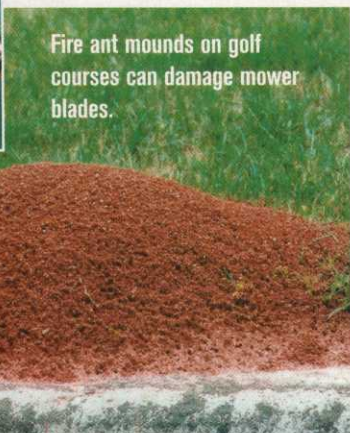


# Extinguishing Fire Ants

CHUCK SILCOX, GLOBAL TURF AND ORNAMENTAL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT MANAGER FOR DUPONT, ADDRESSES FIRE ANT CONTROL ON GOLF COURSES



Fire ant mounds on golf courses can damage mower blades.

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**C**huck Silcox knows ant control like Tony LaRussa knows baseball. Silcox, who has a Ph.D. from Rutgers University and is the global turf and ornamental product development manager for DuPont Professional Products, knows when to bring in the fire ant control products like LaRussa knows when to call in a relief pitcher.

Silcox, an industry veteran of nearly 25 years, has been at DuPont for four years and helped the company launch DuPont Ad-

vision fire ant bait and Advion mole cricket bait. He recently spent time with *Golfdom* to answer some questions about fire ant control.

**In what parts of the country do fire ants pose problems on golf courses?**

They extend from very southeastern Virginia through about half of North Carolina and into southern Tennessee.

The entire states of South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and

Florida also have fire ants. In addition, southern Arkansas, southern Oklahoma and central, southern and eastern Texas have fire ants.

**On what parts of golf courses are fire ants most problematic?**

**What damage they can cause?**

In some cases it depends on the level of inputs at the golf course. If you have a higher-end course that's making applications for mole cricket control, a lot of times there won't be much fire ant activity within those treated areas. But you'll still have activity around the perimeters of the fairways. You also you can't forget the clubhouse and other entry areas, such as driveways and sidewalks, where fire ants can typically be found.

There are different types of damage that fire ants can do. If you have fire ant mounds in an area that's being mowed, they can cause damage to the mower blades. Fire ants are also attracted to electrical transformers and have been known to cause damage



Chuck Silcox

with them. But I think one of the main issues on golf courses is liability, which involves people who are sensitive to fire ant stings.

**How should superintendents monitor fire ant populations?**

**What techniques or tips you can offer them to control fire ants?**

First, listen to your golfers, especially ones like me who don't hit the ball down the center of the fairway all of the time and are getting into areas that haven't been treated for fire ants. They'll let you know if they're running into fire ants.

Again, an area of concern is the clubhouse, where there are a lot of folks walking around and there's a lot of activity. It's easy to monitor fire ants in those areas. If you put out some food — a piece of a hot dog or potato chips when soil temperatures are above 60 degrees Fahrenheit and air temperatures are between 75 degrees and 90 degrees — fire ants will find it within 10 minutes if they are in the area.

**Can you tell me about any new fire ant research you are involved in?**

One of the things we're doing now is trying to find out how quickly we can stop fire ants from foraging, especially around areas like the clubhouse.

*Editor's note: To listen to a podcast of a similar interview with Silcox, visit [www.golfdom.com/online-exclusive](http://www.golfdom.com/online-exclusive).*

## Mr. Smith Goes to Washington ... To Talk About Immigration.

The North Carolina-based Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform stormed Capitol Hill in May to tout short-term relief and a long-term safety net for the industry's labor supply.

"There was a clear sense that Congress is acutely aware of the need for reform. However, as we all know, the challenge is coming to a consensus," says certified superintendent Kevin Smith, vice presi-

dent agronomist for Pinnacle Golf Properties in Browns Summit, N.C.

Federal immigration legislation stalled twice in June. The first proposal fell to partisan politics, and the second failed to make its way to the Senate floor for a vote June 28, effectively tabling the issue.

Senators from both sides of the aisle said it is unlikely Congress will address the immigration issue until after the 2008 election. ■