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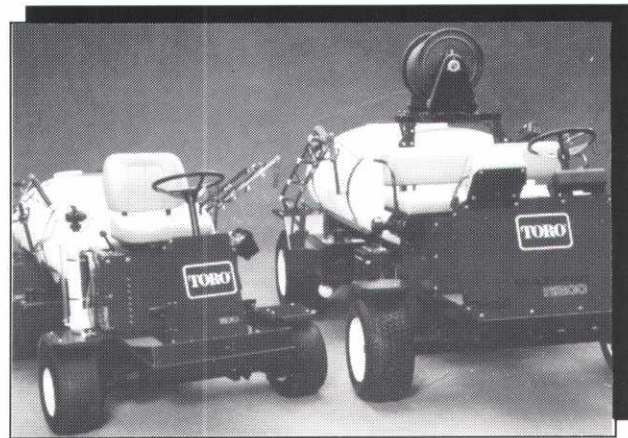
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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

### Weather Or Not



As I write this column, weather warning sirens are sounding as another rainmaker approaches. This signals another day of pumping bunkers and low spots and further delays in completing projects which have already been delayed too long. Weeds are growing profusely, course construction areas are too muddy to work, and people's attitudes are as stormy as the skies. Will nice weather ever come? Weather or not, our jobs are tough enough without dealing with an overly fickle Mother Nature.

I can handle the pesticide and fertilizer applications, daily maintenance of the golf course, personnel relations and other management variables. However, as GCSAA President Randy Nichols recently wrote, we cannot control the one great variable — the weather. As MGCSA President, I've been in contact with many superintendents concerning turf problems. Because of a cool, wet spring, problem greens are again a problem this year as are many other areas. Winter-damaged turf has been slow in healing as poor weather further hinders turf density. Biological, cultural or chemical man made management approaches just don't seem as effective as a few good days of sunshine and warmth.

**Don't be discouraged over situations over which you have no control.** If your course is under water or your turf is thinner than desired, make sure you communicate your concerns and feelings to your membership, greens committees and bosses. Identify your problems and how you expect to resolve them in both the short and long run. And remember, in the battle with Mother Nature, you are never fighting on equal terms. Soon we'll be fighting heat and humidity.

\* \* \* \*

**In spite of poor weather, the Burnet Senior Classic was well received** by the public and the senior touring pros. Superintendent Jim Nicol and his staff received special recognition from the Senior PGA Tour for their fine efforts under trying circumstances. Nice work! As the summer progresses, Jim Gardner will host the USGA Senior Women's Mid-Amateur at Rochester, John Katterheinrich and Interlachen will host the Walker Cup and Tom Fischer and his Edinburgh staff will once again host the LPGA in August. Not many states can brag of so many prestigious events. Good luck and fine fortune to these clubs.

\* \* \* \*

**After long discussion,** the Board of Directors has accepted a break-even financial forecast for the upcoming year. Due to operating profits from the last two years, we feel we can accept even a small loss without having to raise member dues or lowering member services. Let's hope our financial crystal ball is accurate.

**Our July meeting features the Garske Scramble** for member clubs and their staffs at the fine White Bear Yacht Club. Reward your staff for their fine efforts by attending this event. I'm sure host superintendent John Steiner will have an interesting and challenging golf course for our enjoyment.

—Greg Hubbard, CGCS  
President

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## Alexandria Course Praised at Tom Lehman PGA Day

"Gosh, it looks like the Masters!"

That was PGA Touring Pro Tom Lehman's reaction when he stepped up to the first tee at Alexandria Golf Club where he played an exhibition match with PGA professionals Paul Azinger, Keith Clearwater and Duffy Waldorf on June 21.

Tom grew up in Alexandria and learned many of his shotmaking skills on this Alexandria course, but in recent years he has spent most of his time on the PGA Tour or with his family at their home in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Lehman's reference to the famous course in Augusta, Ga. was caused by the impressive looking diagonal cuts on the well-manicured fairway.

"The fairways really looked neat, and so did the entire course," said the former University of Minnesota golf star who, after several attempts, finally made it to stay on the "Big Tour." He has done well ever since.

"We all liked it (the course) a lot,

and the grounds crew deserves a lot of praise," Lehman said.

Credit for the attractive appearance of the Alex course, site of the popular Resorters tournament, goes to Head Superintendent Steve Hamelau, who has been here for 13 years, and his crew.


"We made every effort to get the course in great shape for Tom Lehman PGA Day, just like we do for the

Resorters," said Hamelau, who also is an excellent fishing guide, producer of fishing videos and TV fishing analyst on television. *(But more on that in a future story.)*

"We also paid particular attention to the sand in the bunkers," Hamelau said. "We wanted true, sharp edges so that they looked nice for the galleries and played well. Moreover, with all the rains we had, we wanted to make sure

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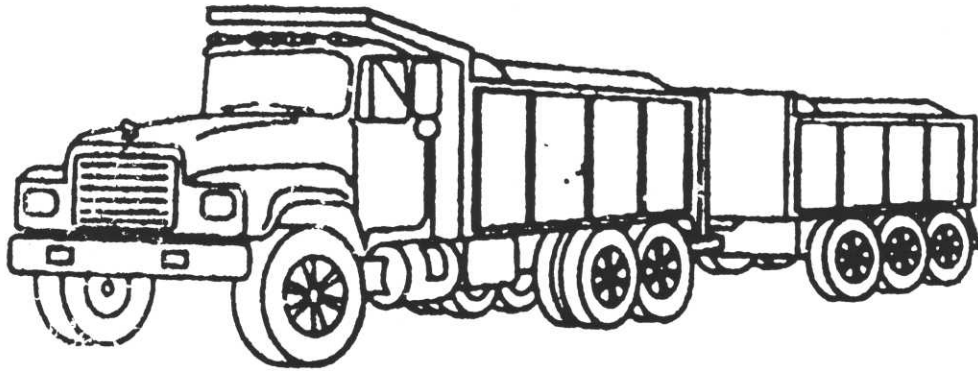
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# Pythium Picks on the Unwary

Like a lot of golf course superintendents in and around Chicago, Len Berg never ranked Pythium blight very high on his list of dangerous turf diseases. In fact, during his 18 years overseeing the Village Green Golf Course in Woodbridge, Berg had never really seen that much of it. So, in 1991 when he took over the reins at Cress Creek Country Club in nearby Naperville, Pythium blight was one of the last things on his mind.

That was in July. Less than a month later, Berg arrived at work one morning to find Pythium blight riding roughshod over his ryegrass and bentgrass fairways.

**"It caught me totally off guard,"** he admits. "Thirty percent of the grass in some fairways had died overnight."

But as dramatic as his tale is, Berg's experience is not unique. Nick Hongisto, superintendent at Schaumburg Golf Course, suffered a similar shock only a year earlier. In August, patches of his bentgrass fairways were dying, and he didn't know why. By the time he diagnosed the problem, it was too late. "It turned out to be Pythium," he says. "Before we knew it, the turf was dead. It was toast."

These stories underscore the fact that even in regions of the country where Pythium is not a consistent problem year after year, it is nonetheless an ever-present threat and strikes swiftly when conditions are right.

**As both Berg and Hongisto discovered,** improving drainage in wet areas and establishing preventive fungicide programs are two keys to stopping the disease before it gets started.

Pythium blight is caused by a number of fungi, but in the northern United States one species, *P. aphanidermatum*, is responsible for most turfgrass damage. The pathogen is omnipresent in the soil and in its saprophytic stage can survive for long periods on thatch on other dead plant material. Under hot, humid conditions, however, the fungus becomes parasitic and attacks healthy grass.

**Dark, circular patches of turf, usually concentrated in the wettest areas of the course, signal initial Pythium infection.** Early in the day, individual blades of grass within these areas appear water-soaked and feel greasy when rubbed between the fingers. As infected leaves dry out, they take on a tannish hue and appear shriveled. If humid or wet conditions persist, white cottony mycelial mats grow over the area.

While most grasses are vulnerable to Pythium, bentgrass and ryegrass are particularly susceptible, especially in low-lying or poorly drained areas that have little air circulation. Considering these criteria, both golf courses seem to have been custom-made for Pythium outbreaks.

Built in the late 1950s, Cress Creek's 140 acres wind through a tree-filled subdivision that is elevated up to 10 feet higher than the course itself. "The neighborhood was originally designed so that the golf course would absorb all the water from the yards and streets," Berg says, "so it is basically a floodplain." Houses and a forest of mature hardwood trees surrounding the course cut off any ventilat-

ing breezes, especially in the prime Pythium months of July and August. In addition, a dense layer of clay underlies much of the course, making drainage problems even worse.

The course at Schaumburg, built in the 1920s, is more open than Cress Creek, but pocked with low spots and until recently almost devoid of drainage. As part of Schaumburg's six-year rebuilding plan, drainage tiles will be installed over the entire course. Already, about a mile of new tiles have been put in place, Hongisto says. Designed to rid the course of excess water as rapidly as possible, the new system should also eliminate the environmental conditions that Pythium thrives in.

**Len Berg's aggressive campaign to dissuade Pythium** at Cress Creek started from the ground up, too.

In the fall of 1991, he rebuilt all the course's catch basins and replaced its old network of 4-inch drain pipes with greater capacity 6-inch pipes. Gravel wet wells were installed near existing drains to allow for even more downward movement of surface water. Last year he built 40 new drains along the fairways. In addition, to providing better draining, Berg aerates trouble spots at least twice every year.

Both superintendents also have initiated preventive fungicide programs to ensure that Pythium never gets the upper hand again.

"During the first week in July we make our first preventive application for Pythium on the fairways" Berg says. "We'll follow that every two weeks until the middle of August." He usually schedules four applications, but in 1992, an unusually cool year in Illinois, he found three applications sufficient. His fungicide of choice is Chipco Aliette fosetyl-Al brand fungicide because of its effectiveness against Pythium and its long-lasting systemic activity.

"I know Pythium can run through this golf course rapidly, so I must feel comfortable with the products I pick to control it. When we spray Aliette for an outbreak of Pythium, I'm confident that when I come back in the morning we're protected and that in two weeks it will still be working."

**Hongisto takes more of a wait-and-see approach** to controlling Pythium, applying Chipco Aliette only if weather conditions favorable to the disease threaten to linger over a period of days. He also employs several cultural practices to discourage the disease, including being careful not to over-irrigate. Because bombarding turf with high doses of nitrogen exacerbates Pythium outbreaks, Hongisto fertilizes his fairways with slow-release fertilizers, which meter out nutrients over time. Since he began treating his fairways with Chipco Aliette and using slow-release fertilizer, Pythium has not returned, Hongisto says.

Although Pythium has not revisited Cress Creek, Len Berg is not about to grow complacent. "Controlling Pythium was completely new to me when I came here," he says, "and it made me change the way I maintain my golf course. I will never let my guard down again."

—Paul M. Baker, *The Bull Sheet*



## Penn State Offers Turfgrass Science Major

The board of trustees at Penn State recently approved the College of Agricultural Sciences turfgrass science major, the first of its kind to be offered among the country's land-grant universities.

Dr. Thomas Watschke, professor of turfgrass science, said Penn State's agronomy department designed the major to prepare graduates for the wide variety of jobs available in the rapidly-expanding turf industry.

"In the past, land-grant university under-graduates interested in turf-related careers could take two or three turfgrass science courses, within an agronomy or horticulture curriculum," he said. "These programs qualify students in soil or plant science, but don't address the business aspects of turf management." In addition to the curriculum's four specific turfgrass science courses, turf majors are required to take 15 credit hours of basic business classes, such as accounting, business law, finance, marketing and labor-industry relations.

While 17 students pursued Penn State's turfgrass science option five years ago, there are more than 40 students in the program today. Watschke predicts continued industry demand and the inception of a specific baccalaureate program will double enrollment in four years. He adds that 50 percent of the new major's graduates probably will enter the golf course industry.

"The National Golf Foundation predicts there will be 40 million more golfers by the year 2000, requiring more than 4,000 new courses in this country," he said. "Right now there are more new courses under construction in Pennsylvania than ever before."

"With the increased wear and tear on existing golf courses and the challenge of maintaining 36-hole complexes, the golf course superintendent of the future will need both technical and business training to pull it

off," he said. In addition to completing the business courses, turfgrass science majors will be required to complete an internship with the industry, but Watschke says there are enough summer jobs for students who want to work on turf for three summers and earn a good wage. "We encourage students to work somewhere in the turf industry every summer. There are so many jobs out there it isn't even funny," he said. "Since our two-year turfgrass management certification program began in the

1950s, it has established a reputation for producing quality turf managers. Watschke says incoming freshmen may opt to work in different types of management positions for two summers before deciding on a career-oriented internship between their junior and senior years.

"A student interested in athletic field management may work on the ground crew at the Double-A baseball stadium in Reading, or for the super-

*(Continued on Page 27)*



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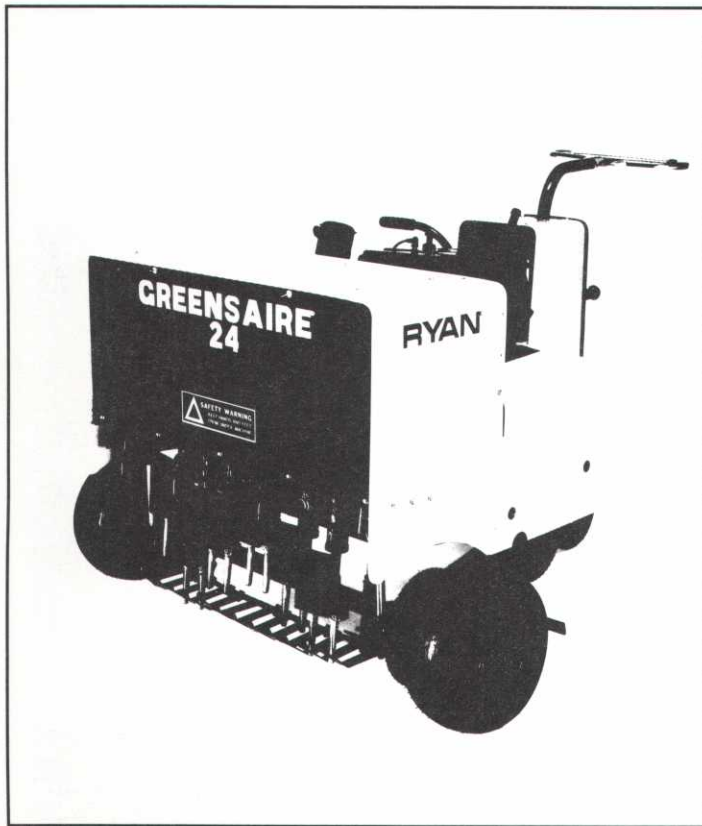
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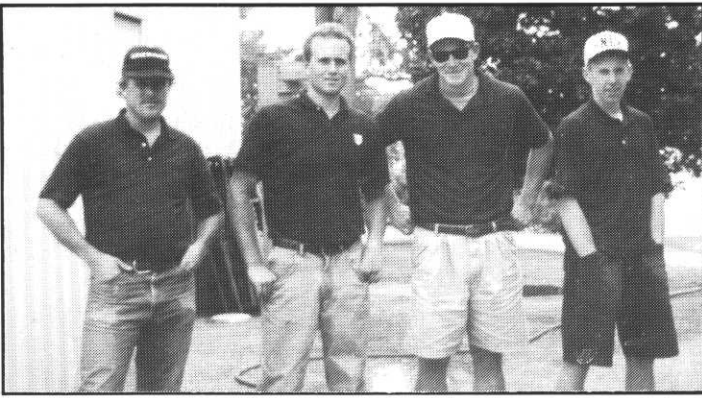
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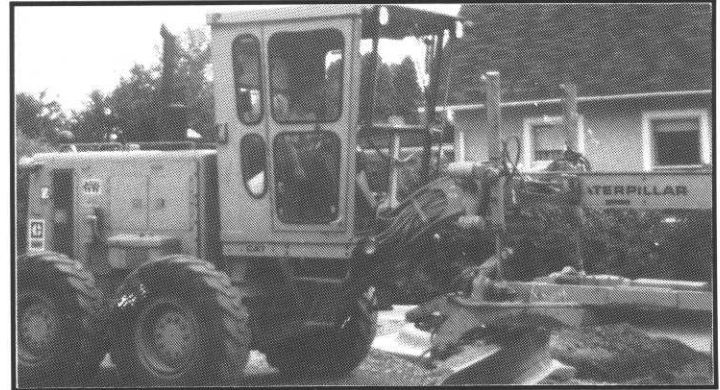
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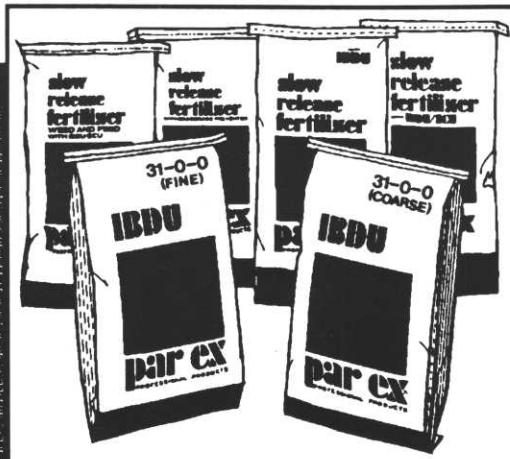
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# GCSAA Offers Time Management Correspondence Course

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The "Time Management" correspondence course was written by one of GCSAA's most popular seminar instructors. Bree Hayes, Ph.D., president of the Hayes Group. She says the course was designed to be comprehensive, practical and challenging—"a real journey of self-exploration."

During the course, the student will analyze personal time expenditures, assess time "wasters" and "thieves," and learn how to set goals, delegate work and stop procrastinating. The course materials also include "essential" time management tips.

GCSAA also has correspondence courses available on the topics of media relations, underground storage tank management and hazard communication. GCSAA and its entire curriculum of seminars and correspondence courses are nationally accredited by the Accreditation Council on Continuing Education and Training, which is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

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