



A Plan For Autumn

By **Monroe S. Miller**, Golf Course Superintendent, Blackhawk Country Club

Honestly, as the weeks and months of summer droned on, I wondered if fall was ever going to arrive. Halfway through summer, I had had enough. But as it always does, the long days leave and the cooler ones arrive. Summer and stress move slowly, but autumn never seems to stay long.

I'll admit that I am missing the fireflies and birdsongs. But the grasshoppers, crickets and katydids are substitute enough. The freshness of summer annuals is reasonably replaced by Queen Anne's lace, golden rod and the blue stars on stems we call asters.

My plan is to enjoy all that is autumn, something not possible with the summer season when you are a golf course superintendent. I'm going to head out to Kalscheuer's farm and search out their biggest and orangest pumpkins, and make a big pile of them on my porch. Maybe they'll have some dry cornstalks and yellow straw for sale, too.

As the shadows lengthen, I am going to make plenty of trips to my favorite orchard and buy plenty of apple cider; I know one that doesn't pasteurize their cider and it tastes a whole lot better.

My plan for autumn includes not only Badger football games and maybe a Packer game, but it also sets aside time for country rides and walks in places where leaves cover the ground and crunch like cornflakes as you pass through.

Who my age doesn't miss the aroma of leaf smoke in the fall? At least once a guy has to pack his Weber grill with leaves and sit back and enjoy the smell; it could be the ultimate way to reminisce about days gone by.

The flavors of autumn include

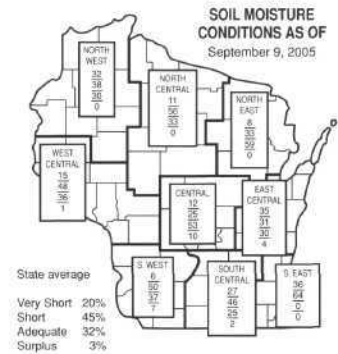
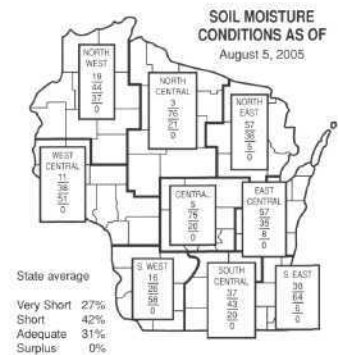
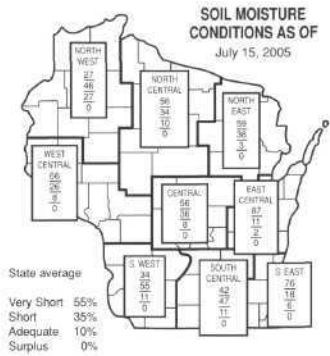
plenty of pies - apple and pumpkin and grape. There's nothing like pie made from fresh Concorde grapes, enjoyed with a cup of strong black coffee. It is pleasant to enjoy the quiet and watch the haze settle into the land below my house. And it is usually so quiet here at home on the edge of town you can hear the sound of combines busy harvesting corn and beans.

I plan to take a day off to simply sit and think. I'll consider the theory someone advanced years ago - "everything is something it isn't, and everybody is always somewhere else" - while contemplating the sky and clouds and geese flying south.

Oh, yes, at the golf course we'll be aerifying, seeding and getting some overdue projects done, perfect work for fall. The WGCSA dinner /dance is a fall tradition for many, and most will see the season end with the famed Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. In between those two events are golf outings - for the WTA and for the Wee One Foundation.

After what consensus tells us, as well as what the accompanying data from the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service demonstrates, it was a hot and dry summer, a miserable growing season that followed a terrible winter. We deserve a special fall season. Do your part to make it happen.

Congratulations to young Branden Tanko, son of Gary. He received the Joseph S. Garske Collegiate Grant from GCSAA. It is a scholarship funded by Par Aide and named for the founder of the company. It is a \$2,500 scholarship and will help pay Branden's expenses to attend Minnesota State University - Mankato this fall.



If you plan to travel around the state to enjoy fall color, you'd better get an early start. The drought experienced in many regions of Wisconsin has had a negative effect on woody ornamentals and that stress may prompt trees to change colors early. An early leaf drop is also expected as a result of the lack of rainfall.

WGCSA members had a good year on the amateur golf tour this

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summer. Mike Drugan and Rod Johnson played in the Governor's Cup at Castle Mound, and Mike won it! Trygve Eckhern qualified for the State Amateur, an achievement in itself.

Hurricane Katrina has affected the New Orleans area terribly, but also across the country, as well. That includes the GCSAA and golf course superintendents in America.

Our 2006 conference and show was scheduled for New Orleans in February, but that isn't going to happen. Recent scenes from the New Orleans Convention Center make the reasons for that abundantly clear.

When we realized that to be the case, many GCSAA members speculated as to an alternate site for conference. It seemed to me the perfect year to move to a northern site, an experience we haven't had since the year we met in Minneapolis. Then a friend suggest that since the Orlando Convention Center was so humongous it was likely we would return

there for a second consecutive year.

We were wrong, as I suspect most who were playing the guessing game were.

For reasons I am unaware of, GCSAA chose Houston as a place to convene the 2006 conference. I still haven't overcome the shock.

We were in Houston once in my 33- year career, and it ranks at the bottom, with Dallas, as favored sites for a conference like ours. In fact it might be worse than Dallas.

It is hard to know where to even start when describing this place. For one, I never felt safe there, and the hotels were a significant distance from the convention center. Panhandlers were a frequent bother, really hassling people for a handout. Getting around town wasn't especially easy, as I recall, and there aren't a lot of things to see while there. The town smells bad and it was dirty. The convention center wasn't very good - lousy meeting rooms - and it was ugly. The one good thing I do remember was that I had the opportunity to meet Gene

Sarazan, winner of the Old Tom Morris Award.

I will reserve final judgment until March. Who knows - maybe there have been lots and lots of improvements? And maybe circumstances left Houston as the only or best choice.

A federal court struck down a challenge to the Madison and Dane County phosphorus fertilizer ban. The challenge declared the ban to be preempted by state and federal laws, and therefore unconstitutional. The court let the ordinances stand. The plaintiffs filed an appeal with the US Court of Appeals, seeking to overturn the federal district court decision.

Over the course of 22 years as editor of The Grass Roots, never has an issue of the magazine been so late. It has been that kind of a year - busy beyond words. It won't happen again, and I won't ignore my own advice - enjoy the fall season!



"YEP, HOTTEST, DRIEST SUMMER I'VE SEEN IN QUITE A WHILE."