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After a few days, allowing the gypsum to work, seed the area and apply a starter fertilizer of your choice. For damaged areas that are not covered by your



A simple battery operated timer can save time and ensure adequate moisture when needed.

irrigation system but might be near a water source look into purchasing a cheap timer for a garden hose. Most of these are battery operated and can be set to run two times per day. These can be just the ticket to get that seed to germinate and the turfgrass growing.

Irrigation water sources that are recharged with runoff water could lead




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to some other issues. The salt levels of these sources may be elevated this spring until we receive enough rainfall to dilute the system or pump enough water into the system to dilute the salts. This spring would be a great time to have your irrigation water tested. This will alert you to any real soluble salt issues that exist. I encourage you to repeat that water test in the fall so you can have baseline history of irrigation water. The results may prove quite useful this spring and in the future. If you encounter problems I would encourage you to talk with Dr. Soldat on the best practices to combat the issue.

In a recent conversation with Morton Arboretum they were seeing rabbit damage to trees and ornamentals. From the picture below you can see the rabbits ate the bark off the plants and as the snow depth rose the amount of damaged increased. This spring might be very hard on young trees and ornamentals. Be on the lookout for those young trees and ornamentals under stress and give them some needed extra attention and be prepared to replace any

that do not survive those pesky rabbits.

As we all know voles love to eat turf under a protective layer of snow. Many of the predators could not hunt them or reach them this winter. When left unchecked by predation and adequate snow cover the damage can be devastating. The long deep snow cover this winter may make the spring on 2014 the "Year of the vole". By the time we realize we have vole damage it is too late to control them so we turn to the damage they leave behind. Don't panic over the damage, many times they will not kill the turf plants and have just eaten the tops of the plants. If this is the case wait until the weather warms enough to promote good growth and apply a light fertilizer application to aid in the re-growth. If the areas are dead then pull out the bags of seed and starter in early May and make the repair.

Remember that the WTA Summer Field Day at the OJ Noer is Tuesday July 29th. The fall WTA Golf Outing will be held this year at University Ridge Golf Course on Tuesday October 7th. 



Rabbit damage will be common after a long snowcovered winter.



I smell a vole!

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News and Notes From WGCSA Members

By Matt Kinnard, Pro Turf Solutions

Career Moves

Lake Geneva Country Club has hired a new Superintendent. **Jeff Heaton** was brought on in February to manage the historic country club grounds, built in 1895. Jeff earned a BA in English from The University of Puget Sound in 2000 and later went on to successfully acquire a BS in Agronomy from Texas A&M in 2007. Jeff has a long resume that includes some impressive golf courses including: Sahalee Country Club in Redmond, WA, Texas A&M Golf Course at College Station, TX, Bandon Dunes in Bandon, OR, Golf Club at Ravenna in Littleton CO, Cherry Hills CC in Englewood, CO and most recently as an Assistant at Shoreacres CC in Lake Bluff, IL.

Jeff and his wife, Jenny, have a one-year-old son named Colton. Although he enjoys hitting the links, it looks like a busy year ahead for Jeff. Congratulations on your new job, Jeff!

Retirement

Long time Wisconsin Superintendent, **Doug DeVries**, decided it was time to move on to the next phase of his life,

retirement. Doug was the superintendent at Reid Municipal Golf Course for a staggering thirty-two years until he officially retired on Jan 3 of this year. In his final year Doug oversaw a major storm water project on the golf course grounds that included the renovation of multiple holes. He said, 'It's been a long, good run. I'm going out on my own terms, so it's a nice departure. I wanted to stick around until the storm water project got done, and I think that was very successful. We'll open as an 18-hole golf course in the spring, and that was my biggest goal. It was the end of my career and I wanted to stick around and make sure that was completed.'

Doug graduated from the University of Illinois with a degree in turfgrass management. During college he worked at Lincolnshire Fields CC in Champaign, IL and interned at Olympia Fields CC. After graduation he began his career as an Assistant Superintendent at Oak Park CC in Chicago. His first superintendent position was at Pepperdine GC in Sturgeon Bay, WI for its construction and grown in. Doug then went on

to be the superintendent at Berry Hills CC in Charleston, WV and Wadena CC in Wadena, MN before moving to Appleton in 1981 for the Reid position.


Doug expressed an incredible amount of appreciation to his wife, Sue, of 36 years for supporting him during his entire turf management career. He said without her it would not have been possible. Now, Doug and Sue will have plenty of time to enjoy retirement playing golf, trout fishing, motorcycling, horse back riding and camping as well as spending time with their two granddaughters. Congratulations Doug!

Birth

Tom Speltz, golf course superintendent at The Pines Course of Lake Arrowhead in Wisconsin Rapids welcomed a baby girl into the world. Charlie Brynn was born on January 14th at 21 inches long and 6 lbs 13 oz. Congratulations Tom!

Awards

The Golf Course Owners of Wisconsin had their annual awards presentation last November. GCOW presents awards for both nine hole and eighteen hole facilities. The award for Best Golf Course Appearance and Maintenance for a 9 - hole course was given to Edgewater GC in Grafton and to Edgewood Golf Course in Big Bend for an 18 - hole facility. The Course of the Year award went to perennial winner, Missing Links GC, Mequon, for a 9 - hole facility and Lake Arrowhead Golf Course in Wisconsin Rapids, for an 18-hole facility. Congratulations to all the winners!

Oh, and before I forget, I started my own business called PROturf Solutions. Please call or email me with any significant news or happenings around the state so we can spread the good news. I can be reached at matt@pro-turfsolutions.com or (262) 720-0251 



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Gary R. Gaard, 1941-2014

By Dr. Paul Koch & Dr. Douglass Maxwell, Department of Pathology, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Editors Note: Gary Gaard passed away on February 27, 2014 at 72 years of age. Gary was a frequent attendee at WGCSA and WTA meetings and spoke on attracting bluebirds.

Gary Gaard was born and raised in Eau Claire, WI and attended the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where he majored in agriculture. After his graduation in 1963, he joined the Department of Plant Pathology in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin. During his early career he provided technical support to the virologists in the Department and skillfully managed the electron microscope facility for many years. The electron microscope was a new tool that allowed scientists to observe plant viruses, the minute details of fungal cells, and the physical relationship between pathogens and their hosts. Gary also provided training and support for many Ph.D. students.

One of these students wrote, "I have many good memories of Gary. He was a bit crusty and didn't take any nonsense, but did a lot of instruction and troubleshooting without any fanfare." Eventually descriptive research was superseded by molecular approaches, and the electron microscope facility was closed. Gary then provided administrative assistance to the Departmental Chair until 1995 when he joined the turfgrass program to assist Dr. Douglas Maxwell who was assigned to take over this program after the sudden departure of the turfgrass pathologist. Gary was a key member of the new TDDL (Turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Lab) along with Steve Millett. Gary handled all the homeowner samples and participated in the rating and management of the snow mold plots. Dr. Maxwell still remembers the spring of 1995 when the crew (Gary, Steve and Doug) went to Gateway Lodge at Land O' Lakes

and saw for the first time the destructive nature of the snow molds. Gary provided assistance to others who have come and gone: Jeff Gregos, Steve Abler, and Dr. Geunhwa Jung.

During the latter years of his career at UW, Gary developed a strong interest in assisting golf course superintendents with the knowledge and means to obtain Audubon Certification. His love of wildlife eventually turned to bluebird management. Gary retired in 2004 but continued providing management of bluebird trails on several golf courses. His article in *The Grass Roots* in the Nov/Dec 2010 issue is a handy reference for those who might want to consider starting or maintaining a bluebird trail.

During Gary's retirement he worked part-time as a naturalist at University Ridge Golf Course, where he interacted often with superintendent Jerry Kershasky.



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WISCONSIN PATHOLOGY REPORT


Jerry provided the following account of Gary's activities at University Ridge: "Gary Gaard was much more to us at University Ridge than a bluebird expert. He was our resident ecological restoration adviser, a go-to person to restore the natural systems of native prairie, wetland and oak savanna on the University Ridge property. Gary had a thorough understanding of the property at University Ridge from research into what this part of southern Wisconsin had been prior to European settlement.

He had a vision of restoring the open front 9 of the Ridge into a prairie and wetland, and the back 9 into an oak savanna. Gary had taken native and invasive plant inventories and had started to control the invasive species by mechanical cutting and herbicide applications. Last year he

mentored an intern from the UW Ecology Department, Dallas Lewallen, the UW football team starting center, on restoring the overall property to its original habitats. This was an interesting duo to watch, Gary at 5' 8" and 155 lbs and Dallas at 6' 4" and 325 lbs, with Gary coaching and pointing out how to go about what at times seemed to be an insurmountable task of restoration."

Jerry continued, saying "Gary introduced me to Dane County Naturalist, Wayne Pauly, who toured the property with us and pointed out that what Gary was doing and planning was the right course to take to restore the property. Wayne and Gary also suggested controlled burns for the prairie, wetland and the oak savanna. At this time I did not know you could burn an oak savanna and

have them survive and thrive. Gary connected with Jim Elleson of Quercus Land Stewardship who conducted our first burn on the oak areas we had thinned out surrounding the back 9 greens. Gary was devoted to the task of restoring the University Ridge property, educating us on what was here before Europeans arrived and why it would be ecologically helpful to return it as nearly as possible to that state. I think you could say Gary was Land Grant Extension work at its best. All of us at University Ridge will miss his friendship, naturalist knowledge and can-do attitude!"

The University Ridge Golf Course is not only a demonstration of what can be done to enhance the natural beauty of a course, but also is a lasting legacy to Gary Gaard who so loved nature. 



Gary Gaard discussing bluebird management to interested onlookers at the OJ Noer Turfgrass Research Facility.

Careers: What to Expect When You're Expecting

By **Brian Bonlender**, Assistant Golf Course Superintendent, West Bend Country Club

It was yet another cold and snowy day for the 6th annual WGCSA Assistant Superintendent Seminar: nothing less would be expected this winter. With almost 50 Assistant Superintendents, vendors, and Superintendents registered for the February 17th event at Whispering Springs Golf Club in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, this year's attendees walked away with a better idea of what to expect in advancing their careers thanks to the renown speakers from across the country who gave their insight on the industry.

The morning started with an exceptional talk by Bruce R. Williams, CGCS, from Bruce Williams Golf Consulting, on developing skills that will set aspiring Superintendents apart from other applicants. According to Williams, setting yourself apart today is more important and harder than ever. With closures of courses, current employees of the industry looking to advance their careers, and graduates from the many turf programs around the country, the employment picture becomes very cluttered and crowded. With job competition high, setting oneself apart is crucial. Suggested steps would be working for a well-known superintendent, at a respected facility, or having the opportunity to see and learn the ins and outs of a Superintendents managerial responsibilities:

project management, purchasing, budgeting, and setting up pesticide or irrigation programs. In addition, Williams emphasized leadership qualities, specifically knowing the value of individuals and empowering those around you, leadership is an essential skill in furthering any career.

The day continued with Joseph C. Coan CCM, CCE, Chief Operation Officer of Westmoor Country Club. Coan focused his presentation on the topic of clear and concise communication as an interviewee. First, Coan established the importance of initial communication with a future employer, your cover letter. He emphasized it be directed properly to whom it is intended and displays who you are, your intentions, and your potential for the position. Coan's advice for a first impression is cleverly captured as "Seven ways to make seven seconds count". These are simple ways to impress, including dressing professionally, being able to talk about yourself easily and concisely, and addressing the interviewer by name. Coan ended his presentations by revisiting the importance of resumes and cover letters. As simple as it may seem, having proper grammar, spelling, and addressing the cover letter correctly can get you past the first "weeding out" of the interviewing process.

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Joseph C. Coan CCM, CCE, Chief Operation Officer of Westmoor Country Club

Coan also warned of the importance of making sure all statements are accurate and to avoid embellishing credentials on resumes.

The great task of an “expecting assistant” was the next speaker, Bryan Bergner’s main point. Bryan Bergner, current Superintendent at Westmoor Country Club, was in a very different position just a few years ago. Bergner was thrust into interim superintendent position as of the first of September and accepted the position knowing he had only a few months to demonstrate he was the person for the job. Bergner gave great personal testimony to what the transition was like, stating that he felt ready, but also admitting there were many things he still needed to learn as he took on the responsibilities of a crew who looked to him for direction and answers. Bergner went on to say he learned quickly to be prepared and to have trust in the management staff in place. In addition to all of the career changes and challenges, Bergner also set warning to the demands that the new position brings to your personal life, explaining that you really never leave the course.

To end the morning session and give merit to Bergner’s testimony, Bruce Williams finished the presentations with a talk on transitioning from assistant to Superintendent and getting the most out of your staff. Williams gave the advice that if you are looking to advance in the field, you must develop a game plan. Williams outlined a game plan with recommended compo-

nents such as 5 year or 10 year career goal, developing protocols for hiring and training, defining standards for your greens, and even creating an equipment replacement plan. These plans and standards that you take the time to lay out are all helpful in making the transition; and more importantly, aid in creating the climate you want and the work you expect from employees. Williams left us with one simple statement to ponder and take forward, “The harder I work, the luckier I get”.

With time to think on Williams’s words, we reconvened in the afternoon to listen to Carol D. Rau PHR, Golf Career Consultant, Career Advantage LLC. Rau works with the GCSAA to help members with career advancements through writing resumes and preparing for the interview process. Carol Rau started by delivering interview tools and strategies, including demonstrating how to talk about yourself briefly to convey who you are and your qualifications within the first few minutes.

Rau also focused on behavior questioning and how to answer these questions in the most effective way possible. One helpful hint was that it is acceptable to stop and collect your thoughts before answering an interview question. Additionally, Rau also discussed the importance of the interviewee being prepared to ask any questions they may have, a reminder that it is as much you interviewing them at this point to see if this position is a true




Carol D. Rau PHR, Golf Career Consultant, Career Advantage LLC



Bruce Williams explaining what he looks for in Superintendent Candidates.

fit. Rau was scheduled to end the seminar with individual assistance for attendees, but due to weather conditions and transportation, she was unable to stay. Before leaving, Carol Rau gave tips and techniques to be a successful interviewee no matter the career path.

The whole seminar was extremely informative and helpful to those who have aspirations of advancing their career within the golf course industry. Thank you to all those who presented and shared their expertise. Another special thank you goes to the sponsors, Matt Schmitz for hosting the event, the rest of the Assistant Superintendent Committee, and all of those who were able to attend.

I would also like to take this opportunity as a member of the Assistant Superintendents Committee to invite anyone who has ideas, feedback, concerns, or interest in being a part of the committee to please contact a current committee member. This committee has been functioning due to the interest from assistant superintendents and solely feeds off the input from all WGCSA members. After all, the more education and networking we as assistants have, the more we can contribute to our current employers and our career. Thank you for any input and please be on the lookout for information on our next assistant superintendent event. 

Spring Business and Education Meeting 2014

By David Brandenburg, Golf Course Manager, Rolling Meadows Golf Course

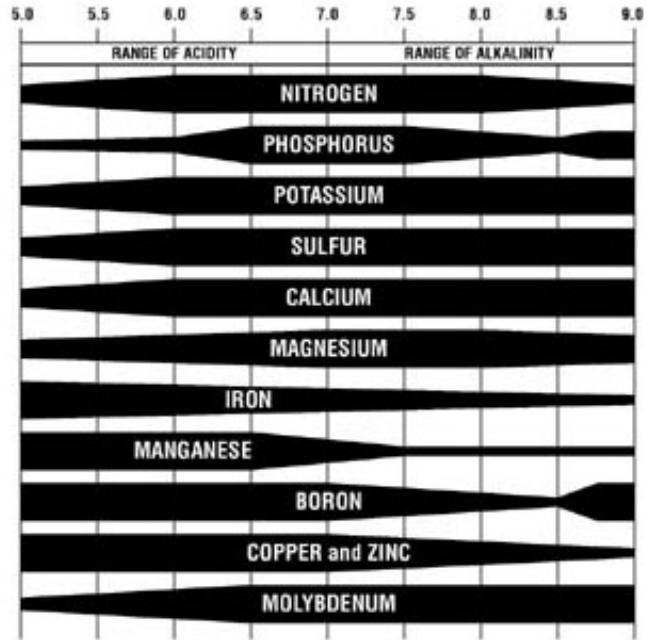
A good crowd turned out for our annual spring meeting at Whispering Springs Golf Course in Fond du Lac. The move to Whispering seems like a good one and the easy to find, easy to park, less expensive location accommodated our group with ease.

Dr. Nick Christians from Iowa State University gave a talk titled Plant and Soil Interactions. He made us all nervous when his first words were “There is lots of numbers so your going to want to take a lot of note”. Then he added we could just buy the book so the room relaxed a little and waiting for his common sense approach to soils and nutrients.

Turfgrass has problems that other areas of agriculture do not see because ag can till and starts their plants over each year. In turf we are dealing with a perennial plant under traffic and often in soils unfit for agriculture.

Dr. Christians had many quotable moments including when speaking about soil science he said “Few fields have so many scams and misinformation”. Chemical soil tests have proven to be quite consistent from lab to lab but what varies is the interpretation. Often turf managers will find the interpretation of their soil test depends on what product the interpreter is selling.

We can tell a lot from the soil test numbers for CEC, pH and buffer pH. CEC at its simplest is the ability of the soil to exchange cations. A good number for turfgrass is 25-30 if the soil has good physical characteristics. You the reader really should have been there because Nick covered way to much material for



Availability of nutrients based on soil pH

me to write in this issue so I will give you a few take home points and you can buy the book along with those who did not take notes.



Dr. Nick Christians discussing soil testing and nutrients.

For grow in on “new” soils often magnesium Mg is the limiting factor in grow in because it is at the heart of chlorophyll production. If you have a new seeding that is just not taking you can mix a teaspoon of Epsom salts in a squirt sprayer and do a small test plot with 0, 1, 2, 3 and 4 sprays per spot. If the soil is deficient in Mg or available Mg the sprayed spots will green up.

Dr. Christians moved on to pH or the number for potential hydrogen in the system. Ph is expressed in a number from 1-14 with 7 being neutral. The smaller the number the more hydrogen ions are taking the place of Ca, Mg and K could or should be.

Fairways tend to have a average pH of 6.5 while greens commonly average 8.2 because of the sand. At 8.2 and above iron additions may be needed.

To raise the pH “lime” or calcium carbonate is historically the best choice. Nick was clear to say “Lime is good if you have the problem lime solves”. Or in other words lime will raise pH, nothing else. If your pH is adequate you do not need lime because it will do nothing for your soils or plants.