

The Grass Roots



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About Our Cover:

With the shorter days and cooler temperatures of autumn come much needed days of relief for golf course superintendents. These are beautiful days, beauty due in no small measure to the deciduous trees found on Wisconsin golf courses. As chlorophyll production declines in the tree leaves, their green color fades and colors imparted by carotenes, xanthophylls and anthocyanins take center stage. As the autumn days go by, reds and purples and yellows and oranges overwhelm the summertime green. The result makes fall a special time in Wisconsin. Artist Jennifer Samerdyke has captured, in form and color, the tree leaves that give Wisconsin nature's most colorful show.

*O world, I cannot hold thee close enough!
Thy winds, thy wide grey skies!
Thy mists, that roll and rise!
Thy woods, this autumn day, that ache
and sag*

And all but cry with colour!

— Edna St. Vincent Millay



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(Left to Right): Mark Kienert, Dave Smith, Dan Williams, Kris Pinkerton, Scott Schaller, Dave Brandenburg, Andy Kronwall, Marc Davison, Mike Lyons.

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Autumn

By Scott Schaller



Autumn is my favorite time of year. To me, as a golf course superintendent, there is nothing more enjoyable than to tour the course you manage on a beautiful autumn morning. September brings all of us well into the second half of the golf season. That's a great feeling for me. I can begin to enjoy dealing with the cooler weather, lower humidity levels and having play on the golf course drop off. I also look forward to watching the Green Bay Packers play each weekend. At certain times, it is a nice feeling to know that the end is near, but in reality we all have a lot of work to accomplish in the fall season. Usually aerification, budgets and late season projects take much of our time, along with the routine golf turf maintenance that we accomplish with our downsized crews. With all of those things to look forward to, it still my favorite time of year.

I hope everyone had a chance to attend the WTA Field

Days at the OJ Noer Facility in Madison last month. The people involved who put this program on did an outstanding job. All of us as turf managers benefit from a show like that.

Speaking of putting on a good show, I would like to congratulate Mr. Michael Lee and his staff for the fine job he did with the Women's U.S. Open at Black Wolf Run in Kohler. The golf course alone is magnificent, but combining it with a perfectly manicured track, this event turned out to be the best Women's U.S. Open ever. This was a great thing for the game of golf in Wisconsin and also a representation of what one of our quality WGCSA golf course managers can produce for the world to see. Great job Mike!!!

On that note, I need to get out and get back to work. Enjoy that autumn feeling. Take care and hope to see soon at one of our monthly meetings. 🍂



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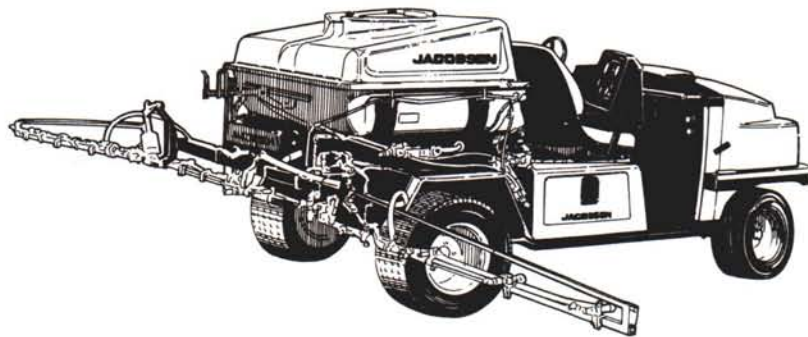
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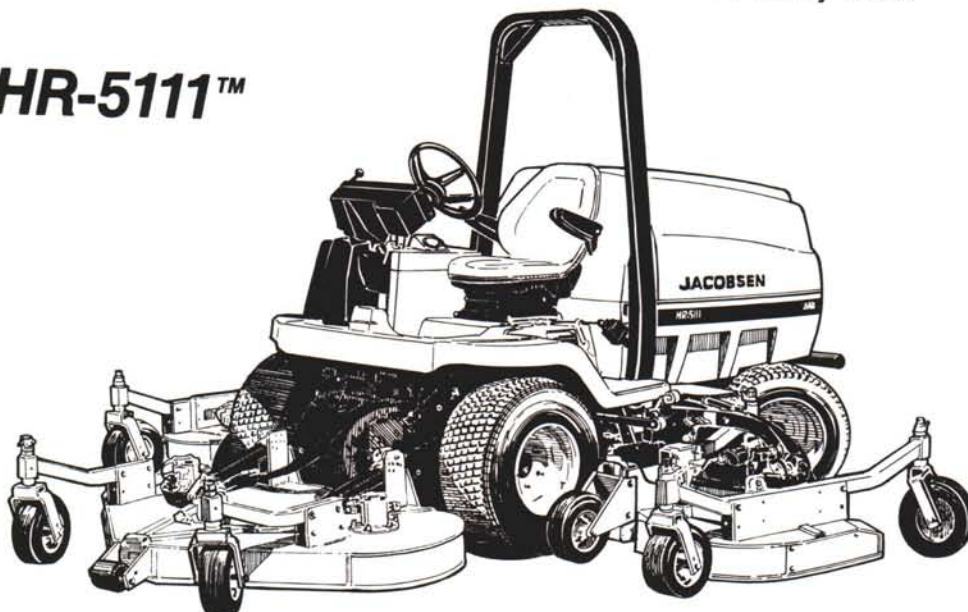
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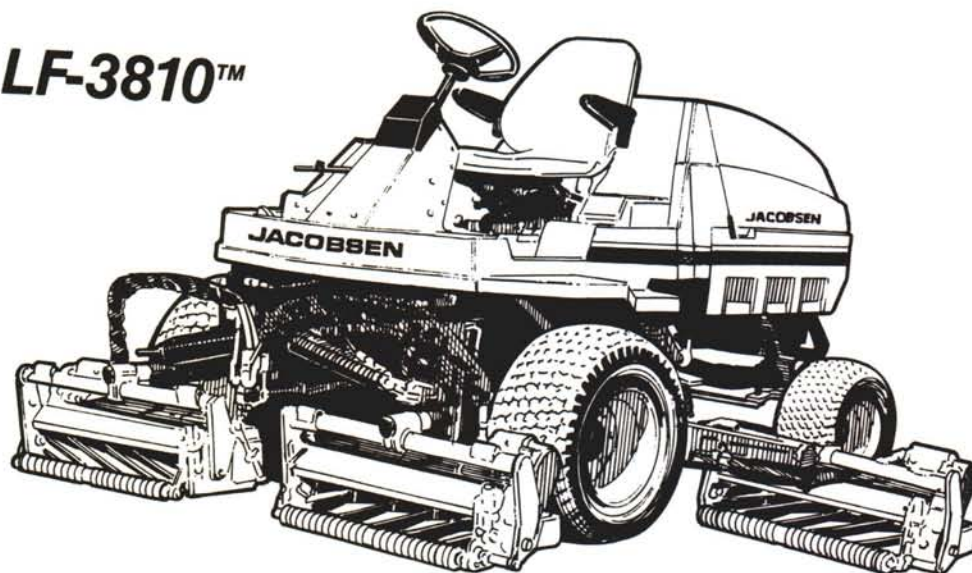
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PRIME TIME: *It's The Best Time of Year Again!*

By Monroe S. Miller

The signs are everywhere. Acorns are all over our golf course, a huge crop like we haven't seen before. The late summer moon shines with a warm patina like an old gold coin. Wild grapes growing near the pump station are ripe with a rich purple color. Walnuts and butternuts and hickory nuts are falling in the roughs, and the apples on the three trees near the fifth tee are ripe and tasty (and wormy!).

It's dark at 8:00 p.m. and it has been difficult to start at 6:00 a.m. — the days are so short. It started with a loss of 2.5 minutes of daylight a day in August, and lickity split — we'll be at the autumnal equinox in a few short weeks.

And it is quiet, a sure sign of fall. The birds no longer wake us up — no robins and wrens, doves and thrashers. The young employees who keep our shop noisy all summer are back in school; those of us left are less inclined to chatter on endlessly. It is a relief at first, but in no time I miss them.

The smell in the outdoor air tells me it is fall. There is a ripeness, a windiness to the autumn air that is unmistakable and indescribable.

The bees are everywhere, causing alarm to golf players and offering a sure sign that the season is passing. And the late summer crops of dragonflies, at least on our course, was huge. They are only one of a few

insects I can conjure up any affection for; I'm always glad to see them.

With a little planning, it is possible to take advantage of some great fall festivals in Wisconsin — Oktoberfest in LaCrosse, Presque Isle's Wild Game Cook-Off, the U.S. Watermelon Seed Spitting and Speed-Eating Championship in Pardeeville, the Wollersheim Winery Grape Stomp in Prairie du Sac, Warren's Cranberry Festival, Applefest in Gays Mills, Mineral Point's Cornish Festival — pick your favorite.

The cool weather is welcome. It portends of football games, your high school team and the Badgers and the Packers (although opening day
(Continued on page 6)

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(Continued from page 5)

for the Packers was the warmest opening day in their history). It heals golf turf that looked weak and worn and tired in late August. It cleanses the air and fills people like me with anticipation of the best season of all.

Late summer had some rough weather for Wisconsin golf course superintendents to deal with. The first week of August was a disaster. We were praying for rain in most quarters since it had been dry for three to four weeks before that. But eastern Wisconsin, especially, got too much of a good thing. From reports of over 10 inches in Sheboygan and Janesville to over 8 inches in Milwaukee, too many of us were unable to enjoy what should have been a great relief.

Even the lesser amounts of two and three inches that many of us received caused saturated soil conditions and, with the hot days of August, hastened already declining and shortening root systems. Yes, rain is welcome, but moderate is what we want.

The storms that ripped across the state on July 20 had some rain, but it

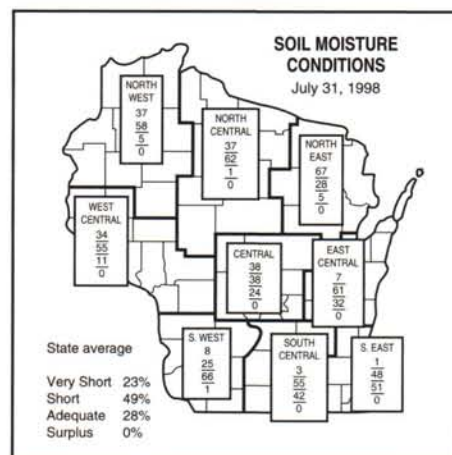
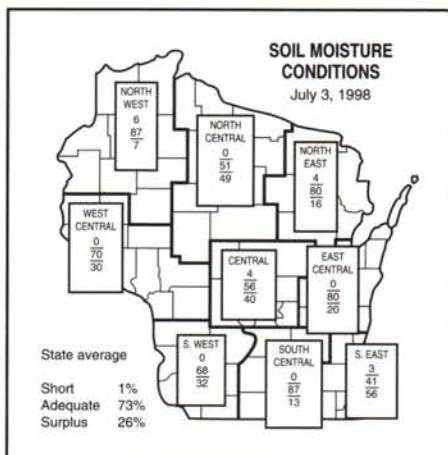
was also mostly downpours and the winds were ferocious. Lake Geneva's airport recorded 100 mph gusts and power was lost in many areas of the state. Chain saws were humming on golf courses, cutting up fallen trees and limbs. It moved out of the state on the 21st.

And even though we had some hot and humid days this summer, they paled to 1936 when our highest ever official temperature of 114 degrees F was recorded at Wisconsin Dells. That puts a perspective on this summer of 1998.

Statistics from the Wisconsin Agri-

cultural Statistics Service tells the story of soil moisture conditions around the state.

Golf, considered by many a benign physical activity, places as much force on the knees as playing football does. The clinical biomechanics and rehabilitation lab at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation conducted a study and measured forces and torques at the knee during the twist of the golf swing. They were as large as those that had been previously



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as those that had been previously reported in a "run and cut" study of football.

To measure the force on the knees, Clinic staff used a specially equipped lab to study 15 men whose handicaps ranged from 4 to 18. Reflective markers were placed at key joints involved in the golf swing and six high speed video cameras captured the movement as golfers hit a ball with a five iron.

The study showed that the strong force on the knee was independent both of the type of golf shoe that participants wore and the golfer's skill. The strongest forces on the knee occurred during the downswing. The bottom line is that it is difficult to determine when an injured golfer can return to the game.

Not studied yet, but worthy of it without a doubt, is the comparison of knee stress between a walking greensmower operator and a middle linebacker playing for the Packers!

Mark and Karen Kienert are proud parents — their daughter won a GCSAA legacy scholarship. She will be attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison this month as a freshman in the School of Engineering.

Golf Digest magazine recently ranked America's best and worst major golf cities based on access to good, affordable public and municipal golf. Duluth, Minnesota was ranked first and Richmond, Virginia was last in 309th place.

Several Wisconsin cities fared very well, with LaCrosse topping them at 21st place. Other Wisconsin rankings in the Golf Digest survey were

44. Eau Claire	138. Madison
47. Janesville	148. Appleton
48. Kenosha	151. Milwaukee
80. Sheboygan	152. Wausau
132. Racine	202. Green Bay



I'm not going to be able to take what has been an annual trip to New England to see the autumn foliage display this fall. It is heart breaking, but Cheryl and I have a big project here and common sense dictates a full fall season at home.

But there are beautiful fall vistas to visit in Wisconsin, beginning in mid-September up north and ending in late October here in southern Wisconsin. We are looking to drive Wisconsin State Highway 35 along the Mississippi River, WSH 60 just north of Middleton and running east/west through Sauk county, and WSH 67 at the Kettle Moraine State Forest. If time (and football schedules) permits, we'd like to drive WSH 77 through the Chequamegon National Forest and WSH 57 in Door county. The graphic shows best viewing times for fall foliage in Wisconsin.

Here's a bit of trivia on fall color. The northeast U.S. has the required combination of the right kind of soil, the right kind of climate, and those special species of trees that make for spectacular leafpeeping. For example, if you take a flaming red and orange and gold sugar maple from Vermont and transplant it to California, it would change color from

green to brown without a speck of red or orange or gold.

I always thought New England was the only place on earth like that. Wrong. Other small areas I have read about include the Andes Mountains of South America, parts of eastern Asia (especially central and northern Japan), a tiny area in southwestern Europe, and a small area in the Ozark Mountains here in the U.S.

Contact your travel agent for leaf-peeping tours!

The bit of poetry inside the front cover, as it often is, was written by a New England poet. Edna St. Vincent Milay was the author. The fall season and her wonderful use of words inspire me to share some of her life with you. She was born in Rockland, Maine and grew up in Camden, Maine in full view of Penobscot Bay, Mt. Battie and Mt. Megunticook. She entertained at the Whitehall Inn in Camden (she played the piano and read poetry) where you can still get a room, and her statue is on the lawn of the village library.

She moved to New York for college (Barnard and Vassar), lived and wrote in Greenwich Village, moved to Europe for awhile, and returned to marry.

In 1923 she and her husband bought a farm near Austerlitz, New York and named it Steepletop after a flower found in the fields there. She lived at Steepletop until she died in the big house October of 1950. A historical marker in the tiny village of Austerlitz (there cannot be 50 people who live there) tells of Steepletop. I wanted to find it, inquired at the post office to no avail, and finally got information at a small gift shop. I drove up Harvey Road, which is unpaved after a mile or so and reached Steepletop.

It is now a writers colony and not open to the public for tours. I stopped anyway, and nosed around. Her small

(Continued on page 9)



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(Continued from page 7)

writing cabin is a distance from the big house, and remains in good repair. The countryside — woods and fields — are supremely beautiful. If you are able, like I am not this fall, to travel near the New York/Massachusetts border, it is a lovely spot to see.

If you ever heard him speak at the WTA Winter Conference or met him as some other CALS event, you'll not likely forget Dr. Don Peterson. His booming voice, sharp wit, love of sports and love of Wisconsin were hallmarks of his career at the UW-Madison CALS. He died of a heart attack on Saturday, August 8th. His funeral was on Wednesday, the 12th, while the WTA Field Day was happening at the Noer Facility.

Dr. Peterson earned a B.S., M.S. and Ph.D in soil science and agronomy at the Madison campus. Except for two years at Washington State University, he spent his career here. He was the epitome of the UW Extension scientist, served as the director of the Wisconsin Ag Research Stations, and was associate dean for Extension.

He retired from the UW in 1990, but served as chairman, president

and CEO of the Wisconsin Agri-Business Council, well known to the WGCSA since we are a long time member of the organization. At the time of his death he was the executive director of Wisconsin Farm Progress Days.

Peterson was a giant in Wisconsin agriculture; he will be greatly missed.

The Wisconsin student branch of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers captured first place in the first ASAE National 1/4 Scale Tractor Student Design Competition, held May 30 and 31 in the Quad Cities area of Illinois and Iowa.

In the competition, each team designs and builds a tractor around a standard 16-horsepower engine and a set of times. The team is judged on its tractor's design, a formal presentation, and the tractor's pulling capacity. Seventeen schools from the U.S. and Canada competed.

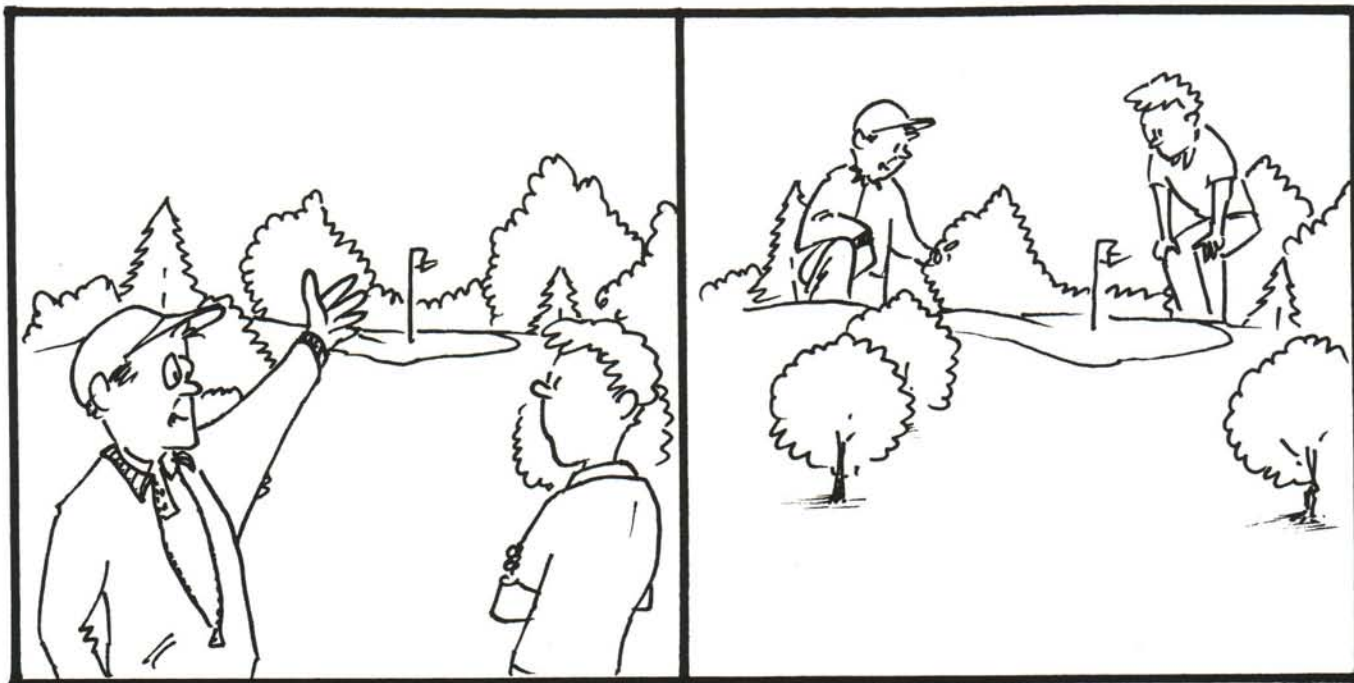
In addition to winning the overall championship, the UW-Madison team also captured the written design report award, the oral presentation award, the safety award, the manufacturability award, the craftsmanship award, and the best appearance award!



Seems to me manufacturers of grass machinery ought to seek these guys out and hire every one of them!

These are wonderful days coming up, the days between the heat of August and the cold of December. They are accented by couples weekend, the WTA golf outing, and the Symposium.

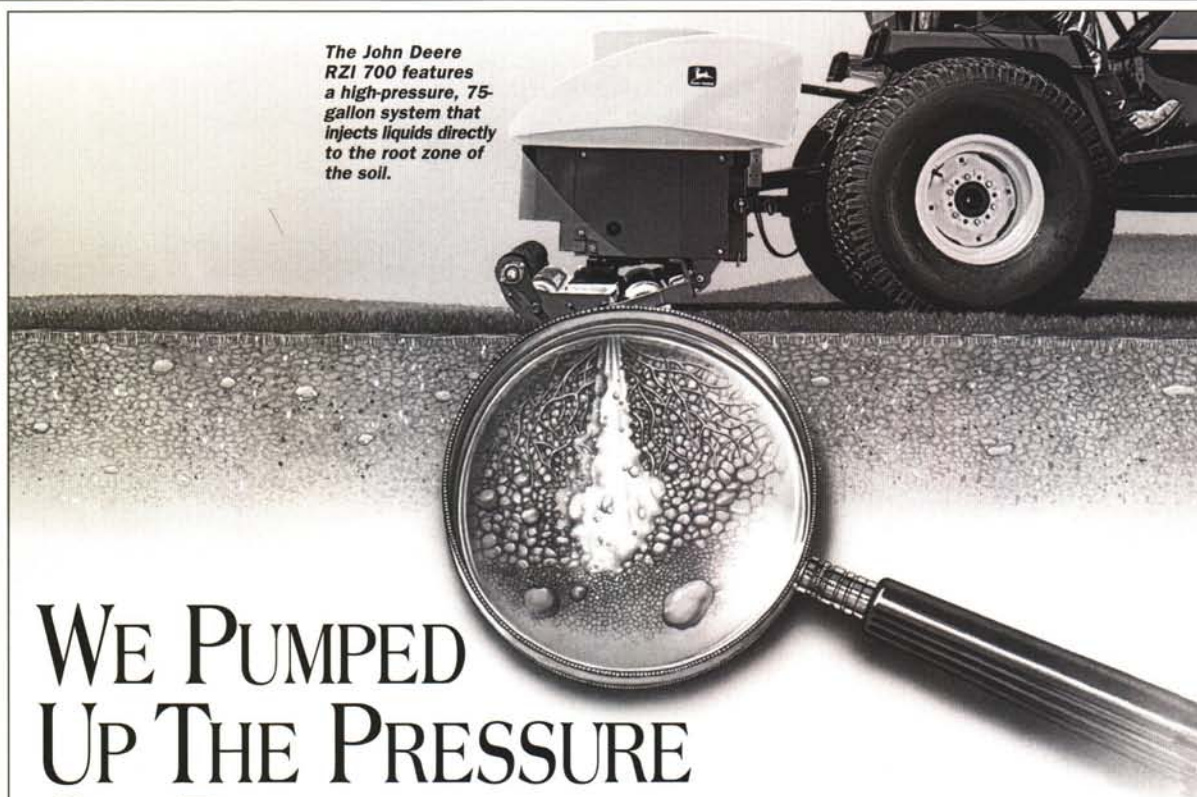
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