agronomist and certified superintendent Ted Horton, of THC Consulting. Horton will partner with Environmental Golf to share expertise on environmental stewardship, indigenous landscaping and habitat protection

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Defense Against Disease

BIZARRE WEATHER PATTERNS
MADE DIAGNOSING SUMMER
DISEASES DIFFICULT. HERE'S
WHAT THE USGA AND OTHERS
SAW THIS YEAR

By Frank H. Andorka Jr.,
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No one can quite explain the bizarre weather patterns across the country this year. It's almost as if something has gone wrong with the seasonal clock, making it particularly difficult this year to figure out which diseases might strike your course.

Still, the members of the USGA Green Section staff and others have been diligently trying to help superintendents diagnose and do battle with problems as they cropped up. Here's what they saw this summer:

Northeast Region – The USGA agronomists in the Northeast said the heat and humidity caused dollar spot to appear on several courses, but they assured regional superintendents that the rumors of fungicide resistance were greatly exaggerated.

"Disease pressure was extremely high," says Dave Oatis, the USGA's Northeast Green Section director.



CHIPCO PROFESSIONAL PRODUCTS

Dollar spot has attacked golf courses in several regions.

"Under these conditions, no fungicide held up as long as it would have under more moderate conditions."

Anthracnose also posed considerable problems for superintendents in the Northeast, and summer patch plagued golf courses in the area. Oatis said syringing those areas helped, but superintendents must not overwater. "Good water management is critical at this point of the season," he says.

Mid-Atlantic Region – Stan Zontek, director of the USGA's Mid-Atlantic region, said he saw a resurgence in take-all patch.

"I saw two courses (vs. none last year) suffering from the disease,"

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