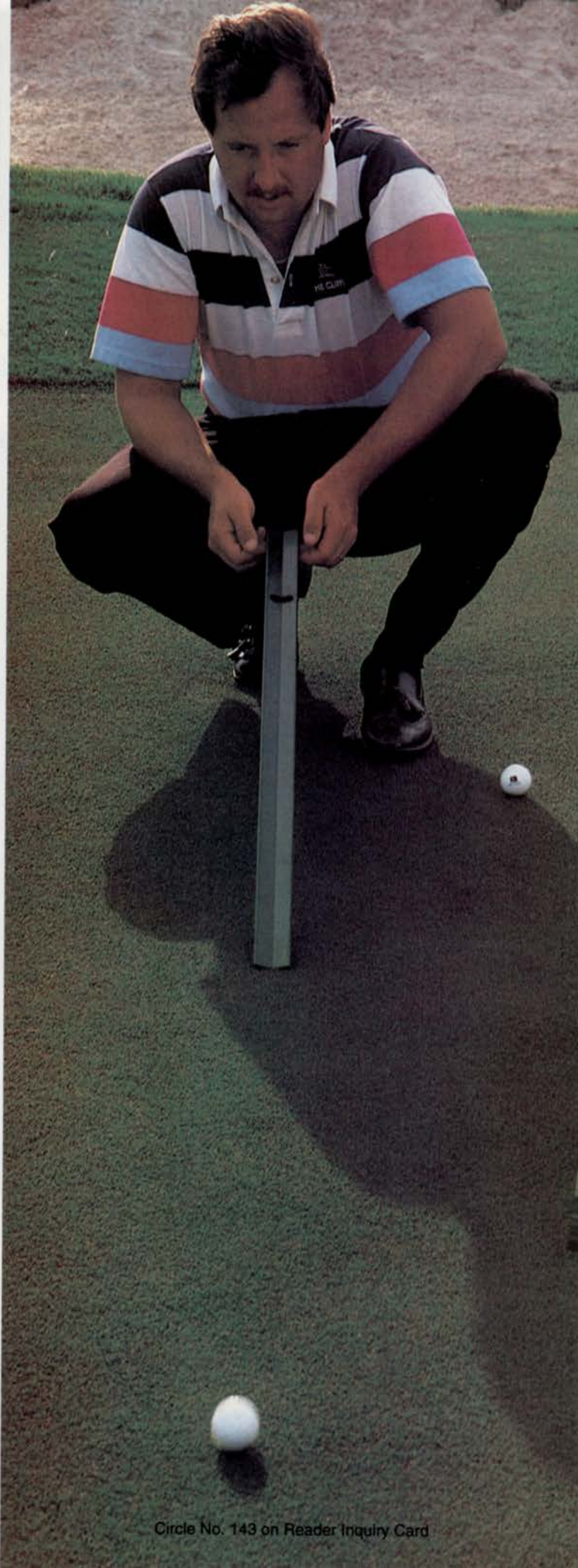
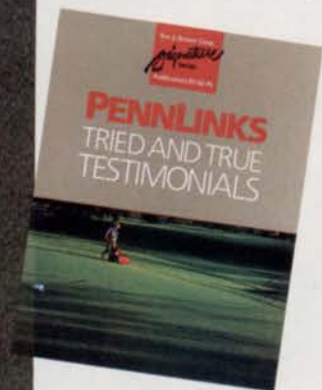


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AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Does the public expect too much from its golf courses?

Larry Kassell, the Pacific Northwest's advertising whiz and disseminator of little-known facts, tells us that golfers take an average of 10 million steps per year on the average golf course green. That's about 700 steps per foursome.

Golfers fully expect all golf course superintendents to keep this downtrodden turf healthy and green. They expect this from the first signs of spring until the first snowfall—sometimes beyond.

Not unreasonably, supers wonder if golfers expect too much.

"We have been greatly affected by media presentations of our tournaments," notes William Spence, superintendent at The Country Club in Franklin, Mass.

Spence, speaking at the GCSAA conference, said maybe the time has come for the public to re-evaluate its expectations.

"I worry about the time," he observed, "when somebody comes up with an artificial turf for golf courses. Is the turf we're providing *now* artificial, in and of itself?"

"We're not going to get perfection. That second law of thermodynamics ('as time advances, disorder increases') will get us in the end."

Steve Cadenelli, the 1991 GCSAA president, agrees with Spence's observations—to a point.

"Golf course standards today are near perfection," Cadenelli says. "But they are geared more for appearance than the needs of the plant.

"Our management practices are now being challenged by a fragile environment. Obviously, things must change. New standards...more in tune with practical and economic realities...must be developed."

Spence and Cadenelli both agree that there's a problem, and it could be getting worse. The solution may be to change public expectations about the look of our nation's golf courses.

"I don't think we relinquish all control and turn over our GCSAA cards to Mother Nature, though," Spence contends. "An

occasional blemish or randomness should not be criticized—just recognized."

Cadenelli's reference to "economic realities," with the recent news from the *New York Times*, really hits home. According to the *Times*, "at least 10 percent of 2,600 residential developments centered on golf courses are in some sort of financial distress."

This puts maintenance dollars—most particularly for those golf courses in struggling residential developments—in jeopardy.

If superintendents are *forced* to cut costs, the golfing public may be *forced* to change its expectations concerning the appearance of golf courses.

"In the future, management inputs will change drastically," Cadenelli contends. "The decision-making process will become increasingly complex, and the future of the game will depend on the superintendent's ability to make solid decisions."

Cadenelli defines quality as species plus input plus technology times the ability of the golf course manager. What he's really saying is that, if input decreases, species or technology or the manager's ability must increase to keep the same quality.

Or, there's the "Spence Alternative" (sounds like a Ludlum book, doesn't it?): educate the public, help golfers accept lower standards that are more compatible with current environmental and financial considerations.

Which will it be? Either way, as Cadenelli says, "The professional golf course manager *must* face the new world with new thinking."

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

INCORPORATING LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

MAY 1992 VOL. 31, NO. 5

COVER FEATURE

23 Cover story: Trees in the landscape

● Planting is the first step in root management that will lead to long and healthy tree life.

Kim D. Coder, Ph.D.

● To get a newly-planted tree off to a strong start, put a 3- to 5-inch layer of mulch around its base, says Mark Timmons, a horticultural consultant.

28 LM Reports: Golf course mowers

Golf course mowers come in many shapes and sizes. Here, we focus on reel mowers for greens and tees, and both reel and rotary mowers for fairways.

Terry McIver

33 Estimating III: Pricing

A thorough costing and documentation system will provide a solid base for managing and controlling your business.

Sylvia Hollman Fee

36 Marking athletic fields

Stripes and lines need to be attractive, easy to use and maintain, within the budget, while lasting the needed length of time.

Steve, Suz Trusty



40 County extension and you

In an attempt to do more with less, extension agents are opting to work more with landscape professionals and less with individual homeowners.

F. Brian Smith

44 Meeting small business needs

The National Federation of Independent Businesses is indeed a voice for small business in Washington, D.C. and all 50 state capitals.

44 Career tracking

Growing your company includes 'growing' employees. When you have them tracking their careers, the employees and employer both win.

E.T. Wandtke

48 Designing, specifying signage

To be effective, a golf course or park sign must meet five basic requirements by using text, symbols, colors and shape. Here are your options.

Arthur H. Mittelstaedt, Jr., Ph.D.



62 Disease control strategies

● What's new in cool-season diseases for 1992, and how to control them, from Penn State University.

Peter Landschoot, Ph.D.

● Florida researcher updates the guide to warm-season disease control tactics she wrote for us last year.

Monica Elliott, Ph.D.

76 Zoysia: a grass for the future

New seeded zoysias will fit in because of lower prices and even lower management requirements.

Jerry Roche

78 Priming and pre-soaking

Laboratory research finds that seed priming has advantages over pre-soaking or pre-germination.



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BPA ABP

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

82 IPM: frayed around edges?

'A lot of us don't understand if IPM is doing us harm or doing us good,' says Tom Smith, president and owner of Grass Roots, Inc., Lansing, Mich.
Ron Hall

85 Radio shenanigans

Lauren Lanphear and Phil Fogarty 'put their money where their mouths are' on a radio program devoted to good advice and good fun.
Ron Hall

86 Doing something about the weather

Mike Bailey, owner of Super Lawns of Gaithersburg, seeks ways to work with weather, rather than against it.
Ron Hall

88 The four 'P's' of training

The challenge, says Tim Doppel of Atwood Lawn Care, Sterling Heights, Mich., is for lawn care company owners and managers to develop *responsible* training programs.
Ron Hall

DEPARTMENTS

1 As We See It

4 Ask the Expert

92 Hot Topics

94 Info-Center

96 Customer Service Tips

96 Events

98 Jobtalk

100 Product Spotlight

104 Product Showcase

110 Classified

112 Ad Index

ASK THE EXPERT

DR. BALAKRISHNA RAO



Choosing the right chain saw

Problem: The Florida Department of Transportation would like your assistance in locating a supplier/manufacturer of an electric-powered chain saw for use in overhead limb trimming. We have specs for air, hydraulic and gasoline-powered equipment, but would like to have a demonstration of an electric-powered saw. (Florida)

Solution: Greg Mazur, Davey's technical advisor for utility services, says Homelite and Stihl have light-duty electric chain saws.

Homelite has models EL12 and EL14; Stihl has models E14 and E20. The numbers indicate bar length. Mazur also says Sears carries the Craftsman line of electric chain saws. Contact local dealers for demonstration.

Electric-powered chain saws will not be very practical for overhead limb trimming. If not impractical, it would be very difficult and unsafe to have electrical cords attached to the saws and power source. The saws on the market require some sort of power source either from nearby buildings and/or mobile generators. I have not seen cordless electric saws designed for pruning.

Drain tube not a bacterial cure

Problem: Does the drain tube cure wet wood bacteria? (Pennsylvania)

Solution: Installing the drain tube does not cure the bacterial problem. However, the drain tubes can help the trees overcome the problem.

Trees having wet wood disorder suffer from gas produced by the bacterial fermentation of sap inside the trunk. As a result, sap may ooze out from openings on the trunk. Affected trees will show undersized off-colored leaves and a thin crown. A properly installed drain tube can help the tree to overcome the gas build-up inside.

There is no fungicide treatment for wet wood disorder. Provide proper watering, fertilizing, mulching and pest management as needed to help improve plant health.

What, how to seed

Problem: In recent years, we have been doing lots of lawn seeding. Which tall fescue varieties would you recommend for use in our area? Would you also please make comments regarding seeds and seeding method. (Pennsylvania)

Solution: Use a blend of at least three cultivars. When choosing cultivars, check the results of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program, which can be found in the "Pocket Seed Guide" mailed with the July, 1991 issue of this magazine, or in the upcoming July issue.

Make sure that you get a certified seed having good percentage germination. Try to use current year's seed for better results.

An important factor in proper seeding is to maintain soil-to-seed contact. It is difficult to achieve this in lawns having heavy thatch. Ideally, lawns with greater than one inch of thatch should be dethatched prior to seeding. Yearly aeration may minimize the

thatch build-up problem if the thatch is less than one inch thick.

As far as seeding methods on established lawns, one method would be to spread seeds after aerifying. With this approach, seedlings may emerge in clumps from aerification holes. The seeds deposited on other areas in the lawn may or may not establish well because they are not in contact with the soil.

Another method is to use verticutting equipment such as a verticutter or a slicer/seeder, and then seeding. Most commercial people prefer a slider/seeder (aeroseeder) which will slice the ground and drop the seeds in the groove in one operation. This method is better, in that it will allow the seed-to-soil contact. This method can also be used to perform no-till renovation. Unless seeding into an existing lawn of fine-leaved tall fescue, the existing vegetation should be first killed by treating with non-selective herbicides such as Roundup. Seed after waiting for seven to 10 days.

After dethatching lawns with heavy thatch, you can use any of the above methods to renovate a lawn. However, the slicer/seeder method would give better results.

Because of excessive thatch in some situations, the sod may have to be stripped first. In this case, prepare proper seeding bed by tilling and raking. Then spread one-half of the recommended rate of seed in one direction and the other half in another direction. Gently drag a leaf rake to ensure seed-to-soil contact. Then spread straw over the seeded area. Keep the seeded areas moist but not wet during germination and establishment.

Biocontrols for bagworms

Problem: Are there any biocontrol programs we can use to manage bagworms on evergreens? Sometimes we also see the bagworms on other plants such as honeylocust. What would you recommend, and when is the best time to provide treatment? (Pennsylvania)

Solution: You can use *Bacillus thuringiensis* (B.t.). It can be purchased under the names Dipel, thuricide or Foray. Reportedly, Novo Foray B.t. has slightly longer residual activity than other products.

These bacterial biocontrol products can be sprayed onto trees.

The bagworm can attack both the evergreens and deciduous trees. They can be found on plants such as junipers, arborvitae, spruce, linden, pyracantha, crabapples, bald cypress and honeylocust. If the problem is not severe, hand-pick the bags and destroy them.

It is important to inspect susceptible plants during May and June and spray when the bags are 1/4 inch long or less. After treatment, periodically monitor the bags for insects inside the bags. If the larvae are still present, re-treat.

Dr. Balakrishna Rao is Manager of Technical Resources for the Davey Tree Co., Kent, Ohio.

Questions should be mailed to "Ask the Expert," LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.

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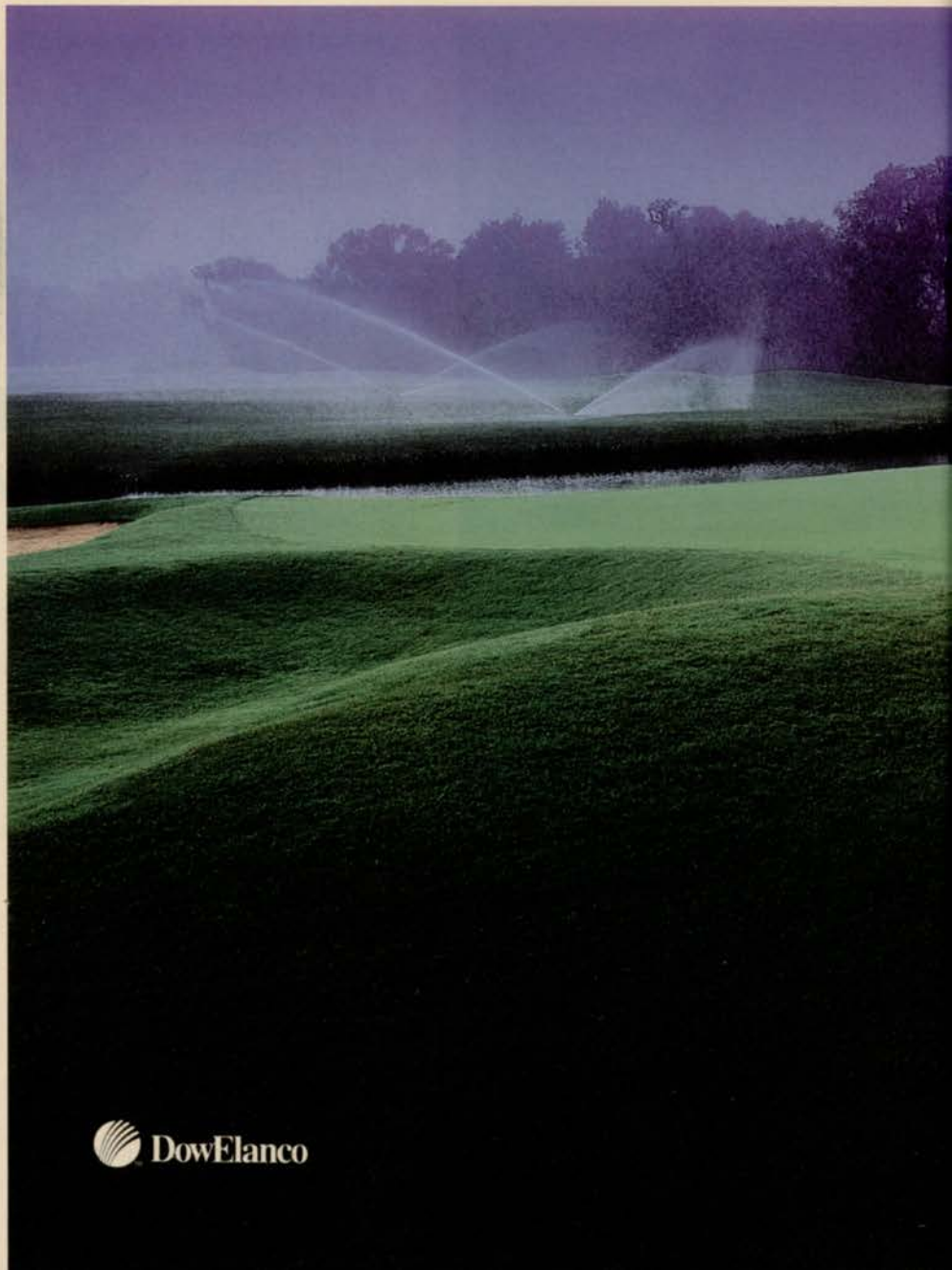
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