

because it was in the Midwest where her family is. "And the position was a teaching/Extension split (40/60), which was what I wanted," she adds.

One-year anniversary...

She arrived in July of 1998 to a full schedule. In the fall semester, she taught nursery management, nursery management lab, and two sections of plant identification. In the spring semester she taught the second plant identification class.

Then there is her off-campus schedule. First, speaking and teaching engagements at events such as the Professional Landscapers Conference, the Grounds Management Short Course, the Turf and Ornamental Workshop, the Wisconsin Turfgrass Expo, the Parks and Recreation Association convention and the Master Gardener train-

ing program. A new program that she and some colleagues will debut this fall is a nursery IPM workshop.

"I'm doing a lot of Master Gardener training this year," Laura points out. "Each year they have a different specialized training area, and this year it's turf and ornamental. So I'm giving nine talks in a month's time, all over Wisconsin."

As she speaks at conferences around the state, what are the most frequent questions? "A lot of people want to know what the new plants are," she answers. "They also ask about plant evaluation and disease resistance, especially for crab apple trees."

Heavily involved...

Other responsibilities include being on the boards of the Wisconsin Landscape Federation, the Wisconsin Nursery Association, the

Wisconsin Arborist Association, and the Longenecker Gardens at the UW Arboretum. She's on the Urban Forestry Council, and she's coordinator of the Wisconsin Woody Plant Society. And she's in charge of the woody plant introductions for the new gardens at the UW's West Madison research station.

One project she's worked on recently is a large, 4-color brochure for Madison Gas & Electric, the Alliant Power Company, and Trees Forever. "It will be on trees that you can plant under power lines," Laura explains. "It will be distributed free to all of their customers."

She's expected to do research, too. This fall Laura will be working with a graduate student on the effects of road salts on woody plants, screening different de-icing chemicals. "And I'll be working with

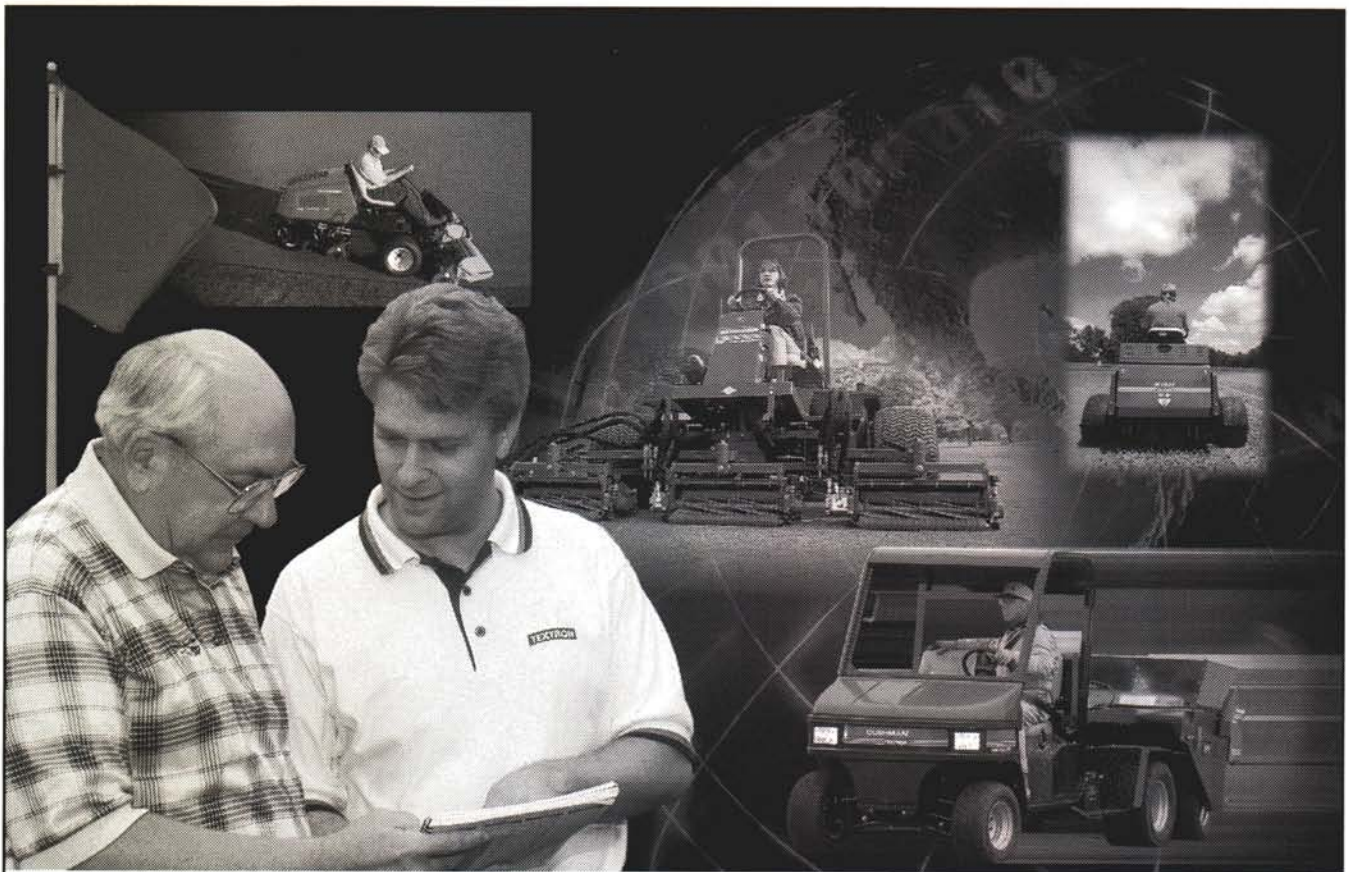


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a researcher in the soils department on the use of compost in nursery field production," she adds. "With my counterparts from Iowa State and Minnesota, I'll be studying fall transplanting of balled and burlap trees."

Long-term goals...

One of her goals for the future is to initiate some educational programs on nursery practices. She also sees the need to update many Extension publications. And she'd like to start some type of a plant introduction program in Wisconsin. "Many states have programs where they have a 'plant of the year' and more formal plant evaluation and introduction programs. I'd like to be able to evaluate plants at several locations in Wisconsin, not just Madison."

In her first year on the job, she has seen quite a bit of the state, from Bayfield and Eau Claire all the way down to Racine and Kenosha. "I want to see a lot more of the state, obviously," she adds. She was most impressed with a trip to Kohler. "I went up there to visit with the landscape crew. Their golf courses are just beautiful! Oh, are they beautiful!"

With so many things that could be done, how does she prioritize? How does she determine where to start? "I wish I knew the answer. Then I wouldn't be in the office until midnight," she admits. "I want to concentrate on things that are going to help the industry, that are going to make the biggest impact, and that are practical."

Golf course contact...

She hasn't had much contact with the turfgrass industry yet, but she is scheduled to speak at the Turfgrass Expo in January. She sees golf courses as a very important part of Wisconsin's green space. "I'm not a golfer myself, but I've always had golf course superintendents asking me what plants they can use that are beautiful but don't require a lot of

maintenance," she says.

"Yes, golf courses have to be a great place to golf, but they also have to look great," she continues. "If you have, for example, a hawthorne tree with the leaves infected with rust, the tree's not going to look good and neither will the course. It's very important for golf course superintendents to know what trees and shrubs

are low maintenance, allow for turf growth, and have exquisite ornamental value."

Laura, who is single, enjoys living in Madison. "It's a pretty cool town," she says. Not surprisingly, in her spare time she enjoys gardening along with other outdoor activities such as camping, hiking, fishing and bike riding. ♣

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What's Been Happening in Wisconsin??



By **Dr. R. Chris Williamson**, Turfgrass and Ornamental Entomologist, University of Wisconsin-Madison

When I first accepted my position here at the University of Wisconsin, I was told that there really aren't many turfgrass insect problems in Wisconsin-Madison. Yet, this year, I've continued to receive numerous phone calls in reference to several different turfgrass insect pests. Several people have attributed these problems as a suspicious coincidence to my hiring! Rest assured I did not introduce or bring any insects into Wisconsin. However, the increased occurrence of insects may be best explained by a combination of factors. The past two consecutive winters have been rather "mild," comparatively speaking. Such environmental conditions have allowed a greater number of insects to survive that would normally be controlled naturally. Another biological factor is the "abundance" of moisture. As a whole, most of the state has had adequate water availability for the development and survival of insects. We have not experienced typical drought-type conditions that help contribute to insect control. Consequently, environmental condi-

tions have been especially conducive for insects.

1999 Insect Pests

Most phone calls coming into my office this year have been from golf course superintendents for black cutworms, black turfgrass ataenius (BTA), sod webworms, and Japanese beetles. However, the majority of calls have been in reference to Japanese beetles, both the adults and grubs. Japanese beetles seem to be a "hot topic," especially since adult Japanese beetles are highly visible, quite peculiar in their behavior, and their feeding damage to ornamental plant materials is very noticeable. Most calls about Japanese beetles have been from the southeastern portion of Wisconsin (i.e., Rock, Walworth, Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee counties); however, Eau Claire has its share of Japanese beetles as well. Japanese beetle traps were placed every 15 miles from Eau Claire to Madison along interstate I-90/94, and all but one trap (near the central-sands area) caught Japanese beetle adults. This suggests that Japanese beetle populations are con-

tinuing to spread and build up across the state, and they are no longer isolated in "pockets."

Reports of black turfgrass ataenius infestations and damage were also received. Consequently, visits were made to the respective courses, and each situation was assessed. Relatively high (i.e., over

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40 per square foot) numbers of BTA grubs were discovered on golf course putting greens, tees, and fairways. The damage from this turfgrass pest ranged from moderate to severe. At one particular golf course, numerous putting greens were nearly destroyed. Feeding damage from BTA grubs first appears as browning or yellowing areas that look to be "drought-stressed." However, after further or intensive investigation, the turf will pull-back or roll-up like a carpet or rug, and grubs can be located just beneath the turf surface.

Black cutworms and sod webworms continue to pose problems for golf course superintendents also. Currently, we are experiencing outbreaks of the second generation of both black cutworms and sod web-

worms. There are typically about 3 generations per year of black cutworms (i.e., mid-May, early-July, and late-September) and 3-4 generations of sod webworms per year (i.e., June, July, August, and September). However, because no biological system is concise or predictable, it often appears that we have continuous populations of both black cutworms and sod webworms.

Monitoring or sampling insects is an effective approach to management and control. Trapping (both pheromone and black-light traps), soap-flushing (pouring soapy water over the turf), soil sampling, and simple observations can all contribute to effective diagnosis of a pest or potential pest problem. All turf areas should be regularly

inspected for pest problems throughout the growing season. Monitoring and/or sampling allows a turfgrass manager to confirm the presence or absence of an insect pest and to assess the need for making a corrective measure such as the application of an insecticide. ♣

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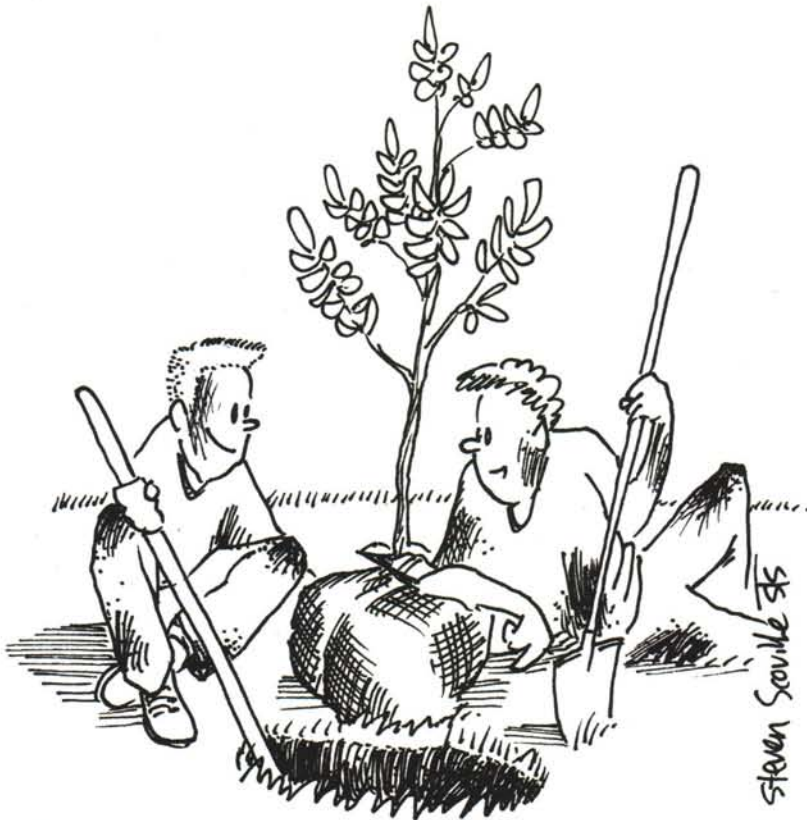
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A Night at the Opera

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

It could only have happened in the fall. Our October meeting was a ways away from the southern Wisconsin cities, and quite a number of guys were leaving Sunday rather than in the dark early Monday morning. A night away from the golf course can be a good salve for the attitude of a golf course superintendent, especially at the end of the year when we are all worn down. It gave me the opening I needed to get Steady Eddie Middleton, Bogey Calhoun, Tom Morris and Scottie Fennimore a little culture. Heaven knows they needed it.

Our pal and colleague, Fredrick Swenson, was the course manager at Yorkshire Hills Golf Club in northwest Wisconsin, site of the meeting. It was located on a beautiful piece of property - hilly, of course - near the village of York. Players from all over Wisconsin, from the Twin Cities and even from Chicago were making the trip there for good golf and some serenity. We were lucky to have a meeting there to see the place for ourselves.

The cultural part of the trip derived from the fact that Fred was an actor in a local drama group and they had a performance planned for Sunday evening. The guys - TM, Steady Eddie, Bogey and Scottie - agreed, albeit reluctantly, to let me get them each a ticket and go watch Fred perform on stage.

I'll confess I was somewhat misleading when I talked to them about it. I failed to mention that the drama Fred had the lead in was actually an opera. The word "opera" conjured up all sorts of things in the minds of the guys. They had an opera pegged as an event with actors in weird clothes (including men in tights - never good!), music sung in a high pitch in a foreign language, an oddball story line, and a performance length such that it was nearly torturous. If I had told them up front that they were going to see Fred in an opera, they would not have gone, and poor Fred would never have heard the end of it. A little deception seemed to be in their best interest.

But the truth about opera is that the difference between it and, say, a drama is that the actors sing their lines. The singing by the actors is a more direct, intense and immediate means of communicating emotion than spoken lines in a nonmusical drama. One operatic production contains a full length play, a three hour orchestral concert, dance (maybe even a ballet), a parade or a pageant, and a choral concert. In the end, it is the music that sets an opera apart.

Operas deal with all the subjects of life itself - history, culture, tragedy, joy, love, war - you name it. Everybody can relate to opera, if they are open minded and if they

want to.

York has an active theater community and Fred thrived on it. Any course superintendent will tell you of the need to do something with free time that is removed from golf and the outdoors, and Fred took that need to an extreme. Blessed with a rich tenor voice, his singing approached that of a professional. And over the years he had finely tuned his natural acting ability. His "hobby" made him unique among us. The guys had all heard him sing at a couple of different times and thought he was "pretty good." Cheryl and I had seen the York community players production of *Guys and Dolls*. We were wowed by the show and Freddie's performance. I knew what to expect; the guys were in for a real surprise.

A good part of the pleasure of seeing an amateur production in York was the venue they were presented in - the Cadbury Opera House. It anchored Main Street, just as it did when it was built in the 1890s. It was like new;



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it had been refurbished to original condition as a centennial project, only the seats were more comfortable, the lighting better and the heating system was vastly improved. The Cadbury was not unlike thousands of other theaters built around the same time across the country. From the Old Masonic Theater in small Chautauqua, Wisconsin to the Pabst Theater in Milwaukee to Concert Hall in Cornwall, Wisconsin, they featured endless numbers of amateur productions over their history - *La Scalla* to *The Old Homestead*. These town halls were a uniting force in communities and the center of the social life of many.

Many of the concert halls looked about the same, much like the Cadbury. They were two or three story buildings, white brick quite often, and centrally located. The hall proper of the Cadbury was an oblong 100 feet long with a gently sloping hardwood floor. Rows of pillars supported the roof. The stage was five feet high, thirty feet wide and maybe twenty feet deep. Its proscenium arch towered majestically some fifteen feet and opened between the walls that set off a room at either

side. An apron extended seven feet (approximately) before the front curtain. The drop displayed scenes from the production at any given time.

At either side behind the proscenium arch stood a piece of scenery that masked the edge of the stage and gave cover to side entrances. There was the front drop and two curtains behind it to serve the various scenes of a production. The first two rows of seats were segregated from the rest by several feet and served as an orchestra pit.

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