

Turfgrass Matters



May 1991, vol. 44, no. 3

Mid-Atlantic Golf Course Superintendents Newsletter

Ben Stagg to host Superintendent-Pro Tourney at Hog Neck on May 14

Hog Neck Golf Course on Maryland's Eastern Shore is the site for the annual MAAGCS Superintendent-Pro Tournament.

"The first reaction anyone has to Hog Neck Golf Course is 'how can anything with such an ugly name be so beautiful?'" This question—quoted from the newspaper supplement celebrating the opening of the championship public course, July 17, 1976—is probably still being asked.

The property for the course was donated to Talbot County by Mrs. W. Alton Jones who owned Hog Neck farm. Her husband, Chairman of the Board of Cities Service Oil, had been an avid golfer and had played all over the world with the likes of Bobby Jones. Mrs. Jones, who had purchased the farm as a retreat from New York City, loved this area and wanted to provide a place where everyone could play golf for a reasonable fee. Says Ben, "We try to keep the fees in line with what will pay the bills plus provide enough capital income to replace and improve."

The course, designed by

Lindsay Ervin and built by Greenhorne and O'Mara, boasts 115 sand traps and 16 acres of ponds. As that newspaper noted, "Ervin wanted the relationship of the traps to the water to have a special meaning for the Eastern Shore, to reflect the interest here in the Chesapeake Bay and beaches."

May will be a busy month for Ben and his crew of eight. Ten days prior to the Superintendent-Pro tourney, Hog Neck will host—as it does every year—the regional qualifying round for the NCAA Class III. There will be 14 or 15 teams qualifying for their final round. "I enjoy that," says Ben, "because you see a bunch of young kids who really know how to play golf."

Ben has been superintendent at Hog Neck since its opening. Prior to that he was at Nassawango in Snow Hill, Maryland, and before that at the Ocean City Yacht and Country Club.

When not on the course—working or playing—Ben enjoys fishing and hunting. "My spiritual life," says Ben, "is also very important to me." He and his wife


Hilda are active in Trinity Cathedral Episcopal Church in Easton and Ben participates in the prayer breakfasts at National. This year the breakfast was a bit incongruous, however. Held in the Riviera Hotel in Las Vegas, the 400 or so participants could hear the slot machines banging away on the other side of the wall.

Ben and Hilda have four grown children and three grandsons. Hilda, retired financial officer for welfare services, has started a second career. She now works three days a week for the hospice organization in Caroline County. She finds the work as rewarding as anything she has ever done.

Ben and Hog Neck Pro Mark Herrmann look forward to competing with you in this annual event.

Directions: From the north—take Route 50. Left on Rabbit Hill Road for about a mile to Old Cordova Road. Proceed for about a mile and a half to the entrance on the left. From Easton and the south—take Route 50 to Route 309 to Cordova Rd.

For those attending the dinner but not playing in the tournament, dinner, raw bar and open bar will be \$35.

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MAAGCS Newsletter

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to apologize again for having the wrong reservation number in the newsletter last month, and I sincerely want to thank all of you who called in to make early reservations for our April meeting at Hillendale. I doubt if your effort could ever have been more in evidence or more appreciated than at that meeting. Since the office was closed on Monday we had to use the numbers we had on Friday plus a few late calls to estimate the number for dinner. Thanks to your consideration we were only a couple off the actual count.

As May 1st approaches and all of us are trying to get our spring renovations accomplished (through the raindrops) one has to wonder if, or when, this Mid-Atlantic weather will ever stabilize. We can't seem to get more than three or four days at a time to work.

I am told that our good friend Ben Stagg (Mr. Eastern Shore) controls everything east of the Bay Bridge, so let's hope he can get this weather in shape for the Superintendent-Pro Tournament on May 14. Ben always knows how to make you enjoy a day in his territory and I for one am looking forward to spending the day with him.

Remember there are no shower facilities so the dinner-meeting will be casual. See you on May 14.

Nick Vance, CGCS
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**GOLF NOTES**

Our May meeting will be the 1991 Superintendent-Pro Tournament. This year's event will be held at Hog Neck Golf Course. The day will begin with an 11:00 a.m. lunch served at the golf course, followed by a 12 noon shotgun start. Please remember that the field will be limited to the first 60 paid teams. At the completion of the golf tournament, dinner will be served across Rte. 50 at the Ice Rink Complex. Dress for dinner will be *casual*. Your golf attire will be just fine. So, send in your entry and plan to enjoy a fun day with your golf pro on the Eastern Shore.

Scott Wagner, Golf Chairman

RESERVATIONS
301-381-0030

Brown Patch: A Chronic Disease Problem for Mid-Atlantic Superintendents

By Peter H. Dernoeden
University of Maryland

Brown patch is caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia solani* and it is a common summertime disease of turfgrasses. The pathogen attacks nearly all grasses used as turf, but is most damaging to tall fescue, perennial ryegrass, creeping bentgrass and annual bluegrass. Kentucky bluegrass, zoysiagrass and other species are only occasionally injured by *R. solani*. *Rhizoctonia zeae* may also cause brown patch, but it has been observed on only one Maryland golf course to date, and only in perennial ryegrass fairways.

Symptoms

The symptoms of the disease vary according to host species. On closely mown turf such as bentgrass, affected patches are roughly circular and range from three inches to three feet or greater in diameter. The outer edge of the patch may develop a one-to-two inch wide smoke ring. The smoke ring is blue-gray in color and is caused by mycelium in the active process of infecting leaves. smoke rings are not always present and patches may have an irregular rather than circular shape. Close inspection of leaf blades reveals that the fungus primarily causes a dieback from the tip down, which gives affected turf its brown color. In tall fescue and perennial ryegrass turfs, affected areas are frequently irregularly shaped and smoke rings are only occasionally present. *R. solani* produces distinctive and often greatly elongated lesions on tall fescue leaves. The lesions are a light, chocolate brown color, and are bordered by narrow, dark brown bands of tissue. In perennial ryegrass,

smaller leaf lesions are produced and tip dieback commonly occurs. During early morning hours, when the disease is active, the cobweb-like mycelium may be observed on leaves in the presence of water or heavy dew. Perennial ryegrass affected with *R. zeae* turns yellow in circular patches prior to dying. Numerous orange-colored *R. zeae* sclerotia can be found among dead leaves in the thatch. Sclerotia of *R. solani* are brown to black and are not nearly as abundantly produced as those of *R. zeae*.

Predisposing conditions

Environmental conditions that favor disease development are day temperatures above 85F and high relative humidity. A night temperature above 68F is perhaps the most critical environmental requirement for disease development. although textbooks underscore the importance of high surface moisture in disease severity, the disease can be very damaging to wilted tall fescue and perennial ryegrass if the relative humidity is high. Late spring and summer application of fertilizers, in particular water soluble nitrogen fertilizers, may increase disease injury from brown patch. Frequent evening or night-time watering or showers will greatly increase disease injury. Avoiding nitrogen applications when the disease is active and irrigating early in the day are the only cultural practices that may help alleviate brown patch. shifts in weather that result in cool night-time temperatures will result in a marked reduction in brown patch severity. Once disease progress is

stopped by cool temperatures it often takes seven to 10 days for brown patch to become destructive again when high temperature stress resumes.

Available fungicides

On golf course putting greens, tees and fairways, fungicides frequently are applied on 10- to 14-day intervals during peak disease pressure periods from late June to early September. In 1990, brown patch was active as late as mid-October. Some effective fungicides for brown patch control are as follows: Banner, Chipco 26019, Cleary 3336, Daconil 2787, Dyrene, Fore, Manzate 200, ProStar, Sentinal, and Tersan 1991. For these fungicides to provide their maximum benefit, they should be applied at the onset of disease symptoms and prior to extensive turfgrass injury. Remember, a shift in weather to cool night-time temperatures will greatly reduce disease activity, and will help to reduce the frequency of fungicide application.

Common Sense vs. Nonsense

It's unwise to pay too much, but it's worse to pay too little. When you pay too much, you lose a little money—that is all. When you pay too little, you sometimes lose everything, because the thing you bought was incapable of doing the thing it was bought to do. The common law of business balance prohibits paying a little and getting a lot—it can't be done. If you deal with the lowest bidder, it is well to add something for the risk you run, and if you do that you will have enough to pay for something better.

John Ruskin (1819-1900)

Meyer Z-52 Zoysia — its uses on golf courses

by Brian K. Finger and Frank H. Wilmot
Summit Hall Turf Farm, Inc.

Meyer Z-52 Zoysia was named in honor of Frank Meyer, a plant explorer for the U.S.D.A. On one of his trips to the Orient, he sent back zoysia seed to the U.S.D.A. "Meyer" was the 52nd seedling selected out of one of these seed lots. Dr. Fred Grau, who was the Director of the U.S.G.A. Greens Section, was responsible for evaluating these zoysia selections at Beltsville, Maryland. He felt that Z-52 showed the best potential for this area.

Meyer Z-52 Zoysia has been in the commercial marketplace since 1951. No other improved turfgrass variety has enjoyed such longevity. This stands to reason, since the attributes and characteristics of

Meyer Zoysia are as, if not more, important today than 40 years ago. The number of varieties and species of grasses today allows great flexibility in choosing a particular turfgrass for a particular situation. When that situation requires a drought tolerant, slow growing, low maintenance grass with exceptional density, Zoysia should be considered.

Uses of Meyer Z-52 Zoysia

Sand Bunkers.

Meyer Z-52 Zoysia provides an excellent playing surface around sand bunkers. In addition, it can cut down on your maintenance considerably.

The slow rate of growth reduces the total number of mowings required to keep the bunker manicured. This slower rate minimizes hand edging, an application of Round Up in May and Round Up/Surflan in early September will keep a nice edge on the trap.

Once the zoysia has gone dormant, it provides an attractive outline to the sand bunker. Even in its dormant condition, the playing surface is excellent. All hand mowing around the trap can be eliminated from October to about May when the zoysia is dormant. An area two or three strips wide around the bunker is sufficient. The zoysia should be

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laid parallel to the outline of the bunker. After ground preparation and installation, the zoysia sod should be topdressed. This eliminates the seams and minimizes scalping associated with lowering the height of cut.

Tees.

Meyer Z-52 Zoysia works especially well as a summer (late April-October) teeing surface. With a good fertility program and regular tee marker changes, it can repair itself. Zoysia works out well on a practice tee as well as playing tees.

The ideal situation is to have an alternate tee of cool-season grasses for play when the zoysia is dormant. If this isn't possible, an alternative would be to keep play on a limited area of the dormant zoysia tee and wear it out. This small area could then be resodded before summer play.

After ground preparation and installation, the zoysia sod should be topdressed.

Target Greens on Driving Ranges.

The different texture and color of Meyer Z-52 Zoysia provide an excellent turf for target greens. Even the dormant color in the winter months is pleasing and stands out against the cool-season grasses.

Zoysia's low maintenance requirements and its slow rate of growth resulting in fewer mowings are all advantages zoysia offers in this situation.

Moving Dormant Zoysia Sod.

Zoysia sod can be transplanted successfully when dormant. In fact, it can be moved right up until the ground freezes late in the year.

Do your usual ground preparation, lay the sod, and then do a thorough job of topdressing. This topdressing provides protection, levels the surface, and covers the seams. Water as required to prevent drying of the sod. Once the sod is frozen for the winter, the water requirement is elimi-

nated until it thaws in the spring.

In the spring, you can start mowing the zoysia at whatever cutting height desired. If you start mowing when dormant, you will minimize any scalping associated with lowering the cutting height during the growing season.

EDITOR'S DESK

Editor Betty Ford is now facicized. (One un-unabridged dictionary defines this as, "Proudly equipped with a new facsimile machine.")

To save \$.29 should encourage one and all to get busy writing for the newsletter. Any missiles may now be zapped directly to 301-384-4683.

It was more than kind and generous of President Nick Vance to shoulder part of the blame for the telephone number gaffe in April's newsletter. Let it be known that Ford's flying fingers and poor proofreading were responsible. Mea Culpa.

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Addressing a Problem

Without a doubt we are rapidly becoming a very large organization and managing the logistics of our membership is increasingly difficult. Currently we keep all membership information on the association's computer. This database generates all the mailing lists, billings and the membership directory.

A membership survey went to everyone with the 1991 dues statement. Many of you have returned these surveys and we have made the necessary corrections, but some of you have not. It is up to you to provide us with correct information so that you receive all mailings and are listed accurately in the 1991 directory.

If you are not sure whether the association has the proper information in your file, a hardcopy of the entire membership is available at all meetings for review. If our information is not current, or you have moved or changed jobs, please see me when paying for dinner to fill out an updated survey form.

We also need to review our Dinner/Meeting reservation policy. Remember, we are a large group and your dinner reservations are a *must* so that we can provide the proper headcount for our host superintendent far enough in advance for them to accommodate us.

Reservations must be made by calling the association's reservation telephone number at 301-381-0030 by 4:00 p.m. the Friday before the meeting. If reservations are not made prior to the 4:00 p.m. cutoff time, you will receive a pink dinner ticket. Holders of pink tickets may or may not be served depending on the availability of dinners.

If you plan to attend every meeting this year, and want to avoid the hassle of making reservations every month, add your name to the **Permanent Reservation List**. Members on this list will automatically be added to the headcount for dinner for every meeting. Those on the Permanent Reservation List who cannot attend, must call the reservation number to *cancel* before 10:00 a.m. on Monday before the meeting, using the regular reservation number. First-time violators will be sent a letter. Second-time violators will be removed from the list.

Please remember that these policies are made to help us do a better job for the association. We are a large organization and we should be professional enough to show respect for our host's staff. If you have any questions, see me at the next meeting.

Rhys Arthur, Chairman
Financial Planning

Loves of the Gypsy Moth

Gypsy moth caterpillars have been reported to feed on over 300 species of trees and shrubs, but some species exist that caterpillars do not like.

As a rule, young caterpillars are more choosy about their food than are mature ones. Some tree and shrub species that are shunned by small caterpillars will be eagerly fed upon by mature ones, especially if they are surrounded by favored species.

It is very important to plant many different species of trees and shrubs. A single tree or shrub species should not make up over 10 percent of the total number of individual woody landscape plants on your property. This will help reduce the impact of injury from all types of pests, not just gypsy moth.

If you are considering planting new trees and shrubs, it is wise to avoid species in the high preference category.

High Preference--Favored by young and old: Apple, Oaks, Alder, Hawthorns, Grey & River Birch, Willows, Crabapples.

Medium preference--Defoliation can still be severe: Elms, Maples, Cherries, Larch, Chestnut, Witchhazel, Black Gum, Boxelder, Lindens, Hornbeam, Sweetgum, Hickories, Sassafras, Sumac, Cottonwood, Mountainash, Pines.

Low Preference--Young will avoid, mature will consume: Beech, Hemlock, Spruces, White Cedar.

Very Low Preference--Not fed on unless surrounded by preferred hosts: Ash, Honeylocust, Dogwoods, Sycamore, Persimmon, Black Walnut, Saucer Magnolia, Balsam Fir, Catalpa, Hollies, Tulip Poplar, Buckeye, Butternut, Junipers, Black Locust, Horsechestnut, Mulberry, Rhododendrons, Mountain Laurel.

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