

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Welcome to PDI

The GCSAA's new membership standards — known as the Professional Development Initiative — officially took effect July 1. GCSAA members approved the new criteria at the association's annual meeting in Dallas in February 2001.

For grandfathered members of the GCSAA, the date signals the beginning of the renewal cycle. However, new members must now attain certain levels of education and experience to achieve Class A status.

Jeff Bollig, director of communications for the GCSAA, said the association has spent most of the past two years testing various processes and procedures to ensure effective and efficient data management.

RISE wants to prove point

Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) wants to identify the sources of nutrients that may be contributing to surface water pollution.

So the national trade organization that represents producers and suppliers of specialty pesticides and fertilizers is teaming with its member companies to sponsor two university studies on the effects of specialty fertilizer to urban water quality. The total cost of the studies, each taking three years, will be about \$310,000.

To determine the levels of phosphorus and nitrogen from natural sources vs. turf fertilizer, the University of Minnesota and Cornell University will conduct separate experiments in accordance with proper scientific methods.

RISE's Jim Skillen, manager of formulators' issues, said the group knows that turf fertilizers are not generally responsible for excess nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen)

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Extreme Drought Leads to Extreme Measures

VEGAS COURSE RIPS OUT IRRIGATED TURF TO COMPLY WITH WATER RESTRICTIONS

By Shane Sharp

That the southwestern U.S. is mired in one of the worst droughts in history is no longer front-page news. The extreme measures some golf courses are taking to cope with the worsening conditions and tighter water restrictions are worth noting, however.

Steve Swanson, superintendent at the Sienna GC in the golf-rich Las Vegas suburb of Summerlin, has removed 14.1 acres of irrigated turf from the upscale daily-fee course to comply with local water restrictions.

For its conservation efforts, Siena received a \$300,000 rebate from the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA). But the rebate may do little to offset the hard times that could remain ahead. If the drought continues at its current clip, Siena could remove a total of 60 acres of turf and spend close to a \$1 million tearing apart a perfectly good golf course.

The question circulating among local superintendents is whether or not golf courses should be the primary target of heavy-handed water restrictions that have essentially left them no choice but to tear out signif-



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icant portions of grass. To the voting public, the area's more than 50 golf courses appear to devour more than their share of water. In reality, the golf course industry is responsible for a mere 8 percent of regional water consumption, according to the SNWA. Water use by the metro area's 1.6 million residents, by comparison, accounts for about 65 percent. Swanson says the politics of the situation are inevitable.

"Let's see, you can go after 50 golf courses or 1.6 million people," Swanson says. "It is not rocket science which one you go after. Let's be honest, a lot of this boils down to politics."

Clark County's two main water sources don't discriminate between homes and golf courses, however. Lake Mead, the source of 85 percent of Las Vegas' water, has dropped 74 feet in the past two years and is at 63 percent of its capacity, according to the SNWA. Lake Powell, further up the Colorado River, is down 95 feet and is at 50-percent capacity.

"Things could and probably will

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found in the nation's water bodies as claimed by activists.

"Natural sources such as leaves, pollen, soil erosion, flower parts, and pet and waterfowl waste contribute significantly to high phosphorus levels in urban lakes, ponds and rivers," he added.

Skillen said there has not been enough documented research to counter the unsubstantiated claims of activists.

Fisher follows Whitman

Linda Fisher, deputy administrator of the EPA, resigned in July. Her announcement came one day before EPA Administrator Christine Whitman stepped down from her position.

Novozymes takes Roots

Salem, Va.-based Novozymes Biologicals says its recent acquisition of Roots Inc. in June will strengthen its position in the market for environmental microorganisms, which allow environmentally friendly growth enhancement and disease control for turf.

Industry loses top architect

The golf course industry lost one of its top architects when Robert Muir Graves died in June from cancer. Graves, 72, began his career in 1955 as a landscape architect before slowly transitioning into golf course architecture full-time in 1960. Graves' design portfolio includes more than 75 new golf courses.

Protection Plants

TURF-SEED TAKES ACTION TO COMBAT CROSS-POLLINATION FEARS FROM SCOTT'S ROUNDUP READY BENTGRASS

By Frank H. Andorka Jr., Managing Editor

One Oregon turfgrass breeder has planted 250 of what he called "sentinel" plants in farmers' fields that surround test plots of glyphosate-resistant bentgrass being grown by a competitor to see how far the pollen from those plots will travel under open-breeding conditions.

Bill Rose, chairman of Turf-Seed, told distributors at his company's Field Day

event that there were 400 acres of glyphosate-resistant turf being grown in Oregon, and he's concerned about the possibility that it will cross-breed with non-glyphosate-resistant turf. So Rose approached farmers he knew in the Madras, Ore., region where the fields are located and asked them to let him plant his "sentinels" to monitor how far the pollen travels. The guard plants will be tested periodically to see if they've become glyphosate resistant.



MIKE KLEMM

Will many golf course fairways be comprised of Roundup Ready bentgrass one day?

The genetically modified turf is called Roundup Ready bentgrass and has been developed in a joint effort between The Scotts Co. and Monsanto. The companies have mechanically inserted a gene to modify the plant's DNA and make it resistant to Monsanto's nonselective herbicide Roundup. They hope to someday make it easier for superintendents to control turf weeds, especially *Poa annua*.

Rose says he's also researching how far the prevailing winds can carry pollen from genetically engineered plants at his research facility in Canby, Ore. So far, the trials have confirmed that the pollen will travel at least 1,000 yards, but some tests have indicated that it can travel further, he says. He added that he's working with the Environmental Protection Agency on the tests.

The Scotts Co. disputed Rose's claims.

"We've conducted extensive research regarding pollen flow and outcrossing," the company said in a prepared statement. "First, the only bentgrass being grown in the Madras area is within our Oregon Department of Agriculture-approved control area. There are no other bentgrass fields within 100 miles. That's one of the reasons we chose to plant there.

"Second, bentgrass is not sexually compatible with other grass species, so there is no chance of outcrossing that would transfer the glyphosate-resistant trait to say, fescues or blue-grasses, for example," the statement continued. "Additionally, the new variety is only resistant to glyphosate, so other herbicides can control bentgrass in seed production environments. Even if it does outcross to bentgrass plants growing on ditch banks, those hybrid plants can be controlled with other herbicides or by mechanical removal."

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