

President's Message

YEAR END REFLECTIONS



By Bill Roberts

Some people claim that March, with its dirty snow and a whole winter of inactivity taking its toll, is the worst month. Others dislike the long, hot, "dog days" of August. Still others find the biting winds and frigid, brutal temperatures characteristics that make January simply a time to be endured. Everyone runs into that time of year when there is too much time to think and not enough things to do. For me, it is always November.

There is no grass to grow in November, only grass to try to protect for the next five months. Play is virtually nil and cups are being changed about once a week. The summer staff is gone. The phone is not ringing constantly and I haven't had a meeting in a week. I seem to go through "withdrawal" from the golf season; a subtle sense of uneasiness even though everything is as it should be.

This column, this year, presents an opportunity to reflect and appreciate and even express gratitude. 1986 was a pretty good year and as I remember that, the subtle uneasiness goes away.

Play started early for me and my turf got off to a great beginning. I had a lot of fun, and learned a new appreciation for the "rules of golf", while working with Tom Meeks of the USGA on a tournament here at SentryWorld. Temperature stress in July was a bit more than I needed but disease pressure was

down and insect activity was slowed in 1986. Things got cool earlier this Fall but a little flush of growth late should help with turf density next Spring. Greens, tees and fairways are sprayed. The irrigation system has been de-activated. Maybe November is all right after all.

Reflections on the activities of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association in 1986 are also appropriate at this time of year. The recently completed Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium was, as usual, an excellent affair; it was well attended and well presented. Bob Welch, Jim Spindler and the rest of the Symposium Committee deserve our thanks for that.

I'd also like to recognize the unselfish efforts of the WGCSA officers, Directors, Committee members, the WSGA office staff and, most importantly, you the membership, for a very successful 1986. Evidence of that success can be found in, at least, the following achievements:

a.) inclusion of 26 new members on our membership roles since April and an on-going membership recruitment effort that continues to pay dividends,

b.) contribution of nearly \$10,000.00 to Scholarship and Research causes including the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, the O.J. Noer Research Foundation and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America,

c.) a strengthened educational program at monthly meetings throughout the year and recognition of that program on the national level,

d.) recognition of our excellent publication, "THE GRASS ROOTS" on the national level, not once, but twice this year. Awards were received from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and the National Golf Foundation.

All of these efforts are substantial in and by themselves but, again, point up that the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association is a vital and progressive organization that is helping, in many tangible ways, all members to achieve that common goal of excellence in turfgrass management. November has given me time to remember that it has been a rare privilege and pleasure to have participated in that process in 1986.

Thanks.

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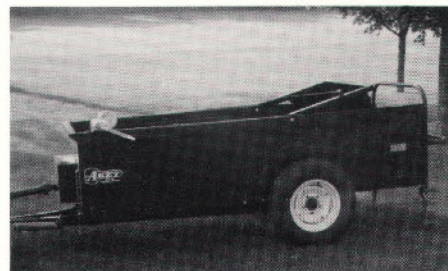
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CAVEAT EMPTOR

By Monroe S. Miller

I've been lulled into a false state of trust the past couple of years. I was shaken back to reality in a quick and sure fashion at the end of March. The episode is one we all have been a part of at some time or other. It involves the price of replacement parts.

At times the argument of original equipment manufacturer parts versus those sold by will fitters has been hostile. It is almost always, between these two groups, a discussion of quality and cost. Ten years ago I bought some lower cost bedknives from a will fitter for a rough mower. They were disastrous and required replacement at mid-season. Needless to say, I was infuriated by the thought that someone had taken advantage of me. "Never again," I vowed. The experience, coupled with some serious attempts by manufacturers and distributors to reduce the vulgar price gap, led me back to OEM parts in most applications. Filters, spark plugs, tune-up parts, belts and other similar high turnover items were about the only things that I didn't buy from the makers of particular machines through the various distributors. And truthfully, the OEM parts were the excellent quality you would expect. I assumed they were continuing a fair-pricing policy.

And in most cases, they were. My confidence was justified. OEM parts from some manufacturers have been priced downward in many instances. I've personally visited Toro's parts facility in Minneapolis within the past few months and can testify to their commitment to the parts business. Their fill rate is high, pricing is fair, factory availability of parts is closely monitored and maintained for at least 15 years after the last of a particular machine is produced, and they have an outstanding direct ship program. Jacobsen has made a concerted effort, too. All visits

to Ransomes, Inc. in Johnson Creek have confirmed their understanding of the critical importance of replacement parts. All of these major companies have distributor programs for fast moving parts that are competitive in price.

That is only three companies; there may, in fact, be others with similar attitudes and programs. **But**, there are still some OEMs that over-charge for replacement parts. We were completing the repair and maintenance work on several common machines in late winter. We had ordered all parts from our distributor and, as could be expected, not all were in stock. We checked with a local bearing house on a couple of items, and lo and behold, they had several specific bearings we needed. Then it got interesting. They priced each piece and made the extensions and, in my brilliance, I was sure of an error. A call confirmed that they were indeed correct. I went into an orbit of anger. The distributor cost to me, in the most flagrant case, was \$23.65 for a particular bearing. The bearing house cost to me was \$6.73! Same bearing, same manufacturer, same kraft wrapping, same box, same number, same everything mind you, except price. There was no "special machining" either (I've heard that one before) on the OEM part. Gouging is too kind a word to describe this — rip-off is better and the one I prefer to use. It reminds me of the endless stories of late about defense contractors cheating the American taxpayer.

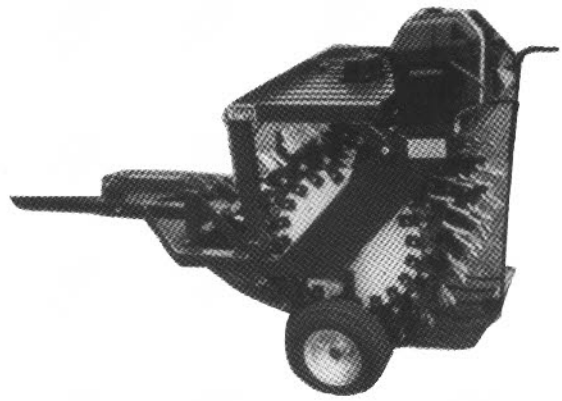
Sometimes I think we live in a rip-off society. OEM parts are, in instances like this one, merely an example of a larger problem. Anyone who has attended the GCSAA Conference and stayed in a big city hotel knows. A breakfast of coffee, a roll and an orange juice in the hotel can cost \$8.00, not including the tax and tip. Costs go up a dime and we are charged a buck. For

years I've subscribed to the laissez-faire philosophy of leaving business alone and keeping ignorant governmental agencies and bureaucrats out of it. But that attitude is strained in the shadow of incidents like mine this winter. Business, I guess won't control and regulate itself until absolutely forced into it. That bothers me. It also bothers me that too often there is virtually no sense of community left; those in our industry are not alone and our predicament is not uncommon. There is an erosion of ethical standards in feelings that should sadden all Americans. I feel that it goes beyond just an economic situation — it is a moral one. If there isn't a sense of decency prevailing in the populace, no economic system will work like we know it can or should. The salvation of a problem like this one is that in our economic system we do have the self-correcting process we are now observing in our profession with the parts situation.

The unwitting neglect of my sensibilities, while hard to take, is easy to explain. I am basically a trusting person and I trusted this particular manufacturer, as I do the others who manufacture the equipment we use to maintain our golf course. I guess that was wrong. At least it was in this case. I know I have learned a lesson or two. Apparently fair pricing is often not a policy of some manufacturers — subsequently I've heard other tales equally nefarious. Also apparent, unfortunately, is that I was not exactly a shrewd businessman when it came to parts purchases. An incident like this leaves no winners — my trust is destroyed and someone loses a good customer. It seems that over-pricing is a poor policy that is very shortsighted. There is no excuse for any company to turn the parts business into a corral where the elephants trumpet "Every man for himself" as they dance among the chickens. If will fitters are experiencing some success, and they are, it is easy to see why. Burn me once — your fault. Burn me twice — my fault.

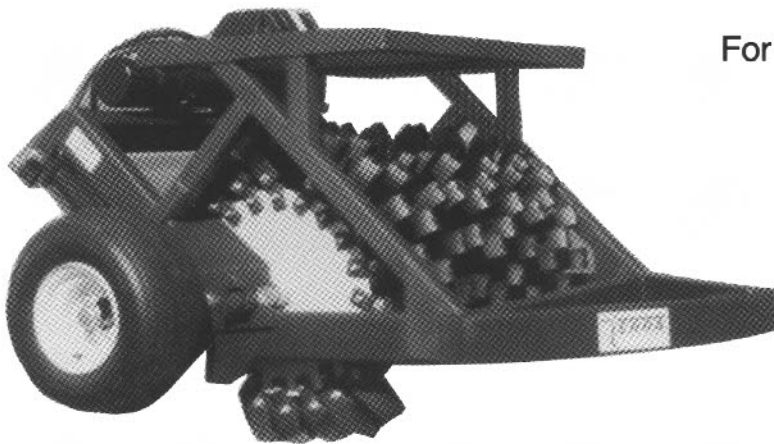
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Take-All Patch on Wisconsin Golf Courses: How Serious Is It? Can We Control It?

By Dr. Gayle L. Worf

Take-all patch (or "Ophiobolus patch" as some still prefer to call it) of turf has been a disease historically reserved for England and the northwest. About a decade ago it became important on some golf courses in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maryland. Other northern states, including Wisconsin, now report it in sporadic, but locally serious outbreaks.

The pattern of its emergence is worth noting. In general, it is on bentgrass, usually on greens that have been recently established, and often following fumigation. In Wisconsin, we've identified it on three courses to date, to my knowledge, two of which were newer courses. Bentgrass fairways have been damaged more than greens, although some spotting has taken place on greens. The causal organism is *Gaeumannomyces graminis* var. *avenae*, and bentgrass, essentially, is the only susceptible turfgrass, although it will colonize other hosts. Symptoms are most evident during spring or fall, probably inspired by cool, moist conditions. It is a crown and root rotter, and occurs in rings and patches, somewhat reminiscent of necrotic ring spot on bluegrass and "Poa patch" on *Poa annua*.

Young turf is usually the most susceptible to damage, and the disease often—though not always—is much less visible and damaging after a few years. Exceptions do occur, so its possibility should not be ignored on turf of any age.

Tentative diagnosis in the field can be made by the pattern of symptoms expressed (eg, patches), the presence of extensively discolored and rotting roots and crown areas, together with active colonization of the affected area by the black, ectotrophic fungus. Because of the possibility of confusion with other ectotrophic fungi, as well as the need to add to our surveillance of the disease in Wisconsin, it may be well to confirm diagnosis through the laboratory.

Can Take-all patch be controlled? Research on the problem as a turf disease (rather than a cereal crop disease) has taken place principally in England and Washington, and more recently by Dr. Peter Dernoeden. Results have not always been consistent from place to place, as you would expect, but there are some definite trends that are worth noting.

1. Fungicides are usually unable to control the disease—but several of them reduce the damage.

2. Higher soil pH (above 6.5) favors the disease over lower pH.

3. Nitrogen sources appear to be important.

4. Chloride ions, as well as adequate P and K may be beneficial.

To accomplish these, I'm inclined to favor Dernoeden's findings as a logical starting point for combatting the disease in Wisconsin. Essentially, these consist of:

1. Ammonium chloride fertilizer. He suggests a total of 3 to 4 lbs N and K per 1000 ft² annually for at least two

years.

(In its absence, ammonium sulfate can be combined with muriate of potash, eg, KCl, and a phosphorus fertilizer, if P is needed.)

2. Avoid adding lime or a topdressing soil with a pH above 6.5.

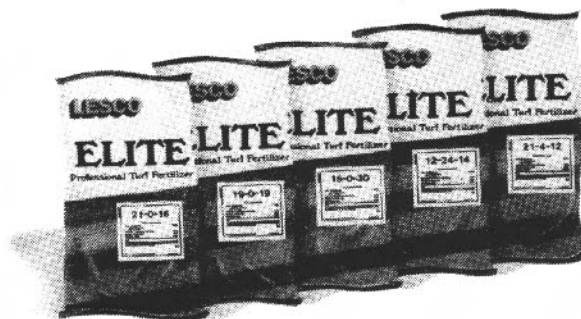
3. Control thatch through verticutting and aerating.

4. Use phenyl mercuric acetate, 1 oz., in October and November, and again the following spring where it is legal to use it for snow mold control (eg, on greens, tees and aprons).

Several fungicides have shown statistical—but not adequate take-all disease suppression in various trials, including Bayleton, Banner, Chipco 26019, and Fore. Sulfur applications, presumably to influence pH, and some other acid-forming fertilizers have looked better than other treatments, too, in various trials. However, none of these have given consistent or adequate responses.

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LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MR. MORRILL

By Monroe S. Miller

I'd hate to think where we would be today in our golf course business without our land grant colleges and all of the contributions they have made in the past 125 years. Much of what we have learned from research has been conducted at these institutions. Many of us received our educations from them - we have alums in the WGCSA from the UW-Madison, MSU, U. Mass. and Penn State, to name a few. And we receive continuing education from conferences sponsored by them - those above along with Purdue, Illinois and other neighboring states. These institutions are essential to our well being, professional wellness as well as personal.

Have you ever wondered how each state just happened to have a land grant college? Well, I sure did, a long time ago, and ended up doing a lot of reading and studying and visiting about the person who formulated the concept and pressed it into legislation and reality.

I'd like for you to meet Justin Smith Morrill of Strafford, Vermont. Mr. Morrill exemplified the qualities that New Englanders in general and Vermonters specifically prized in themselves, their state(s) and their leaders. The son of a humble blacksmith, Morrill was forced to leave school at the age of 15. He became a self-educated man and from employment as a merchant's clerk he found great success as a store owner. He was so successful that he retired at the age of 38 to devote his life to study and the more leisurely pursuits of a Vermont country gentleman.

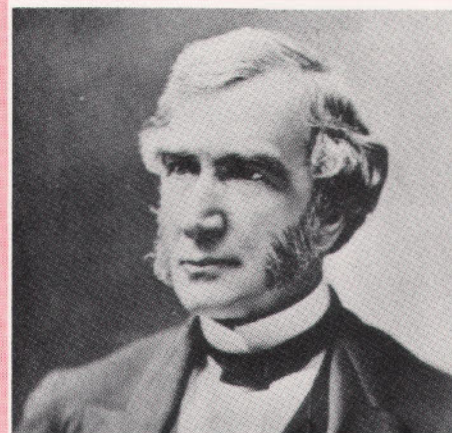
He wasn't retired long, however. The appeal of such a morally upright, small town merchant to the public was very considerable. As the epitome of Yankee achievement, Victorian virtue and homespun values, he ran for public office in 1854 at a very young 44 years of age and was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. Mr. Morrill served the state of Vermont as a Representative in the House and later in the U.S. Senate until his death in 1898 at the age of 88. Over the years

of his long career in Congress he became a very influential man. An ardent protectionist, he helped push legislation safeguarding American industry and business. Mr. Morrill was one of the Senate's leading experts on monetary theory and chaired the Senate Finance Committee for many years. But all of these accomplishments pale in the light of what I think was his greatest contribution - the sponsorship of the Land Grant College Act. Few could argue, I submit, that that legislation has become the most important educational law ever passed in our country.

Representative Morrill introduced the bill in 1857 and finally, in 1862, persuaded President Abraham Lincoln to sign it into law. What it did was to create in each state a land grant college which would give a liberal and a practical education to farmers, mechanics, artisans and laborers. As I mentioned, Morrill had to leave school at 15 and I'm sure this lack of formal education inspired the concept of providing colleges to teach courses in science, agriculture and engineering in addition to the classics. The Act expanded American higher education into areas of practical training, not at the expense of classical studies, but in addition to them. No longer would colleges principally be for clergymen, teachers, physicians and lawyers.

As finally signed into law by Lincoln, vast tracts of Federal land, 30,000 acres for each member of Congress, were set aside as endowment for each college. Sale of this land raised enough money for the colleges to operate, but their operations gradually depleted the endowment. So Senator Morrill (he left the House in 1866 for the Senate) introduced a second bill in 1890 which established an annual cash subsidy of \$25,000 (Cals Dean Leo Walsh will tell you \$25,000 won't go very far today!) to correct the problem.

I don't think anyone can over-emphasize the timeliness of the Land Grant College Act. Encouraged by the construction of the first transcontinen-



Justin Smith Morrill - circa 1867 Photograph taken by famous Civil War photographer Mathew Brady shortly after Morrill was elected to the U.S. Senate.

tal railroad and offers of free land to settlers, expansion to the west was creating a need for new and improved farming techniques to help tame the west as well as to restore the overworked farmlands of the east. The new colleges developed research programs that discovered, developed and tested the methods which helped revolutionize American agriculture. Hybrid seeds, crop rotation and chemical fertilizers are the ones I think of first as being some of the best known results of these programs.

So we all owe a debt of gratitude to this old New Englander. If you are ever between Strafford and South Strafford, Vermont, treat yourself and visit Mr. Morrill's rural homestead. You will feel kinship with him for another reason - he was a serious student of landscape gardening. He designed extensive plantings and walkways and gardens around his house and farm buildings. His purpose was to experiment with many different plantings to see which would be best suited to the harsh Vermont climate. Many of the original plants he put in the ground in the mid-1800's are surviving today.

It seems to me that Mr. Morrill's legislative intents provide a framework to adopt **any** of the land grant colleges as one's own, since their purposes are the same. I've always said that if I were living in Iowa, my attention would be on Iowa State. The same would be true in Indiana and its land grant college, Purdue; if I was an Illinois resident I'd support the U. of I. in Champaign/Urbana, and so on, despite the fact that Wisconsin's land grant college is my

alma mater. Hopefully everyone working in Wisconsin has adopted our land grant college as their own..

So, how is our land grant college doing these days? I like to think that things are going better. It would be hard to believe that they could have gone much worse. It has been a rough five or so years - state budget deficits, no raises for UW faculty and staff, a decline in the spirit of a great school, a drop in staff morale and program underfunding, just to name a few. There were dramatic increases in the number of tenured professors leaving the Madison campus, subjects of "raids" from other institutions. There is no doubt in my mind that the idiotic merger foisted on the state by P. J. Lucey (he should be hung for it) has taken its toll on our land grant college.

But I think the greatness remains, in spite of difficult times and circumstances. Many UW-Madison departments rank in the top 10 nationally. Ten UW-Madison faculty, former faculty members or students have won Nobel Prizes. It has awarded more doctoral degrees than any other American

university. It is ranked third among all U.S. colleges and universities and first among public institutions in total funding for research and development (behind only John Hopkins and M.I.T.). In fact, the UW-Madison had \$208.4 million total R & D expenditures this year, up \$24 million from the previous year.

Our land grant college has the fourth largest single campus in America, behind only the U. of Minnesota, Ohio State and the U. of Texas. The UW-Madison was ranked 7th nationally in undergraduate programs by the Gourman Report and 9th in graduate programs. The "Selective Guide to Colleges" gives the UW-Madison the highest rank among Big 10 schools in overall programs for students.

And the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences has impressive facts to share; the highest number of faculty in the National Academy of Science - 14 active faculty and 14 emeritus faculty. The CALS at Wisconsin graduates more M.S. and Ph.D. students than any other institution, and has the highest ratio of research funding to faculty -

about \$100,000 per position.

We all owe Mr. Morrill a lot. I think he would be proud of the network of land grant colleges his legislation created. We should be particularly proud of our land grant college in Wisconsin. But we must be ever vigilant as we see the shrinking of federal research monies. Moral support and understanding of CALS administrators will be helpful as they continue to downsize the college in coming months. A continuation of our support for research to help replace dwindling federal dollars is definitely a key. Letters to legislators when budget time comes around can only be positive. And finally, a keen sense of pride in what an awesome resource we have at our land grant college will help all of us understand that we must be on guard to protect against any decline in the greatness of a truly great institution. Remember, it belongs to all of us.



LOVE TO RECEIVE GCSAA 'DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD' IN PHOENIX!

Dr. Jim Love, retired faculty member from the Department of Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has been selected as a 1986 recipient of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's Distinguished Service Award. The award will be presented to Jim at the opening session of the Association's annual conference in Phoenix in January.

Professor Love spent 35 years in the UW Soil Science Department and for the last 25 years he developed and managed the Turfgrass Management Program for the University. He retired in July 1986. The hallmark of his tenure at the University was a devotion to teaching and counselling undergraduate students, a dedication seldom seen in an institution noted for its formidable research capabilities. The UW does not offer a two year associate degree program and all of Jim's students received B.S. degrees. Notable is the fact that a vast majority of his turfgrass graduates are still in the business of maintaining fine turf.

The GCSAA Distinguished Service

Award is presented to individuals "who have demonstrated dedication and outstanding service to Golf Course Superintendents and the profession". The list of past recipients includes only the best who have served our profession. The first honor was extended to Colonel John Morley, the founder of the National Association of Greenkeepers of America (later the GCSAA) and its president from 1926 to 1932. The award has recognized the business' best research investigators, USGA Green Section staff, golf leaders, Golf Course Superintendents and industry innovators. Dr. Fred Grau and Colonel John Morley each received the honor twice. The award has been given 51 times in the Association's 60 year history.

Only one other individual who lived and worked in Wisconsin has been extended this recognition. That man was O.J. Noer, and he is also the only person who received the Distinguished Service Award three times - 1952, 1959 and 1960. As all WGCSA members know, O.J. was a Stoughton native who

received his education from the University of Wisconsin in the same department where Jim Love was a staff member for so many years. It was, in fact, O.J. who guided Dr. Love's career into turfgrass management in the 1959 - 1960 period. And at O.J.'s request, Jim Love received the first research grant from the O.J. Noer Research Foundation.

We extend our congratulations to Dr. Love. He represents the best that Wisconsin has to offer and the WGCSA is proud to have sponsored his nomination. He rightfully joins a very special and select group that has given so much for the welfare, benefit and prosperity of our profession.



FIELD DEMONST

A BOLD MOVE — RANSOMES NEW

By Randy Smith

On October 24th, 1986, Nakoma Golf Club's maintenance staff undertook a relatively new version of renovating a green. Our number two green is basically native peat soil with years of topdressing on top. Poor drainage has plagued this green, causing standing water and ice to thin and kill the turfgrass in several places. This green is usually the factor for opening date in Spring or the opening hour following a storm. Short of complete rebuilding, which of course has not been ruled out, we (the green committee, the Board of Directors, and myself) elected to attempt to improve the conditions and drainage of this green with the methods as follows.

Using a Ransomes Bob-Cat Verti-Groove, designed and invented by Tom Mascaro, we sliced approximately 3000 lineal feet on the putting surface of our green. The grooves were cut with 4 passes of 3 slits at 1 foot spacings in the North to South direction, and 6 passes of 3 slits at 1 foot spacing East to West. Our directions were determined according to the natural drainage of the green, the "pockets" that would not drain, and the potential "French" drains around the outside of the green.

The slicing blades that we used were 1/2" wide and set to go as deep as possible. We penetrated and removed thin slices of topmix 4 1/2" to 5 1/2" deep. These slices were carefully removed after each pass with 3 blades. The trenches were immediately backfilled with sand (Waupaca Sand's topdressing sand). We found that dry sand works much better in filling the trenches than slightly moist sand. Shovels were used to specifically place the sand over the trenches. We then packed the sand in the grooves and "scraped" the sand into those trenches with 1/2"x6" boards. Those same boards were used to compact the sand in the trenches three times or until they were packed all the way to the surface such that grooves vs. turfgrass had the same firmness under foot. We felt that the backfilling process should be completed prior to making the next pass so that the grooves would not swell shut or cave in, thus losing the effectiveness of the French drain or puttability of the playing surface due to roughness.



Trying a Truckster to tow Verti-Groove.



Turf students compacting trenches with sand.



Tom Mascaro, Dave Legg, Randy Smith watching Chuck Frazier inspecting depth of grooves.



Cross sectional slices of topsoil being observed on bentgrass nursery at Blackhawk C.C.

RATIONS — 1986

RENOVATION WITH VERTI-GROOVE

Our method of pulling the vertigroove was first a Cushman 4-wheel truckster. Even with extra weight in the Cushman, we were about to break traction with 3 slicing blades in and set as deep as possible. Our second try was with a small Allis-Chalmers tractor with turf tires. As it turned out, the green was firm enough at this time of year that we did not cause any detectable tracking on the green. Please note that we did wait 2 days after a $\frac{3}{4}$ " rainfall and would not try this process in soft spring conditions.

Once the grooves were completed, we spiked the green with a hand spike, overseeded with $\frac{1}{3}$ # Penncross creeping bentgrass per 1000 s.f., topdressed the entire 7,000 s.f. green with 2 cu. yards of 80% sand/20% peat, dragged in the topdressing, mowed the green, and then rolled the green with one roller from a 3# gang-fairway roller (500 gallons each). We pulled the roller with a Cushman truckster. I would be reluctant to do this on a mineral soil green or where compaction would be of concern.

We fertilized this green with $\frac{1}{2}$ # actual N both 1 week and 2 weeks prior to this procedure to encourage recovery and hopefully uniform growth over the entire green. We felt that it was important not to fertilize with the trenches open as we did not want to create differential growth on the putting surface.

Playability has yet to be determined as we have not had weather conducive to golf since we accomplished this procedure. Our own observations of rolling golf balls over the grooves are relatively encouraging. We suspect that freezing and thawing over winter will necessitate rerolling next spring.

We were concerned about slicing this late in the year; however, we do cover this green with Warren's Terra Shield. In doing so, we hope to protect the green and potentially encourage early growth for recovery.

Some 65 hours were expended by 6 individuals to complete the process as described. Very little negative feedback has been received to this date and I guess I would look at that as being a plus although as I mentioned earlier, we have had limited play. Observing the trenches thus far, I would say that I am encouraged with the possibilities that this unit has. Future use for a putting surface still remains in question. We will have to see how playable this surface is next year.



Cross-slicing for drainage.



Various stages of the grooving process.



Backfilling trenches with sand.



Tom Mascaro - the designer/inventor of this unique machine.



The slicing process.

'SentryWorld South' Hosts WGCSA Tournament Meeting



UW-Madison Soil Science Professor Wayne Kussow addressed the topic of 'Late Season Fertilization.'

Very warm, very humid, very nice and very well drained. Those were the conditions that 66 of our WGCSA members and their guests were treated to at the WGCSA Annual Golf Tournament Meeting held on September 25 at "SentryWorld South", otherwise known as the Country Club of Beloit. September's heavy rains held off long enough for Host Golf Course Superintendent Don Ferger and his staff to really work miracles in excellently preparing this fine golf course. Sincere thanks to Don and his staff for providing such fine playing conditions and also

for providing such fine hospitality for our tournament.

The golf tournament got underway shortly after 12:00 noon as 54 golfers began their trek over the course. Bruce Schweiger, the pre-tourney favorite, had promised not to show up, but reportedly couldn't resist the urge to make the rest of us look like fools. There were many different winners and just a few losers-winners included the WTA, who received the proceeds from all soda & beer sold on the course. Winners of the respective flights and winners of the course proxie prizes are as follows:

Championship flight

1st place Bruce Schweiger (74)
2nd place Dale Parske (78)

"A" Flight

1st place (tie) Dan Millies (85)
1st place (tie) John Krutilla (85)

"B" Flight

1st place Roger Bell (98)
2nd place Woody Voigt (99)

Seniors Division (over 55)

1st place Dick Evenson (78)

Affiliated Members flight (class "E")

1st place (tie) Curt Larsen
1st place (tie) Jim Knapp

Course Proxie Prize Winners

Closest to pin in 2 shots (#5) - Gary Mulvihill
Closest to pin (#7) - Bruce Schweiger
Longest putt (#9) - Bill Douglas

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