

Off The Fringe

Business briefs

Towne rises with Phoenix

You may have noticed that Owen Towne, the former global business director of Griffin LLC Specialty Products Group, has a new company named Phoenix Environmental Care LLC. The



Owen Towne

company offers value-added post-patent products to the green and aquatic industries. Towne embarked on a press tour recently to promote his new company.

"The company will have a high level of dedicated technical support to meet the needs of the end-user," Towne said.

The company's products include Vital fungicide and proprietary Phoenix brands of chlorothalonil, propiconazole, glyphosate and bifenthrin.

Towne said his products are tailored to users who want good products at a good price. He said the words "Environmental Care" are used in the company's name because "we're really trying to create a benefit for the environment."

"Product stewardship will be a key focus of the new company," he added.

Several members of Towne's previous team with Griffin, including Patti Niewoehner, are now with Phoenix.

Par Aide celebrates 50 years

It's first product was a cast aluminum ball washer that retailed for \$18.75, and 50 years later Par Aide is still going strong. The golf course accessory manufacturer, founded by Joseph Garske in 1955 in Lino Lakes, Minn., is recognizing its golden anniversary as a second-generation, family-owned business.

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It'll Cost You to Keep It Green

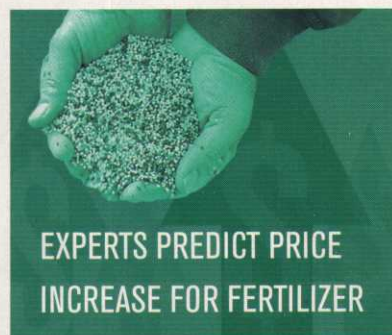
By Lynne Brakeman

Besides driving up fuel prices, worldwide demand for natural gas and petroleum products is making fertilizer prices higher.

Natural gas and petroleum provide the basic building blocks of fertilizer. Some experts are predicting as much as a 20-percent increase in the price of fertilizer this year.

On April 6 two senators introduced legislation specifically targeted at combating runaway natural gas prices. Sen. Lamar Alexander (R-Tenn.) and Sen. Tim Johnson (D-S.D.) proposed legislation that, among other longer-term initiatives, would allow the Department of Interior to issue gas-only drilling leases. The senators say this strategy would be acceptable to environmentalists while opening up the potential of a gas-rich area in the eastern Gulf of Mexico.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) predicts natural gas demand will increase 2.2 percent in 2005 and 3.2 percent in 2006. At the same time, domestic natural gas production will only increase 0.5 percent largely because existing U.S. gas wells are becoming depleted. The result: The country has to import more natural gas and the price keeps climbing. The short-term outlook is dim.



EXPERTS PREDICT PRICE
INCREASE FOR FERTILIZER

According to The Fertilizer Institute's (TFI) testimony to Congress in March, the United States has lost 20 nitrogen fertilizer production facilities since 1998. Fifteen of those have closed for good and five plants are idle. This has resulted in a 35 percent decline in ammonia production in 2003-04 compared with 1998-99. In the same time period, U.S. nitrogen imports have increased from 6.11 million tons of nitrogen to 10.36 million tons. Although the fertilizer industry obviously focuses on the ag sector, the problems about which they are lobbying clearly impact the Green Industry.

"The current U.S. natural gas crisis is forcing domestic nitrogen fertilizer plant closures at an alarming rate," said Billy Pirkle of Royster-Clark Inc. on behalf of TFI and the Agricultural Retailers Association. "The cost of nitrogen fertilizer production has reached an all-time high, forcing many U.S. plants to shut down. Jobs are being exported to China, Russia, the Middle East and the Caribbean, as U.S. farmers are becoming increasingly dependent on foreign sources of crop nutrient fertilizers."

BASF Execs Go Front and Center to Discuss Future of Chemicals

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Hans W. Reiners made no apology for the word “chemical” being used in the tagline of his company’s name. Reiners is one of the top brass for one of the industry’s largest pesticide producers — BASF: The Chemical Company.

“Chemical” may not be the prettiest word these days to describe pesticides, but Reiners could not care less.

“Let’s face it: We’re a chemical company,” said Reiners, president of the BASF Group’s Agricultural Products Division. “If nobody stands up for it ... well, we shouldn’t be surprised if people say we don’t need chemicals anymore.”

Reiners spoke to members of the turf and agriculture trade press at a media

event held in April at the North American headquarters of BASF Agricultural Products in Research Triangle Park, N.C. Attendees also listened to presentations by Bill Wisdom, group vice president of Agricultural Products in North America; and Markus Heldt, senior vice president of the Agricultural Products Division in Latin America. In addition, attendees toured the company’s 72,000 square-foot lab facility.

In his presentation, “Agricultural Products Strategy Confirms Technology Leadership,” Reiners, who’s based in Limburgerhof, Germany, talked extensively about the company’s focus on research and development. While Reiners said he expects the herbi-

cide market to decline by 1 percent to 2 percent annually in coming years, he said that doesn’t mean new herbicides aren’t required.

“We know there are some voices saying that, in

There are greater growth opportunities in fungicides and insecticides, Reiners says.

the field of herbicides, all problems are solved and there is no need for new technology,” Reiners said. “We do not believe that this is fully true. Therefore we watch the situation very carefully. We think the time will come when, in some markets, innovative solutions will be highly appreciated.”

Globally, there are greater growth opportunities in fungicides and insecticides, Reiners noted.

“In the insecticide market, modern higher quality chemical products are increasingly going to replace traditional active ingredients,” he said. “Based on

this necessity for new products, which is driven by potential persistency and regulatory pressure, insecticides will grow by some 2 percent per year.”

Reiners said the same growth is true for fungicides. “Here we see a high and continuing demand for innovation resulting in a mid-term annual market growth for an estimated 3 percent.”

Reiners said BASF is working on developing six active ingredients as well as a herbicide-tolerance project and numerous products to protect seeds with active ingredients that have already been launched.

Wisdom talked about BASF’s improved effort to focus on its customers. Part of being customer-focused, he noted, is having a correct “innovation ratio” when it comes to a company’s product-in-the-pipeline strategy. The optimal technology model would be a company that has 50 percent of its efforts in new technology and 50 percent of its efforts in established technology.

Wisdom stressed his belief that innovative products will be based on genetic traits in the future, defined as 2015 and beyond.

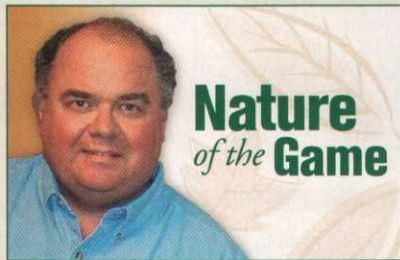
“I may be retired by then, but we believe in them,” he concluded.



Golf Courses Can Help Preserve Gopher Tortoise

BY RON DODSON

Editor's Note: This new column, which will appear bi-monthly in *Golfdom*, is the idea of Ron Dodson, the CEO of Audubon International. Dodson, who has worked in the environmental field for more than 30 years, has been involved in the development of public policies on the state and federal level and has created many environmental education programs. Dodson can be reached at rdodson@auduboninternational.org.



The gopher tortoise is officially listed as a threatened species in Georgia; a species of special concern in Florida; an endangered species in South Carolina; and is federally listed as threatened in Mississippi, Louisiana and a portion of its range in Alabama.

The primary reasons for the shrinking numbers of gopher tortoises are loss of habitat, poor forestry management practices, disease and road death. As the human population expands and places even more pressure on remaining gopher tortoise habitats, this important species will continue to face declining numbers unless a range-wide conservation effort is put in place.

Dodson's message is simple: Save the gopher tortoise.



Gopher tortoises live in burrows in dry upland habitats, including areas of long leaf pine, flatwoods, dry prairies and coastal dunes. The areas must be well-drained sandy soils for digging purposes, with herbaceous food plants, and open sunny areas for nesting and basking in the sun. Burrows can be up to 40 feet long and 10 feet deep.

These tortoises can live more than 60 years, with females maturing between 10 and 15 years. They breed between April and June each year and lay three to 15 eggs. Gopher tortoises are considered a "keystone" species because their burrows also offer refuge to a range of other animals, including more than 360 species.

Golf courses can play an important role in conserving and protecting this declining species. One excellent example is The Old Collier Golf Club in Naples, Fla. Originally permitted for several hundred housing units, the development company decided instead on a private 18-hole golf course and no housing units.

The property in its entirety was 267 acres, including 50 acres of river corridor and wetlands, and 20 acres of lakes and other associated "developed" acres. The project was to preserve 33.6 acres of upland habitat by permit. But it has preserved and restored 70 acres of upland habitat with more created each year.

There were 74 gopher tortoises found when construction began. Today there are 135 healthy and productive gopher tortoises on the property.

If you would like more information on gopher tortoise conservation, contact the Gopher Tortoise Council, in care of the Florida Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 117800, University of Florida, Gainesville, Fla 32611.

Or contact the Web site at www.gophertortoisecouncil.org.

The Thin Side of Elvis

EVERYTHING ABOUT THE KING IS COLORFUL – EXCEPT HIS LAWN

By Thomas Skernivitz, Managing Editor

At Graceland, blood is thicker than water and turf.

One of the highlights of last month's annual meeting of the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) was supposed to be a groundskeeper-guided tour of Graceland, the residence and burial site of Elvis Aaron Presley.

Instead, The King's keeper of the green left the building before TOCA members could arrive on what was a Blue Hawaii-like first day of May in Memphis. Apparently, the blood relative of the Presleys felt obliged to cheer on his cousin and Elvis' lone child, Lisa Marie, who was performing downtown at the Beale Street Music Festival.

Perhaps it was for the best. The lushest green on the 13.8-acre property turned out to be the lime-colored shag carpeting that Elvis had planted on his floors, his walls *and* his ceilings. (And you thought eccentric was fried peanut butter-and-banana sandwiches.)

Meanwhile, the outside of Graceland was anything but "Viva Lawn Vegas." The turf was a little on the wispy side, prompting at least one TOCA member to recommend a little less conservation, a little more biostimulant please.

To be fair, most superintendents don't have to deal with 600,000 customers annually, many of whom never heed the "Please Stay Off The Grass"



Bill Klutho, manager of public relations for John Deere, gives a shake of the hips in salute to Elvis upon hearing that The King drove this old John Deere when both were in their heyday. Klutho and other turf professionals toured Graceland during the recent Turf and Ornamental Communicators meeting in Memphis.

signs. And shade is a hindrance, especially in the front yard, which includes plenty of oaks and sycamores, as well as a few dogwoods.

Not that Elvis was too turf-friendly himself. As the owner of Graceland from May 1957 until his death at age

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PHOTO BY: LARRY AYLWARD

A Different Mode Of Action To Control Dollar Spot.

Now That's A Change For The Better.

Off The Fringe

A 'Vitally Important' Book

SHACKELFORD'S 'THE FUTURE OF GOLF' RE-RELEASED IN HARD COVER

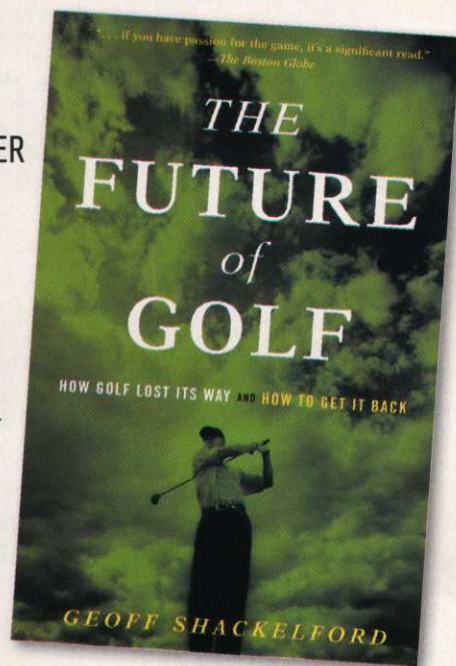
Geoff Shackelford's book, "The Future of Golf (How Golf Lost Its Way in the 21st Century and How to Get It Back)," has been re-released in hardcover by Sasquatch Books. The new version features a collection of previously published essays from *Golfdom*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *LINKS* and *Golf World*, as well as new content.

"As a golfer, open your mind when reading this treatise on the sport and its future," pro golfer and architect Ben Crenshaw says of the book. "We all must consider where golf is headed and how best to protect the traditions of the game. I think 'The Future of Golf in America' is vitally important."

In a review for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Brian Murphy writes:

"What [Shackelford] currently sees from equipment manufacturers, course designers and, especially, the United States Golf Association distresses him. Final scorecard: Shackelford is not subtle in his sledgehammer criticisms, so if you're looking for a feel-good tale, this is not for you. But if you're passionate about the game's future, about its past and about what's right for the royal and ancient game — and if you love to read anti-USGA rants — this is your baby."

Shackelford is a contributing editor to *Golfdom* and author of the magazine's *Designs on Golf* monthly column. In 2004 *The Golfer* magazine named Shackelford one of "modern golf's 10 most influential writers"



alongside Dan Jenkins, John Updike, David Owen and Lorne Rubenstein.

For more information about the book, contact Shackelford's Web site at www.geoffshackelford.com.



Dollar Spot Control on a Creeping Bentgrass Green, 2004

Emerald® fungicide 70 WG (0.13/14 day/1,000 sq ft) (0.18/14 day/1,000 sq ft) (0.18/21 day/1,000 sq ft)	100%
Banner MAXX® 1.3 ME (1 oz/21 day/1,000 sq ft)	82%
Bayleton® 50 DF (.5 oz/14 day/1,000 sq ft)	88%

Dollar Spot Control on a Creeping Bentgrass Putting Green, 2004

Emerald® fungicide 70 WG (0.13/14 day/1,000 sq ft)	96%
Emerald® fungicide 70 WG (0.18/21 day/1,000 sq ft)	94%
Daconil Ultrex® 82.5 WG (3.2 oz/14 day/1,000 sq ft)	44%

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Chart 1: Cooperator: Dr. Bruce Clark, Rutgers University Variety: Crenshaw Application Interval: 14 & 21 days Application Dates: Initiated June 1 Spray vol. (gal/1000 sq ft): 2 gal — Partial data shown.
Chart 2: Cooperator: Dr. Rick Latin, Purdue University Variety: Pennlinks creeping bentgrass Application Interval: 14 & 21 days Number of Applications: 5 (14 day) Application Dates: Initiated May 19 Spray vol. (gal/1000 sq ft): 2 gal — Partial data shown.

Quotable

"You go further south and *Poa annua* is a weed in our region. You go further north and it's a desired surface. So we sort of split the middle here with it. If [superintendents] are trying to kill *Poa*, we can figure out how to do that. If they're trying to manage it, we can figure out how to do that too."

— Keith Happ, senior agronomist for the USGA Green Section's Mid-Atlantic Region, on the respect and disrespect that superintendents have for *Poa* in his region.

"This is going to be a crazy summer."

— Scott Nuzum, a greenkeeper at Pinehurst No. 2, on the U.S. Open Championship coming to the course later this month.

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42 on Aug. 16, 1977, he was known to tear up the premises while riding his horses — the backyard includes a stable — and golf cars. He even owned a converted snowmobile that was labeled the "grass mobile."

Graceland officials today pretty much concede their top priority isn't so much maintaining the bermuda-grass, zoysia and fescue as it is the "Jungle Room" and Meditation Garden. Turf is replaced every year after it inevitably goes brown during the brutal Mississippi Delta summer. There is no irrigation system, primarily because there is no map of the electrical wiring that feeds the floodlights that Elvis had attached to nearly every tree in the front yard.

All in all, Graceland is worthy of the extra spotlight. Sure, the lawn might be a little drab, but in typical Elvis flamboyance, everything else on the estate more than makes up for it.

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Business briefs

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"It's a great time to look back at our accomplishments, but even more importantly, we want to look ahead to the next 50 years," Stephen Garske, president of Par Aide, said. "We wouldn't be where we are today without the continued support of our dealers and superintendents and the dedication of our suppliers and employees."

The company published a legacy book that includes significant company developments, important events and golf trivia. Some of the stories involve President Dwight D. Eisenhower's gracious acceptance of a Par Aide ball washer, Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon, the U.S. bicentennial and the launch of the hit TV show, "The Simpsons."

ValleyCrest stages field day

More than 40 superintendents participated in an environmental field day sponsored by ValleyCrest Golf Course Maintenance.

Held at the Plantation at Leesburg (Fla.) and directed by Joellen Zeh, the program manager for the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, the event allowed superintendents to be involved in the detailed evaluation of a golf course property, focusing on best-management practices of environmental planning, wildlife and habitat management, chemical-use reduction and safety, water conservation and water quality management.

Tee-2-Green goes back to school

As part of a new initiative to help educate turfgrass students on the breeding process and production of developing bentgrass varieties, Hubbard, Ore.-based Tee-2-Green made its first "College Tour" stop by presenting to the local GCSAA Student Chapter at Washington State University in March.

During the presentation, a Tee-2-Green representative discussed various aspects of creeping bentgrass, including how breeders develop and test bentgrass varieties; what techniques are used during production, harvesting and cleaning of seed; and the importance of certification standards when selecting bentgrass varieties.

Tee-2-Green says the College Tour is part of its ongoing initiative of reaching out to turfgrass students across the country.

One Seed's Staying Power

PENNCROSS CREEPING BENT
CELEBRATES 50 YEARS

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

Bill Rose chuckles softly when asked about the staying power of Penncross creeping bentgrass, which is celebrating its 50th birthday this year. "We've planned its death about three times that I can remember offhand," says Rose, president of Tee-2-Green.

In 1946 Penn State University Professor Burton Musser established a research and development program to produce seeded bentgrass varieties that were aggressive and disease-tolerant while also having vigor and quick establishment. He wanted a new variety with the ability to tolerate various climates and also exhibit excellent appearance, color and adaptability. The result was Penncross, the most widely used bentgrass variety in the world, Tee-2-Green says. "It's still going strong and is a major part of our sales," Rose says.

When Penn State developed PennLinks and Penneagle, Penncross' demise was predicted. It didn't happen. Then the Penn A and G series came along and Penncross' demise was predicted once again. It didn't happen again.

Rose attributes Penncross' vigorousness to its success. "It's aggressive, especially in the landing area, which takes a beating," he says. "When good golfers hit to the same place all the time, you need a good grass that fills in."

In 1973, Penn State declared Penncross a proprietary or "private" variety. Through a formal agreement, Penn State authorized the Penncross Bentgrass Growers Association of Oregon to receive breeder stolon planting stock for production of commercial seed. The association formed Tee-2-Green to market the Penn bents.

Penncross has taken Rose on a good ride. So has the seed industry in general, which has been a major part of his life for many years.

Rose moved the family from California to Oregon in 1942. The family lived across the street from the largest grass seed farm in Oregon.

Back then Oregon's seed industry consisted of producing annual ryegrass, English perennial ryegrass, Alta tall fescue and colonial bentgrass, Rose recalls.

Rose has witnessed and been a part of many landmarks in the seed industry. He says the emergence of Merion Kentucky Bluegrass in the early '50s, which he later began farming, provided a big boost to his career.

Other industry landmarks, Rose says, include the development of Manhattan perennial ryegrass in the mid-1960s by Dr. Reed Funk of Rutgers University; and the development of Pennfine perennial ryegrass by Dr. Joseph M. Duich at Penn State in 1971.

There are continued challenges as well. For the golf industry, they are development of drought- and disease-resistant varieties.

Rose, who says his passion for the seed industry is still burning strong, has no plans for retirement. "I'd be bored if I retired," Rose says. "There are a still a lot of challenges."

