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# Golfdom

JULY 2010 • VOLUME 66 • NO. 7

## Don't Get Complacent!

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Experienced superintendents offer advice on how to stay fresh, focused and frank in an ever-changing and demanding profession. **BY KEN KRIZNER**

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**By Larry Aylward**

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**By Anthony Pioppi**

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## Turfgrass Trends

This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest discusses how to let turfgrass guide your fall nitrogen fertilization. Also, William L. Berndt offers a primer on soil redox potential. See pages 57-62.

## Online Exclusive

Check out this video podcast and more only at [www.golfdom.com](http://www.golfdom.com):



**Turf on a Tight Budget** – Bayer Environmental Science recently held its Warm-Season Weed-Control Symposium. The event was attended by some of the top turfgrass researchers in the country. *Golfdom's* Larry Aylward caught up with several researchers to ask them this question: With a decrease in funding, do you feel more pressure than ever to do your job as a turfgrass researcher?

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**D**id Mark Woodward resign? Or was he fired? According to a press release issued by the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, Woodward “resigned” from his post as CEO of the organization. But there are a few things worth noting about that press release that make me think the GCSAA’s board of directors may have forced Woodward out.

First, the press release states that Woodward resigned to “pursue other career interests,” which suggests Woodward didn’t have another job to go to. I don’t know about you, but I’m not quitting my job when the unemployment rate is 10 percent, no matter how much severance I get.

Second, Woodward’s resignation was “effective immediately,” according to the release. Most people I know leave a few weeks of notice when they resign. Steve Mona, Woodward’s predecessor at the GCSAA, left several months of notice when he announced he was leaving.

Third, the press release contained no statements from Woodward. Wouldn’t you think Woodward would at least want to acknowledge the people he worked with for two years at the association upon resigning? From what I’ve heard, Woodward was well liked inside the walls of the GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan. (And none of the GCSAA’s employees saw his “resignation” coming, by the way.)

The press release touted the “solid” job Woodward did at the GCSAA, and how he had “guided the GCSAA through one of the nation’s most severe economic downturns in years.” Yet, by reading between the lines in the press release, it’s easy to get the impression that Woodward may have been shown the door.

I spoke with Woodward shortly after the announcement. Woodward told me he did, indeed, resign. But you know how those things go. General Stanley McChrystal, the former top commander in Afghanistan, “resigned,” too.

I also spoke with GCSAA Vice President Robert Randquist, the certified superintendent of Boca Rio Golf Club, who flew into town and visited Woodward along with GCSAA President Jim Fitzroy the day Woodward “resigned.” Randquist didn’t want to comment

## On Woodward’s ‘Resignation’

BY LARRY AYLWARD



DOES THE GCSAA  
REALLY WANT  
PEOPLE TO THINK  
THE ASSOCIATION IS  
IN TURMOIL?

much about the situation. Understood. I’m sure Randquist and Fitzroy want to draw as little attention to the matter as possible.

Now, let me be clear that I’m not out to get the dirt on Woodward. He has my utmost respect. While he was in a difficult gig, it seemed like he was doing his best to make it work. But something tells me that something happened to cause Woodward’s “resignation.” And the GCSAA’s board of directors needs to address this with its members and supporters.

Why? Because people are wondering what’s going on. They’re reading between the lines of the press release, too. They realize there may be more to this story than Woodward just deciding he’d had enough of his job, which is the way the press release tries to make it sound.

I received an e-mail from someone representing a major industry supplier asking what I thought of the “turmoil” within the GCSAA after the announcement was made. You know other people are using similar words to describe the situation.

Randquist says there’s “no upheaval” and “no internal struggles” within the GCSAA. He also said the association can’t control what people think about Woodward’s departure.

But I say Randquist and the GCSAA owe its members an explanation of what happened for the betterment of the association. Do they really want people to think the association is in turmoil?

It has been a tough few years for the GCSAA, mainly because of the troubled economy. Revenues have declined and attendance is down at the Golf Industry Show. The last thing the GCSAA needs is to be perceived as an organization on unstable ground with its leadership. And people will think that if the association’s leaders bury their heads in the bunker sand on this one.

*Aylward can be reached at [larryward@questex.com](mailto:larryward@questex.com).*



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# Off The Fringe

## Business briefs

### Robinson Named Superintendent of Pinehurst No. 2

Pinehurst Resort has named Kevin Robinson as golf course superintendent of Pinehurst No. 2, host site for the 2014 U.S. Open and U.S. Women's Open Championships. Robinson replaces Paul Jett, who left the resort unexpectedly last month.

Robinson has spent the last 18 years maintaining Pinehurst's courses, including the last 11 as a superintendent on four different Pinehurst courses. He has led renovation projects on three different Pinehurst courses and will be charged with guiding Pinehurst No. 2 through a restoration conducted by Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw.

"Kevin has done an outstanding job preparing and maintaining a number of Pinehurst courses, and his proven track record and experience will be invaluable on No. 2," said Pinehurst President Don Padgett II.

### Rounds Rise in April

After dropping the first three months of the year, rounds rebounded in April and were up 10.5 percent compared with April of 2009, according to Golf Datatech LLC. But rounds are still down 3 percent through the first four months of the year. Public access play was up 11.6 percent April and private course activity was up 6.9 percent. A total of 3,850 courses are represented in Golf Datatech's report.

### SipcamAdvan Opens New Laboratory

SipcamAdvan has opened a new laboratory facility in Valdosta, Ga., which will augment the company's formulation expertise and new product speed to market, both key components of its growth plan for 2010 and beyond, the company says. ■

## The Top Talk Shop



DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY RESEARCHERS  
GATHER FOR A WEED-CONTROL SYMPOSIUM  
TO DISCUSS MSMA AND OTHER ISSUES

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**S**cott McElroy admits he loves controversy. Hence, it was no surprise that McElroy, associate professor of turfgrass and weed science at Auburn University, opened the 2010 Warm-Season Weed-Control Symposium held by Bayer Environmental Science last month talking about a controversial topic — the fate of monosodium methanearsonate, or MSMA.

Ten top turfgrass researchers from various universities in the South gathered in Key Largo, Fla., for the three-day event. The researchers discussed myriad topics, including testing results on two new Bayer ES herbicides — Specticle, which Bayer expects to debut in the fourth quar-

ter; and Celsius, which the company released early this year. The researchers also spoke about key issues affecting the golf course maintenance industry, from controlling *Poa annua* to researching funding in a tough economy to how to replace MSMA if it is placed on the proverbial shelf.

MSMA, classified as an organic arsenal, is used for weed control in bermudagrass, zoysiagrass and some cool-season turfgrasses. It's used for post-emergence control of goosegrass, crabgrass and dallisgrass.

There has been much talk the past few years about MSMA's fate. Some say the herbicide's days are numbered. Others aren't so sure.

"I love arguing about it," McElroy said with a smile.

The big question is what products  
*Continued on page 8*



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## Off The Fringe

**THE TOP** Continued from page 6 will be used to replace MSMA to control various Southern weeds if the Environmental Protection Agency does suspend the herbicide.

Shortly into his talk, which focused on MSMA replacement strategies, McElroy reiterated EPA's stance to cancel MSMA use on golf courses. "After Dec. 31, 2012, registrants are prohibited from selling or distributing existing stocks of products containing MSMA labeled for use on golf courses," the EPA states in its ruling. "After June 30, 2013, persons other than registrants are prohibited from selling or distributing existing stocks of products containing MSMA labeled for use on golf courses. After Dec. 31, 2013, use of products containing MSMA labeled for all uses, except cotton, is prohibited."

In 2006, the EPA announced it would cancel re-registration of any pesticides containing MSMA. Arsenic levels raised by MSMA "raise a concern for cancer risk," the EPA stated. But the organization decided to take a second look at MSMA, partly because it might have overestimated the risk of organic arsenic and MSMA's contribution to environmental inorganic arsenic levels. Organic arsenic is a naturally occurring element.

In its most recent ruling, McElroy said EPA has written that if someone can prove that arsenic — not organic arsenic, of which MSMA is based — is not toxic, it will reverse the ruling.

"Organic arsenicals ... are much safer than elemental arsenicals," McElroy said. "But I'm going on the assumption the EPA will not discover any safety information ... so MSMA will go bye-bye."

But Fred Yelverton, professor of crop science and co-director for the Center for Turfgrass Environmental Research and Education at North Carolina State University, said he's not convinced MSMA will be eliminated. Yelverton



Scott McElroy talked about the fate of MSMA and what could be used to replace it.

said an EPA official told him the use of existing stocks

of MSMA could be extended beyond Dec. 31, 2013.

MSMA's demise would mean one less herbicide to control at least four weed species in warm-season turf — crabgrass, goosegrass, dallisgrass and broomsedge. Golf course superintendents will also be losing an inexpensive product in MSMA, McElroy pointed out.

The researchers at the meeting agreed that quinclorac and sulfentrazone could be used for crabgrass control, mesotrione for goosegrass control, foramsulfuron for dallisgrass control, among other herbicides. Bayer ES's two new products can also control the weeds.

McElroy said a post-grass control herbicide was needed. He asked the other researchers if they thought a three-way herbicide could be used for such control.

Yelverton's presentation focused partly on pre-emergent crabgrass control in tall fescue. Yelverton says improper mowing height — tall fescue is cut too short at 1 or 2 inches — will cause pre-emergent herbicide to not work as well.

"If you raise the mowing height, you will get a lot more crabgrass control," Yelverton said. "Something as simple as mowing height has a tremendous impact on pre-emergent herbicide efficacy."

James Brosnan, assistant professor of plant sciences at the University of Tennessee, gave a presentation on the fundamentals of weed germination. Brosnan said three consecutive days and nights with soil temperatures above 55 degrees F will cause crabgrass to emerge.

Brosnan said *Poa annua* germinates at 44 to 85 degrees F, and that superintendents in Knoxville, Tenn., were

having a difficult time controlling *Poa annua* in the fall. Brosnan said his turf trials show that Bayer's new herbicide Specticle, which the company expects to register later this year, offers promising in controlling crabgrass and *Poa annua*. Specticle's active ingredient is indaziflam.

Don Myers, Bayer ES's product development manager for herbicides and plant growth regulators, touted indaziflam's low-use rate, which he said is favorable to the EPA. Yelverton said that fact provides a strong marketing angle for the product.

"Resorts all over the world want to market as being more environmentally friendly — and that includes everything from soap to pesticides," Yelverton said. "This is a big deal in the golf course industry, and it's not going away."

Other presenters included Joe DeFrank, professor of horticulture from the University of Hawaii, who spoke about goosegrass control on Hawaiian golf courses, and Bert McCarty, professor of horticulture at Clemson University, who spoke on doveweed and sedge control. DeFrank talked about mechanical control (verticutting), cultural practices (inducing moisture stress to prevent goosegrass roots from reaching the soil) and chemical control to combat goosegrass. McCarty said doveweed is an up-and-coming problem weed.

"I've received more calls on it than any other weed in the past two years," he added. "We usually don't see it emerge until about the third week of May."

In closing the event, Matt Bradley, Bayer ES's herbicide product marketing manager who hosted the symposium, thanked researchers for their time and insights in warm-season grass weed control.

"We appreciate your input," Bradley told them. "This kind of pulls everything together."

Until they meet again. ... ■



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## Off The Fringe

# Water Friendly

## MARYLAND COURSE PROMOTES ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES VIA DESIGNATION

By John Walsh, Contributing Editor

**E**ver hear of a Groundwater Guardian Green Site? Jon Lobenstine wants to make sure you do.

Little Bennett Golf Course, one of nine public courses operated by the Montgomery County Revenue Authority in Maryland (MCRA), completed an application to evaluate and document its groundwater-friendly practices to earn the designation awarded by The Groundwater Foundation ([www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org)), a nonprofit organization based in Nebraska.

There are about 38 golf courses throughout the country with such a designation.

A site, in this case a golf course, undergoes annual soil testing for precise fertilizer inputs and has no-application buffers around bodies of water. By using drought-tolerant turfgrass cultivars and tracking irrigation usage and efficiency, course management helps protect and conserve local water supplies.

"We're trying to get the word out that golf courses aren't bad environmentally," says Lobenstine, the director of agronomy for the nine MCRA courses, all of which are registered as Groundwater Guardian Green Sites. "People don't truly understand how conscientious we are when managing golf courses. So many great resources are available to help us care for the world around us."

Earning the groundwater designation is part of an overall approach to promoting and being recognized for

environmental stewardship, Lobenstine says, adding that another goal of all nine courses is to be Audubon International-certified in two years. Currently, one is — Little Bennett. The environment is important to MCRA partly because its courses are located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Internally, Lobenstine formed an environmental committee to analyze how the MCRA can make its golf course operations more environmentally friendly. In doing so, Lobenstine came across The Groundwater Foundation.

"The designation helps us acknowledge our green efforts," he says, adding the no-cost process to be designated a Groundwater Guardian Green Site is a straightforward process that aligns with Audubon's application. "We want to redefine ourselves as a company, and the environment is one of our core values. The environment, beyond the golf course and into the world around us, is our responsibility."

Lobenstine says most superintendents have already implemented the practices the Groundwater Foundation uses as criteria to designate a

golf course: using native plants, soil and water testing, proper disposal of rinsate, and no pesticide or fertilizer applications around wetlands and bodies of water (50- to 100-foot buffer zones).

"The superintendents I've talked to about the Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program are intrigued by it because it's a relatively new program that provides a solid resource for our environmental goals, but none have heard of it," he says.

The Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program began in 2007 to recognize good stewards of groundwater by encouraging managers of highly managed green spaces to implement, measure and document their groundwater friendly practices. Interested facilities can become involved in the Groundwater Guardian Green Site program by visiting the foundation's Web site at [www.groundwater.org](http://www.groundwater.org) and downloading the program application

So the next time someone mentions the Groundwater Guardian Green Sites program, you can say you're in the know, thanks to Jon Lobenstine. ■

