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Circle No 108

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Insidious Insects

Continued from page 50

Shetlar says superintendents can treat for fire ants effectively with fipronil, the same chemical that eradicates mole crickets. He adds that there's anecdotal evidence that Merit can suppress fire ant populations, but it can take between six to eight weeks to work.

Canker worms – These caterpillars, commonly known as inchworms, can defoliate trees with frightening speed, Shetlar says. Repeated infestations can also weaken a tree's resistance to disease, he says.

"The anecdotal evidence suggests that the Midwest could be in for a larger infestation of this pest," Shetlar says. "They come in cycles of two to three years, and they're cycling back this year."

Shetlar says superintendents can control these insects with pyrethroids.

Redgum lerp psyllid – The Redgum lerp psyllid defoliates eucalyptus trees by sucking the sap from the leaves. The leaves fall off, depriving the trees of nourishment and weakening their immune systems, Gross says.

"We saw a lot of damage last year, and we're afraid it might be back again full throttle," Gross says. "Several courses aren't taking any chances. They've already sprayed their trees with Imid insecticide, which has worked."

Gross says he has also heard of success with a mi-

croinjected product called Imicide from J.J. Mauget Co. in Arcadia, Calif. The pesticide is injected into the base of the tree and is carried through its vascular system to the leaves. When the Redgum lerp psyllid eats the leaves, it ingests the pesticide.

Viburnum leaf beetle – The invasion of this European insect will wreak havoc on viburnum, Shetlar says.

"We've been telling superintendents to plant these shrubs because they're low maintenance," Shetlar says. "But if this bug continues to spread, [the shrubs are] not going to be easy maintenance anymore."

The larvae hatch in May, Shetlar says. Entomologists across the country are watching the bug's migration, which has already spread through New York, he says. "We'll tell you in the fall how bad it was," he says.

Black turfgrass ataenius – Pam Smith, superintendent at Blackberry Patch GC in Coldwater, Mich., says she's bracing for the annual invasion of these root-eating bugs. The insects attack cool-season grasses during high-stress periods, so Smith says she's prepared to do battle this month with the adults.

"I knock down the adult beetles with a synthetic pyrethroid to reduce the adult population," Smith says. "Then I hit them



with Merit late in the month to kill the remaining larvae. You know you've been successful when you start seeing the carcasses when you cut cups."

Smith says black turfgrass ataenius is frequently hard to diagnose because the symptoms look like localized dry spot. Gross says the insect isn't only a problem in the Midwest.

"Courses in [the California] area lost a lot of turf last year to that pest," Gross says. "We're monitoring the problem closely this year."

Sodworms, cutworms, billbugs and armyworms – "If you've got dryer than normal conditions, these are the bugs that you're going to see," Shetlar says. "Any insects in the caterpillar family will destroy the crowns of your turf."

The newer chemistries, particularly the neonicotinals, may control more pests than scientists originally thought, Shetlar says.

"Some of these newer chemicals could be called mood-altering drugs for bugs," Shetlar says. "We're going to have to rethink how we use some of them because they're showing great promise on other pests."

With that, Shetlar says he must to go because his grandson was calling him outside. It was time to catch some more bugs.

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Circle No. 128

Real-Life Solutions

SHARON GC, SHARON CENTER, OHIO

X Hole an Xcellent Idea



Superintendent builds spare hole to play when there's work to be done

BY MARK LESLIE

Problem

How to take a hole out of play, work on it and still have 18 regulation holes.

Solution

Build an extra (or X) hole.



"X stands for extra," says Frank Dobie, superintendent and general manager of Sharon GC in Sharon Center, Ohio, where last September he opened the X hole to play. "We can now close down any hole to work on it and still have 18 holes in play."

This is not a new idea and has been done elsewhere.

"It's something that should be considered when designing a new course or if there's space on an existing course," Dobie says. "In today's society, no one wants to wait or be inconvenienced, especially club members.

"Players will grumble if they lose a green to play for a day," Dobie notes. "They are really unhappy if it's several weeks while work is being done on a hole. If a green needs to be rebuilt [completely], then the time out of play is unacceptable. Temporary greens cut in the fairway are just not acceptable either."

Problem

The idea for the X hole

A five-acre plot of land adjacent to the 10th green and 11th tee proved to be the perfect site for the extra hole.

came to Dobie when there was a drainage problem with the seventh green, he says.

"Getting a backhoe and workers in there during play was a nightmare, so we postponed the work until we closed in November," he says. "The weather window here is very short. We got it done, but it is an inefficient and frustrating way to work on a green."

Because he had other greens that needed work, *Continued on page 56*

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Real-Life Solutions

Continued from page 54 Dobie knew he needed another solution.

Solution

A spare hole seemed like the best alternative. It happened that a five-acre plot on the northwest corner of the property adjacent to the 10th green and 11th tee was a perfect setting to insert a short par 3.

Coincidently, the Ohio State Department of Dams told Dobie that a dam on the property should be elevated by 4 feet to meet new water-containment standards.

"In order to do that, we had to have a dense clay, and the only source on the property for this was the same five-acre section," Dobie says.

You could call this the "Perfect Dig." It provided clay for the dam and a 1.3-acre pond for the new par 3, plus the necessary fill dirt for the green and tees.

"We married the two projects and it worked well," Dobie says, adding that he built an alternate 11th tee so that people playing the new X hole could proceed onto the 11th hole. Returning to the original 11th tee would have meant backtracking against following players from the X hole tee. The alternate 11th tee is situated so the hole plays the same distance as from the original tee.

Dobie designed the new hole to be low-maintenance — a par 3 with no fairway to mow and a predomi-





nately fescue rough. "We do have three pot bunkers on that hole, but all the slopes can be mowed with a triplex and the bunkers are large enough to accommodate a power rake," he says.

Dobie says the entire project cost about \$80,000. He hired a local contractor in the fall of 1998 to do the heavy earth moving, so the X hole had the winter to settle. In the summer of 1999, Dobie's staff did the final grading, shaped the bunkers and installed irrigation and drainage.

The USGA-style green was built next, and last June the green was seeded with A-4 bentgrass. The tees were seeded with Penncross bent.

What is Dobie's outlook on the project?

"We accomplished a major project with the dam

(Above) The green complex features three bunkers and a USGA-style green. (Bottom) The near-finished hole at a glance. The entire project cost about \$80,000.

work that was required and added a unique feature that will serve us in the future," he says. "The X hole is like a spare tire. You hope you never need it, but if you do, it saves a lot of grief."

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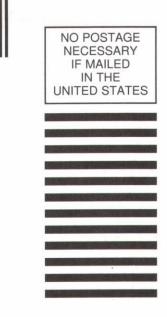
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