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ABOUT THE COVER

The focus of golf tournaments in Wisconsin each summer is on the State Am and the State Open.

The State Am will be held at Brown County Golf Course. Superintendent Paul Delfosse chose the 9th hole at his course as his favorite hole. It's a 444 yard par 4 that features lots of trees and some water.

The State Open will tee it up on the Meadow Valley course at Kohler's Blackwolf Run. Superintendent Ron Bierwirth chose the 18th hole as his

favorite. This 395 yard hole features a massive 22,000 ft² green that is shared with #18 on the River course. And, of course, thanks to Jen Samerdyke for her rendition. She worked from photos provided by photographer Jim McNicoll of Green Bay and Beth Keough of Kohler's communication department.

"Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun."
- Ecclesiastes

THE GRASS ROOTS

THE GRASS ROOTS is a bi-monthly publication of the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association printed in Waukegan, Wisconsin by Kramer Printing. No part of THE GRASS ROOTS may be reprinted without expressed written permission by the editor.

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BALANCE

By **Marc Davison**, Golf Course Superintendent, Green Bay Country Club



Summer is in full swing and we are now being tested to our fullest. How are you holding up? Full crews are busy carrying out our directives, hopefully in the proper

way. The weather has been a real concern lately; as usual, it's either too hot, too humid and in many parts of the state too dry. How often do you feel like you don't know which way to turn first? So often we are pulled in so many directions it makes your head spin. It's not only this way in our profession. Most people feel the same way. It almost seems like this is the "American way" these days. Never say "no" and always take on too much and then try and figure out a way to accomplish all we have committed to.

Sometimes it feels as if we are jugglers and we have too many balls in the air all the time. How do you balance all the demands placed on you? Priorities must be made, which is obvious, but that can be difficult in itself. What are your priorities in life? Have you ever sat down and thought about this? Do you have your priorities in the proper order? How do we know?

In my life I am afraid I put too much priority on my job. This is probably typical of most males. We tend to work too much. Then when we arrive at home we are fairly exhausted. So even when we are at home, we are not always able to give 100% of ourselves to our family and, more specifically, our spouse. There never seems to be much time left over for anything else, especially during the

"summer" golf season which, as you know, runs mid-April through October, a very long "summer."

Take some time to review your priorities. Don't be afraid to make some adjustments if things are a bit out of whack in your life. Our jobs are just that, jobs. There are other areas in our lives that require our attention just as much as our employers do. Don't get out of balance. We must balance our energies. Stay focused and be sure your priorities are in order.

Monroe Miller has once again been recognized for his outstanding contributions to the game of golf. The Wisconsin State Golf Association has inducted Monroe into their Hall of Fame. Monroe is the first golf course superintendent to be elected into this elite group of individuals who have contributed to the game of golf in our state. Please congratulate Monroe next time you see him.

The June meeting of our association was held at Green Bay Country Club. We hosted a new event called

People vs. Pro, which was sponsored by BASF. It was a very nice event with the winner advancing to compete against other regional winners for a chance to play against a professional golfer at Barton Creek Resort in Texas. Superintendent Mike Werth from Monroe CC won the event and will now play at Barton Creek in September. Congratulations and good luck Mike! A big thank you to David Oberle from BASF for organizing this event with our association. BASF donated \$2,000 to WGCSA for hosting the event and donated all the prizes that day.

GCSAA is offering more and more educational programs via their web site. These programs are typically one to two hours in length and can be taken right at your desk. Check out the selection and try one out some time. Even if you cannot commit the time when it airs, you can always view the program at a later date. The programs are available up to one year after the presentation date. ♣



Dave Oberle of BASF presents WGCSA president Marc Davison a check to the chapter for \$2,000, a donation for hosting the People vs. Pro event on June 13th.



Madison's Push for Pesticide-Free Golf Courses

By **Dr. John Stier**, Department of Horticulture, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Several months ago I received a call from a member of Progressive Dane, a powerful Dane-county based political party. They wanted to discuss pesticide-free golf courses. Last month they managed to get the issue of pesticide-free municipal golf courses on the docket of the Madison Parks Commission.

If you haven't been to a public hearing before, the committee goes through items one-by-one, inviting persons to speak to the issue for a limited time period (usually about 3 minutes). The committee may then ask questions of the speaker, otherwise the

speaker is done and sits down. NO ONE from the audience is allowed to participate except during their 3 minute speech.

The beginning speakers represented Progressive Dane. The first was the member who had called me on the phone earlier in the year, and his goal was to reduce, and eventually eliminate, the amount of pesticides used by city golf courses. He proposed starting with Glenway Golf Course, a popular 9-hole course in the center of the city. Glenway, he said, could be a "test" site. The second seemed to be the instigator of the

move to eliminate pesticides on golf courses—a doctor who apparently plays golf and is concerned about the use of pesticides to maintain turf in our country. He discussed pesticides in broad terms related to children's health without giving any specifics. He did mention a golf course in San Francisco that had gone "organic" and no longer used pesticides, instead relying on a compost tea. Earlier in the week the doctor had given a newspaper interview stating that UW-Madison's turf program should be able to assist in the development of management

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programs to allow golf courses to go pesticide-free.

The best prepared speaker of the night was Ray Shane, superintendent of Madison city golf courses. He began by discussing the improper use of the previous speaker's terminology of "organic" by stating that any carbon-containing molecule was by definition "organic". He then discussed the actual amounts of pesticides used on city golf courses (which are relatively little) based on their Integrated Pest Management program. His declaration that simply cutting pesticide use in half was useless without knowing the relative amounts already being used was right on target. Ray discussed the golf course budgets over the past several years given reduced play due to poor weather and economy, combined with increased costs for repairing damage caused by things like this

year's severe winterkill. He then discussed specific diseases such as snow mold and dollar spot, their impact if left unprevented, and the budgetary losses to be incurred as golfers left to play other courses. Ray used his three minutes wisely, and was asked more questions by the committee than any of the speakers, allowing him to get even more points across. A few golfers spoke, one pointedly saying (in response to the doctor's statements) he wasn't concerned about pesticides and kids weren't on the golf course. Another wanted to know why the university hadn't already developed a pesticide-free program at our "sod farm" (I think he meant the O.J. Noer Facility).

Both Wayne Kussow and I spoke briefly about the misconceptions of "organic" golf courses but that if they decided to go this way we were willing to oversee a trial at Glenway. The turf group had met

the previous day to discuss our thoughts on the procedures and practicality of a pesticide-free golf course. Our primary thought was to compare a preventive program with the IPM approach being used and a pesticide-free approach on several holes at Glenway. Geunhwa Jung had agreed to lead the effort. We would have documented the cost of all products including the compost teas and other pesticide replacements as well as surveying golfer's attitudes and thoughts on the turf managed in the different styles.

We were followed by a UW-Madison Hospital doctor who leads a grassroots organization to eliminate chemicals in turf management. Her group had been involved in the earlier effort which led to our local ban on phosphorus-containing turf fertilizers. Her appearance and demeanor were quite professional and she



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seemed to have all her ducks in a row. She opened up by stating a number of studies showed turf pesticides caused a variety of health problems: when asked by the committee if she could provide the actual reports, she said yes. She then went on to say how successful the pesticide-free San Francisco golf course has been due to its reliance on a compost tea and how they would host the PGA tournament there later this year. One of the committee members apparently knew the tournament schedule and quickly interrupted, stating that the San Francisco golf course was definitely not hosting the PGA in 2005. Tap-dance time for the speaker as her credibility crumbled. She left the floor in a whimper instead of the bang I'd anticipated. I doubt she'll make a mistake like that next time.

The remaining speakers were rank and file troops from the anti-pesticide crowd, relatively inarticulate without any new information. That night the Parks Commission voted down the proposal to make Madison's municipal golf courses pesticide-free.

Could such a proposal be successful in your community? I'm not sure it's finished in Madison. How would you respond? Having been to numerous public hearings at both the local and state level, the formula for success varies depending on the politics. In those instances where it truly is a public forum, with the municipality truly seeking information and opinions, those groups which are well organized and articulate hold sway. In those cases, speakers have well thought-out statements, sometimes which they read from paper, following one after another. Sometimes the matter seems to be predetermined, in which case those groups (which again are well organized) "lobbied" behind the scenes early on. Without suggesting the need to formally lobby,

every golf course superintendent needs to be involved at the community level to provide information. People fear the unknown.

Let your local media and community know you are a professional expert on turf management. Your efforts could range from agreeing to do a television interview about the opening of the golf season to contacting local media asking them to prepare a news release. Jerry Kershasky did just this in March when he coordinated the winterkill symposium at Westmoor Country Club. One of the easiest ways to get information out is simply to be active in your community and be prepared to provide ad hoc information. If a parent attending the same high school football game as you comments about the health effects of pesticides, be prepared to state that the acute toxicity of today's turf pesticides is comparable to table salt and aspirin.

When someone states the local lakes are again full of algae because of all the lawn fertilizers, be prepared to state that turf is actually a great buffer to prevent urban runoff, and research shows the majority of P entering lakes comes from bare soil, usually from agricultural or construction sites.

I'm frequently asked for data and information on the environmental effects of turf. We are fortunate to have a lot of information available to us in the turf industry. Options to get this information include sources such as the on-line data base Turfgrass Information File (www.lib.msu.edu/tgif), the USGA Green Section, and GCSAA. John Marshall Clark at Massachusetts will soon be publishing data from a study he's conducted to determine the amount of pesticide exposure golfers have while golfing. Dr. Clark is a toxicologist by training and has been working in pesticide toxicology for some time. The USGA has been

funding the work and I look forward to his presentation I'll see later this month, followed by publication sometime in the next year or so in a scientific journal. Of course, the gist of his results will be published by USGA in their on-line TERO journal this year. I expect this work to become a standard reference.

At UW-Madison, we've published a number of studies in the Wisconsin Turf Reports over the years on products and management practices that reduce the need for pesticides. We've also tried a lot of products that simply don't work. Some of the information will be used for a presentation by Paul Koch and Jacob Schneider, UW turf graduate students who have several years of golf course experience, at the upcoming WTA Expo. Look for additional information on the use and effectiveness of alternative approaches to turf management during the rest of the year in *The Grass Roots*. ♻

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An Introduction to Moss Control in Wisconsin



By Paul Koch, Steve Abler, and Dr. Geunhwa Jung, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

My name is Paul Koch, and I am a new graduate student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I will be researching under Dr. Geunhwa Jung in the Plant Pathology Department, as well as assisting Steve Abler in the Turf Diagnostic Lab. My main background lies in golf course management, as I have learned the ropes working on two different golf courses over the past six years. Through my own experience, as well as reading the literature and talking to superintendents, I believe one of the most pressing problems in turf management today is the invasion of moss into intensively managed golf course putting greens. As increased golfer demand for faster green speeds has resulted in unprecedented stresses on turf, infestations of moss into golf course putting greens has become a major problem. Though pinpointing one exact reason for increasing moss encroachment is impractical, three of the most important cultural reasons for the rise are lower mowing heights, reduced nitrogen fertility, and discontinued use of mercury-based fungicides (4).

Moss Biology

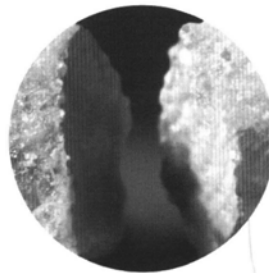
When looking at the diversity of mosses, it is overwhelming to know that over 9500 species of moss exist (3). But only four of those species have been documented on golf courses in the United States, with silvery-thread moss (*Bryum argenteum*) undoubtedly the most common species found on golf course putting greens (1).

The biology of mosses is fairly simple compared to other plants such as grasses and trees. But it is this simplicity that has helped them survive in harsh environments for millions of years, and is what makes them so hard to control today. The most noticeable biological difference of mosses is that they have no vascular system (xylem and phloem). While this does not allow for mosses to grow more than a few centimeters tall, it also means that moss does not translocate any systemic pesticides throughout the plant that are applied to kill it!

Mosses also do not have true roots, stems, flowers, seeds, or fruit but instead are anchored by small hair-like filaments called rhizoids. These rhizoids absorb water and nutrients, and allow the moss to quickly establish itself on surfaces such as rocks, tree bark, and golf course putting greens.

Though moss has historically been perceived as

growing only in very wet and shaded locations, silvery-thread moss has proven to be very adaptable to dry, sunny areas where thinning turf allows an opportunity for the moss to germinate. Contributing factors to thinning turf may be low cutting height, low fertility, poorly drained soils, excessively wet soils, compacted soils, excessive thatch, or some combination of the above. Where the turf does thin, moss spores in the environment can germinate and quickly establish within the turf surface. Once established, the moss can spread sexually by producing spores that are carried by wind, water, golfers, or mowing equipment. More often, though, moss is spread asexually. Mowers and other machinery such as core aerators spread



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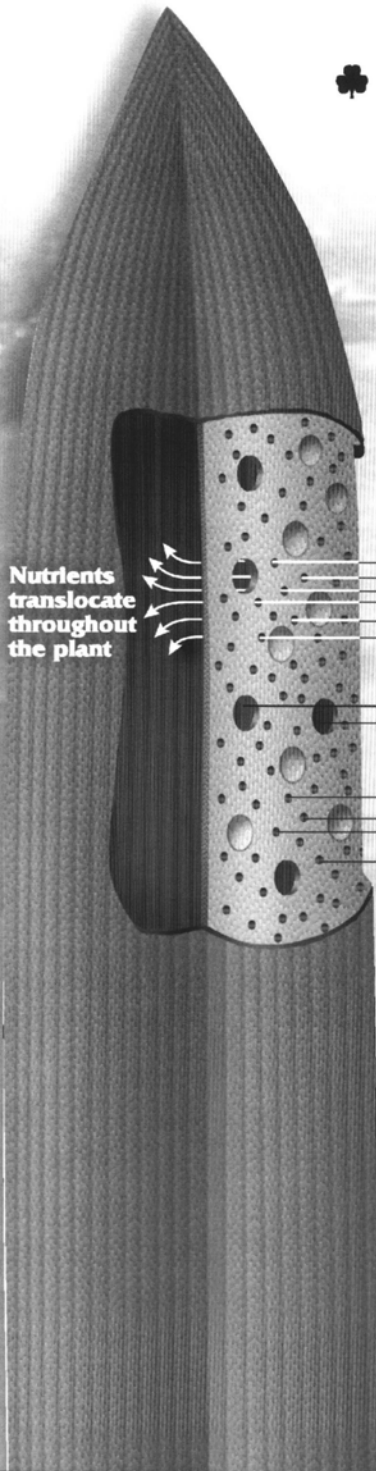
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