

1/2-mile radius of the EAB infested ash tree, consequently, all ash trees regardless of an EAB infestation or not are felled (cut down). Although perceptually a quite harsh approach, theoretically this management approach has the greatest chance of providing the highest probability (closest to 100%) of reducing or minimizing the spread of EAB.

As you might expect, this approach can be quite costly; it is estimated that each 1/2-mile EAB eradication effort costs between \$600,000 and \$1,000,000 to conduct. Thus, if EAB is detected in numerous locations, this management approach can very quickly become cost prohibited due to the limited number of monetary resources available. This may have been the rationale or justification that the Indiana Department of Agriculture used as they have elected not to participate or implement the EAB eradication program.

Currently, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer protection has an EAB Emergency Management Plan that includes EAB eradication. Again, this means that if EAB is discovered in Wisconsin, a delineation survey of ash trees within a 1/2-mile radius will be conducted and all ash trees (infested or not) will be felled and destroyed. A concerted and collaborative effort between the University of Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, and the United States Department of Agriculture/Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service/Plant Protection and Quarantine has been ongoing since 2003 regarding EAB. As a result, communication and plans with entities such as the Native American tribes, sawmills, paper mills, solid-wood packing, pallet, arborists, etc. have taken place to develop and establish response plans to most effectively respond in the event that EAB is discovered in Wisconsin.

Currently, no management strategies are suggested for Wisconsin. However, if or when EAB is discovered in Wisconsin, several insecticide treatment options are available. Based on research generated at Michigan State University, both homeowners (do-it-yourselfers) and professionals have some viable treatment options that are quite effective in managing EAB. For the homeowner, three treatment options are available: 1) Bayer Advanced Garden Tree and Shrub Insect Control; 2) Bonide Systemic Insecticide Bullets; and 3) ACECAP 97 Systemic Insecticide Tree Implants. Whenever using pesticides, ALWAYS read and follow label directions! For additional information regarding these products, visit www.emeraldashborer.info. Keep in mind, should you elect to preventatively treat your ash trees and you are within a 1/2-radius of where EAB

is discovered, even though you proactively treated your ash trees, they will be felled and destroyed.

More times than not, professionals typically have more products available than do homeowners, this is also true for EAB insecticide options. Professionals have access to additional products such as Onyx (bifenthrin), Mauguet Imicide and Mauguet Injecticide-B (bidrin), as well as other trunk injection technologies such as the ArborJet (a pressurized trunk injection system).

Should you choose to make EAB insecticide treatments, trunk injections, soil drenches and injections should begin in the early spring (mid-April through June); timing is highly dependent on the size (diameter at breast height or DBH) of the tree and larger trees (> 6 inches DBH) may require two to three months for uptake. Bark (trunk and limb) spray applications should be applied prior-to or when adult EAB are emerging.

For more information regarding EAB visit the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Entomology, Emerald Ash Borer website at www.entomology.wisc.edu/emeraldashborer.



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The End of the Line

By Pat Norton, Golf Course Superintendent, Nettle Creek Country Club

After five seasons as part of a course ownership group...followed by eight seasons of family ownership...my father's younger brother has had enough. After numerous attempts at finding the elusive golden formula that might lead to successful course ownership...he realizes that the time has come for him to retire from the golf course business. His thinking is...enough of the worry, enough of the additional capital contributions, and enough with the negative cash flow. And his thinking is totally correct.

So, these course owners have

decided to hang it up. We were informed officially in mid-July 2006 that this golf course is 'on the market'...and for sale.

Bill and Rosemary, age 80 and 76, respectively, have decided that it is about time to settle their affairs and quit worrying about this under-performing public golf facility. This guy has been buying and selling property all of his adult life...and usually knows when to 'get in' and when to 'get out'. He has decided that the time is right for them to 'get out' by selling this place and try to get their money back out of it! This fine older

couple, so much a part of this golf course for 13 years...has begun the search for buyers...and will try to recover their initial investment. Quite a challenge to find a qualified buyer these days...and quite a daunting task to sell in this overpopulated golf course market!

Very sobering is the fact that most courses these days sell for less than their original purchase price. In fact, it is rather uncommon in these 'post boom years' to read about a course being sold for more than the original purchase price.

Very sobering, also, to realize

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that there are many possible scenarios in which my services...or those of many of our current employee corps...would not be needed by new owners. It is an almost everyday experience to read about takeovers, mergers, sales, and layoffs in corporate America. It happens frequently in our golf world also. I totally expect that it may happen here. We are all, myself included, headed for some major changes here at NCCC in the next 12-16 months.

What a change from the golden days of course ownership of 15-20 years ago! In checking out the old photographs from those days...it is easy to see the transformation of this golf course from then until now...twelve years later. The golf course has changed and improved so much during that period of time. This is a much better golf course than it was twelve years ago. It's a shame that all of that improvement probably will not be recaptured in the selling price.

The original ownership group, of which Bill and Rosemary Norton were a part, bought this rag-tag,

unfinished golf course back in March of 1994. Those original partners, by virtue of a very strong selling price, enjoyed the appreciation of investment that will be impossible to duplicate, or even approach, given the current economic climate in the world of golf.

B&R(Bill&Rosemary) bought this course in 1999 from those former partners...when golf was much stronger financially and golf rounds much easier to count. They had just sold off their banking interests and had money to reinvest...or watch it go off to Uncle Sam. The need to reinvest and a desire to stay involved in something combining agriculture and business prompted their purchase of this golf facility.

Since spring of 1999, B&R have employed five different golf professionals and five different food & beverage managers. Numerous employees have come and gone over the past thirteen golf seasons...with most of them being good people who made a positive connection and contribution to Nettle Creek. Others though, have

left their mark in a decidedly negative way, are disposed of and quickly forgotten.

In fact, three long serving golf course employees informed me just this morning that they will be returning to Mexico in mid-November...for the duration. They have been here at Nettle Creek for 8-9 seasons...quite a long time to be away from home earning money for the betterment of younger siblings and others left at home. It gives me a strong premonition that things here are starting to break up a little bit.

The greatest employee longevity, though, has been provided by Deb, our bookkeeper/controller...and myself, as superintendent, manager, and vice-president. We are both veterans of all thirteen seasons here. We find ourselves giving each other knowing looks and winks when the latest 'new/old' idea...the 'didn't work then, won't work now' plan of attack...is being verbally espoused by our latest **newbie** golf professional.

By far the biggest problem that we have had over the past eight golf seasons is exactly that. We have had new golf professionals, 'newbies', about every other season since 1999. Each new professional brings with him new ideas, new policies, and new attitudes...and needless to say...new is not always better! Developing any continuity with members, outing coordinators, and the golfing public becomes very difficult when the faces change constantly in our golf operation.

Our neighbors up the road a half hour, by contrast, are much closer to all of that suburban population and enjoy the services of a 14-year veteran superintendent and a 14-year veteran general manager who have both been with them since their opening in 1992. What a difference! While we struggle along at 25,000 rounds...our friends at Blackberry Oaks(a very compa-

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nable course to ours)...annually produce 5,000-7,500 more rounds than we can ever muster.

And, after eight golf seasons of battling it all, our owners want to turn it all over to somebody else, retire, and enjoy their remaining years with a bit more tranquility. A very logical and wise decision...

So, as I ponder my 50th birthday next May...I ponder my future in general. Where will I fit in? Will it be here? Who really wants to hire an older superintendent when there are so many younger guys out there? Unfortunately, age and experience are not typically assets in this business...when compared to youth, enthusiasm, and a higher level of technical training. Interesting though, is that here at NCCC my age and experience have been highly valued over these twelve years. With new owners, I am not so sure.

The key may be to find a different level of involvement that permits continuing to work in the golf business. For example, the reality is that a thirty something guy makes a great superintendent, but typically doesn't have the experience or financial power to buy a golf course or form a course management company. Maybe that is what an older guy needs to consider doing with the remainder of his career.

But I don't feel old at all...in fact, I feel really good. On a good day the mirror will show me a face that is still fairly youthful...while on a regular day the mirror increasingly confirms what my body is constantly telling me. Why do my knees always hurt...and that stiff right hamstring has tightened up again...making it pretty much impossible to squat down on a green to set a cup...or catch a baseball like Johnny Bench. Not that I want to do either one anymore...

I feel that my experience more than makes up for the fact of being

50, but the real problem with being retained by new owners will be the salary requirement. If a local group buys this course, there is a possibility that they might want a partner and be willing to compensate me at my present level. But, given our financial performance lately, it's more realistic to assume that salary cuts might be part of the new recipe.

It's interesting also to discuss the future with fellow staff members or our golf members. They almost all assume that I will be part of the future here...simply because I've been here for so many years...sort of a permanent fixture. I point out that I would be the first guy to get the axe...simply because I am the highest paid salary guy...and the intentions of new owners are to probably operate with their own people.

Long before the actual announcement of 'For Sale,' it was well known here that B&R intended to sell within a few years. The summer of '05 was a really tough one...with Bill privately declaring then his intention to sell out. The difference now is that he is publicly stating his intention to sell out and retire.

So, none of this is a surprise. Lots of time to prepare, to think

things through, to prepare psychologically for departing a course that has been so large a part of my life for the past 12 years. Combining the age factor with the selling factor has led to much reflection and thinking about the future. Any guy who approaches and passes the half century mark goes through this process...a normal thing to do when accessing one's own mortality.

If we all look back on our collective pasts and realize how far we've come in life...it can give a guy a huge feeling of satisfaction. It may have been intimidating at the time...but somehow it all worked out well. It happens more easily when couples and families anticipate and embrace the work involved and the change that is thrust upon them.

The anticipation of change is refreshing and interesting. There are lots of possibilities...some very exciting...about what may transpire as my 50th birthday and the selling of this course coincide as May of 2007 approaches. I look at it as an opportunity to embrace change...and continue to build a future equally as fruitful as have been the past twenty-five years. I hope...for many reasons...that it works out that way. ♻️

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Education Abounds at Field Day 2006



By Tom Schwab, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Turfgrass Field Day 2006 delivered excellent education and inspiration to over 300 guests who took a break from their busy work schedules on August 1st. Attendance at Field Day included 266 attendees and 78 sales representatives from 31 companies. Several distinguished guests also attended including Dr. Molly Jahn, the new Dean of the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, and Dr. Irwin Goldman, Associate Dean of the College. Kirk Hunter, Executive Director of Turf Producers International, was also in attendance.

The day was extremely warm with temps in the 90's and full sun, and the Noer Facility was in all its glory from an inch of rain five days earlier. The research tour was likewise in all its glory with interesting presentations covering many 2006 turfgrass management investigations and findings.

The day started out with a welcome by Dr. John Stier representing the WTA, Brett Grams from the sports turf industry, and Dean Molly Jahn representing the UW-Madison. This was Molly's first day as the new Dean of our college, and we feel honored she chose that day to attend our industry's foremost summer event.

Next the 300 plus guests broke into two groups for the research tour, one group visiting golf turf research and the other group visiting research focused on the sports turf, sod production, and lawn care industries. There were eight presentations on each tour with so many new discoveries to be learned about. Many talks crossed over and had information for all turf management profes-



Dr. John Stier talks sod production with distinguished guests Kirk Hunter and Rusty Stachlewitz from Turf Producers International.



Dr. Chris Williamson talks with distinguished guests Drs. Molly Jahn and Irwin Goldman, Dean and Associate Dean from the UW-Madison College of Ag and Life Sciences.



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Dr. Wayne Kussow always draws large crowds for his nutrition talks.



Graduate student Eric Koeritz talks about futuristic turf management.



Displayed here are a few of the supplies and equipment used to maintain the Noer Facility that are annually donated by industry.

sions. Graduate student Jake Schneider gave one such presentation about using rain gardens to control urban runoff. His work evaluates the ability of turfgrass and native plant rain gardens to filter rainwater and replenish groundwater.

Attendees also learned about new and old turfgrass species and cultivars. Dr. Geunhwa Jung presented his work on breeding perennial ryegrass and creeping bentgrass with the goal of resistance to multiple diseases. Graduate student Eric Koeritz presented his work about managing an old fairway and greens specie that has had limited use to

date but holds good potential for the future.

Attendees learned of the effectiveness of a new herbicide to remove annual bluegrass from athletic fields, sod farms, and other turf areas. Additionally there was a presentation about a new product for selective control of quackgrass and tall fescue. One other presentation focused on pre-emergent crabgrass control products.

There were two nutrition presentations, one for managing existing turf and the other for establishing turf. Attendees learned about new and existing products for control of dollar spot on golf courses and further

learned all about five common home lawn diseases.

Two talks exposed concerns with animal and insect pests. Dr. David Drake spoke about wildlife damage in and around suburban areas. Dr. Chris Williamson spoke about a potentially larger problem of the emerald ash borer, which could eliminate many of the ash trees in our state.

All this information from the research tours was educational and empowering. So was the value from the afternoon trade show. The summer field day exhibitors provided every tool, service, or advice needed to better manage turf areas. This year's participants



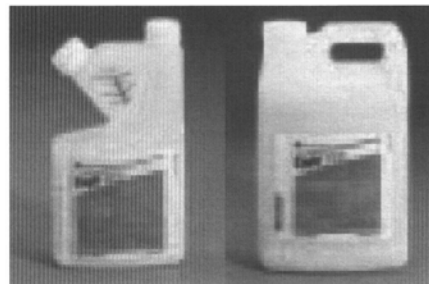
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