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Official Publication of the Michigan & Border Cities Golf Course Superintendents Association

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#### "A Patch of Green"

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#### The President's Message

We are making a change in our circulation coverage with this issue of the Patch of An additional Green. 350 copies are being sent to the Chairmen of



the Greens Committees and to their Committee members at all members Clubs of the Golf Association of Michigan.

This is a new policy that will be tried for a period of time. There are several reasons for this change. One, we feel that much of the information contained in our publication will be of value to your Chairmen. He will better

understand our problems if he can read about them. We will also be able to get to him with explanations when we run into bad conditions on the courses in the area.

We also cover the work that is being done at Michigan State and this will help deseminate this information. We need all the supporters of turf that we can get and this action should help to do this.

Many of our National programs are discussed here in the Patch of Green and they too need some supporters. We hope to gain a few new members.

Last but not least we need supporters in our local endeavors and we hope to gain support in many of our projects such as National Golf Day and the annual golf outing used to raise funds for turf research.

> Your President. Ted Woehrle

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#### **GAM Moves Headquarters**

On March 1, the Golf Association of Michigan moved its Headquarters from downtown Detroit out to 29563 Northwest Highway, Southfield, Michigan, 48076. The telephone number is 313 353-0330.

They are sharing the office complex the PGA, Michigan Section. Their address is the same as the GAM but their telephone is different. If you want the PGA office, dial 313 356-7272

There is additional office space available for allied associations that may want to use the facility from time to time for meetings and perhaps the office equipment when available.

We welcome the GAM out to the golfing community. Good Luck.



#### **Protect Against Late Winter Injury**

Keep the golfers off soft greens or you may end up with a green looking like the green above.

This is the time of year to protect your course from late winter injury.

The two pictures accompanying this note are to illustrate some of the things we should do if there is a sudden thaw of the ice and snow that may still be around in certain parts of Michigan. Get the excess water off the turf to help prevent a soaking of the tissue and possibly setting the stage for cold temperature kill if the temperatures drop suddenly. The other picture is to remind you to keep the play off the greens if conditions are too soft for play or you may end up with greens looking something like This picture was taken at a course where the players decided to play despite the requests made by the Superintendent. The greens were



never smooth again for the remainder of the season. Just a reminder.

Before you can discipline others successfully, you must discipline yourself.

- William Feather

#### Welcome All Readers

Joint Meeting with PGA and GAM

On April 4, 1973, we will be holding a joint meeting with other golf oriented associations in Michigan. We will be meeting with the PGA members of the Michigan Section and the GAM representatives from the member Clubs here in Michigan. The meeting will concern a short Irrigation Symposium covering the following subjects and speakers:

Introductions of speakers by Ted Woehrle, President of the Michigan and Border Cities Golf Course Superintendents Association and the Golf Course Superintendent at Oakland Hills, Birmingham, the host Club for this meeting.

Why Water - (The Agronomics): Dr. James Beard, MSU turf expert

The frustrations of the Superintendent: Bill Milne, Superintendent Country Club of Detroit

What irrigation equipment is being used today in the Michigan area: James Vince, Sprinkler Irrigation Supply Company, Royal Oak, Michigan

If we change to Automation, How do we go about it?: Ed Shoemaker, Rainbird Manufacturing Corp., Glendora, California Lessons we have learned: Walter Wilkie, Wilkie Turf Equipment Co., Southfield, Michigan

The Economics of Automatic Irrigation: Ernie Hodas, Century Supply Corp., Berkley, Michigan

Questions and Answers to follow.

This meeting is on a Wednesday evening. Cocktails will start at 6:00 and dinner will be served by 6:30.

The whole evening should be very educational. Please try to attend and bring your Greens Chairman. It isn't necessary to come for dinner but we certainly would like to see you there about 8:00 PM for the meeting. Please make reservations through our Association or by using the card sent by the GAM.

Remember, Oakland Hills Country Club, Wednesday, April 4, 1973. Cocktails and dinner followed by the meeting.

Although men are accused for not knowing their own weakness, yet, perhaps, as few know their own strength. It is in men as in soils, where sometimes there is a vein of gold which the owner knows not of.

- Jonathon Swift



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#### Carl's Comments

by CARL H. SCHWARTZKOPF
Mid-Continent Agronomist, USGA — Green Section

With the metric system being used in turfgrass research and many of the results being given in publications and at conferences in kilograms per hectare or kilograms per square meter, it can be a little confusing, but it need not be.

The metric system is based on units of ten, thereby making it easier to work with than the present system of inches, feet, yards, miles or quarts and gallons. Since the time is coming, possibly sooner than you think, when the metric system will be used instead of the present method of measuring, the following conversion units may be helpful in your understanding of the metric system:

1 yard =	.914 meters
1 kilogram (kg) =	2.2 lb.
	2.5 acres
1 acre (43,560 ft2) =	.4 hectares
1 kg/ha =	.9 lb/A
10 kg/ha =	9.0 lb/A
1 meter =	39.4 inches
1 kilometer =	.6 miles
3 ton/acre =	7000 kg/ha
4 ton/acre =	9000 kg/ha

How many kg/ha of fertilizer did you apply the last time the fairways were fertilized? The metric system will not only be used by Golf Course Superintendents, but by club members and your family as well. Imagine a member saying he missed a 40 cm putt on number 14 for a birdie, or your wife telling the butcher she needs a roast that weighs 2 kilograms, only to have your son come home from little league to say he hit a home run that was 55 meters long. It could happen in the near future!

#### Cost of Best Job

A Superintendent produces a product that is measured in terms of golfer satisfaction, a difficult standard to measure. The result, in terms of specifying appropriate costs levels is either to do the "best" job with whatever funds are budgeted or to do the "best" job and see how much it costs.

The problem focuses on determining this range; to establish a reasonable budget level; determine how to allocate among cultural operations, and then produce the "best" job.

Boils down to the turf user, his motivation and his willingness to pay.

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#### **Utilizing Earthworms**

by TED WOEHRLE

Since moving to Oakland Hills Country Club in the Detroit area in 1968, I have noticed that growing Poamnua is not the problem that it was in the Chicago area. At first I believed that it was entirely due to porous sandy soil and the good drainage. These, of course, are very important, and no doubt have a great deal to do with the success of growing healthy Poa, but I also had some sandy, well-drained areas in Chicago, and I couldn't keep Poa during these times of stress.

In taking a closer look at a few other variables, I noticed the absence of thatch - I noticed deep roots - more dollarspot because of leaching - an enormous earthworm population, and different cultural practices used in the past in comparison to Chicago. This reminds me of a question I used to ask many of my fellow superintendents in Chicago - WHICH CAME FIRST, POOR SOIL OR POOR GRASS? Did we ruin our soils with poor management practices of over-watering, over-fertilizing, and the over-zealous use of pest controls?

First, we killed grass by overwatering - a great thing this irrigation. Wet soils and grass make a great place for diseases to do their dirty work. The grass dies, the weeds come in and, of course, *Poa annua* is right there with the rest of the weeds. We killed the cutworms and other insects, and inadvertently killed our old friend - the earthworm.

The Oakland Hills C.C. have almost a pure *Poa annua* turf. We've killed all the other weeds chemically dandelions, chickweed, knotweed and clover, along with crabgrass and goosegrass.

From what I understand about the history of my Club, we were about to have the 1951 U.S. Open Golf Tournament, and it was a disastrous year for turf. Several members went to Canada and purchased enough *Poa annua* to seed all the fairways. They got good germination, good survival, and the Club ended up with the finest playing fairways. To this day we still have good *Poa* fairways. Sure, we lose some turf to winter desiccation or ice damage, but seldom do we lose *Poa* in the summer.

A cross-section of a turf sample has deep white roots on the *Poa* almost at any time during the summer, usually around 5 or 6 inches deep. There just isn't any thatch. In checking past records insecticides have rarely been used. There is a great abundance of earthworms - (Polish aerifiers as we call them).

I became interested and began asking questions, reading some old textbooks. Then Jack Welch of Scotts sent me a collection of research papers from around the world, and I was amazed to find out that these little critters are indeed the most important tool we have on the course. Dr. Jack Butler at the University of Illinois, and the Turf Department of Michigan State University have been doing thatch studies, including the effects that the earthworms have on the control of it.

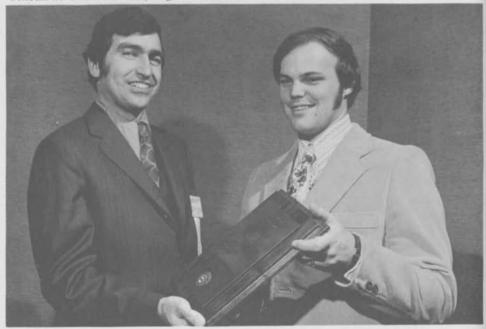
Let me take you on a little trip through the land of the worm by reviewing some of the findings that have come about by scientists around the world. Incidently, most of the work on worms has been done in England, Germany, Russia, and Australia.

Continued on Page 13

#### NORMAN W. KRAMER AWARD



President Clem Wolfrom, on left, presenting the NORM W. KRAMER AWARD to the top scholastic student in turf, Roger Southworth.



David Heiss, Director of the Michigan Turfgrass Foundation, on left, presenting the OUTSTANDING STUDENT AWARD to Don Ratcliff, a second year turf student.

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#### Utilizing Earthworms Cont.

As early as 1882, Darwin recognized the fact that earthworms play a part in the formations of agricultural soils. Since that time, some investigations have been made on the effects of earthworm activity on the physical, biological properties of the soil. Workers concluded that the air capacity of soils was increased by earthworm activity, and the aerobic processes, especially nitrification, were stimulated.

Earthworms eat soil and organic matter, excrete casts, and make holes, thereby perforating and granulating the soil. Aside from the pure mechanical aspects of earthworm activity, it has been shown that the water stability of soil aggregates is increased in soil worked by worms.

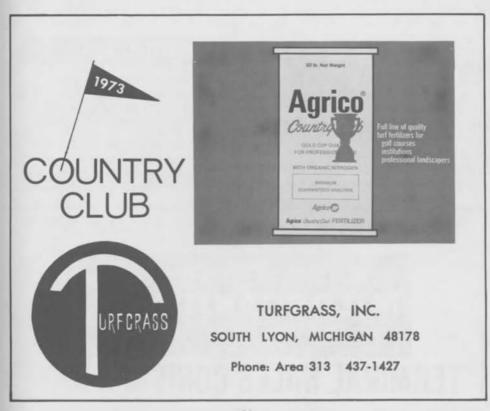
It appears probable that earthworms are important in maintaining good soil physical condition; thus, water infiltration rates are higher (3 to 4 times

more rapid) where they occur in large numbers. Hopp and Hopkins report several populations for ordinary field conditions of over 1/2 million worms per acre.

Studies show that it normally takes a worm about 1 and 1/2 hours to burrow into the soil. 22% of the surface four inches moves through the earthworm's bodies each year. Up to 25 tons of dry weight per acre of earthworm casts are deposited annually on the soil surface. Not quite equivalent to 1/4 inch of top-dressing per year.

Worms are prolific reproducers. The average worm has 50 to 60 cocoons, or hatching, per life span, mostly during the spring. The heaviest worm populations are found in spring and early summer. After July 1 there is a steady decrease. After October 1 we noticed the population again increases. The eggs are hatched during the summer.

Continued on Page 16



#### Wandering Tee Shots

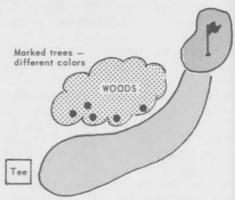
by BILL MADIGAN

With the use of electric carts and fewer caddies used on golf courses today; play has slowed somewhat due to misplaced shots and players not being able to locate their golf balls, especially on courses with a high amount of play from non-members or public play.

The reference system of locating golf balls can be a problem in densely wooded areas. The player, watching his shot, and using a tree or object as a point of reference for location, can have a problem when he gets into his cart and approaches the area where his shot landed. His visual perspective changes and he can have a problem locating his reference point.

In order to aid this player, I suggest using something to offer this player a better reference point. In wooded areas, trees could be marked with different colors that are visual from the tee. Paint could be used or 6" plastic bands placed around the tree at a reasonable height, 6 - 7 feet. They could be marked vertically using high visibility colors that don't interfere with course rules and aid these players. Only a few are needed

in the primary drop zones, parallel or perpendicular to the fairway. Such as:



This is one of the few small things that we, as superintendents, could do to speed up play on our courses.

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Utilizing Earthworms Cont.

Most of the worms found in the fall are immature worms.

Other Factors Affecting Population

Soil pH seems to affect the earthworm population. Few worms are found in very acid soil (lower than pH 5), and this could · be nervous sensitivity to soil acidity, or of nutritional requirements which acid soils fail to meet. It has been shown that worms tend to neutralize soil pH. They can make acid soils more alkaline, or they can make alkaline soils more acid.

NOW, A NATURAL QUESTION

Do earthworms increase soil productivity, or merely live in greater abundance in the better soils without contributing to productivity? It has actually been proven that where poor soils have been inoculated with worms, there was considerable improvement in the soil in a short period of time -2 years.

Here are other factors affecting the worm population. A 35 year study in England showed that of 16,000 worms examined, there were 10 species found of which 5 species made up 95% of the total. Their plots have been treated with six cultural practices, or factors alone, and in combination with each other.

Sulfate of ammonia and sulfate of iron both decrease worm populations slightly. When applied in combination, they become synergistic in nature, and almost eliminate the worms completely. Lime applications, topdressing with organic matter, and spiking or aerifying improve the population immensely. Also, superphosphates improve the population. They still use Mowroh Meal on greens to thin populations, but not kill them completely. Some herbicides kill worms - not certain how - perhaps killing food supplies.

Insecticides controlling worms -Continued on Next Page

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#### Utilizing Earthworms Cont.

Carbaryl - quick results, poor persistence

Chlordane - slow reacting, but quite persistent

Dieldrin and Aldrin - useful

Lead and calcium arsenate - good long lasting control

If you want to thin populations, use chlordane up to 4 & 5 lbs/A, and in two years you will be back to normal.

In conclusion, earthworms do very definitely improve soil structure by increasing aggregate content and porosity, thus facilitating aeration, water absorption, root penetration and drainage. The main benefit, chemically and biologically, of earthworm activity is the digestion of plant material and its intimate mixing with mineral soils.

#### OSHA Guide for Chain Saw Safety

- 1. Pick the proper saw for the job.
- Have a thorough knowledge of the operating procedures for the saw you intend to use, and be sure you can make normal operating adjustments.
- Be sure the saw is properly adjusted and ready to run.
  - a. All screws, nuts and bolts should be snug.
  - The handles should be in good condition.
  - c. The muffler must be operational.
  - d. The chain must be sharp and properly adjusted.
- 4. Use the correct fuel mix and chain oil.
- 5. Be sure your fuel can has a prominent label and a filler hose.
- 6. Dress properly with snug clothing, safety shoes, hard hat, gloves, eye guards, and hearing protectors.
- 7. Make sure you know cutting techniques before you begin.

Continued on Next Page

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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.

- John Ruskin

#### OSHA Chain Saw Safety Cont.

- Inspect the job before you begin to work, and establish an escape route.
- Clean up debris before working if it poses a hazard.
- 10. Make sure other workers stay clear of the saw operator.
- 11. Refuel safety shut off the saw, choose a clean area, do not smoke and keep the fuel off the muffler. Move away from the refueling area before starting the saw.
- Use extreme care when using a saw aloft in a tree.
- 13. Don't rush and stay alert.

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With no outstanding features, just one of a crowd.

When the flag passes by, he stands erect

Hand over heart with proper respect His claim to fame is not material worth His type is known as "the salt of the earth."

> EARL LOGAN 23871 Manistee Oak Park, Michigan

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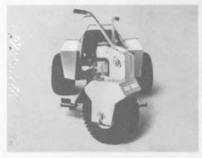
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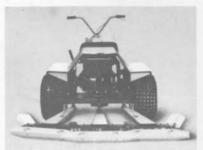
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