



Early Spring, Early Summer

By Monroe S. Miller

The debate heard in casual conversation among Wisconsin golf course superintendents the past couple of months has been, "how far ahead of normal are we?" Mostly, the conclusion has been between two and three weeks. Not in debate was the fact that we actually had a spring this year, a beauty after our extremely mild winter.

The lilac bloom was not only profuse and luxuriant in our town, it happened around the first of May. Flowering crabapples were similarly ahead of schedule, as were flowers on black locust trees. Poa annua seeding was over before it usually starts, at least on our course, and soil temperatures were accelerated by a solid two weeks.

Bugs were out in great big numbers early. Mosquitoes were driving golf players crazy and we were seeing cutworms around at a calendar date I would have guessed nearly impossible.

The perception of people living in southern Wisconsin is that it was a wet spring and early summer. We are ahead of normal in precipitation down here, but we have been lucky. Central Wisconsin has been dry, and northern Wisconsin has been drier yet. Golf courses there were watering early and heavily; they missed the spring rains that were generous in the south.

A number of golf courses were hammered by the storm that roared across Wisconsin early on May 31. A few places experiencing heavy damage that I have heard about include Old Hickory CC, Lake Windsor CC and Merrill Hills CC.

The Wisconsin Ag Statistics reports are here to confirm what we already know.

Best bumper sticker seen in the past two months in Madison: "Annoy a liberal — work hard and be happy!"

Just about the time you figure GCSAA has exhausted every avenue of digging for money, they find a new approach. The latest one showed up on the dues statement - they added \$25 donation to the grand total due, obviously hoping to sneak it past members, bookkeepers or club treasurers. If the cause cannot generate funding based on its merits, then the cause should be reconsidered. There ought not to be slight of hand efforts involved; it's poor.

And what possible business does GCSAA have for our social security numbers? They are playing with fire on this one; the federal government tells citizens, "don't

give your SSN to anybody." That should include, especially, GCSAA politicians and bureaucrats.

I enjoyed the April and May WGCSA meetings. Abbey Springs and Cedar Creek are in wonderfully beautiful parts of Wisconsin and each meeting featured an excellent speaker. Bluebirds occupied the topic of conversation at Abbey Springs and pond management (including some questions about zebra mussels) was well discussed at Cedar Creek.

I felt bad for Scot Spier, however. Attendance was poor at his meeting — 27 players and some lunch-only members — because of a conflict with the Wisconsin CMAA event. I was disappointed to see so many members choose the CMAA meeting over a WGCSA meeting, and I wasn't the only one to notice or comment.

But the day was great, the course was in outstanding condition, and those there were glad for Scot's efforts.

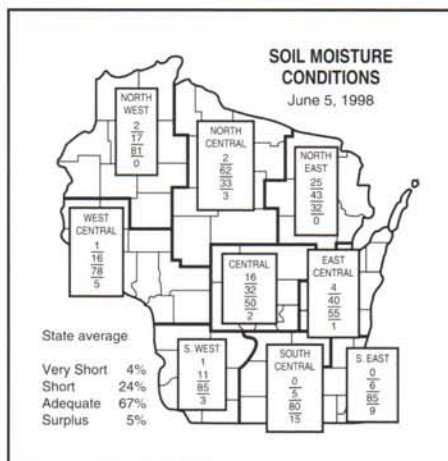
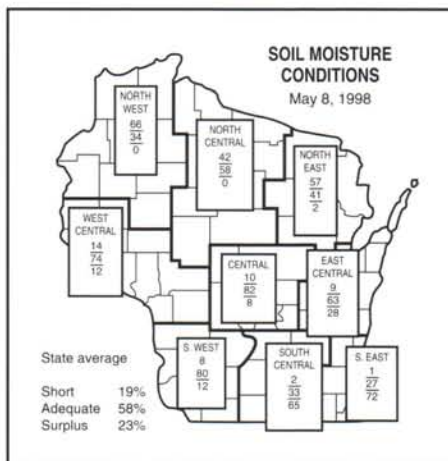
In the March/April issue of *The Grass Roots* I reprinted a president's message from the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association publication, *The Hole Notes*. Jim Nichols was discussing a proposal he was going to put forward to the Minnesota members that, in essence, was going to include golf as part of three of their meetings.

Some who use the Noernet called that a "proposal", obviously from me, to eliminate golf from our meetings. They don't read very well.

It was forwarded as information. If I were to make a proposal, it would be to include education at the three summer meetings, not to keep anybody who wants to play golf from doing so.

And if I make a proposal, it will be in clear language that anyone will be

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able to understand. I generally don't beat around the bush and surely don't need the support of another chapter's program to make the case.

Three cheers for Jeff Parks, Dave Helke and their crew at University Ridge. They hosted the 1998 NCAA Women's Collegiate Golf Championship and received rave reviews from the print media, from the ESPN 2 broadcasters and commentators, and from the players themselves. Those who either watched the eight-day tournament on the ESPN telecast or who attended in person can testify to its outstanding condition. Some of the players asked "is this a private club?" It was a major golf event for Wisconsin.

In fact, it will be quite a year for women's golf in the Badger State. In addition to the NCAA Women's Championship, there is the US Women's Open at Blackwolf Run. That event is followed closely by the Women's Western Golf Association National Junior Girls Championship at Blackhawk CC. Although the amateur events come at quite a cost - lost revenue and additional expense - the courses involved should feel great pride for selection as venues for national competition.

Steve Millett is in Japan now; he left in the third week of June. It's quite an honor for him (and for us) to

be immersed in the study of snow molds with those scientists in the world who know the most about these dreaded golf turf diseases.

Before he left, Steve dropped his business card off at my office. Here it is. Good thing we don't need it to know who he is!



Recently a pow-wow was convened in Dr. John Stier's office. John, Terry Kurth, Dr. Tom Miller (UW-Madison School of Business) and myself were in attendance. The topic under discussion was surveying the turfgrass industry in Wisconsin.

It is a job that needs to be done, done professionally and accurately, and given wide distribution. Most states around us have surveys and reports, and they provide startling information about the magnitude of the turfgrass industry in the state. We have the advantage of learning from the ways their reports were constructed and presented.

One of the first efforts of the WTA, not long after its formation, was a survey written by WTA leaders Kurth and Ed Devinger. It served us well in

its time, but a new and more expansive one is a must.

Support of the WGCSEA will be important.

It is hard for me to believe that the next time I go through this exercise it will be for the September/October issue of this journal. My fingers are crossed that by then I will be able to report and record a banner summer for Wisconsin golf courses.

Adios. 🌿



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