

"For winter overseeding on bermudagrass, the rye is almost too good," says John Foy, director of the USGA Green Section's Florida Region. "It doesn't die when you want it to. It's hanging on longer, into late spring and early summer, and that creates more transition problems [back to bermudagrass]."

Responding to this, scientists are breeding intermediate ryegrasses, which are hybrids between an annual and a perennial rye, especially as an overseeding turf. "They don't have the heat tolerance of the perennials, so they transition better in late spring and early summer," Foy says.

Intermediate ryegrass, Meyer says, is a concept that has merit, but it depends

on ryegrass market prices, which are going down again.

"When perennial rye is high-priced, there's a spot in the market for intermediates," he adds. "When the rye price goes down, it puts price pressure on that type."

Meyer adds that some people have learned to manage ryegrasses in the springtime

Continued on page 52

Rye, Bluegrass a Good Fairway Marriage

A mixture of ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass on fairways could be the best solution for vigorous turf, according to Kevin Morris, national director of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program.

"I like a bluegrass-ryegrass combination," Morris says. "If you have a bluegrass base, you can overseed rye into it."

Morris notes that ryegrass can be competitive with bluegrass, but superintendents can manage it. If you don't use as much water, and if you cut back on fungicides and fertilizers, bluegrass has a bit of an advantage, Morris adds.

"You can achieve a balance," he explains. "With both healthy, you can have better resistance against diseases."

Some bluegrasses tolerate half-inch mowing, Morris says.

"The one thing we don't know is how well they will survive summer patch," he adds. "That has been a problem in Kentucky bluegrass for a long time and is a main reason people turned to ryegrasses back in the late 1970s and early '80s. Ryegrasses were easy to seed and didn't have summer patch problems. A lot of golf courses didn't have fairway irrigation back then. But with irrigation and increased budgets, people are using more fungicides to fight summer patch."

Morris said NTEP is between trials for perennial ryegrass. The new test seeds were planted last fall at sites around the country, and the first results will be published in 2001.

Last year, after the final year of a four-year test, data collected from sites across North America ranked Palmer III as the top perennial ryegrass in the trials. One-tenth point below Palmer III, and thus in a statistical tie, were Brightstar II, Secretariat, Calypso II and Premier II.

— Mark Leslie

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Eye on Rye

Continued from page 51

with plant growth regulators and herbicides, causing it to die.

"The problem is that in making a [hybrid], you lose brown patch resistance," he adds. "They look poor if you have a brown patch epidemic. So how much are superintendents gaining if they have to spray a fungicide to control brown patch?"

While overseeding fairways and

There has been a trend away from *Poa triv* to rye because of its durability.

roughs with ryegrass is a trend around the state, Foy says *Poa trivialis* is losing its dominance as the choice for overseeding greens in Florida. For the past 10 to 15 years, *Poa triv* alone or in com-

ination with bentgrass has been standard. But there has been a trend on heavily used golf courses away from *Poa triv* to rye because of its durability, Foy says.

"*Poa triv* is nice, but if you get 200 to 300 rounds per day, it doesn't stand up well," he explains. "In south Florida, bermudagrass doesn't go dormant, but it doesn't grow for two to four months in the wintertime, and the cart traffic beats it down. Every winter, I hear complaints that the fairways are too tight and they have lost definition between fairway and rough cuts."

The bottom line: Will the world of perennial ryegrass return to the idyllic? With optimism over conquering gray leaf spot, Rutgers' Meyer is positive about its status. "There are certainly some striking changes going on," he says. ■

Mark Leslie is a golf feature writer and president of Blais & Leslie Communications in Monmouth, Maine.

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Hats Off to the Settlers – and Rutgers

When William Meyer travels to Europe, it's not to see the Arc de Triumph or Big Ben. His eyes are gazing downward, scrutinizing the grass below – mostly in sheep pastures.

"We're trying to go back to the origin of the species and find new ryegrasses," says Meyer, director of the turfgrass breeding program at Rutgers University. "All the ryes originally came here with settlers from Central and Eastern Europe, so they crossed it in their pastures."

Since Rutgers supplies many of the top-rated ryegrasses that make it to the American marketplace, Meyer feels a special responsibility to the rest of the turfgrass research community. In the 1995-98 ryegrass test run by the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, nine out of the top 10 varieties were cooperative projects with Rutgers – and the Rutgers germplasm came from Europe.

Leaving Pure Seed Testing in Oregon to join the Rutgers staff in 1996, Meyer started working in Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, East Germany, Bulgaria, Finland and Norway as well as England.

Today, his research is integrating the ryegrasses he brought back from Europe. More than 100 germplasms found on his trips are being tested in "a large program to intercross – most of it from old sheep pastures in Europe," Meyer says.

"We're looking for characteristics from Europe, where we think we have a more diverse genetic makeup, and trying to integrate them into the pool of material we have here," he adds. "It has worked well."

He notes the impressive results from Bulgarian ryes and vigor improvement from varieties that are 25 percent Polish and 75 percent Rutgers.

Unfortunately, none of this new/old European germplasm is in the current NTEP trials, and the next trial begins in 2004. So the varieties probably won't be available to superintendents until 2005 or 2006.

– Mark Leslie

"G-2 made my job easier."

Mike McBride
Golf Course Superintendent
Muirfield Village Golf Club

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Circle No. 127



A Lesson From Linksland

Let's allow the architects to do what they should

By Mark Leslie

The story goes that when God spoke the world into existence and separated land from sea, He stretched out His hand upon the

British Isles to create linksland — with golf in mind. Thousands of years later, man fulfilled his destiny in that fine game. But like Eve with the apple, he's about to mess things up again.

Author Will Durant once told posterity: "One of the lessons of history is that nothing is often a good thing to do and always a clever thing to say." Risking the latter part of that statement to emphasize the former, I plunge on because some things are worth the danger — like golf.

You see, history and golf are inextricably woven together — at least for the last 400 years — yet today we are allowing the game we love to devolve. We are ignoring the axiom, "Nothing is often a good thing to do."

Are we are forgetting our roots by de-

manding lush-green, turf-only, no-weeds-allowed, wall-to-wall watered courses with hold-the-ball greens that are glass fast? And will these demands kill the game? Probably not. But we will lose sight of its origins, its intentions and the way it was meant to be played.

"A good walk spoiled"? Poppycock! Better, a good hike enhanced. Let's allow the course architects to do what they want.

I traveled Northern Ireland and Ireland with 70 of them this spring and wondered: Did they get it? After a week of playing the island's best linksland tracks, would architects return home with the aura of Ireland coursing through their veins and into their designs? But they told me the question is not if they get it, but does the American golfer get it.

Americans, they agree, are spoiled. "And [that] has major ramifications for our game and to future development of courses," says California-based architect Damien Pascuzzo. "As they continue to demand perfect conditions, the cost of developing golf will increase, its affordabil-

ity will decrease, and we will lose players. We clearly have to build simpler courses."

"If you hit the ball 30 feet off center, everybody thinks you're supposed to have a good lie and a good shot," says Georgia-based architect Bob Cupp. "That's not what it's all about. We can simplify our lives a lot if everybody could experience [Ireland]."

I have a challenge for golfer and architect alike:

- To the architect: Hey, you think it's the best for golf? Then don't be bullied. Do it!

- To the golfer: Suck it up and play the ball where it lies!

Imagine you're a bricklayer and the boss tells you to mix the mortar without water. Or you're a landscape artist and someone steals your blue paint. What do you do?

Similarly, American golfers have stripped designers of a major tool of their craft: freedom. Freedom to be fun and quirky. Freedom to place bunkers in other than orderly places. Freedom to create green complexes and undulations that roll off into the bunkers or low swales.

We golfers have stifled designers' creativity and deadened their work. Therefore, we've lost for ourselves the opportunity to play golf in America as it's played on the links courses of the British Isles.

All of this, of course, would meet heaviest resistance from superintendents — the very ones it should help the most — because they would fear for their jobs. Nightmares ring in their minds with crowds wailing: "He has wildflowers on his fairways. Off with his head!"

A majority of superintendents would agree to would work in the sparse, links-like environments of their U.K. counterparts — if the courses down the street would do the same. If only someone prominent would make the model.

Nevertheless, here is my warning: History connects the dead to the living and the yet to be born. Forget that history in golf, and you lose its essence. ■

Mark Leslie is a golf feature writer and president of Blais & Leslie Communications in Monmouth, Maine.



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Circle No. 128

Call me crazy, but I think the golf industry may not be as helpful as it could be to people who would like to join it. I've spoken with several candidates looking for information on careers in golf, and each of them expressed frustration about not knowing where to look and whom to contact. Some folks, I'm sure, gave up their searches in frustration.

This phenomenon puzzles me, especially in light of the tight labor market we currently face. I am reminded of the words of a mentor I once had who told me that one of the key indicators of a successful, long-term business is its ability to attract and retain qualified, committed people. The golf industry is no exception to this adage, but its diffuse structure creates challenges to marketing all it has to offer.

Since the golf industry is comprised of independent courses, facilities and businesses, it's difficult to construct a marketing campaign to meet the needs of all its components. Therefore, the industry usually uses a word-of-mouth networking effort to fill a specific position. Once it's filled, there's no ongoing recruiting effort to promote the course until the next position opens. That's a bad long-term strategy.

Effectively marketing industry career opportunities means learning how to use economies of scale. It also means that even though there may not be a current opening in your organization, it is worthwhile to participate in activities that provide valuable insight and information to people who are considering careers in the industry. Here are some examples of things you can do to make this happen:

Local chapters are constantly looking for new ways to add value to their membership. Organizations such as this can pool their resources to sponsor job fairs or career days for prospective employees. Well-designed information sessions can be conducted about the industry, including the benefits and satisfaction one receives from these opportunities. Most importantly, however, is the opportunity for face-to-face dialogue between people in the business and those folks who would like to be in it. Experience has shown that these con-

Good People Don't Grow on Trees

BY DAVE ST. JOHN



**COURSES MUST
ATTRACT QUALIFIED,
COMMITTED PEOPLE
IF THEY WANT TO
SUCCEED IN A TIGHT
LABOR MARKET**

versations are invaluable recruiting tools.

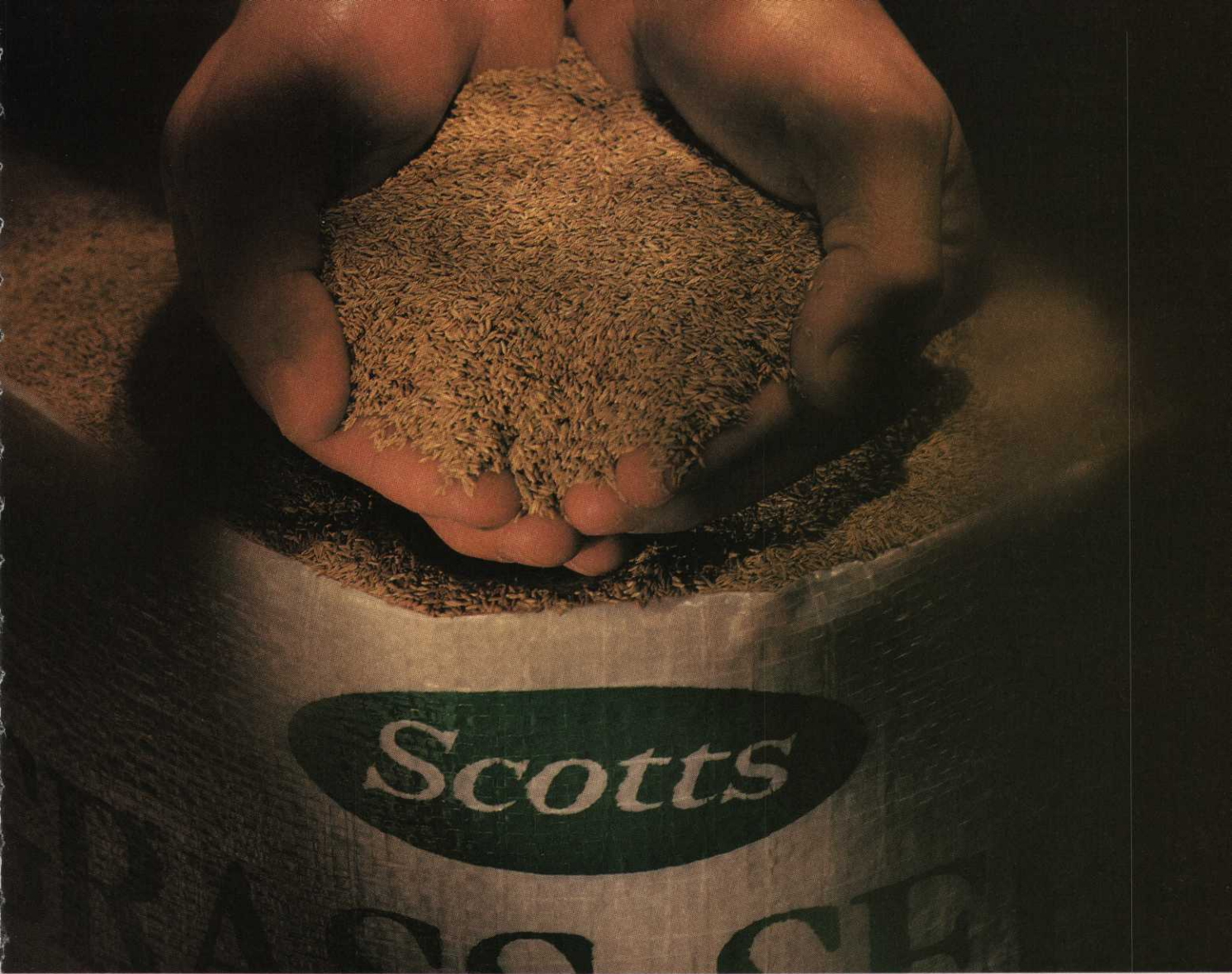
Internships are also a good method to open doors to new employees. If you elect to start an intern program, make it worthwhile and a win-win situation for everyone. Don't stick the students with your worst crew and forget about them. Be creative, and assign the interns some type of project that requires a full measure of their creative and critical thinking skills. There are some sharp people out there who may come up with new ways of doing things that you wouldn't have considered without their help.

Web sites are another way to make it easy for prospective employees to contact you. If your facility doesn't have a site, you should make a strong pitch to get one. Keep the site fresh with regular updates, and make sure your Internet address is part of all your facility's literature. Ensure that the site has a section which describes employment opportunities.

Establish links with local colleges, industry-oriented schools and industry associations. Students on campus usually have direct access to the Internet, which means they are only a few clicks away from communicating directly with you.

The name of the game is ongoing marketing, effectively using economies of scale and accessibility. People who want to work in the industry don't want to spend inordinate time searching for you. If that's the hurdle they have to overcome, rest assured they will take their skills to other companies in allied industries that have figured out ways to remove these obstacles and will welcome them with open arms.

Dave St. John is a principal in GreenSearch, an Atlanta-based management search and human resource consulting firm. He may be reached at info@greensearch.com.



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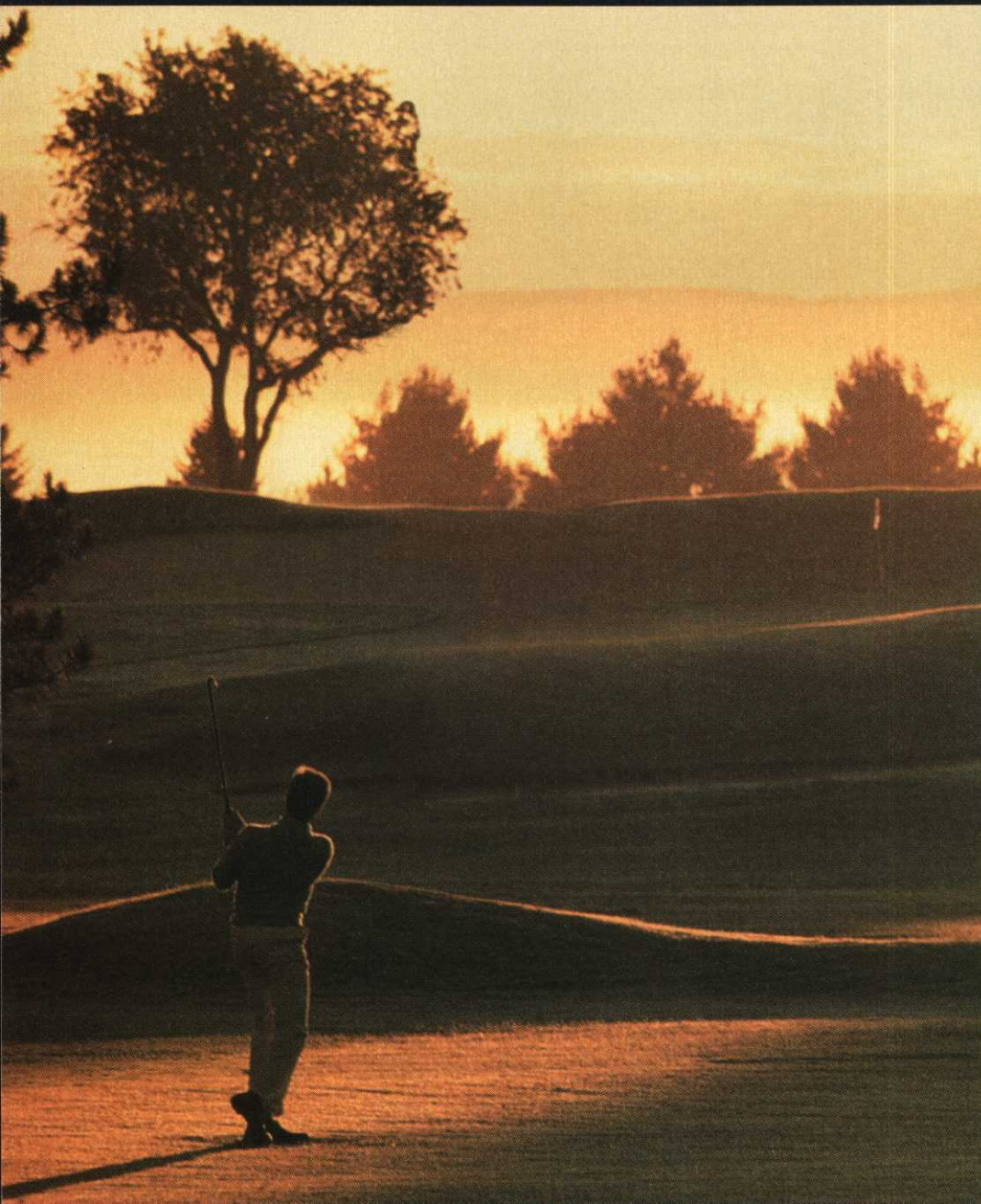


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- 07 60 Golf Course Architect
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- 10 105 University/College
- 11 100 Others Allied to the Field (please specify) _____

2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)

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- 13 15 Assistant Superintendent
- 14 20 Owner or Management Company Executive
- 15 30 General Manager
- 16 35 Director of Golf
- 17 70 Green Chairman
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- 19 75 Builder/Developer
- 20 55 Architect/Engineer
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3. What is your facility's annual maintenance budget?

- 23 A More than \$2 Million
- 24 B \$1,000,001-\$2 Million
- 25 C \$750,001-\$1 Million
- 26 D \$500,001-\$750,000
- 27 E \$300,001-\$500,000
- 28 F \$150,001-\$300,000
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103	115	127	139	151	163	175	187	199	211	223	235	247	259	271	283	295	307
104	116	128	140	152	164	176	188	200	212	224	236	248	260	272	284	296	308
105	117	129	141	153	165	177	189	201	213	225	237	249	261	273	285	297	309
106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
110	122	134	146	158	170	182	194	206	218	230	242	254	266	278	290	302	314
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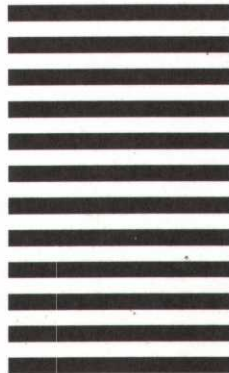
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106	118	130	142	154	166	178	190	202	214	226	238	250	262	274	286	298	310
107	119	131	143	155	167	179	191	203	215	227	239	251	263	275	287	299	311
108	120	132	144	156	168	180	192	204	216	228	240	252	264	276	288	300	312
109	121	133	145	157	169	181	193	205	217	229	241	253	265	277	289	301	313
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