

TurfComms



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PURPOSE: To pass on what we learn willingly and happily to others in the profession so as to improve turf conditions around the country.

GCSAA CONF. & SHOW: Arrived early Friday the 12th. Spent about four hours making a quick tour of the Show after registering. Then went to the **Bentgrass Session**. Dr. Bell of OK State U. gave us a few basics for growth in shade: too large a % of resources goes into shoot growth and too little into root and stolon growth. (Ed. sounds like a good reason to apply Primo™). That thin shaded bentgrass usually responds to nitrogen applications by getting thinner. Shaded or not most of root system is produced from Dec. through June.

Dr. Art Bruneau of North C. S. U. gave a quick run down on how the new cultivars had done in the Southeast. I only obtain spotted info. as I couldn't take notes fast enough. Best winter color: A-4 and Cato. Darkest most of the year: 18th Green, Cato and Crenshaw. Lightest - Mariner. Fastest spring greenup: Cato and Southshore. Finest leaf texture: G-2, A-1, A-4, & G-6. Best Brown Patch resistance: L-93 head and shoulders above Providence and Cato which were good; and these three were there again at the top when it came to Dollar Spot resistance along with Penncross and A-1. Although Penncross and 18th Green were not in the top categories very often against the stiff competition of the 20 or more new cultivars. L-93 and Mariner were both low lateral spreaders. L-93 was not a top performer in Atlanta, GA trial anywhere near as often as it has been reported in other locations.

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Dr. Phil Colbaugh discussed his work with fans for cooling bentgrass. He noted that fans are good for removing dew quickly early in the morning. But, also noted that the quickest results are going to be obtained at about 8 A.M. in the morning when the relative humidity is starting to fall. He suggested a heating element mounted on the back of a fan to heat the air slightly might be very helpful. Heating the air lowers its relative humidity and thus it will better remove dew. He noted that at 20 meters from most fans you have very little air movement or dew removal.

David Lowe, a superintendent from Florida, was the last speaker but I'm including here because of the interesting oscillating blowers this superintendent had placed around his greens. These blowers appeared to be the ideal thing for removing dew from greens and or cooling greens. He claims they are much quieter than fans and get the air down where it does the most good, at the putting surface. This superintendent is growing Penncross bentgrass greens in Florida with 28,000 rounds of play, with 8,500 sq. ft. greens. He aerifies 4 times a year with 5/8 inch tines, hydrojects every 3 weeks, spikes every two weeks, topdresses at least monthly, and rolls after aerification.

Dr. Robert Walker, from Alabama, discussed his Sub-airTM research. First, you need to cool the air down before blowing it into a green with a Sub-airTM. So far he hasn't showed any tremendous benefits. The temperature was lowered 2 to 3°F. He also is including Primo applications in his research. Primo helped root survival with Penncross but not with Crenshaw. Neither alone nor the combined treatments of Sub-air use and/or Primo increased carbohydrate levels in roots the first year.

GCSAA CONF. & SHOW 2/13/99: Went first to the Innovative Superintendent and enjoyed Mark Kuhns talk titled Tree Removal. He noted that trees were not a part of the original design at his club, Oakmont C.C., Oakmont, PA. The bunkers were designed to be the chief hazards. Originally a few trees had been planned for shade at the tees but, over the years this had gotten out of hand. They had taken down 1000 trees over the last few years. He strongly felt that "the beautification of adding trees often eventually reduces the playability of the golf course." How do you take down a 1000 trees without getting fired? First, of course, you need permission. Secondly, don't let the members ever see a tree laying down. Get it down and cleaned up before they get to the course. And preach that "tree removal doesn't destroy a golf course it restores it." Not only does it open up the turf to better air movement but by removing the trees you kill their roots and the turf improves dramatically.

From Richard Marcks, CGCS Fairview C.C., Greenwich Conn., I heard another explanation of why there were so many resident Canadian geese. It seems that at one time hunters used live decoys for geese hunting. When the US government declared use of these illegal several thousand geese that had never learned to migrate were released and became the great grand parents of today's resident geese.

After most of this session's talks I went over to the Golf Course Architects Session. I picked up a useful rule of thumb I had not heard before: For every million dollars invested in the building of a golf course you need to charge \$8 to \$10 in green fees to realize a profit.

And for all of us to think about, but particularly for architects and developers? Which is better for GOLF, 10, one million dollar golf courses or one 10 million dollar golf course? This

generated a big discussion over what was making golf course construction so expensive. Hurdzan noted that a million dollar golf course probably does not include land cost. He said that land is under certain conditions donated. Other things that increased costs were: 1) permits - one architect talked of a group that had spent \$3 million just going through the permit process in California. He showed a list of the various governmental organizations that may become involved in the permit process. 2) Union costs in a state like California can double costs. 3) bridges will greatly increase costs. 4) A million for earth moving is not unusual, of a 1/2 million or more for the irrigation system.

One architect noted that satellite photography makes a record of what you did, good, bad, or otherwise. And the photographs get taken and stored on file permanently whether you ask or not. BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING

One of the architects quoted Jeff Cornish, "Design for the A & B players. The C player should be on the practice tee not on the golf course."

After the architect program it was run over to the Zoysia Forum, (Frank Whitbeck, Whitrock Farm Forum?), where I heard one superintendent talk about replacing 419 with Meyer and another replacing tall fescue in the roughs with Meyer. In both cases it was done with minimal seedbed preparation. Mr. Whitbeck noted that Z-net was now 20% of his business and reduced costs of planting to 1/2 that of sod but with 4 to 6 months grow-in.

GCSAA CONF. & SHOW 2/14/99: USGA Greens Section session - Several agronomist talked of bunker renovation but when they talk of putting geofabric in the bottom I shut down. I did like the concept of putting a vinyl plastic edging around the lip as both a barrier and a semipermanent edge. But, the biggest applause on this subject was after a comment that essentially said bunkers were **hazards!** You are not suppose to hit your ball into them. They are not meant to be a high maintenance item. Tell that to the members.

Practice Ranges: The idea of **painting lines** on practice tees rather than using ropes so that danger of someone tripping over the ropes interested me. Also the creation of **fake sand traps** that would not interfere with either mowing or ball pickup. To do these they removed the sod and about two inches of soil and then they packed in a sharp limestone sand material that would provide a firm sandy appearance and left it.

There was a presentation by another agronomist on putting in irrigation heads to water the bunker sand on dry days so as to firm them up. And I would swear I can remember a talk at another USGA Green Section Session of placing small part-circle heads around the bunkers so that you didn't water the sand. And then there was the idea of using small ???curb??? heads half way down south or west facing bunker slopes to give them a little more water so they wouldn't burn out.

John Foy discussed the problem of working topdressing sand into not only the new denser bermudagrasses but also bentgrasses. He mentioned one club had gone to bagged dry sand and was hand applying it, using vibratory rollers to work it in and then trying hover mowers, the latter worked well.

Dr. Noel Jackson, turf pathologist from U. of R.I. and this year's Green Section Award winner, gave an interesting talk on the history and use of organics noting that some composts applied daily through the irrigation system were having some success suppressing diseases.

Pat Gross talked of using special low volume sprinklers to only water the green for those times during the summer when you need to leach the salts out but don't want to have runoff or bunker damage.

NEW AT THE SHOW: **Drive** is a new herbicide with a new chemistry. It was in research tests as quinclorac, or 3,7-dichloro-8-quinolinecarboxylic acid. It is selective with both pre and postemergence activity with both some grass and broadleaf activity. I had a literature search done on that - 42 - pages (about 90 abstracts). Will give a summary in the next issue.

Compass is a new fungicide not yet registered for use or sale in the United States, but one has to assume that if Novartis is handing out technical data sheets on it they must expect registration soon. It is a new strobiluring type fungicide with a very high LD50. The recommended rates are 0.25 oz/1000 or less and according to their data sheet it is good for Brown Patch, Anthracnose, Rust, and Gray Leaf Spot.

Golfdom the old magazine run by the Graffis brothers when I was an infant has been resurrected from the dead. I wish it luck.

end of GCSAA Conf. and Show

CHIPPERS: I now see a fair number of golf courses with chippers. In Arbor Age there is an excellent article comparing drum type chippers versus disk type. You might be able to access this information at <http://www.arborage.com> or drop me a line and I'll send you a copy. In brief the drums may be best for small brush but the disk type are better for chipping logs. filed under equipment

EARTHWORM CAST CONTROL: Also in "Turfgrass Management in the Pacific Northwest" V.1, I.4, is a good article reviewing this problem with lots of background information; not much on control. Washington and Oregon State U.s are joining together in research to find ways of reducing earthworm casts as a nuisance in fine turf. If you would like a copy give a call.

NOAH GORDON author of SHAMAN et al: For one who reads as much as I do it is always nice to find another great author. Shaman is the second in a trilogy I found out after reading the book but it made no difference to me that I read it first. This is a historical novel (late 1800s) of a Scottish doctor and his son. I read and enjoyed it this winter. Read the third in the trilogy (Matters of Choice) after writing the above, and then the first, The Physician on the way to and from the GCSAA Conf. & Show. This first in the trilogy takes place in 11th Century Europe. I liked all three but enjoyed Shaman and The Physician more than Matters of Choice. Your wife might like Matters of Choice more than the other two. This latter book's story takes place in present day Massachusetts, the author and my home state. As I prepare to take this issue to the press I'm reading one of his earliest works Rabbi .