



Observations from the Southwest

Southwest Regional Update: November 13, 2002

by Patrick Gross

First significant rainfall of the season – Many superintendents in the Southwest were glad to see the rain clouds roll in last week. Many areas received between 1" and 3" of rain to help flush the accumulation of soluble salts and sodium from the soil. As a reminder, late fall and early winter are a good time to apply gypsum if it is recommended in your soil test report so that winter rains can help work the gypsum into the soil.

Rapid Blight – A relatively new disease called Rapid Blight has been observed at a few courses in California during the past few weeks. The causal organism has been identified by Dr. Larry Stowell and Dr. Bruce Martin as part of the chytridiomycete family. The disease affects *Poa annua*, *Poa trivialis*, and perennial ryegrass, but a wider host range may be possible. Damage often occurs on *Poa annua* greens under intensive management and on bermudagrass greens, tees and fairways overseeded with *Poa trivialis* or perennial ryegrass. The symptoms appear as irregular shaped patches with a slightly yellow or darkened color. There is no mycelium or other visible disease structures that can be seen by the naked eye or by a hand lens to help identify the disease in the field. Discoloration and decline most often occur in October, November, and December.

The disease appears to be triggered by abrasive cultural practices (e.g. aggressive vertical mowing, brushing, sand topdressing), a reduction in fungicide applications, and high soil salinity. Cool temperatures and higher humidity typically experienced in the fall may also influence the disease. Dr. Stowell and Dr. Martin are collaborating to study the biology of the disease and develop a comprehensive management program. Preliminary data suggests that the disease can be controlled with a combination of mancozeb (*Pythium* rate) plus trifloxystrobin (*Fusarium patch* rate). A detailed overview of the disease from Dr. Stowell along with pictures is available at his website: <http://www.pace-ptri.com>

If you suspect a possible problem with Rapid Blight, you can also contact Dr. Phil Colbaugh at the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station to arrange sending a sample for diagnosis:

Dr. Phillip Colbaugh

Texas Agricultural Experiment Station
17360 Coit Road
Dallas, TX 75252
Phone: (972) 952-9630
Fax: (972) 952-9669
Email: pcolbaug@dallas.cntr.tamu.edu

University of California, Riverside Turfgrass Website – UC Riverside opened their new Turfgrass Research Program website that is full of great information. The website is divided into nine sections:

- UCR turf Home Page
- General Information
- Research Projects
- Reports on Topical Issues
- Research Conference and Field Day
- UCRTRAC (UCR Turfgrass Research Advisory Committee)
- Publications
- Turf Links
- Search

There are multiple links to state government agencies, turfgrass industry associations, UC research centers, as well as nationwide university turfgrass research and education programs. While the entire website is well done, the sections on Research Projects and Topical Issues provide a wealth of information for superintendents and turfgrass professionals. The website can be reached at: <http://ucrturf.ucr.edu>

Pat Gross is the Director of the Southwest Region of the USGA Green Section



A recent Voice of the Valley Television Show focused on the re-design at Silver Creek Valley Country Club in San Jose, CA.

(L to R) On the set to describe the renovation process were GCSANC Member and Course Superintendent **Nick Checklenis**, Greens Committee Chairman **Art Knapp**, and PGA Director of Golf **Jay Jackson**. Listening intently was host **Emmy Moore Minister**.



Emmy Moore Minister with Voice of the Valley Television Show congratulates GCSANC Past President **Bob Costa** on his contributions to the game of golf and to the Association. Costa, the 2001 Golf Course Superintendent of the Year is also Vice President of Golf Course Management for the Lombardo Group. He oversees all course maintenance at Rancho Canada Golf Club and Laguna Seca Golf Club including its new state-of-the-art range facility. Costa took time on the set to discuss the all-encompassing role of today's superintendent.