

# Think Water

## RAIN BIRD TOUTS INTELLIGENT IRRIGATION AT ARIZONA EVENT

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**R**ain Bird and an assortment of “students” went back to school recently at the University of Arizona (UA). Glendora, Calif.-based Rain Bird held its third Intelligent Use of Water Summit Aug. 31 on the UA campus in Tucson. The two-hour event, which featured several speakers including golf course architect John Fought, attracted more than 100 attendees. Rain Bird’s fourth summit is set for Dec. 31 in Pasadena, Calif.

Why has Rain Bird decided to get in the education business? The answer is simple, said Barbara Booth, director of Rain Bird’s Golf Division. “While products are near and dear to our hearts, products alone will not enable people to make intelligent choices when it comes to water uses and irrigation systems.”

It’s easy to assume that Rain Bird wants everyone — from golf course superintendents to landscapers to homeowners — to water away. After all, irrigation is the company’s business. But Rain Bird realizes the world is facing a severe freshwater crisis. So it’s staging symposiums focused on the relationship between water conservation and landscape water use, water conservation policies and legislation, and potential programs and initiatives to bring greater awareness to the need for water conservation.

Arizona golf course superintendent Shawn Emerson, who attended the event, said he welcomes the educational events. “What is telling in this is how good golf course superintendents and the industry are in the conservation of water,” said Emerson, director of agronomy for the Golf Club at Desert Mountain.

At the outset of the program, Dave



Joanna Kind discussed the Environmental Protection Agency’s new WaterSense program.

Johnson, Rain Bird’s corporate marketing director, said the need to conserve water has never been greater.

“With global water experts predicting the conflicts of the future will be fought over water, it’s essential that world leaders, environmental experts and the public be aware of the need to conserve water,” Johnson said.

Fought, a member of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, said environmental awareness is at the top of his agenda as an architect, and that includes proper water use. He said he’s designing a new golf course in St. George, Utah, that will be seeded with a more drought-tolerant fescue/bentgrass mix that will require half the water used by a course seeded with Kentucky bluegrass and bentgrass. Fought said the U.S. golf industry needs more courses like it.

“It’s really critical that we get a handle on this,” Fought said of water use. “It’s probably the most important issue we need to be involved with today.”

At the program’s conclusion, moderator Robert Glennon, professor at the University of Arizona’s Rogers College of Law, advocated raising water rates to prompt the public to conserve. Glennon, the author of “Water Follies: Groundwater Pumping And The Fate Of America’s Fresh Waters,” noted that 36 U.S. states will suffer water shortages soon.

“It’s evident that conservation programs fraught with complexity, thereby requiring elaborate monitoring programs, may prove to achieve neither cost-effectiveness nor meaningful water savings,” he said. “Appropriate water

## Quotable

**“You have slow play because golfers play slow. They don’t abide by any of the sensible practices that have been recommended for years on how to encourage fast play.”**

— Dave Catalano, director of golf at Bethpage State Park in Farmingdale, N.Y.

**“I don’t know that McDonald’s and Burger King are having less turnover problems. But it’s a lot easier for them to train a new person to flip burgers than it is to train someone to take good care of a golf course.”**

— Lyne Tumlinson, director of career services for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

**“We don’t think it’s the sexiest topic in the world, but we think it’s pretty darn important.”**

— Chad Ritterbusch, executive director of the American Society of Golf Course Architects, on growing the game.

rates offer an opportunity to augment various conservation programs as a way of encouraging water conservation.”

Emerson disagreed with Glennon’s proposition and said raising water prices is not the answer for conservation. “It sounds and feels good, but is it reality?” Emerson asked. “We need more science behind everything we talk about.” ■



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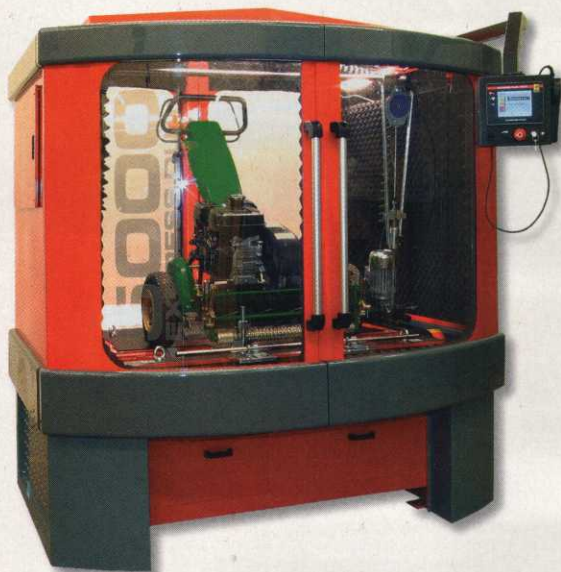
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## Off The Fringe



*Continued from page 10*

"When you look at the market rankings, it becomes clear that there are lots of cities in the Midwest where people know how to take care of their nest eggs," A.G. Edwards Financial Planner Sophie Beckman says in a prepared statement. "Although there are definitely pockets of good savers in every region of the country, the Midwestern region shows the greatest consistency throughout."

But don't pack your bags for the Rust Belt or Great Plains just yet. New Jersey, Connecticut, Maryland and Massachusetts all made the top five when broken down by state, and the top-three cities are Los Alamos, N.M., Connecticut's Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk corridor, and San Jose, Calif. (Visit [www.agedwards.com](http://www.agedwards.com) for the complete Nest Egg Index).

So what's the message?

"We found that while external factors, such as economic and employment situations may influence an area's ranking, building a healthy nest egg really comes down to solid saving and investing habits, personal priorities and discipline," Beckman says.

That need for more discipline comes at a time when fewer workers can count on guaranteed pensions, and of course, Congress continues to ignore the looming shortfalls in Social Security. That means self-funded retirement accounts will be the norm, but it doesn't mean they'll be sufficient. Half of Generation Xers risk having less money in retirement (at age 65) than they had while working, according to the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. Its National Retirement Risk Index was developed to raise awareness of the issues that affect retirement for baby boomers and subsequent generations.

The center estimates that one-third of early boomers — born 1946-1954 — probably won't have enough to maintain their current standard of living when they retire; 44 percent of late boomers risk having less retirement income.

The center's solution: Work an extra couple years to give yourself a cushion, or save more money (3 percent more) beginning at an early age. The former is probably more feasible for those of us without access to a fusion-powered DeLorean.

That's food for thought the next time you wander into the home-theater aisle at BestBuy or pass by yet another status car in traffic.

Keeping up with the Joneses might make you more like them, but it probably won't make you wealthy. ■



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# Freezing Points



## SUPERS SHARE TIPS TO PREVENT, CONTROL WINTER DESICCATION

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**D**on't look now, but here comes the cold to a considerable part of the country. So, superintendents, get set for snow, ice, teeth-rattling winds and long, dark nights. Oh, yeah, and the threat of desiccation on the golf course.

Recently, we asked some veteran superintendents for some tips on how to prevent or control winter desiccation before it starts. Here's what they had to say:

"The only thing I have ever done to prevent winter desiccation on my greens is to apply a heavier-than-normal layer of topdressing that I do not drag in but allow to stay on top of the greens for the entire winter. Some superintendents will apply an anti-desiccant spray. I have not done that. As far as tees and fairways are concerned, I've never done anything special to prevent desiccation on these areas. Because in a 'normal' winter, anti-desiccation materials are not needed. In a severe winter, they are not going to help. So why spend the money on them?"

— **John Carlone**, *Certified superintendent of the Meadow Brook Club in Jericho, N.Y.*

"We try to make sure our soil moisture level is high prior to freeze. We up the potassium level in the fall while the plant is still growing."

— **Jim Nicol**, *Certified superintendent of Hazeltine National Golf Club in Chaska, Minn.*

"I will water heavily, if need be, the first week of November. I will run sprinkler heads next to big trees by the greens. We use an anti-transpirant with

our last application of fungicides. I try to break up the winter winds with a snow fence and also try to catch the best cover of all — snow. We put out brush to catch some snow as well on a couple greens. We do not cover greens. Last year we did not topdress the greens, but we have in the past. I'm leaning toward topdressing and dragging it

in to protect the crown, yet light enough that the sand doesn't hold moisture and therefore damage the crown. I find the bentgrasses are very hardy and don't need covers. It's the *Poa annua* we protect to some degree."

— **James Bade**, *Superintendent of Somerset Country Club in South St. Paul, Minn.* ■

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# Off The Fringe

## Outer Limits

EXPERIMENTAL FACILITY LOOKS  
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ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY ITS TURF

By David Frabotta, Senior Editor

**I**magine your green chairman routinely infects your A-1 putting greens with cutworms and asks you to fertilize the crabgrass. And your general manager also wants the dollar spot to flourish on the L-93 while you devise the best way to grow various weeds in the TiffEagle bermudagrass fairways.

It's no joke. That's the life of Gary Ryan, turf superintendent for the Bayer Environmental Science Research and Training Center in Clayton, N.C. He's in charge of keeping 40 different golf-length cultivars healthy at the company's experimental facility while scientists try to kill them during product testing under the most stressful conditions possible.

"It was hard to get used to at first, but it's been interesting to find new ways to control pests," Ryan says. "Agronomically, I'm still the same thing I went to school for, but I'm doing it in different ways."

Those "cultural" methods don't typ-

ically include preventive pesticides or fungicides because they could interfere with experimental trials in progress. So Ryan keeps a close watch on plant stress, and he aerates more often than he did as superintendent of nearby Neuse Golf Club.

"I've been in the business for 15 years, and I think I've reseeded more in the past three than I did in the previous 12 combined," he says. "But I've learned more in the past three than I could have in other environments, too."

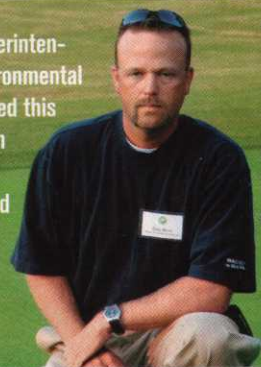
Ryan's domain includes 40 acres of golf-height grasses, which include 40 varieties of warm- and cool-season turf on four golf holes and plots scattered around the facility's 281 acres, which also includes eight acres of vegetative/or-namental management studies. And there's always something new. The facility just planted two acres of seashore paspalum to see how it fares in North Carolina's transitional climate (zone 7).

As many as a dozen experimental trials are being conducted at any one time, requiring Ryan to consult a spreadsheet before he can treat a pest or stamp out a fungus.

"They kill it, and I bring it back. That's it in a nutshell, but I'm still doing what I love."

That cycle might sound pretty familiar to other superintendents, too, says

Gary Ryan, turf superintendent for Bayer Environmental Science, rehabilitated this A-1 bentgrass green that was about 60-percent damaged due to an experimental trial.



certified golf course superintendent (CGCS) Bruce Williams, director of golf and grounds management for Los Angeles Country Club.

"We stress turf to create better conditions for the golfer, so I'm not so sure what he is doing isn't like what every superintendent is doing around the country," he says.

Williams was a speaker at Green Start Academy, a Bayer/John Deere confab that brought 50 assistant superintendents to the Research and Training Facility for continuing education and networking.

Other speakers included Stanley Zontek, director of the USGA Green Section in the Mid-Atlantic region; Grady Miller, Ph.D., professor at North Carolina State University; Bob Farren, CGCS, grounds and golf course manager at Pinehurst Resort, as well as product lecturers from Bayer and John Deere/Turf One Source.

"There has been some good basic information here," says Green Start board member Ken Mangum, CGCS, director of golf courses and grounds at Atlanta Athletic Club. "We all depend on research like this because we are busy doing our jobs every day, and the better-educated our assistant superintendents are, the better off the industry will be. ... They are going to be controlling budgets of their own not too long from now."

In the meantime, Ryan will continue his uphill battle to make the grounds suitable for guest tours and training, and he says he'll keep a special eye on the paspalum experiment. If it works well, he says he might even use it for his lawn. ■



Richard Rees, Ph.D., demonstrates the NTech GreenSeeker, which translates light reflection into a vegetative index to determine turf health.

### BAYER MEASURES PLANT HEALTH

A turf doctor might be able to gauge the exact health of your greens on-site thanks to a development by Bayer Environmental Science. The company recently dedicated a lab at its Research and Training Center that will work to quantify plant health using equipment that measures photosynthesis and root biomass, among other criteria.

Measuring phosphorescence, for example, allows turf managers to measure plant health prior to adverse visual symptoms, says Richard Rees, manager of projects and technical information for Bayer Environmental Science. He is spearheading the development of diagnostic tools that can be mounted to existing equipment for practical turf evaluations.

The company's plant health initiative was launched in cooperation with North Carolina State University. ■



Photos:  
Dakota Dunes Country Club  
Douglas D. Hausman, CGCS



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# Hole of the

▶ Hole No. 15 | Black Diamond Ranch, The Quarry Course | Lecanto, Fla.





# Month

## Hole Stats

Distance: 371 yards

Par 4

## The Turf

Green: TifEagle

Fairway: 419 Bermudagrass  
/TifEagle

Consistently rated the No. 1 golf community in Florida by *Florida Golf* magazine, Black Diamond Ranch features 45 holes of Tom Fazio-designed golf courses with 1,320 acres of dramatic elevation changes, classic bunkering and fairways framed by thousands of beautiful live oaks, dogwoods, myrtles and magnolias.

True to its name, The Quarry Course was a working limestone quarry before it opened for play in 1987. Among a host of accolades, the Quarry was ranked as the No. 3 golf course in the state of Florida last year by *Golf Digest* magazine.



Carved over and around canyon walls, it combines challenging shot-making opportunities with stunning views of the rolling countryside along Florida's Nature Coast.

A short par four at 371 yards, hole No. 15's intimidation lies in its elevation. Raised 150 feet from tee to fairway, a golfer's accuracy is challenged with a narrow landing area flanked by bunkers and a natural aquifer on the left.

Employing a strict integrated pest-management strategy, certified superintendent John Cunningham and his crew focus on monitoring the turf for early stages of disease development.

When dollar spot threatens the TifEagle greens in the summer and winter months, Cunningham rotates with Emerald® fungicide.

"I used Emerald for the first time in a product trial and it stopped dollar spot dead in its tracks," said Cunningham. "That was almost four years ago. When we do decide to make a chemical application, we want to use a product that is going to work, and we have been happy with the results from Emerald."

To see past Holes of the Month, download a desktop image and more, visit [www.turfacts.com](http://www.turfacts.com).

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GOLFDOM'S HOLE OF THE MONTH IS MADE POSSIBLE BY:

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**I**f you know anything about golf lore, then you know Old Tom Morris has been heralded as the progenitor of the modern golf course superintendent. He was a man of many talents and responsibilities: greenkeeper, golf professional, club maker and winner of the British Open. He was a true Renaissance man in his time.

Today's superintendents are no less versatile, but the hats they wear are not as romantic as Old Tom's. Today's greenkeepers in America are superintendents, whatever that means. Some superintendents might construct a golf club from a Golfsmith kit, but they most likely are constructing budgets as businessmen.

There are only a few golf professional/superintendents, and I'm not sure which hat they wore first, but we do have a fair number of superintendents who play a respectable game of golf. In fact, many played on college golf teams, but they astutely realized they would be more successful "going low" as a pro with height of cut instead of strokes under par. Capturing the national association's golf championship is their British Open, but they are just as versatile as ever.

Today's superintendent is most often the go-to person at a facility. The good ones have a knack for solving problems, and their world is one of constant change that includes club leadership, the labor force, laws, regulations and fickle economies.

This juggling act is no less impressive than Old Tom's, even if today's duties smack of MBA lexicon, like leader, motivator, communicator, trainer or coach. There are the core disciplines that go without saying: agronomy, business and environmental stewardship. If Old Tom was a jack-of-all-trades, his modern counterpart is master of his many domains.

Old Tom was a pioneer of golf course maintenance. He began a methodical, reasoned approach to managing the golf course, however crude it might seem by modern standards. Today, the products, equipment and methods are the result of high-tech research and development, but the basic concepts remain rooted in sound nutrition and cultural practices — we just have more choices of how to get there.

Modern superintendents have traded in

## A Legacy of Respect, Esteem

BY JOEL JACKSON



OLD TOM'S  
PROFESSIONALISM  
AND DEDICATION  
FLOURISHES WITH  
HIS SUCCESSORS

Old Tom's tweed coat for cotton pique polo shirts. Old Tom seemed so formal compared to our casual approach to the work environment. We hold to vestiges of the formality by requiring sport coats at some of our meetings and conferences. Some scoff or deride this nod to formality, but nothing says that we are serious and honor golf's traditions more clearly than a room full of people dressed for the part. Today we call it image. Old Tom called it the uniform of the day.

For all of his accomplishments, Old Tom was still a victim of the social class system dominant in his day. Thanks to the dedicated association service of many golf course superintendents and the growth and development of the GCSAA, those barriers have been removed. Today, it's pretty common to see superintendents revered for their skills, professionalism and dedication to the art and science of golf course management.

The sense of urgency in today's world makes the romance of Old Tom's era hard to digest, and longing for the good old days doesn't seem to have much relevance, except for perhaps modeling Old Tom's dedication to the game of golf. If superintendents consider their positions only as a means to an end or just a paycheck, then they are sadly mistaken and in the wrong profession.

Maverick personalities and career challenges can be found in every profession. Your road might have many detours before you reach your destination. Rejoice, do not despair. You come from good stock. You are all sons and daughters of Old Tom.

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*Certified superintendent Joel Jackson retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.*