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# Golfdom

SEPTEMBER 2010 • VOLUME 66 • NO. 9



## Picture This

BY LARRY AYLWARD

# 14

It's one thing to make your golf course environmentally friendly. It's another thing to spread the word of what you're doing to benefit your course and the entire industry.

## columns

- 4 **Pin High**  
Things Change ...  
And Stay the Same
- 8 **From the Back Tees**  
Are You Giving It  
Your Best Shot?
- 10 **Turf M.D.**  
It'd Be Nice to  
Take a Rest, But ...
- 44 **Shack Attack**  
The Sand Trap

## departments

12 **Hole of the Month**

### Turfgrass Trends

This month, *Golfdom's* practical research digest discusses golf courses as bird habitats. A study examines home ranges and movements of Eastern Bluebird fledglings. See pages 39-42.

### Online Exclusive

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



**Got Moss?** – You might, considering it has been very active the past few years. Adam Manwarren, product manager of turf and ornamental for FMC Professional Solutions, talks about what you can do to control moss culturally and chemically.

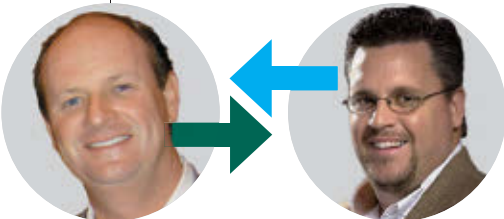
Adam Manwarren ▶



## 24 Point/Counterpoint

Superintendents debate hiring philosophies.

By Eric Von Hofen and Christopher S. Gray Sr.



## 35 Talking Herbicides

Manufacturers discuss herbicide technology now and in the future.



## 30 Its Own Entity

Led in part by superintendent Dan Gho, Pacific Grove Golf Links shakes its "Poor Man's Pebble" label with revitalization effort.

By Larry Aylward

### About the cover

Art Director Carrie Parkhill, with help from photographs by Florida-based superintendent Joe Hubbard and *Golfdom's* Larry Aylward, designed our collage of a cover to go with the "Picture This" theme.

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**E**ven though we're well into it, I still can't believe it's 2010. Wasn't it just last week we were all fretting about Y2K? Just for fun, I recently paged through *Golfdom* issues from 2000. My, how things have changed ... and stayed the same! And some things that were important 10 years ago ... well ... you just don't hear much about them anymore.

For instance, in 2000 we reported heavily on the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Professional Development Initiative, or "PDI," which we said "had the potential to reshape the employment future of every superintendent in the United States." At the time, we believed it did, and so did you. Well, PDI was passed and went into effect, but it surely didn't have the impact people thought it would.

There are the cobwebs left dangling by electronic commerce. In 2000, *Golfsat.com* and other companies tried desperately to get superintendents to purchase maintenance products online. *Golfdom* also featured stories on the subject. But one final word about e-commerce: Edsel.

Some things are working, though. In 2000, we reported The Toro Co. was developing a prototype greens mower powered by a fuel cell. Toro has developed that mower, which it says demonstrates the feasibility of hydrogen as a fuel for specialty application. In 2020, that mower, or others like it, could be a mainstay on golf courses.

While on the topic of greens mowers, in a 2000 story headlined "To Infinity and Beyond," we reported on what superintendents expected from tomorrow's greens mowers. Well, tomorrow is today and greens mowers have become more operator friendly, more fuel efficient and easier to maintain. OK, the mowers aren't cutting with laser "blades" yet, but who knows in another 10 years?

In a story on why more superintendents should use plant growth regulators, we asked a rhetorical question, "Why not use them?" Ten years later, we're certain that more superintendents than ever are using PGRs for myriad reasons.

And get this, in 2000 we reported that widely detested crabgrass may be able to clean up soil heavily contaminated with petroleum. Memo to BP.

## Things Change ... And Stay the Same

BY LARRY AYLWARD



THERE ARE THE  
COBWEBS LEFT  
DANGLING BY  
E-COMMERCE

We also reported on many economic issues in 2000. Of course, the economy was much different then, including the golf economy. We ran a story on how a healthy economy and a shrinking labor pool had attracted more headhunters to the industry. Considering that more courses have closed than opened in the past five years, I don't think those headhunters are hunting anymore.

Speaking of golf course openings, we reported in 2000 that California and Florida were tied for the most golf course openings in 1999 with 36 each. With a little luck, about 35 new courses will open nationwide this year.

Of course, many things have stayed the same since 2000. In his decade-old column, "Take That Cell Phone and Shove It," *Golfdom* columnist Joel Jackson expressed how perturbed he was that superintendents were getting up in the middle of meetings and seminars to answer their ringing cell phones. They're still doing that.

In 2000, we quoted industry legend Joe Duich, professor emeritus at Penn State University and turfgrass extraordinaire, as saying, "How are you going to get your members to repair ball marks? No way in hell you're going to do it." Something tells me Duich is still right.

Finally, in 2000 we offered results from our first survey of superintendents on the state of the profession. One of the questions asked was: What's the biggest challenge you face in your job? Fifty-eight percent answered "labor problems" and lamented about finding reliable employees.

But 10 years later, only 22 percent of superintendents say finding and retaining good employees is their No. 1 challenge. They're worried about other things, such as keeping their own jobs.

Thanks for taking this ride with me in the time machine. Let's do it again in 2020.

---

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



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I recently heard a definition of happiness that went like this: “If you want to be happy for an hour, take a nap. If you want to be happy for a day, go fishing. If you want to be happy for a week, take a vacation. If you want to be happy for a month, get married. If you want to be happy for a lifetime, be happy at what you do.”

Are you happy at what you do?

In July, I had the privilege to hear a keynote speech by motivational speaker Ken Futch at the Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association’s annual meeting. The title of this column is a shameless rip off of the title of Futch’s book, “Take Your Best Shot.”

How many keynote speakers have you heard who accidentally shot themselves in the head to jump start their way to success and happiness? It took a freak accident to make Futch consider how he was living his life. Then he wrote a book about it. Thanks to his insights, however, we don’t have to go through that trauma to learn how to turn situations into opportunities to raise our job satisfaction and happiness.

Now, I didn’t say it wouldn’t take preparation, perseverance and, yes, even some lucky timing once in awhile. But if you keep looking for opportunities to showcase your strengths and talents, you can improve your chances significantly.

I know most superintendents are decent, hard-working, honest and loyal stewards of a golf club’s assets. They pour their hearts and souls into their jobs. However, we’re often weakest in promoting and marketing ourselves on what we accomplish.

When Futch talks about turning situations into opportunities, he could be talking about golf’s current state, which offers myriad possibilities to do so. In that regard, below are some things to consider doing to make your club aware of what you know and do. You never know who will take notice and what doors may open up for you.

**1. Negative local press and regulations concerning water, chemicals and fertilizers:** Post a detailed bulletin on how you manage the irrigation

## Are You Giving It Your Best Shot?

BY JOEL JACKSON



TAKING ADVANTAGE  
OF OPPORTUNITIES  
THAT COME OUR  
WAY IS A LEARNED  
PROCESS

of the course, discussing daily system checks, technology, upgrades, etc. Do the same for chemicals and fertilizers – calibrations, actual acreage treated, spot treatments, spoon-feeding, etc. Never hesitate to inform your members of your stewardship and safety practices that protect people and the environment.

**2. Communications:** Find out the most advantageous time at your club to be more visible. Is it the putting green on Saturday morning, during men’s or ladies’ days during the week, or some other time? Use that time to talk informally about what’s happening on the course. Take advantage of opportunities to play golf with board and committee members. Don’t get too social — keep it friendly but professional. Yes, this borders on club politics, but politics are inevitable. Don’t be an outsider when the going gets tough. Play golf with members when appropriate. Teachable moments will occur on the course.

**3. Education:** Provide constant and constructive feedback to crew members about performance, and the same to members and management about course conditions. Give nature and maintenance tours. Promote continuing education for you and the staff. Report back to members and management about what you learned that will be of value to the club. That goes for the Golf Industry Show and chapter meetings.

Taking advantage of opportunities that come our way is a learned process. But if you want to be successful and happy in life, isn’t it worth giving it your best shot?

---

*Certified Superintendent Joel Jackson is executive director of the Florida GCSA.*

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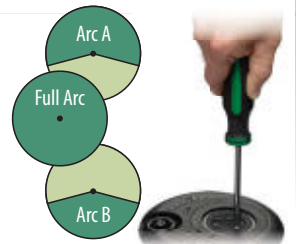
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**T**urf maintenance in most of the United States this past year was extremely difficult and challenging. Starting with the snow (and ice) melt in late winter and early spring and continuing through the hot, humid, wet/dry summer, turf loss became a way of life for many golf course superintendents.

The last thing I want to do is relive this past year (which may not be over yet). In fact, I wish I could take some time off to regroup and think about next season during the winter. But while a vacation may sound good, now is the time to look to the future.

What better time, while things are still fresh in our minds, to document improvements that need to be made to minimize turf loss and personal stress in the future. Turf loss can be a sign of where improvements need to be made. Here are some key indicators that need to be documented and, if budgets allow, corrected:

■ **Drainage** — Starting with this past winter, several Northern golf courses suffered winter injury from continual ice cover and through freeze/thaw cycles. A major component of winter injury is water. Removing or reducing the potential for water freezing on the turf reduces the potential risk of winter injury.

These same areas where water accumulates or saturated soils exist are high-risk areas for pythium blight during the summer. Installing drainage reduces the likelihood of one or both of these problems. Although many courses experienced pythium blight along drainage lines, at least superintendents know where to target or spot treat in the future.

■ **Air movement** — North Carolina State Turfgrass Professor Lane Treadway made this comment in July on a turf disease blog, “No Wind = No Grass.” The lack of air movement increases canopy temperatures and decreases evapotranspiration, which spells death during hot, humid conditions. This is the time to mark out the trees that need to be removed from around greens, tees and

## It'd Be Nice to Take a Rest, But ...

BY KARL DANNEBERGER



... NOW IS THE  
TIME TO ADDRESS  
TURF PROBLEMS  
THAT SO MANY  
SUPERINTENDENTS  
EXPERIENCED OVER  
THE PAST YEAR

fairways to improve air movement. If tree removal is not an option, consider removing underbrush from wooded areas that may surround the green to promote some air movement or installing fans around greens that are especially stagnant.

Shade also plays a role in winter injury. Remembering or documenting where winter injury occurred can, in many instances, signal trees that need to be removed in the fall.

■ **Traffic** — Identifying and correcting flow patterns where traffic injury occurred can help reduce turf decline in the summer. Wear injury is often a sign of the severity of summer stress. Around tees and greens, wear injury from golf cars may identify places to build new cart paths.

Entry and exit points from greens that show excessive wear may be a key to changing your crews' work-flow patterns. Cultural practices that enhance wear tolerance or minimize wear injury need to be implemented prior to the start of the summer stress. Changing practices when decline occurs has much less of an impact.

And, finally, there's wear injury because of golfers. This is a nice problem to have from a club operation point of view. But having a couple hundred rounds a day during summer stress periods causes damage agronomically. How we educate golfers on how they can help with this matter by being more aware is a challenge that doesn't start when turf loss begins.

It's just another reason to think about correcting these problems now.

---

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