

## Tips

*Continued from page 110*

and buried in the back of your bottom desk drawer. It contains useful and vital information for servicing the topdresser, says Glenn Musser, product manager for Mill Creek Products. Important monthly and annual maintenance functions that need to be performed are addressed in the manual, such as greasing a unit according to the manufacturer's recommendations, Musser adds.

It might be necessary to remove safety guards or shields to properly service or maintain all areas of the machine, Mason says. "Remember, sand has a way of finding its way into many areas, so be thorough. Keep the fittings clean and use safety caps to prevent sand or other contaminants from getting into or on hydraulic connections or into the hydraulic system," he adds.

On older topdressers, Dufault

advises mechanics and superintendents to perform occasional but thorough inspections to make sure wheel bearings are packed properly and that hoses are in good shape and functioning properly, among other things.

Floor belts should also be inspected.

"Most floor belts need to be tracked to prevent the floor belt from moving too far from one side or the other," Mason says. "Inspect the floor belt before or after each use and make tracking adjustments as necessary. Also make sure to replace any worn or missing inner floor-belt seals."

Musser advises mechanics and superintendents to purchase replacement parts, such as chains and sprockets, from the original manufacturers.

If the topdresser is hydraulically driven, Kinkead stresses the importance of changing the filter in accordance with its hours of use. "If you

don't replace the filter, you could decrease its power or cause it to run a lot hotter," he adds.

### Take it easy

Maintenance goes hand-in-hand with operation, Dufault says. A worker doesn't want to drive a topdresser into the ground by running it recklessly. Dufault notes he's seen careless operators roll topdressers into bunkers because they drove the machines too close to the hazards.

"People blame [the accidents] on the equipment, but most happen because of operator error," he says. "What wrecks topdressers the most are inexperienced operators. They do things they shouldn't be doing with the machines. An [inexperienced operator] can do more damage to a machine in five minutes than a superintendent can do in 10 years." ■

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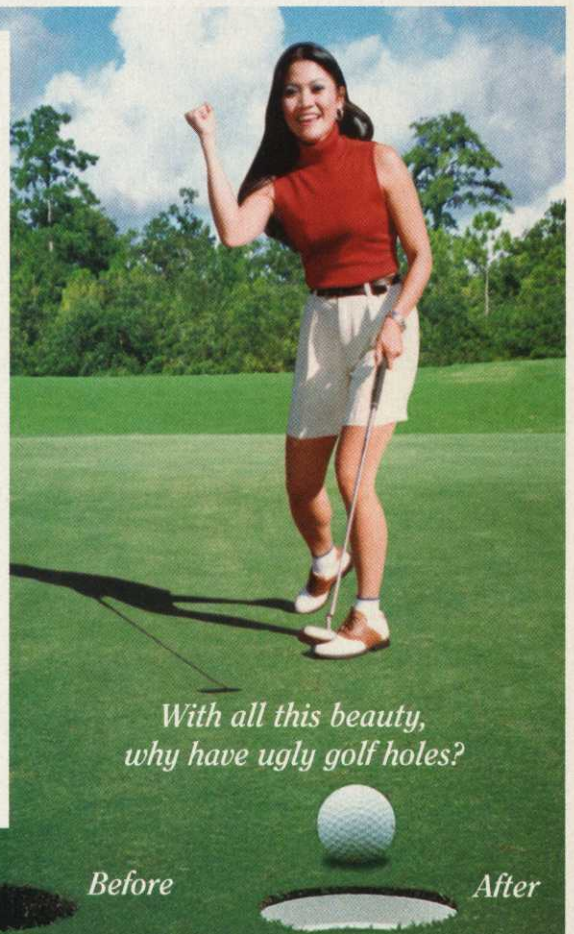
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## Genetic Resistance Aids Fight Against Dollar Spot

BY DAVID A. RICKARD

**T**im Christ, superintendent at Metedeconk National GC in Jackson, N.J., says that dollar spot is so bad in his area that superintendents have been hammered by the disease. But Christ doesn't lose any sleep over dollar spot on his bentgrass tees, greens and fairways that comprise 27 holes of golf at his course. He saves an average of three to four fairway sprays for dollar-spot control each year because he's planted turf that genetically resists the disease.

It's no secret that the causal agent of dollar spot, the fungus *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*, can be a real headache on creeping bentgrass greens and fairways. Some superintendents describe the Northeastern quadrant of the United States as a dollar-spot factory. Since environmental restrictions limit the amount of pesticides superintendents in the region can use, using genetically resistant turf against dollar spot makes sense.

### The choice

The elements comprising the classic disease triangle — host plant, pathogen and environment — collectively influence disease incidence, severity and duration. All three factors must be considered in making smart-disease management choices.

Trying to force the pathogen and the environment to help the cause is not easy. There's always going to be fungal inoculum, and the weather inevitably favors the disease for some part of the season. So it falls to superintendents to work on the only side of the triangle they have any control over — the choice of turfgrass.

To see how genetic resistance to disease may be an answer to the problem, note that data generated each year in the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program (NTEP) tests show some creeping bentgrass varieties can take on dollar spot and thrive. The two varieties that finished No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, in the 2001 ratings of the *National Bentgrass Test—1998—Putting Green* for "turfgrass quality of bentgrass cultivars grown on greens at three locations without fungicides" were L-93 from Jacklin Seed



and Penn A-2 from Tee-2-Green. In addition to providing good overall quality, their performance at various dollar spot locations in 2001 tells the story of how inherent disease resistance pays off.

At Rutgers University, researchers tested eight bentgrass varieties under field conditions for their susceptibility to major diseases. Two cutting heights and two nitrogen regimens were included. Creeping bentgrass varieties Penn G-2 and L-93 were least susceptible to dollar spot under most nitrogen and cutting height treatments, and required the fewest fungicide applications to control the disease.

In 1996, Texas A&M conducted a study on creeping bentgrass to evaluate the extent of dollar spot control conferred on a blend of varieties with different levels of resistance. Its data on monostands of these different cultivars tells an interesting story, clearly showing how disease resistance affects both the occurrence and degree of dollar spot infection.

Christ's secret to success was to combine genetic resistance with judicious chemical applications to fight dollar spot. Christ reviewed data from the 1994-997 NTEP trials and took recommendations from researchers who have tested many *Agrostis* varieties under severe dollar spot pressure. Christ selected L-93 from among several good options, mainly because of its consistent dollar spot resistance.

Jim Kelley, president of Evergreen Turf, a golf course management, consulting, construction and renovation company, is another proponent of the genetic resistance approach to managing dollar spot. He seeded all 18 greens at Patriot's Glen GC in Elkton, Md., with a dollar spot-resistant bent (L-93) in May-June 2001. Fairways and tees were a Kentucky bluegrass mixture. "The greens have been problem-free ever since seeding," Kelley says.

Superintendents like Christ, Kelley and Berry find it pays to combine the edge they receive from genetic resistance with timely chemical controls. Recent research studies tend to agree. ■

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*Rickard is a consultant and expert in research and development of plant protection technologies and cultivar interactions.*

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As a young man, Norton was a terrific golfer. But at 26 he decided to become a priest, and joined a rather peculiar Order. He took the usual vows of poverty and chastity, but this Order also required him to give up golf. Forever. Difficult as this was for Norton, he agreed and was finally ordained.

One Sunday morning the Reverend Father Norton woke up and, seeing it was an exceptionally beautiful, sunny spring day, decided he just *had* to play golf. He told the Associate Pastor he was feeling ill and convinced him to say Mass that morning. Then Father Norton headed out of town to a golf course about forty miles away, so he wouldn't accidentally meet any of his parishioners. Setting up on the first tee, he was all alone. After all, everyone else was in church!

About this time, St. Peter leaned over to the Lord while looking down from the heavens and exclaimed, "You're not going to let him get away with this, are you?!"

The Lord sighed and said, "I guess not."

Just then, Father Norton hit the ball. It shot straight toward the pin, dropped just short, rolled up and *fell into the hole*. IT WAS A 420-YARD HOLE IN ONE!

St. Peter was astonished. He looked at the Lord and asked, "Why did you let him do that?"

The Lord smiled and replied, "Who's he going to tell?"

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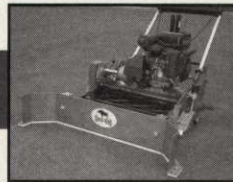
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# boats, etc.

**T**here exist those souls who claim the biggest barrier to waterskiing remains those 20 extra pounds, a pronounced lack of balance and a distinct inability to use their shoulder “muscles” for anything more strenuous than waving. Granted, an exercise regime change may be in order for some hardcore aqua-shredding, but the integral piece of fun in the sun (and water) remains a boat — and a big one.

If you have ever set foot in a boat shop, you know that watercraft are serious business. Boats are now financed much like cars. In fact, some cost as much as a luxury car with all the bells and whistles.

If you are going to take the plunge and drop \$8,500 for a used entry-level ski boat or shell out \$17,000 to \$20,000 for a nice family deck boat, you first need to make sure you'll use the darn thing at least once a week.

Beyond that are several factors to think about before you pop for a new or used boat. So as we always say, do your homework — and lots of it — before you sign on the dotted line. Here are some of the things you need to understand before you go shopping:

**Horsepower** — My family's first craft was not pretty — a buckety, short boat with a whopping 60-horsepower engine. If it was windy or there were more than two adults in the thing, getting up

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NEAR YOU** **BY MARK LUCE**

on the skis was tough. For better results, you need to have at least 125 hp to get the job done.

**Seating** — Boats with bow seating are better because the spray provides a nice cool-down. Look for boats at a length of 18 feet to 20 feet, which can hold five normal-sized adults comfortably without giving up too much power.

**Safety** — You won't drink and drive in a car, so why would you drink and drive in a boat? Beyond this no-brainer, everyone on your boat needs to have a life jacket.

**Hauling/storage** — It takes a truck to haul your big boat, but there are alternatives. You can often rent a slip at the local marina, sometimes for year-round storage. This will run between \$100 and \$125 per month.

Barring the bankroll to dive into your own boat, there is another option — make friends with someone who loves to water ski. My softball buddy Randy loves anything related to the water and takes his boat out at least three times a week in season. Guest



spots are frequent. Sure, there's a short wait to have your pull around the lake. And as Randy says, “The boat runs on gas, not thanks.” A guest on any boat needs to offer to spring for fuel, food and drinks.

I can't ski like I once did, as the first paragraph physical afflictions seem to adversely effect my now 33-year-old torso.

But as contradictory as it sounds, there exists a zen-like peace in being yanked around behind a roaring boat. Sure, you're technically tethered, but there's freedom of movement, communion with the water, the rush of speed, and sheer simplicity of that “thwapt, thwapt, thwapt” rhythm of the skis as you glide across glass-smooth water on a lazy summer day.

At least until you wipe out.

*Mark Luce, a free-lance writer based in Kansas City, Mo., can't slalom worth a damn anymore after returning to the landlocked Great Plains.*

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