

Scout client's property, get to know individual environment

■ "Personalized environmental management" is the lawn care of the future, says Glenn Bonick, owner and founder of Fertigrow, Dallas, Texas

As reported in a previous edition of *Bioturf News*, Bonick is one of those landscaping/lawn care professionals who offer natural or biological programs just in case a client requests it.

"What we're trying to do with IPM (Integrated Plant Management)," says Bonick, "is imitate what takes place in nature.

"By regularly scouting [each client's] property, we can get to know [each individual] environment.

Every yard is different and has different needs."

The Fertigrow program offers monitoring, inventory and diagnosis,

as well as diversified pest management and tree health treatment services. According to Bonick, scouting and monitoring guide all decisions in selecting the most suitable management strategy for each property.

Scouting and monitoring guide all management strategy decisions for each client's property.

Personal Plant Managers—Each of Fertigrow's IPM customers is assigned a Personal Plant Manager, whose job it is to scout a site to assess the insect, weed and disease presence.

Weather conditions are also tracked. Insects or disease are treated at the best time with the lowest possible impact on the environment. Natural defenses, such as beneficial insects, are used, and an evaluation of their efficacy is noted.

Bonick Landscaping was founded in 1982. The Fertigrow division was formed in 1987 to provide individual, environmentally conscious lawn, tree and shrub programs for those clients who may prefer to have a choice. Fertigrow also offers a basic low-impact program and an organic program in addition to its IPM service.

Biological controls to give supers more options and tougher turf

The most effective turf-grass control strategy is disease management, not pathogen elimination.

■ Disease management on the golf course turf is a concern of every superintendent.

The high level of management demanded by both golfer and superintendent is achieved through the use of naturally-occurring microorganisms to suppress disease development.

It is important to realize that diseases are an important component of the natural ecology and that the most effective control strategy is disease management, not pathogen elimination.

Turfgrass diseases are dynamic, and their development on golf courses will change as management practices are varied.

Biological management of disease is one area that will offer new approaches to the superintendent. This would include the use of resistance in grass plants and the

use of microorganisms.

The use of naturally-occurring microorganisms is an undeveloped resource in turfgrass. The goal of current research is to identify particular microorganisms that live naturally in the turfgrass ecosystem and which will control the activities of pathogens.

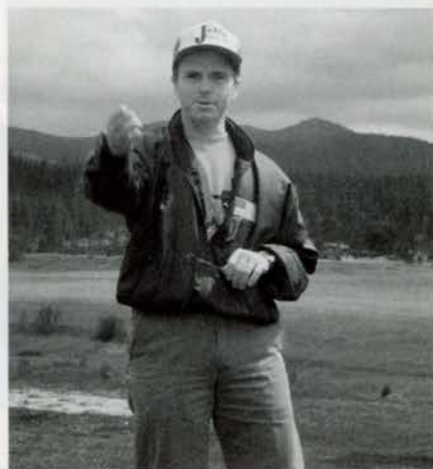
Once having identified these beneficial microorganisms, methods must be developed to insure that they are present in the turf.

At the University of Illinois, we have identified several microorganisms that have the specific ability

to inhibit the activities of *Pythium* and *Gaeumannomyces*-like fungi. These microorganisms can reduce the severity of disease. We are determining if they can be used with current golf course management practices.

We are also investigating if they can be integrated with the use of fungicides. The most exciting aspect of this research is the

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Wilkinson: microbes reduce disease severity, will be used more for control.

use of genetic engineering to develop grass plants that not only resist pathogen attack, but also preferentially attract those beneficial microorganisms that will suppress pathogen activities.

—Dr. Hank Wilkinson, plant pathologist at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, presented during a talk at a Golf Course Superintendents of America meeting.