



# MID-ATLANTIC News Letter



Published by  
Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents to aid in the Advancement of the  
Golf Course Superintendent through Education and Merit

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NO. 11

## WAS SMOG RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT TURF LOSS OF 1973?

Richard Anderson, Superintendent  
Burning Tree Club

With a record number of air pollution alert days in 1973 and the majority of fine turf grass areas under stress during this period the effect of direct sunlight on grass became very evident. Smoke, smog, and clouds can screen out a large majority of the sun's rays from reaching the earth's surface. With the absence of direct sunlight, a noticeable difference in the grass plant can be observed in just a few days. Photosynthesis will be greatly reduced and the grass plant will have to utilize its carbohydrate reserve. I believe this happened this year in that the smaller, younger leaf blades were shadowed by the larger, more mature blades and they had to rely on the outer leaf blades for carbohydrates. This in turn weakened the entire stand of turf. With a continued screening of the sun's rays from smog, the underlying or shadowed leaf blades eventually died. Having utilized most of the carbohydrate reserve from the entire plant the outer or exposed leaf surfaces were weakened and the quality and vigor of the turf was lost.

The stomates on the leaf blade do not open as wide because of this sun screen and the transpiration rate of the plant is reduced. This allows irrigated water to remain near the surface longer than desired and now, we have the already weakened plant also under water stress. Air spaces in the soil decreased so the lack of available soil air prevents the plant from taking up water and we have in a sense created wet weather wilt in a time of drought.

With the turf now in a very weakened state — conditions for turf diseases have become ideal. Many diseases are activated by the reduction of light and wet soil conditions. This year because of the smog cover these disease organisms could continue working in the daylight hours. Fungicides and management practices to prevent the spread of the disease were futile. Because of the lack of direct sunlight the ability of the grass plant to recover was also affected.

With the smog alert now over, *slowly* the affected areas are being revived. The year 1973 will long be remembered as the worst year on golf courses in over 20 years. Unless these larger cities push for cleaner air and better smog controls, 1973 will only be remembered as the year it all

started. Grass does need light — *direct* sunlight not filtered through and screened out by smog.

## THANKS FOR RESERVATION CARDS

by Bob Shields

My thanks are extended to all members who returned their reservation cards for the Woodmont Meeting.

Ninety-two cards were received with 76 people indicating they would attend. Then there were phone calls saying some would like to cancel out while others wanted their name added. The number I told the house to prepare for was 80 and that was the number we had!

The reason for the return card is of course to let the club house know how many dinners to prepare, but one of the side benefits I have always liked is the friendly hand written notes on some of the cards when they are received.

For example:

"I will hopefully attend the October 2 meeting at Woodmont. Always look forward to your invitation — will do my darndest to attend." Claude Barrick

"I will 'with pleasure' attend the Woodmont meeting." Brownie

"Looking forward to seeing my favorite golf course — South Woodmont." Bill Emerson

"Bob — sorry I can't make this one. It's always a pleasure at Woodmont. Hope you have another good meeting." Elwyn Deal

"I look forward to it." Fred Grau

"Hate to miss it but have a conflict." Jack Hall

"Will be out of town." Jack Hewitt

"Deep regrets, it would be great to see Woodmont again." Charles K. Hallowell (Mr. Hallowell was USGA Greens Section representative in 1957 when Woodmont decided to have Bermuda grass fairways on the South Course, and a visit from him would be welcome at any time.)

"Sorry Bob, I will be unable to attend." Percy W. LeDuc (He is Mr. Argyle C.C.)

"Sorry Bob, I can't be there. As you know I will be in London at that time. Have a good tournament." Bob Martino

"I am disappointed that I cannot make the meeting, but I am settling on a new house that day and will be tied up all day. Hope the weather is good and best regards to all." Carl Schoening

"Sorry I can't be there. Enjoyed the article in Weeds Trees and Turf. Keep up the good work. Have you tried K-31 fescue in a stress area — seeded heavily?" Fred Sappenfield

"Sorry, Bob wish I could make it." Dick Schmitt

I received a card from Wayne Jerome in Florida saying he would not attend but no reason as to why he could not. Now we must wonder — was it because he was too busy, too far away or was it because Gay and Dale wouldn't let him come.

We did have one member from Florida, tho, Russell Kerns was with us and we were happy to see him again.

It's too bad the rain spoiled the tournament. We wanted you to see the golf course and make suggestions on how we might improve it. Some of our members said it was in better condition than it has been all summer and accused me of dressing it up for the superintendents. I admitted that we had done some extra work, then added that we always do for big tournaments.

## NATIONAL GOLF FOUNDATION LAUNCHES "OPERATION GOLF UPDATE"

"Operation — GOLF UPDATE" will be the most comprehensive effort ever made to compile all available significant information about golf and golfers in the United States, according to Don A. Rossi, Executive Director of the National Golf Foundation, which will spearhead the survey of more than 11,000 golf courses.

Rossi explained that golf course records maintained by the Foundation, and dating back to its origin in 1936, are no longer valid since many golf courses have changed in the interim — in ownership, in size, in type of operation and in the facilities offered. He said many new trends in golf course planning, construction and operation have emerged in recent years which cannot be statistically measured by the Foundation's present records. He added:

"To function effectively in meeting the growing demand for help in the development of every type of golf facility we must bring our unique storehouse of golf information up to date."

Rossi said the "GOLF UPDATE" questionnaire has been especially designed for quick and easy fill-out, and features humorous cartoons to make it fun to complete. It is arranged for computer analysis, for quick 'readout' of information. He said:

"This is one survey that will reward the respondents directly because it will produce a useful yardstick for every private, daily fee and municipal golf operation. However, for this yardstick to be truly useful, we need much more than a 'token' response.

"We receive enquiries daily on how many golf courses have installed automatic, or semi-automatic irrigation, where they are located, are they successful, what are the problems, etc.

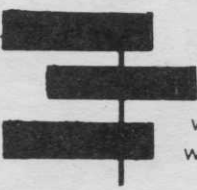
"Other questions involve the use and operation of golf car fleets at the different types of golf courses, mechanized golf course maintenance — even golf course lighting for night play or night maintenance.

"One very important area of information requested is whether the golf operation employs a golf professional, a

course superintendent or a manager — any one of these, or all, or a combination of any two of these. The answers to these questions could indicate a need for additional trained specialists for these departments."

Rossi added that the final 'readout' of the survey will not only furnish much additional important information for the Foundation in helping existing golf operations with problems as well as assisting in the development of new golf courses; it will also indicate future directions for Foundation literature and consultant services.

The National Golf Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to the development of more golfing opportunity for Americans through its facility and activity development programs, is headquartered in Chicago's Merchandise Mart.



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# THE YEAR OF EXTREMES—1973

by *Sherwood A. Moore*  
Woodway Country Club

No one connected with the turf industry in the Metropolitan New York area — or in fact the whole Northeast — will ever forget the 1973 season. We did not have a little of everything, we had a lot of everything. Mother Nature threw the book at us this year in the form of adverse weather (excessive cloudy days, excessive rainfall, and excessive heat), every disease imaginable, insects galore, and then to top all, the summer ended off with a blistering heat wave.

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**MISCELLANEOUS GOLF SUPPLIES**

After a very mild winter, spring broke early and March had some very nice workable days, so all turfmen thought what a wonderful season was ahead for us. That was short-lived — for the rains came and continued. Cloudy rainy weather can make the grass look green, if you ignore the diseases, but when the sun breaks out that little grass plant just fades away. This is what happened near the end of June and the first part of July — grasses started to die like mosquitoes at a Dursban cocktail party.

Those areas that did survive this period met a new onslaught in early August by another downpouring rain (oh, what ever happened to those half inch and one inch rainfalls) followed by warm, muggy weather. Diseases were working on diseases — they had no grass left to devour.

Ah, we thought in mid-August when we had a breathing spell of cool nights, we are “over the hump” and “Poa annua” weather is back with us. So we started to aerify and rip the turf areas apart for reseeding, when Mother Nature let go with another block buster in the form of two weeks of hot weather — nine days of which the temperatures were over ninety degrees. So there went some more grass — yes, even new seedlings to the ravages of heat and disease. Those who had difficulty in identifying Pythium diseases previously had no trouble during this period.

In fact, the grasses have been infested with every disease in the book this year — the plant pathologists are grinning from ear to ear. In spring and early summer, Red Thread or Pink Patch (*Corticium fuciforme*) and the Leafspots (*Helminthosporium*) walked thru the fescues and bluegrass turf areas. Many beautiful bluegrass lawns were brown from leafspot diseases.

Fusarium Blight or Frog Eye Disease (*Fusarium roseum*) was more prevalent this year than many of us have ever witnessed. This disease caused considerable loss of turf on lawns, fairways and roughs this season. And naturally Dollar Spot (*Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*) and Large Brown Patch (*Rhizoctonia solani*) did not take a back seat. They were ever present. Mention has already been made of the severity of Pythium Blight or Cottony Blight (*Pythium*). Fairy Ring (*Basidiomycetes*) was present in all its glory, plus no doubt numerous other diseases that we did not even want to think about.

Oh yes, don't forget our friends the turfgrass weevils. They took their share of turf in May and June, and then, not being satisfied with that, produced a second active brood in August.

The Japanese Beetle is making its presence known this year after being sort of forgotten about for years. Even some resistant strains are being reported, so from now on do not include them out. The chinch bugs took a back seat this year — probably got drowned out — but the sod webworm and cutworms made up for them. If you witness numerous birds working ravenously on your lawn, you had better investigate before the above mentioned critters wipe it out.

So it really has been a year of extremes — with rainfall, temperatures, humidity, diseases, insects, wilt, and what-have-you. Even though it is best not to think about it and try as we may to forget, I think that 1973 will be a topic of conversation among turf men for some time to come. I only hope my golfing members do forget and forgive.

*From Tee to Green Newsletter Metropolitan GCSA — Oct. 1973.*

## NOVEMBER MEETING

The November meeting of the Mid-Atlantic will be held on Tuesday, November 13 at River Bend Country Club, Great Falls, Virginia. Tom Haske will be our host.

River Bend was built in 1960 on 150 acres in Great Falls. The greens are C-1 and 19 with some C-7. The fairways are blue grass fescue mixture as are the tees.

Our host Tom Haske graduated from the Institute of Applied Agriculture at the University of Maryland and has been at River Bend since 1968.

This summer they have been trying to fix a lot of wet areas and have laid over 5,000 feet of tile. Also this summer they have put down over a mile of cart paths. Right now they are trying to get the construction mess cleaned up for seeding. Plans for the winter include renovating some tees and building a green house.

Our annual Mid-Atlantic Golf Tournament will be held this month at River Bend due to rain cancelling out last month's golf. Everybody come early and bring along your golf sticks — you will have a shot at one of the prizes — over \$300 in trophy-prizes.

Golf may be played anytime after 12 noon; Social Hour — 5:30; Dinner — 6:30.

Directions to the club — Take Beltway (495) exit number 13 to Route 193. Go towards Great Falls to Shell Gas Station. Turn right on Walker Road. Go about 3 miles to Beach Mill Road. Turn right and go about 1/3 mile to club entrance on right.

## COMMON SENSE

A few weeks after moving to a new country club, a superintendent complained to the retiring superintendent of the golf course about the poor cooperation he had received from the club's general manager and also about how poorly he felt the whole operation was run by the club officials in general. He had hoped the retiring superintendent might repeat his feelings to the management of the club.

The next time the new superintendent went to the club house the general manager greeted him with a big smile, told him how happy he was to see him and that he hoped he liked his new home town and to please let him know if there was anything he could do to help him and his wife get settled. The manager also mentioned that several prominent members of the club were very pleased with the progress on the golf course in the short time he had been there.

Later the superintendent reported to the retiring superintendent of the miraculous change he had encountered with the manager. "I suppose you told the SOB how poor of an operation I thought he was running," he said.

"Well, no," the old superintendent said. "In fact — and I hope you don't mind — I told him you were amazed at the way he had built up this small club into what it is today; and that you thought it was one of the best run country clubs you had ever seen."

Moral to story: It's always easy to criticize something or someone — but where does it get you if you are not offering constructive criticism. The goal of criticism is to leave the person with the feeling he has been helped.

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## NEWSLETTER MAILBAG

I recently received a letter from Richard Malpass, member of the Executive Committee of GCSAA in which Dick told me of a serious power shortage of electricity they are enduring along with the worst drought they have encountered in 94 years.

As Dick put it:

"Along with you, this has been a trying year. We have suffered the worst drought in 94 years. We are quite dependent upon hydroelectric power and it appears that we may very well have to cut our useage of electricity as much as 30% this Winter. With an all-electric home, this gives one some cause for concern. Even now half of the freeway lighting has been shut off, all advertising signs turned off, and nearly half of the lighting in stores, public buildings, offices, etc. Thermostats are turned lower, air conditioning comes on at higher temperatures. Hot water faucet handles have been removed in many public buildings to save hot water heated by electricity. All of this in a portion of the United States enjoying the lowest electrical power rates and in an area more highly electrified than any other area in the nation. It now appears also, that there will be a shortage of natural gas to add to the shortage of gasoline and heating oils. This should be an interesting winter.

"Unfortunately the power situation affects Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Western Montana, part of Wyoming, and part of British Columbia. So there will be a lot of us in the same boat if we have a severe winter.

"Well, that should be enough for our problems. We hope to see many of you in Anaheim for the 1974 Conference and Show. The Southern California superintendents are going all out to make this a memorable visit."

We, in the Mid-Atlantic, often assume our problems surpass those of any other geographical area - but it looks like nobody escaped the year of 1973 - without going a step backward.

## BAGWORMS

If you had bagworm problems this summer make sure you pick off all bags before next spring. A portion of the bags that hang on shrubs over winter contain eggs which would initiate next spring's infestation.

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# WOODMONT MEETING— OCTOBER 2, 1973

Woodmont Country Club, located in Rockville, Maryland, was the site of our memorable October meeting. Bob Shields, our host superintendent has headed the 36-hole 500-acre grounds operation for almost two decades and has offered his club for innumerable Mid-Atlantic Meetings over those years. We've never been disappointed yet! One reason for this is that we always have so much to see that is different or new from our last visit. This year Bob has recently completed the reconstruction of his 17th green on the North Course. This green was relocated and the near-by pond greatly enlarged to provide the membership with a forever changing golf course. This new green was constructed in strict accordance to USGA specifications and should be very interesting to observe over the following years. Also recently reconstructed was the 7th tee on the North Course. This was the first tee Bob has built completely out of sand, which has worked out very well during this first season.

All of Woodmont's 500 acres involve some form of intensive maintenance except 50 acres which are left natural. Included in the maintenance program are:

- 7 acres in greens
- 5 acres in tees
- 140 acres in fairways
- 150 acres in rough
- 4 acres in parking
- 100 acres in woods
- 3 acres in tennis
- 3 acres in lawns
- 8 acres in ponds
- 1 acre in flowers

Other than the two 18-hole golf courses, Bob also maintains the following:

- 12 Hartue tennis courts
- 4 hard surface tennis courts
- 2 paddle tennis courts
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- 2 miles buried telephone lines
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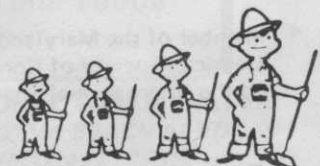


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## MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

The following people have requested membership in the Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Association:

Kenneth M. Cominsky	Class B
William R. Angerer	Class H
Gus G. Constantino	Class E
Averill B. Brigman	Class A
Thomas J. Willock	Class A
William J. Rondeau	Class E
Charles E. Jordan, Jr.	Class E
Thayne A. Loendorf	Class E
John H. Lea	Class E
Charles S. Johnson	Class E
Thomas K. List	Class D
Harold E. Parr, Jr.	Class D
David Harmon	Class A
Richard Stewart	Class D

Richard Fisher requested his membership classification be changed from Class B to Class A.

These membership applications and changes are being published here in accordance with our by-laws. Unless written objection is received within 30 days after publication, these requested changes to our membership will take place.

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## SINGING THE BUDGET BLUES

*From New England Newsletter/Oct '73*

The golf course superintendent was in direct competition with Mrs. Average American Housewife this summer as each engaged in the battle of the budget. Who won? It was a tossup.

Each, however, had to cut corners. And we all know how that is. You cut here and hear a scream there. While

the housewife served the family a diet full of meatless wonders, the superintendent was out on the course virtually appealing for some help from above to keep his budget from skyrocketing out of sight.

"It's a good thing we aren't in the Metropolitan area," a super with a labor outlay far exceeding his expectations offered. "The average cost of labor there is \$4.40 an hour. You have to pay time and a half for Saturdays and double time on Sundays. With the kind of conditions we've had this year, I could go through my labor provisions in two months."

Naturally, labor made the biggest dent in the budget because of the high humidity-excessive moisture pattern of the weather. The only way to combat this was with manpower and the labor bank was hit hard.

The seven-day week for the super is covered in another piece in the Newsletter. But that unusual circumstance was compounded by the seven-day week for crew members. One superintendent revealed that he averaged four or five men working Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer. This is why the Metropolitan New York scale would have killed the New England Association members.

The average hourly rate here is \$2.30. But this could change in the future. There is some strong talk about the Teamsters Union moving in to cover golf course workers. If this should occur, future budgets will take a walloping rise. Right now the average outlay of an 18-hole course for labor is \$75,000 per year. Toss in the increase in hourly rate and those overtime riders and it really riddles a budget.

While labor ate considerably of its share of adding to the budget blues, other factors also appeared to make shrinking violets of once healthy financial figures.

The trend was to go way over prescribed cost on fungicides. Again, this was precipitated by the weather. Whereas an ordinary summer might call for \$3,000 in fungicides, this year that figure was at least tripled and even went beyond that on some hardly-hit courses.

Repairs of equipment and even unavailability of certain parts also had their hand in the battle of the budget. A conservative estimate throws the cost of repairs up 15 percent from last year. This does not include certain items which couldn't be obtained to repair equipment, a setback which caused a switch to manpower again to provide a solution.

The whole idea of the budget being firmed in December and then being desecrated in July has to be the result of poor planning by the country club. Naturally, the super never gets as much as he wants in the line of budget money. This is a natural setting for a natural rivalry between those chosen to allow the spending and those chosen to actually do the spending. There is always a gap in each's thinking.

However, future budgets must contain contingency clauses to allow for unusual conditions such as were experienced this summer. Without such a clause, the superintendent could be placed in a position where he loses his golf course over the outlay of a few thousand dollars. The club member again most choose between having a course hanging by the thread of uncertainty (mostly the weather) and one that has the foresight to meet the demands of extreme conditions.

No one can predict a repeat of the summer of '73, but everyone can be ready for such a horrendous thought. It's all done at budget time.

—Gerry Finn

# IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

## 1973 Mid-Atlantic Meetings

- Nov. 13 River Bend C.C., Great Falls, Va.  
Host: Tom Haske  
(Annual Golf Tournament)
- Dec. 4 Indian Spring Country Club  
Silver Spring, Maryland  
Election Meeting  
Host: Herb Heinlein
- Jan. 7-8 Mid-Atlantic Conference  
Sheraton Inn  
Washington-Northeast
- Feb. 10-15 45th International Turf Conference and  
Show  
Anaheim, California

### PROMPTLY FILL OUT AND RETURN

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