



# CHIPS & PUTTS

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## GAZING IN THE GRASS WITH FRANK S. ROSSI, Ph.D. CORNELL UNIVERSITY THE 2000 SEASON

**All Wet!:** Most of the Northeastern U.S. experienced abundant rainfall and below normal temperatures. Several months were either the wettest or coldest on record. Although there were several weeks during the season where ET exceeded precipitation, in general, there was available soil moisture that provided relief for irrigation systems following the drought of 1999. Still, there were several weeks in early August where humidity was exceptionally low and irrigation was required. Many turf managers reported significant moisture stress during these low humidity periods.

**Mow, Mow, Mow, You Go!** The consistent theme from many turf managers this season was "if you couldn't grow grass this year, you need to find another profession". Clearly, a major challenge for school districts, lawn, landscape, and golf course crews was to keep up with the mowing. The large expanses of fields, volumes of lawns, and amount of rough area seemed to surge with growth with each passing week. The wet soil conditions made it very difficult to get onto the turf, the wet turf made for a sloppy cut, and as a result obeying the one-third rule became almost impossible. Many turf managers look to the summer months to rest mowers. Non-irrigated areas experience summer dormancy that typically slows growth. However, this season it just kept growing, and growing and growing! The positive side of this was many areas of consistently healthy turf with excellent root systems (where the soil was moderately well drained) that contributed to a conspicuous lack of grub damage (many reports of high grub populations were reported with little damage). Also, adequate moisture and warm soil releases a significant amount of nitrogen from organic matter as a result of an active microbial community.

**Gettin' Mossy!:** Significant amounts of available moisture combined with low fertility and low mowing heights resulted in substantial amounts of algae and moss on putting greens. Additionally, chronic use of DMI fungicides such as Banner, Bayleton, Rubigan, etc. that have growth regulating effects can result in thin turf that allows moss and algae to invade. Silvery Thread moss, the major moss species on putting greens in the Northeast, is a simple green plant that can establish itself from one cell. It rarely produces spores, but the size of one cell may mislead you to think it arises from spores. Nevertheless, there are two methods available for moss control that either desiccate the moss or disrupt it physiologically. Many are using Dawn Ultra dish detergent, peroxide-type products, or other herbicidal soaps that break through the mosses one cell thick leaves and dry it out. However, it generally returns into the area where it was killed. The use of copper-based fungicides such as Kocide (CuOH) or Junction (CuOH + Mancozeb) has been shown to provide more long term reduction in moss populations, but appears to be very pH dependent as a result of the availability of copper at pH's below 6.0. It appears that the best success with these compounds is achieved when the soil pH and the spray solution is around 6.5 or less and then rainfall (pH 4.5-4.9) or irrigation water with pH below 6.0 is applied to release the copper from the hydroxide (OH)

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### *In this issue.....*

- *Why is PDI Necessary?*
- *Learn to Love Pressure*
- *Election Results*





## President's Message.....

Well, this is my first Presidents' Message, and I am really excited to be heading this Association for the next couple of years. I know that I have some big shoes to fill, but with your help, I think we can get it done. I want you to know that anytime you feel the need to vent or 'chew the fat' about the Association, please feel free to call or email me. My lines are always open. Now on to some deserved 'Thank-You's'.

First of all, I would like to thank **Jim MacLaren** for his many-many years of dedicated service. I look forward to 'bouncing' ideas and utilizing Jim's vast knowledge of this Association.

Last, but certainly not least, I want to thank **Ron Garrison**. He has filled-in, helped train me (blame him), and done whatever it took to keep this Association together. Your many years of hard work and dedicated service is much appreciated, Ron. Thanks, my friend; now just sit back and RELAX!!!

I want to close by saying, 'Welcome Aboard' to the two new members of the Pocono Turfgrass Association Board of Directors, Eric Reed and Steve Chirip. Your fresh blood and new ideas are going to be a welcome change to this Association.

Gene Huelster

## From the Editor's Desk.....

As the 2000 golf season ends for most of us, the weather was one of regional variability. The only commonalities were below average temperatures and increased rainfall (as compared to 1999). As I talked with several people across our region a lot of you were faced with abundant moisture and untimely rain. Some of the rain events washed out many, many rounds of golf and in turn revenue was affected. However, at Glen Oak the weather was characterized as timely rain, below normal temperatures with several dry periods mixed-in. We had the same number of rounds of golf for the 2000 season as we had for 1999. We never imagined topping the 1999 rounds of golf, but with cooperative weather it was at least equaled. I guess what I'm eluding to is that as in any of our courses or businesses each one is different and micro-climates exist to create variability amongst most every golf course and business aspect. Comparing two 18-hole golf courses is not an "apples to apples" comparison. Likewise, two businesses that may sell similar products are not always very similar, and comparing these two is not easily accomplished. Many factors need to be considered for comparisons to equate. For example: two 18-hole courses have different budgets and standards (directly effecting the bottom line); even if their budget final numbers are close to each other, course A may have different line items then course B; how about course features that impact maintenance; areas (acreage) maintained; and climatic differences (as discussed above); just to name a few. So the next time someone tries to compare your business or golf course with another, start by asking several qualifying questions so that you can begin to compare "apples to apples".

Darrin Batisky



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### CHIPS & PUTTS STAFF

#### EDITOR

Darrin Batisky

#### Managing Editor,

Melinda Wisnosky  
R.R. 1, Box 219  
Harding, PA 19643  
570-388-2889  
Fax: 570-388-2167

### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Jim MacLaren  
Tony Grieco, CGCS





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form. There have been reports of injury to annual bluegrass, however, to date, it has always grown out of it. Best time appears to be late season (fall) with four applications of 5 oz of Junction per 1000 at 2-week intervals in 2 gallons of water per 1000. We have observed significant accumulation of copper in the soils and root tissue, but little injury when the pH of the soil or irrigation water is around 6.5 to 7.0.

**Worm Holes:** Earthworms have emerged from the soils in record numbers this season again a natural phenomenon related to high soil moisture. Clearly, an active earthworm population is the sign of a healthy soil with adequate aeration and organic matter. In fact, there have been several research reports that have linked high earthworm populations with the use of natural organic fertilizers. In addition, earthworms play an important role in thatch management, mixing soil particles with decaying plant material. Still, golfers complain about "mud smeared fairways" with thin turf from the earthworm casts. There are short term, long term, and illegal solutions to this inconvenience. Short-term cultural solutions include increasing the mowing height 0.25" to mask the casting and mow the turf when it is dry so as to eliminate smearing of muddy casts. Long-term solutions include aggressive sand topdressing that irritates the worms forcing them to seek emergence elsewhere. Also, long term use of acidifying fertilizers or sulfur applications on poorly buffered soils that reduced surface pH will discourage earthworm activity. Sadly, many golf superintendents are applying insecticides such as Sevin (carbaryl) or the Restricted Use Pesticide (RUP) Turcam (bendiocarb) that will kill earthworms to reduce complaints. Be warned this is illegal. If you are found to be making an application of these insecticides targeted at earthworms this will result in revoking of your pesticide certification.

**Fistful of Dollar Spot:** Turfgrass managers across the Northeast were reporting reduced control with many of the typical fungicides labeled for dollar spot control. For example, in most years, Daconil or other formulations of chlorothalonil, provide 10 to 14-day dollar spot control, yet this year appeared to provide 3 to 5 day suppression. This was also true for several of the DMI fungicides. Clearly, weather conditions were ideal for the disease with plentiful moisture and copious amounts of morning dew from condensation and from plants leaking sugar-rich guttation fluid from the leaf tips. However, I am beginning to wonder about the widespread use of Heritage (azoxystrobin) and its known enhancement of dollar spot symptoms, i.e., that the regular use of Heritage is creating a more favorable environment for the organism to persist by either reducing antagonistic organism, or possible effect of the plant. Finally, the question about fungicide resistant dollar spot comes up for those who do not regularly rotate fungicide chemistry; still this does not explain resistance to the contact materials with chlorothalonil. In the end, the dollar spot explosion may just be related to ideal weather patterns, similar to other diseases such as gray leaf spot that thrive on extended leaf moisture.

**Wondering about winter:** The odd warming periods we are experiencing this fall might be concerning if combined with excessive moisture. However, it appears from most weather records that we are on the dry side. Dry, cool falls create optimum hardening conditions. Moderate but not excessive moisture stress is ideal for enhanced winter hardening. Other factors related to winter hardiness include:

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John D. Fowler  
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Sr. Marketing Specialist

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**Thatch.** Excessive thatch accumulation will reduce winter survival as a result of plant crowns and other perennial structures being elevated from the soil/thatch interface and less buffered from extreme temperatures. In addition, thatch levels above 1 inch can promote desiccation and turfgrass disease incidence. Late season core cultivation that incorporates the soil from the cores into the thatch layer can assist with solving this problem and actually improve drainage by breaking through layers.

**Disease Management.** Two research projects from Japan suggested that low temperature pathogens could "sense" weak plants that might be more susceptible to infection. Subsequently, as indicated several times to this point, maximizing plant health through proper acclimation with water management, fertility and mowing height, could result in reduced snow mold. Nevertheless, species such as perennial ryegrass, creeping bentgrass, annual bluegrass are highly susceptible and will require preventative management to ensure survival.

**Traffic.** Of all the management factors that are under the control of the turfgrass professional, minimizing traffic during periods when the soil is frozen or just when turf is not actively growing can be the most difficult. Players want to use the turf and that conflicts with what is known regarding maintaining healthy plants. While there is limited data on early season play, estimates suggest that active play during the "shoulders" of the growing season can require many weeks of active growth for recovery. Therefore, if possible, minimize traffic when the plants are dormant or the soil is frozen. **Turf Covers.** The use of synthetic protective turfgrass covers, for enhancing winter survival, has provided variable results over the years. Recent studies from Laval University in Quebec have indicated that snow is the best insulator and should be kept on as long as possible. The next best thing is any cover that uses an air layer to insulate the turf from extreme temperature and moisture. Keep in mind that covers accelerate green up in the spring and can result in reduced winter hardiness if temperatures drop suddenly.

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IRRIGATION



## "WHY IS THE PDI NECESSARY?"

*The following are excerpts from the presentation made by the Membership Standards Resource Group at the annual Chapter Delegates meeting held on September 8-10, 2000.*

Several years ago, members began to understand that superintendents exist in a changing professional environment. With the increased emphasis on televised golf and the economics of the game, more is expected now from superintendents than ever before. And more will be expected in the future. Our members said and continue to say that golf course superintendents want more appreciation and recognition, compensation, retention and opportunities.

The Membership Standards Resource Group was formed to look at how to achieve these goals in the future. They were to determine if action was possible to address these issues and determine what process should be followed to pursue the goals if they were adopted.

The MSRSG needed information to effectively address whether or not we could have an impact on the key problems faced by golf course superintendents - appreciation, compensation, retention, and career opportunities.

The research by SRI, International clearly showed what golf course superintendents do - tasks - and which of these tasks employers valued most.

In order to effectively market the superintendent of the future, we have a triage approach. The foundation of this project continues to be education, both formal and through continuing education. The classification standards are built from this foundation and create an opportunity to drive the public relations initiative.

The classification system documents what superintendents are doing on the job, thus providing members with the tools they need to communicate their value to employers. This system will also provide GCSAA with the opportunity to integrate this information into our national public relations campaign.

Classification illustrates that expertise, knowledge and skills support the competencies established through GCSAA's research and member superintendent focus groups. Although there is not a guaranteed proficiency within the competencies, the proposed sliding scale will provide employers with an assurance that Class A members meet a baseline proficiency within most of the competencies outlined through required experience and education.

The application of pesticides in the golf course maintenance practice often attracts the most attention from governmental agencies, the media and the public. Demonstrating expertise regarding these applications provides assurance that Class A superintendents are knowledgeable about the most recent procedures and methods for the safe handling and use of these products. Furthermore, golf course superin-

tendents are the environmental stewards of the property they manage. By requiring that Class A members have a valid pesticide license or pass the GCSAA-developed pesticide test, GCSAA members will illustrate their commitment to environmental stewardship by meeting and, in most cases, exceeding the requirements of applying plant protectant products. This proactive step will make a large impact when GCSAA meets with environmentalist groups and regulatory agencies.

The ongoing education requirement demonstrates that Class A superintendents are actively seeking education to stay abreast of the latest developments. Service points are given for activities and contributions outside of traditional educational events. Support of GCSAA's local chapters is crucial to help ensure a vibrant local support network for superintendents. Serving golf-related and civic organizations also help build leadership and management skills; assigning points for these and other service-related activities provides an additional incentive for participation.

The PDI's mission illustrates the main reason for its proposal: "To improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of the professional superintendent that contribute toward improved playing conditions and the enjoyment of the game of golf."

We feel strongly that individual golf course superintendents and the profession as 'm tole has a great deal to gain from this initiative. By better understanding the link between continuing education and increasing our value to our facilities in the eyes of our employers, our members are positioned to gain appreciation, compensation, retention, and job opportunities.

For a complete copy of the proposal, look at the PDI section under the Learning Center by logging onto [www.gcsaa.org](http://www.gcsaa.org) or call the GCSAA Service Center at 800/472-7878.

*If you would like an electronic version of this document, please contact Judith Ferguson, GCSAA Education Department Coordinator, at 785/832-4469, or e-mail your request to: [jferguson@gcsaa.org](mailto:jferguson@gcsaa.org).*







## PATTERSON SCHOLARSHIP

We are now accepting applications for the Patterson Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded annually, the recipient chosen is awarded \$500 and given honorary membership to the Pocono Turfgrass Association.

The requirements for consideration are:

- ♦ Applicant must be a second year student in a two-year program, or a fourth year student in an undergraduate program in a turf related major.
- ♦ Applicant must submit in writing why he/she feels that he/she should be considered for the scholarship.
- ♦ Applicant must include what he or she feels his/her contribution to the turfgrass field will be.
- ♦ Applicant must submit a letter of endorsement from his/her employer in the turfgrass field. This endorsement may come from an employer from an internship program.
- ♦ Applicant's request for consideration and his or her employer endorsement must be submitted together on or before January 1st, 2001.
- ♦ Applicants requesting consideration for the Patterson Scholarship should send requests to:

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Any questions Please call Jason Barndt at: (570) 759-6480.

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*A message from your golf course superintendent and GCSAA*



## LEARN TO LOVE PRESSURE

When you're racing to put out fires, it's hard to relax and make calm, unhurried decisions. Here's how to stay in control when you're on edge:



**Look ahead, not back.** During tough times, you may want to bemoan your bad luck or pin blame on people or events. But that just wastes time and makes you more upset. Instead, focus on what to do next.

**Example:** You discover you've accidentally deleted hours of work on your computer and there's no way to retrieve it. Don't curse and complain. Instead, start planning how you'll reconstruct the lost data.

**Distance yourself.** If you're immersed in a crisis, take a break and re-visit it with a fresh outlook.

**Example:** Rather than waiting to hear if you've salvaged an endangered, big account, divert yourself with other tasks. Dwelling on a potential disaster will merely induce stress.

**Play the scientist.** Experiment with new approaches to solve problems.

**Example:** You're worried about meeting a deadline, so you try different ways to boost productivity and compare the results.

Source: Communication Briefings as adapted from Office Hours, The Economics Press, (973)227-1224.



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## POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO  
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### PTGS DONATION

In 1999 the PTGA approved a donation to the New Jersey TGA for the Ralph Geiger Turfgrass Education Center. It was dedicated on November 17, 2000. The building is a state of the art facility consisting of classrooms, a laboratory, computer room, and a boardroom. This beautiful building can be visited during the Rutgers Fields Days the first week in August. Mark your calendars.

### LYONS RECEIVES FELLOWSHIP

Eric M. Lyons was recently awarded the first George W. Hamilton, Jr. Fellowship in Turfgrass Science. The award was presented on November 15 at the Penn State Golf Turf Conference in University Park, PA. The fellowship is awarded to Penn State graduate students who demonstrate excellence in turfgrass science. Eric is a graduate of University of Northern Iowa and is a Ph.D. candidate studying turfgrass root physiology under Dr. Dave Huff. Eric is in his third year of his graduate program and sponsored by a research training grant through National Science Foundation.

## PENN STATE DEFEATS MICHIGAN IN CUTTER CUP COMPETITION

The 2000 Cutter Cup match against Michigan State University was held at Meadowbrook Country Club in Detroit, Michigan on October 6. The event was hosted by superintendent Michael Edgerton. The Penn State team was represented by Rob Boyer, Rick DiMaggio, Joel Dustan, Brian Stiehler and J Woodring. Michigan State was represented by Sean Flynn, Andy Morris, Andy O'Haver, Greg Schmidt, and Stephen Young. Despite the cold weather and wet conditions, a great time was had by both teams.

The golf course was in excellent condition and very challenging due to the fast greens and tough pin positions. The match play format, similar to the Ryder Cup, ended in a tie with both teams earning 2.5 points. In the event, one point is given for a win and a half point is given for a tie. Since Penn State was defending the cup, it was retained for another year.

After the tournament, the PSU team and caddies had a tour of the Hancock Turfgrass Research Facility at MSU, followed by dinner and an evening on the town hosted by the Michigan State Team.

*Excerpt from article written by Brian J. Stiehler*



POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION  
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