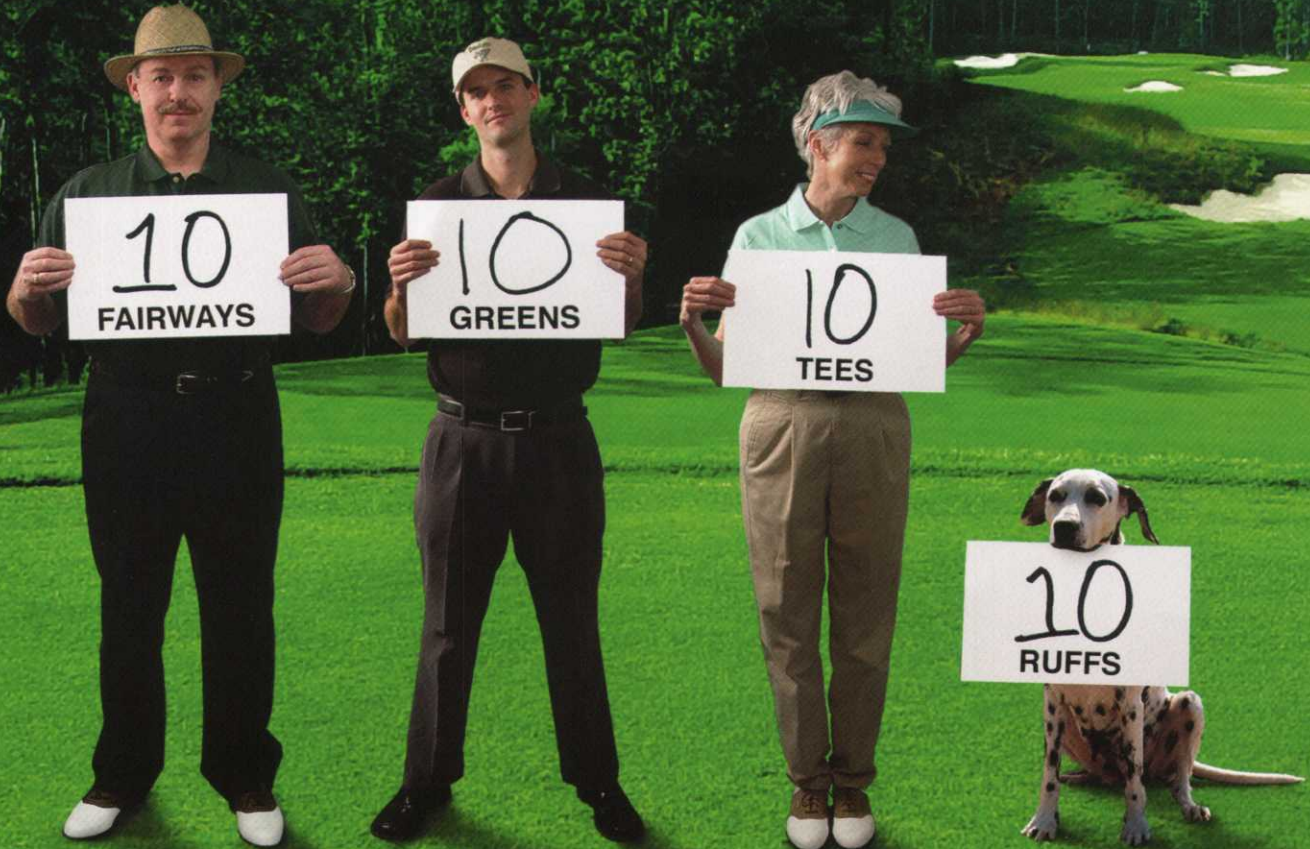


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### About the Cover:

Jim Nicol, CGCS, Hazeltine National Golf Club, far right on top row, represented his club and the MGCSA in a very positive light throughout the PGA Championship. Along with Nicol are 110 members of the tournament grounds staff, many of them MGCSA volunteers, who helped prepare the course throughout tournament week.

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**October 5**  
**MGCSA Fall Mixer**  
Minnesota Horse and Hunt Club  
Prior Lake

**December 9**  
**Awards & Recognition  
Banquet**  
Oak Ridge Country Club, Hopkins  
Host: Keith Scott, CGCS

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Brackett's Crossing Superintendent Tom Proshok, left, and Syngenta Professional Products representative Luke Dant, who ran an event that raised funds for turf research at the 2009 Harold Stodola Research Scramble at StoneRidge CC on July 6.



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### *Don't Believe Everything You Read, Research It!*

By Richard B. (Rick) Traver, CGCS

Recently, my wife Barb, was reading an article in the *Star Tribune* that commented on atrazine and its potential to leak into the groundwater. She then proceeded to ask me what golf courses use atrazine for. I politely told her I thought farmers used it at one time for weeds. Then she showed me an article reprinted from the *New York Times* that in its first paragraph stated "... relied on the popular weed killer atrazine to protect their crops, golf courses and manicured lawns." I myself was a little amazed at the use of atrazine, popular *and* golf courses in the same sentence since I have been spraying weeds for a few decades on golf courses and never used atrazine. I let it go until I had several members ask me the same question my wife asked and decided to do some research. The article mentioned Aatrex and Syngenta so I looked up the label, and after reading the label, golf courses aren't even directly mentioned; however, fairways are and at that only for warm season grasses. My point to this whole experience is that I don't believe that investigative reporters can be found in the daily media anymore. I did about 15 minutes of research and found out that this product isn't used on golf courses in the northern half of the U. S. I do not know how it is used on crops, but why were golf courses included in the article. I talk with many people who bring up items stated on the news or written in the paper and they believe the media to be totally truthful. I am probably preaching to the choir, but please do not believe anything you read in the paper or hear on the news; research it. Many writers and news people apparently believe they are the intellectual elite, and that facts aren't important, they editorialize and tell us what they think we need to know.

**Congratulations to Jim Nicol and his crew for the great job they did presenting Hazeltine National Golf Club during the 2009 PGA Championship.** I had the opportunity to see the course twice during the event, the first being the Governmental Relations Breakfast. The PGA did a great job during the breakfast presentation of promoting golf and emphasizing the economic impact golf plays in the state and throughout the country. Many legislators and representatives were in attendance including Gov. Pawlenty. The second time was Sunday of the event, with my wife and daughter, and man were there a lot of people there. It always amazes me how the turf can rebound from so much punishment by the spectators. Anyway we were able to watch the last eight or so groups on #3 and then again on #12. But the "Tiger Watchers" basically caused us to give it up at that point, after that it was impossible to find a spot where the three of us could see anything. My wife and daughter astonish me whenever we attend a golf event; the same happened last year at Interlachen for the Women's Open. We got in the car and "had" to listen to the final holes on the radio (it surprised me WCCO had play-by-play coverage). Then when we got home my wife turned on the golf channel to watch the interviews and commentary (I didn't even know she knew what channel that was). All my experiences aside, it was a great championship with all the drama and excitement expected in a major. Great job Jim and company!!!

**The U of M Field Day was held on September 10.** Brian Horgan, Eric Watkins and their assistants put on a great demonstration, and the research they have going on will benefit our industry in many ways. I hope you worked it into your schedule, I'm sure it was well worth your time.

The MGCSA Championship is being held at Northland Country Club this year. I have heard great things about the course and how you need to play all putts to break toward Lake Superior. We have been trying to have an event at a northern course for some time. Thanks to Host Superintendent Chris Tritabaugh for arranging to have our event at Northland.

Just as an FYI, last issue I commented or vented on the whole Brett Farve affair. Believe it or not, a couple of days after I submitted that column, Brett stated to the media and anyone who was listening that he was staying retired. Guess what, the day I got my *Hole Notes*, he came out of retirement and we had the whole media circus surrounding his installation of Viking Horns. - *Respectfully, Rick Traver*

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# HOLE NOTES

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Editor  
Jack MacKenzie, CGCS  
jmackenzie426@msn.com

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## PEER-TO-PEER: BETTER TURF THROUGH NETWORKING

*MGCSA Superintendents were asked: The winter of '08-'09 was hard on many golf courses across our state: What were your successes for quick recovery? How did you communicate with your players? What will you do differently to prepare for the next winter?*

At **Minocqua Country Club**, one of the things we did, which I feel helped a lot, was to split the application of our snow mold protection products. We went with two half rate sprays. The first spray was when we started to feel the time was right. As you know, you can never predict what the weather so we didn't want our full application laying out when we could potentially be a month from snow cover. We applied the second half app when the sky went black and snow clouds were moving in. A strong positive of this is that you eliminate unprotected skips or places where the pumps lost prime, etc. Everything will have *at least* a half rate.

*Photo: You can definitely see that the treatment worked.*

- Bill Stein  
Minocqua Country Club

(Continued on Page 7)



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## Peer-to-Peer -

(Continued from Page 5)

At **New Richmond**, we lost some turf from water sitting in low spots in fairways. We aerified, spiked and seeded those areas but they were slow to recover. On a few tees we cut seed in with a slit seeder. When the weather warmed up the seed grew. We lost some bentgrass on a small area on a green because the collar acted like a dam so water draining off the surface backed up. This year we will cut the sod off of that part of the collar to let the water drain.

- Tom Johnson  
New Richmond Golf Club

**The winter of 08-09 was pretty simple:** If the greens were covered, no damage. If they weren't - damage to some degree. Solution: Buy more covers (ugh!).

- Dave Kazmierczak, CGCS,  
Prestwick Golf Club

At **Bunker Hills** we had extensive damage to our poa. We started spiking early April and kept spiking weekly, on fairways, greens and tees. The fertilizer we used early had very little success, we also seeded a few areas with minimal success. We found spiking to work the best. This winter I am going to use green paint, and Early green up sand from Plaisteds on some areas to see if that helps. Then hope for snow cover and deal with it next spring.

- Brad Hable  
Bunker Hills Golf Course  
(Continued on Page 9)



MGCSA members helped out with the early morning mowing at Hazeltine National Golf Club during the 2009 PGA Championship.



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## Peer-to-Peer -

(Continued from Page 7)

At **Oneida Golf and Country Club** in Green Bay, my bad year was '04 and '05. Because of an extremely slow recovery, I figured I didn't want to do that ever again. So after much conversation with peers, professors, board and green committee members, I created a GMP (Grounds Maintenance Plan) that encompassed everything I do culturally and totally based it on what was best for the greens, tees and fairways all year long. I even included my capital equipment wish list to this plan and related it all to help preventing this from happening again. My green committee approved it and we have been living by it ever since with really good results, but not perfect.

The two main issues were preventing future ice damage and figuring out what was the best recovery practice.

Every winter we cover our green complexes with impermeable plastic which takes away the ice factor for us, but I made sure to tell my membership that, like everything else in the world, this wasn't perfect and it hasn't been. But it is definitely


better than the alternative. For recovery, our best option was to sod any damage as fast as and as soon as we could. We built a 30,000 square foot greens nursery, a 15,000 square foot tee nursery and a 35,000 square foot fairway nursery using plugs from aerification. We would have gone larger but didn't have the room at the time.

Since then we have used our sod on small sections on two greens. I cut the sod off the green slightly lower than what I cut it off the nursery. This allows me to pour the sand to the sod at extremely heavy rates and it really levels out the sod, even more than the vibratory roller I rent to flatten it out immediately after we lay it. Even though this is an extremely labor intensive process, I am able to mow this sod at my lowest setting of 0.095 by July 1st and it has been very well received by my members. Some don't even know we did anything. Sorry for the long response but I actually had to leave a lot out.

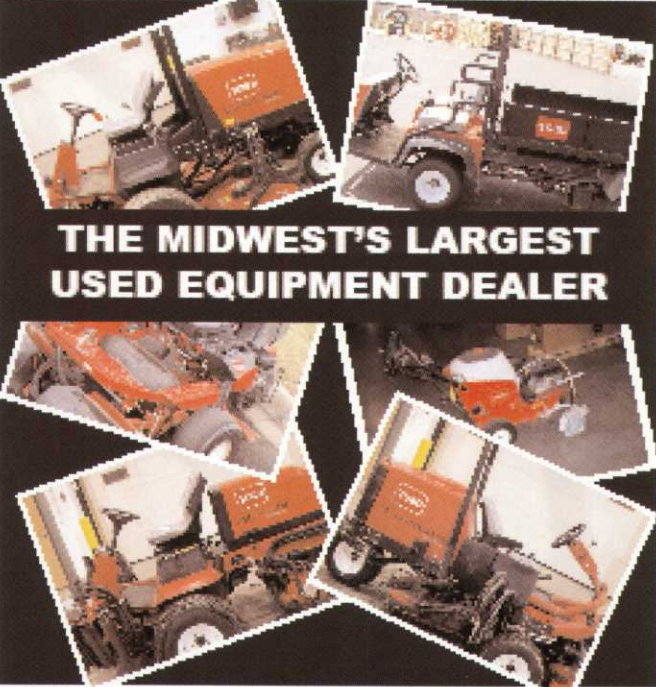
*"After much conversation with peers, professors, board and green committee members, I created a GMP (Grounds Maintenance Plan) that encompassed everything I do culturally and totally based it on what was best for the greens, tees and fairways all year long."*

Hope all have a better spring next year.

- Mark Storby  
Oneida Golf and Country Club



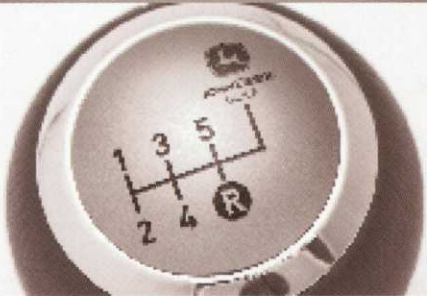
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## BREEDING AND EVALUATING PERENNIAL RYEGRASS CULTIVARS FOR MINNESOTA

By Nancy Jo Ehlke, Eric Watkins, Don Wyse, Donn Vellekson and Andrew Hollman  
Department of Agronomy and Plant Genetics and Department of Horticultural Sciences University of Minnesota

### Introduction

Improvements in perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne* L.) turf quality traits such as color, density, texture, mowability, disease resistance, and stress tolerance, have played an important role in the popularity of perennial ryegrass. Many improved turf-type cultivars do not have adequate levels of winter hardiness for the northern USA and Canada. To capitalize on the growing market for perennial ryegrass, the development of better winter hardiness, rust resistance and turf quality is imperative. New sources of winter hardiness have been identified in public collections of perennial ryegrass for use in our plant breeding program. Numerous studies have tried to use artificial screening methods to measure the cold tolerance and winter hardiness of turf grasses. Although some of these methods have merit, they have not been able to replace field evaluations for winter hardiness. Selection for improved winter hardiness is also complicated by the unpredictability and repeatability of the winter environment making selection difficult and expensive by requiring the use of multiple environments.

### Materials and Methods

Plant breeding activities are underway to improve perennial ryegrass for turf and seed production and are focused on improving winter hardiness, disease resistance, and turf quality. The initial source of winter hardiness was NK 200, an older variety with acceptable winter hardiness but poor turf quality including coarse leaf texture and crown rust susceptibility. Progeny from the crosses were evaluated for winter hardiness and turf quality characteristics. Plants which combined winter hardiness and turf quality characteristics were selected for further

evaluation and breeding activities. The recently identified new sources of winter hardiness are currently being introgressed into our perennial ryegrass breeding populations.

A second trait of interest in the breeding program is rust resistance. Crown and stem rust are the major diseases of perennial ryegrass in seed production and a prevalent disease in turf. Appropriate greenhouse screening methods for our breeding program are currently being developed. New sources of genetic resist-

*"The perennial ryegrass breeding program at the University of Minnesota has been highly successful in developing new cultivars with improved winter hardiness and herbicide tolerance."*

ance to rust will also be investigated by screening wild and landrace collections from the National Plant Germplasm system and Rutgers University that were previously characterized for novel winter hardiness genes. Recurrent selection for multiple resistance genes will be conducted to improve the level of rust resistance in our perennial ryegrass breeding populations.

A third trait of interest is herbicide tolerance. Quackgrass is a primary noxious weed in many states and contamination of perennial ryegrass seed with quackgrass destroys the economic value of the seed. Perennial ryegrass varieties with tolerance to Assure II (quizalofop) herbicide that effectively control quackgrass continue to be under development in our breeding program. Current research efforts include introgressing the herbicide tolerant trait into our elite breeding populations with improved turf quality, winter hardiness, and disease resistance.

An elite perennial ryegrass breeding

population has been developed with a dense, spreading growth habit, high turf quality and improved winter hardiness. We are continuing selection in this population to improve its characteristics and have sent it to Rutgers University to improve its disease resistance and turf quality. Due to its dense growth habit and spreading characteristics, it appears this population would be an asset on high traffic areas such as athletic fields, a growth market in Minnesota. Herbicide tolerance is also being introduced into this elite material.

### Results and Discussion

The perennial ryegrass breeding program at the University of Minnesota has been highly successful in developing new cultivars with improved winter hardiness and herbicide tolerance. To date, the University of Minnesota

perennial ryegrass breeding program has released four cultivars: PolarGreen, Ragnar, Ragnar II, and Arctic Green.

### Summary

The University of Minnesota perennial ryegrass breeding program has been highly successful. Our cultivars and breeding populations possess high levels of winter hardiness. Turf quality has been substantially improved in our advanced breeding populations. Herbicide tolerance has been introduced into some of our advanced populations.

\* \* \* \*

(Editor's Note: Turf quality data and winter hardiness data can be found at the research section of <http://www.turf.umn.edu> and additional winter hardiness and seed production data can be found at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/forages/pdfs/2008Grass%20Seed%20Institute.pdf>)