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Golfdom

APRIL 2012 • VOLUME 68 • NO. 4

13 PLANT HEALTH: PART 1 HEALTHY PLANTS, HEALTHY MINDS

When plants get stressed, healthier roots keep supers at ease.

BY STEVEN TINGLE



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Golfdom Art Director Carrie Parkhill Wallace gives us a view of the underground with an image from iStock International Inc.

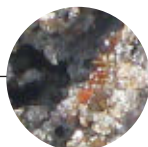
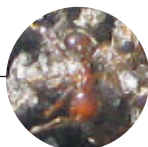
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Las Vegas came up aces for the Golf Industry Show. Here's our rundown of the greatest show on turf.

By The *Golfdom* Staff

Put Out the Fire!

Be on the lookout for next month's issue, with a special report on fire ant control.



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Online Exclusive



Stop by *Golfdom* TV (www.golfdom.com) to see the first of our series of interviews with *Golfdom* Summit superintendents, as well as an interview with Chris Lineberger about plant health.

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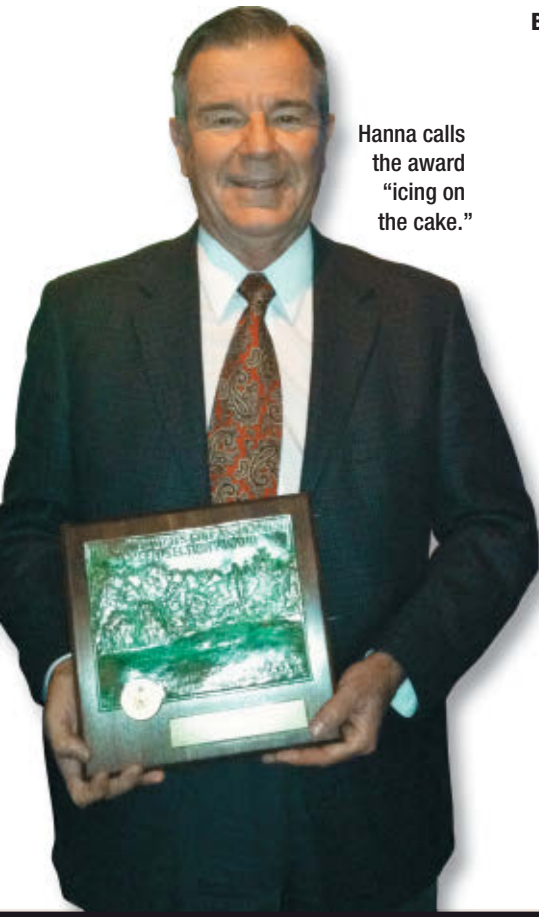
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Off The Fringe

HANNA Garners Green Section Award

THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA, TIFTON SCIENTIST IS RECOGNIZED FOR HIS TURFGRASS CONTRIBUTIONS.

BY BETH GERACI



Hanna calls the award "icing on the cake."

Wayne Hanna, Ph.D., has worked as a turfgrass scientist at the University of Georgia, Tifton since 1971.

Today he's the latest recipient of the USGA Green Section Award.

The USGA Green Section presented Hanna with the award at the 2012 Golf Industry Show, citing his many contributions in developing environmentally friendly turfgrasses.

"It's nice getting paid for something that you enjoy doing so much," Hanna said in accepting the award. "It's been a joy working with the industry, all of you, and I appreciate the enjoyment that comes from being a servant of the taxpayer."

In introducing Hanna, USGA agronomist Patrick O'Brien recalled Hanna's many accomplishments in developing hybrid bermudagrasses over the last 40 years, including Tif-

Sport, TifEagle and TifGrand.

All of them "are industry standards used on golf courses," O'Brien said. "They have enhanced the enjoyment of millions of golfers, including those at USGA championships and at all levels of golf."

In return, Hanna credited the USGA Green Section for circuitously helping him revive the breeding program at UG Tifton back in 1983. Hanna had just presented about Tif-Dwarf at a USGA Green Section conference in Boca Raton, Fla. when a superintendent approached him.

"He said, 'You know, we need to start developing some bermudagrasses that have a putting surface similar to bentgrasses,'" Hanna recalled. "I thought it was a pretty good idea. So I went home and started reviving the bermudagrass breeding program at Tifton."

A native Texan, Hanna earned a Ph.D. in genetics from Texas A&M University. In 1971, he launched his long career as a research scientist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Georgia.

The turfgrass breakthroughs Hanna made with Dr. Glenn Burton led Tifton to become known as the "bermudagrass capital of the world."

PHOTO BY: BETH GERACI; ILLUSTRATION: ISTOCK INTERNATIONAL INC.

**FAST
FACT**

Course **OPENINGS**
in 2011:

19

Course **CLOSINGS**
in 2011:

157.5

Source: National Golf Foundation

For the sixth consecutive year **more golf courses have closed than opened**. The number of closing in 2011 is the high water mark thus far.

358.5 courses have closed since the industry's peak in 2005.

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Golembiewski says leaving OSU was “the hardest decision I ever had to make in my professional career.”



Golembiewski to Bayer

Former Oregon State University turf director chooses to move family back home **BY SETH JONES**

The week of the Golf Industry Show was stressful for many, but especially for Rob Golembiewski, Ph.D.

Golembiewski was trying to decide what he wanted to do. Stay at Oregon State University, what he calls the “premiere turf program on the west coast,” or take a job with Bayer CropScience as a technical service specialist.

When he returned home on Monday following the

GIS, he made up his mind: he was taking his family back home to Columbus, Ohio, and joining Bayer.

“It was not one thing,” Golembiewski told *Golfdom*. “It was the position. It was the location. It was family. I tell you what, man, it was the hardest decision I ever had to make in my professional career.”

With Bayer, Golembiewski will be performing the same job as former UC

Riverside plant pathologist Frank Wong, Ph.D., who left a similar position to work for the same company. Golembiewski will focus on the Midwest while Wong continues to work on the East Coast.

“It’s a fairly new position for the company. These positions were previously only research and development, but Bayer is making a conscious effort to invest in the industry,” Golembiewski says. “As products come to market, they’ll be passed along to me and Frank to provide support to end-users.”

Golembiewski says he’s “99-percent sure” Oregon

State will replace him. He says the position supports not just Oregon, but the entire West Coast. In the three-and-a-half years Golembiewski worked for Oregon State, he did 80 presentations to more than 30 different groups.

Golembiewski is the 10th child of a family of 11. He says eight of his siblings still live in the Columbus area. “I’m excited for my three kids to get to know all their cousins,” he says.

The Department of Labor (DOL) has issued a final rule that would make significant changes to the H-2B program. Due to become effective April 23, the rule would make it more expensive for golf courses to hire and retain foreign workers, a large part of the industry’s work force.

Rep. Rodney Alexander of Louisiana recently introduced a House joint resolution (H.J. 104) that would block the DOL from enforcing the rule. And the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) is urging its members to rally in support of the resolution.

Ask your congressional representa-

GCSAA Fights DOL Rule

Urges superintendents to oppose possible changes to the H-2B program.

BY BETH GERACI

tives to co-sponsor and support it, the GCSAA says, because if the resolution does not garner enough congressional support, many golf facilities won’t be able to hire an adequate number of workers during the peak season.

The GCSAA is actively working with the H-2B Workforce Coalition to prevent the changes in the H-2B wage

rule from being implemented. The association and its members submitted comments opposing the proposed rule last year, and the GCSAA is currently supporting pending litigation. The association is now focused on a legislative response from leaders on Capitol Hill.

Members are asked to contact Chava McKeel, the GCSAA’s senior manager of information and public policy, at (800) 472-7878 ext. 3619 for help in taking action. Or log on to <http://capwiz.com/gcsaa/issues/bills/?bill=61029011&alrtid=61029016>.



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— *Jason Busch, Powder Horn Ranch Golf Course, Sheridan, Wyo.*



“The staff is fantastic, and in general it's a very good read—not just for superintendents, but for owners and GMs and board members, the information is relevant for all parties involved in a golf course.”

— *Brian Anderson, Nemacolin Woodlands Resort, Ohio, Pa.*



“*Golfdom* is always on the cutting edge in research and has great articles that both turf scientists and groundworkers can read and understand.”

— *Robert Carey, Spring Brook Country Club, Morristown, N.J.*



“The best thing about *Golfdom* is information we get on the political issues as well as the technical issues we are being faced with. Also, the State of the Industry Report is huge for us; we have to know where we are headed and what the future holds.”

— *Mark Burchfield, Victoria Club, Riverside, Calif.*



“People don't realize the longevity, how many years *Golfdom* has been in operation. They're a little more cutting edge, they speak more of the truth from what you hear in other magazines. *Golfdom* tells it how it is and isn't afraid to cover the issues.”

— *Joseph Hubbard, Broken Sound Club, Boca Raton, Fla.*

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I had a column all typed up, finished, ready to be published. And then I scrapped the whole thing a day before deadline.

Why? Because Tiger Woods won his first tournament since 2009.

Is Tiger back? I don't know. Is Tiger back in conversation around the water cooler? Definitely.

I play pick-up basketball with a regular crew on Sunday mornings. When I show up, I say "hey," to everyone, then I start warming up, wondering how my knees will feel after two hours of running.

This particular Sunday when I arrived, the guys were all talking about Tiger. I heard one of my friends on the court say, "I bet it'd be good for Seth's business, too." I took my mind off my knees to give a quick "huh?" My friend, who also works in the golf industry, repeated that he thought a Tiger win could help business for both of us. To which I agreed.

I started shooting three-pointers (every big man openly wants to be a shooting guard) as the conversation continued. It went from Tiger and his chances that day... to who has played already this year... to where they played... and with whom... before ending on a debate over who the best golfer we collectively knew was. (No argument was made for Seth Jones.)

And by then it was time to shoot for teams.

Some people scoff at Tiger's impact on the sport. They argue that golf was here long before Tiger, and it'll be here long after Tiger. And that's true. But look at the bottom of page 4 of this issue, at the number of courses that have closed since 2005. Almost 400 courses! And consider that for a time, Tiger Woods was the most popular athlete on the planet. Having the most popular athlete of any sport be an American golfer was a huge benefit to this nation's golf industry. It increased golf's visibility every weekend.

At last year's *Golfdom* Summit, we conducted a survey with all the attendees. One of the questions was, "What kind of a year do you think Tiger Woods will have in 2012?" I think Mark Burchfield, superintendent at the

A Good Start for Tiger and Golf

BY SETH JONES



HAVING THE MOST
POPULAR ATHLETE
OF ANY SPORT
BE AN AMERICAN
GOLFER WAS A
HUGE BENEFIT TO
THIS NATION'S GOLF
INDUSTRY.

Victoria Club in Riverside, Calif., hit the nail on the head when he answered, "I'd like to see him have a great year. We need Tiger Woods for golf. The best years that I can remember in the industry is when he was doing great. Our industry needs that. We've all gone through a lot in the last few years... I think it's been somewhat to do with the exposure of golf, and Tiger is a part of that."

Consider this — my regular hoops game takes place a mere seven miles from Kansas University. The Sunday that this conversation was taking place was the same day that the Jayhawks were to play an Elite Eight game against North Carolina, which is coached by KU's old coach, Roy Williams.

Ten out of ten guys on that court either went to KU or lived in Lawrence, Kan. And yet the conversation wasn't about the Jayhawks' chances against the Tar Heels. It was about Tiger's chances to win that day... and it was about golf.

Sure enough my knees felt terrible by the end of the run. A few Aleve afterwards took away the ache. As I sat and rehydrated during the KU game, I kept flipping over to NBC to check on Tiger. I was thrilled to see he won.

So far this year a lot of the country has experienced unusually warm weather, luring golfers out of hibernation early. Those of us who attended the Golf Industry Show enjoyed one of the very best shows in years — I know for me personally, it was my best GIS ever. And now Tiger is catching the eyes of the sporting public again, and for a good reason.

It's a good start to 2012 for Tiger. It's also a good start for golf in general. Let's hope both keep up.

Email Jones at sjones@questex.com.

Winter at the Lake Omgosh Golf Club lasted two whole weeks in January. Ever since then it's been "the eternal spring," or as Duffy McDuffy our superintendent would say, "the eternally dry spring!" We're so far behind in our annual rainfall amounts that a light sprinkle makes headlines.

Duffy has just returned from a week in Las Vegas, where he attended the GCSAA Golf Industry Show. I ran into him at our 19th Hole and Whine Bar. "So Duffy, how was Vegas and the show?" I asked.

Duffy replied, "Well, it's been 12 years since the GCSAA has been there and the 'girly shows' are skimpy as ever. Oh, you meant the *Golf Industry Show*? Well, Steve Wynn has a new look going at the Wynn and Encore hotel/casinos. Instead of exploding volcanoes, dancing fountains and neon lights, he installed a mountainside full of rocks and trees to front the hotel. I guess he's going more green than glitzy."

"Did you manage to do any gambling in your free time?" I added.

"Yes," he said. "My wife gave me a \$20 bill and said, 'Go crazy.' I remember they had nickel slots before. Now they have penny machines, which can stretch a tight gambling budget if you only bet 1 cent per one line. But those clever devils have a bank of buttons that you can push and parlay that penny into a dollar bet if you aren't careful. Once, when the machine's bells were ringing and lights flashing I thought I hit the jackpot. Alas, down in the corner it said, 'You won 8 credits.' I did manage to stretch that \$20 into two hours' worth of entertainment and two free drinks.

"Enough on the nightlife," Duffy continued. "I did have some great seminars and general sessions, and the education and networking are always worth the trip. I know that sounds like a paid advertisement, but it's true. Education has always been one of the core missions of GCSAA, and great problem solving ideas and tips are just an informal conversation away.

"Next year," Duffy added, "I suggest the GCSAA offer a free but mandatory orientation session called 'Walking the Trade Show Floor

Duffy's Excellent Trip to the Strip

BY JOEL JACKSON



DUFFY HAD SOME GREAT SEMINARS AND GENERAL SESSIONS, AND HE SWEARS THE EDUCATION AND NETWORKING ARE ALWAYS WORTH THE TRIP.

101.' You know how everyone hates to get behind one of those left lane slow pokes on the interstate? Well, that's second only to having to detour around a roadblock of gabbers in the middle of an aisle. Sometimes it feels just like driving in Florida!"

Duffy added with a slight smile: "There was one big problem with the program. After having booked Peter Jacobsen and David Feherty back to back for the Opening and General Sessions, I don't know how they're going to follow that up in San Diego. Both of these gentlemen are one-third golfer, one-third performer and one-third humanitarian. Jacobsen, also known as Jake Trout of Jake Trout and The Flounders, a musical group of professional golfers that included the late great Payne Stewart, graciously accepted the Old Tom Morris Award.

"Now in the company of the giants who preceded him," Duffy continued, "he advised his audience to be true to the spirit of the game and courteous to all whom you come in contact with, a lesson he learned well from Arnold Palmer.

"The next night David Feherty had folks white-knuckling their grips on propriety with his salty language. Before long, this self-confessed recovering bipolar, alcoholic drug addict had us rolling in the aisles with laughter. In a truly bipolar moment, we soon had tears of raw emotion flowing as this proud new American citizen poured out his heart full of patriotism, compassion and support for our Wounded Warriors of the Mideast wars. It was — unexpected, heart-grabbing inspiration.

"But," Duffy added, "it's good to be home!"

Certified superintendent Joel Jackson is Executive Director of the Florida GCSA.