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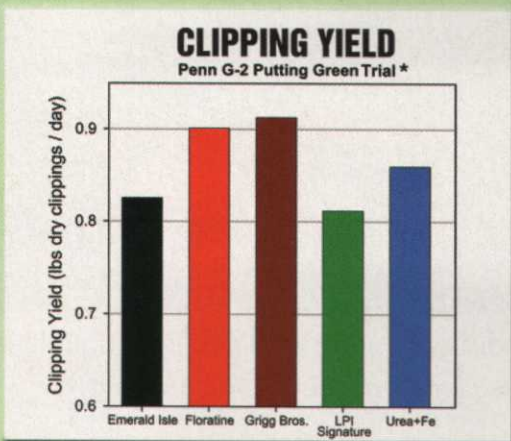
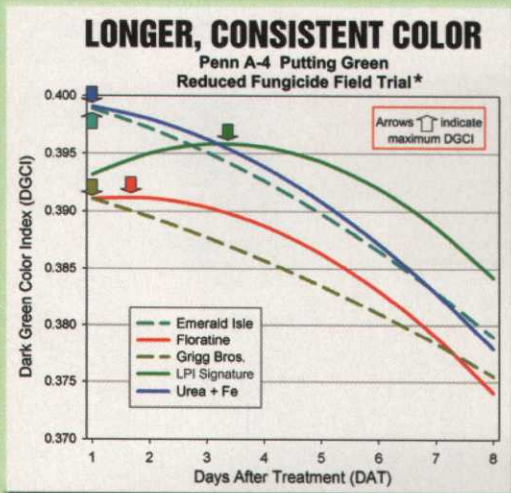
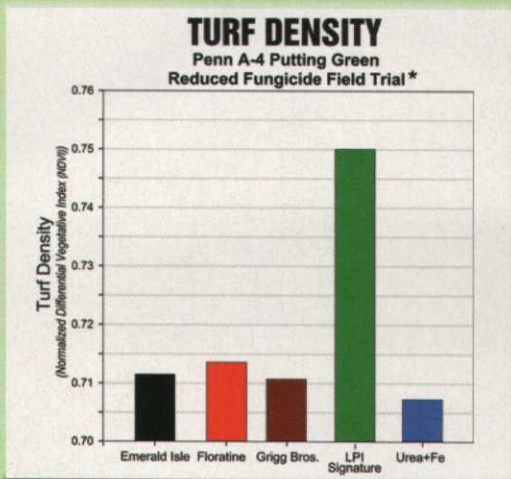
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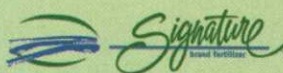
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Signature® Foliar Fertilizers Deliver Consistent Results



* Max Schlossberg, Ph.D (PSU), 2007.



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Off The Fringe

“Navigating Product Evolution” – Continued from page 20
golf course superintendents in conjunction with the 2006 Golf Industry Show in Atlanta. During those focus groups, a matching exercise of a number of popular product brands, active ingredients and manufacturers showed that though superintendents are well educated on active ingredients, they don’t necessarily know which products contain which ingredients, or which basic manufacturer is responsible for each branded product.

What can the chemical side of the golf industry do to change this dilemma? And how important is it for superintendents to know who’s making their products?

Most participants in our focus groups actually expressed feeling embarrassed for not knowing which active ingredient belonged to which manufacturer. One of their suggestions was to prominently display the name of the active ingredient and the name of the basic manufacturer on the product label. And yes, it *is* important to know the manufacturer that is making and servicing you with a product. Quality is not always equal among products. There is value in what we’re doing in terms of production quality, technical service and complaint handling. That’s important for our customers to know. ■

“Congress” – Continued from page 14

ity” to Stephen Seagal right now), and the Global Warming Pollution Reduction Act of 2007 is also stalled in committee.

If they fail to reach the floor for a vote by election time, then they will need to be reintroduced by the 111th Congress in 2009.

While those might be coups for the industry, the legislature’s failure to agree on an immigration bill might have hindered superintendents’ ability to find necessary workers, especially because Congress allowed the returning-worker provision of the H2B visa bill to expire.

But the legislation that is having the biggest impact on turfgrass managers is being debated and implemented at the local level, Riordan says. Water-use issues have plagued the Southeast and Southwest, and water rights are being debated around the Great Lakes.

Municipalities still debate the regulation of phosphorous leeching, and a New York municipality is trying to ban leaf blowers to diminish noise pollution as well as emissions.

Here’s what we know: Politics are local. Golf business is local. Your confidence in the economy and personal prosperity are local. So seriously, can you afford to stay on the sidelines while city councils, watershed councils and others in the community continue to create obstacles that prevent you from doing your job as superintendent?

After all, we don’t really need change that we can believe in. We need people who we trust to make the right decisions. And whom do you trust more than yourself? ■

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Hole of the

▶ Hole No. 7 | Marvel Golf Club | Benton, Ky.



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Month

Hole Stats

Distance: 427 yards

Par 4

The Turf

Green: Penn A-1/A-2
Creeping Bentgrass

Fairway: Transcontinental
Bermudagrass

Nestled along the western shores of Kentucky Lake, Marvel Golf Club is Western Kentucky's premier 18-hole championship golf course. Designed by Palmer Course Design and opened in 2005, Marvel sits upon some of the most pristine landscape found anywhere in the bluegrass state.

Christopher S. Gray Sr. serves as general manager and director of golf course operations. As the National Public Course and Overall Winner in the 2007 GCSAA/Golf Digest Environmental Leaders in Golf Awards, Gray and his crew have successfully integrated quality turf conditions and environmental responsibility at Marvel. Throughout the course's changing scenery, native regions and environmentally enhanced areas commonly come into play during a golfer's round.

The par-four seventh hole illustrates this combination of pristine turf and natural beauty. As the most demanding par 4 on the front nine, the fairway narrows at the landing area where bunkers will catch any errant shot to the right. The elevated green, sloped from front to back, requires an accurate shot to keep the ball on the putting surface. Running along both sides of the fairway and behind the green are massive naturalized areas waiting to engulf a wayward shot.

Establishing and maintaining these naturalized areas are one of Gray's greatest challenges.

"We have an enormous problem with soft crabgrass throughout the golf course," Gray said. "In our naturalized areas, we aren't able to use a pre-emergent herbicide because it inhibits the germination of the native seed bed we want to promote."

To control the soft crabgrass in these environmentally sensitive areas after it has germinated, Gray uses Drive® DF herbicide.

"Drive gives me the ability to effectively spray out the soft crab without negatively affecting our native broomsedge bluestem, which is the cornerstone of all our naturalized areas," Gray said. "Protecting and enhancing the environment has always been a top priority in my career, and Drive helps me accomplish that."

To see past Holes of the Month, download a desktop image and more, visit www.betterturf.com.

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

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Shades Of Green

■ OPINION

As *Golfdom* celebrates its 10th year, it occurs to me that I have written 112 columns, including this one.

“Shades of Green” is more than just a title. It is a symbol of the many variables in the golf industry. Issues affect us on different levels, yet there is always a common denominator that binds us together — producing playable and profitable golf courses. Playing golf might be a game, but owning and operating a golf course is a business.

The color green has environmental, economic, agronomic and political connotations. The shade of green changes depending on the issue: drought conditions and water restrictions, flat golf rounds, local ordinances on fertilizers, pesticide use and recent EPA decisions on pesticide products.

Balancing environmental responsibility with economic viability takes cooperation and commitment between superintendents, owners, managers and golfers. Like a Muppet’s mantra, “It’s not easy being green.” But your future depends upon it.

I’ve tried to paint the issues with humor and insight, sometimes presented in the fictional life and times of Duffy McDuffy, superintendent of the Lake Omigosh Golf Club. The idea for the Lake Omigosh Club and characters grew out of my admiration and enjoyment of the humor and writings of certified golf course superintendent Monroe Miller in his “Tales From the Back Nine” in the Wisconsin GC-SA’s *Grass Roots* magazine. I’ve also borrowed some things from humorist Garrison Keillor and his ongoing Lake Wobegon adventures.

So every month for the past decade, I’ve cobbled together 625 words on a topic that was either on the radar screen or in the headlines so readers can appreciate where the profession has been and think about where it is heading.

Not all the humor has been appreciated, and not all the feedback has been positive. But I do appreciate the comments some of you have given me at GIS and at other venues.

So much for nostalgia; it’s time to look ahead. It doesn’t take a clairvoyant to see that water availability and conservation will be the most

Environment Still No. 1 Concern for Golf

BY JOEL JACKSON



SUPERINTENDENTS

MUST DOCUMENT

WATER USE,

SUSTAINABILITY

AND IMPACT STUDIES

important issues facing the golf and turfgrass-related industries during the next few years.

Superintendent associations at the national, state and local levels need to develop alliances with other golf and green industry groups to leverage communications and political effectiveness on issues such as water conservation. They must maximize working relationships with the staffs of all regulatory agencies.

Superintendents must also utilize best management practices (BMPs) — drafted by cooperative panels of researchers, regulators and industry members — as a useful tool to temper the emotions surrounding the trend of local ordinances to regulate fertilizers and pesticides. By citing BMPs supported by peer-reviewed science, local governments have a way to approve agronomically sound practices as the basis for local ordinances. Comprehensive BMP manuals can be used to address a variety of issues from water to pesticide and nutrient management.

Besides the environmental impacts, state golf and green industries should have current economic impact studies done to show the value of those industries to the local economy and why they need access to key resources on an equitable basis. Golf courses must participate in these surveys to help make our case.

There will be continuing technological advances in turf-care products and equipment that will allow superintendents to decrease inputs into the environment while still providing excellent playing conditions. The challenge is to make feasible, practical, affordable changes to current programs while documenting water and chemical use to show our commitment to living acceptable shades of green for our communities.

Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.

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At the Masters recently, all eyes were on the beloved second cut, Augusta National's euphemistic way of describing the 1 3/8-inch rough guarding its fairways. It was the 10th Masters played with the corridors narrowed. And because writers love a good anniversary, you can be sure there was plenty written about it (myself included in *Golf World's* Masters Preview).

Ignore that the second cut is an insult to the vision of architects Alister MacKenzie and Bobby Jones, who did not believe in dictating tee shots be played down a narrow center line. Instead, they wanted players to choose the best angle of attack depending on the day's hole location.

The club says the second cut was designed to deliver a half-shot penalty. While they offer up bits of statistical evidence that this has occurred, most players feel the second cut has made Augusta National less complicated. That's a euphemism for easier.

Some say the second cut has not added the hoped-for difficulty in large part because U-grooves make flyer lies less common in today's game, negating the impact of this light rough. Even worse, U-grooves have devalued the impact of firm greens and important angles in course design.

I was not an initial supporter of the United States Golf Association's desire to outlaw U-grooves, figuring it was just a lazy way out of dealing with a golf ball rollback. After all, so the theory goes, if the world's best can't spin it out of the rough, they are going to concentrate on hitting fairways instead of bombing and gouging. While that theory is a bit naïve and overvalues the importance of rough, I recently saw firsthand how the grooves are a menace to the core values of the game.

Researching a *Golf World* story about PGA Tour course setup, I was allowed to tag along with tour official John Mutch at the Target World Challenge. Played at Sherwood Country Club, the December event faced record-cold temperatures overnight, leaving superintendent Sean Dyer's course covered in morning frost.

Time to Get in the Right Groove

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



Many greens were declared mowable within only 30 or so minutes of the first groups coming through.

Walking on the greens, I can safely say they were brick hard. Though they would thaw out a bit, anyone watching shots played into them saw a significant first-ball bounce. So after he posted a ho-hum 62, I asked Tiger Woods a generic question about the course setup that day.

"Well, the field staff set it up probably a little bit more difficult today pinwise, but the greens were soft. I mean, that's the thing that allows us to be aggressive," Woods said. "I fire at pins that I normally don't fire at here. One, we had no wind, and we had greens that were backing balls up. We had to watch out for spinning the ball back too much with nine irons and wedges."

I asked Mutch if I was watching a different tournament. "No," he said with a smile before reciting the tour's slogan, "these guys are good."

But he concurred that the greens were very firm — downright hard in spots.

So yes, these guys are good. But if skill is something worth protecting, then they can play just fine with V-grooves.

If the USGA and R&A can agree on an unprecedented rollback that restores V-grooves to tournament golf, it will re-establish meaning to green firmness and sound course design. Such a shift still won't address the distance gains that have cost untold millions in unnecessary course adjustments, but at least a groove change might encourage lower rough heights.

And this move might return the flyer to its rightful place in the game as a much more interesting dilemma than looking for lost balls and wedging out of deep hay.

RESTORING
V-GROOVES TO
TOURNAMENT GOLF
WILL RE-ESTABLISH
MEANING TO GREEN
FIRMNESS AND
SOUND COURSE
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Contributing Editor Geoff Shackelford can be reached at geoffshac@aol.com.

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