

CHIPS & PUTTS

Founded in 1936

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

VOLUME: 7, NUMBER: 5

JULY 2001

Employers Adjust to Workforce Changes

More and more turf industry employers report that they can't find and keep good employees. They're not alone. A slew of societal factors have combined in recent

years to create labor challenges for employers everywhere. And experts predict that this situation could continue, even during an economic slowdown.

"Employee expectations and loyalty have also changed. Employees are more likely to change jobs....."

First, U.S. demographics are changing. Fewer young people are entering the workforce as the number of older Americans in the population increases. Women have taken a higher percentage of full-time jobs in the last decade. And the number of Hispanic workers entering the U. S. workforce is increasing, creating language and cultural issues for employers.

Employee expectations and loyalty have also changed. Employees are more likely to change jobs if they become dissatisfied in their current job or if wages and benefits are more attractive elsewhere. Some of this loss of loyalty stems from the tight job market of the '90s that increased competition, plus wage and benefit packages, for workers.



Yes, it's a challenging labor market for small business employers. But progressive and innovative human resource strategies can overcome the challenges.

Two human resource strategies that will

serve you well in a competitive labor market are building employee commitment and creating a positive image.

Build Employee Commitment

Employees are more likely to be attracted to a business and stay with it if they enjoy their work and can be productive. As an employer, it's your job to help create this environment by doing at least four important things:

1. Create a vision and a direction for your business. Then communicate that to all employees. This creates a purpose for their work and helps them to feel part of the organization and its success. The sense of contributing to something bigger and more important than just the "job" matters to employees, especially to the younger generation.

2. Develop and support the people you employ. Determine their training and development needs. Then work with employees to develop their personal development plan. This creates a win-win situation: employees gain valuable skills and your business benefits from a higher

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In this issue **June Meeting Results Garden Snatchers** Spruce up your Course July Profile: Stonehedge GC

President's Message & From the Editor

What Your Association Expects Of You As A Member

- 1. Regular attendance at monthly meetings and functions sponsored by the Association.
- Be willing to serve on committees, and hold office as a director or officer.
- Mail monthly return cards promptly, whether you plan to attend or not to attend. If a member makes a reservation and does not keep it, or does not notify the host superintendent to cancel, the member will be billed for the meal and that meeting.
- 4. Superintendent members should be willing to host the Association membership for monthly meetings.
- 5. Pay your Association dues and assessments promptly.
- Respect the golf course and the club facilities of your host superintendent, and wear proper attire befitting of your profession.
- 7. Keep your Association Secretary posted when you change address or you are due for re-certification.
- 8. Make every effort possible to welcome our new members into our Association and try to bring those members who are inactive to the meetings.
- 9. Know and abide by the Code of Ethics set by the GCSAA and the By-Laws adopted by our Association.

May your membership in the Pocono Turfgrass Association be a very happy and fulfilling one, and thank you for your cooperation,

Gene & Darrin



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performance level.

3. Outline the standards for good performance and help employees meet those standards by becoming their coach and supporter.

4. Communicate the results you expect for jobs. Then provide employees with the freedom and resources to achieve those results.

Create a Positive Image

Why is it that one turf related business has a ready supply of qualified applicants, yet the one across town struggles to find and keep good employees?

The difference may be the image that a business projects to the community and to prospective employees. The following factors can help create a positive image and attract a pool of applicants:

1. Promote what's good about employment in your industry. Successful turf businesses highlight the benefits such as working outdoors, job variety and the opportunity to see results of hard work.

2. Maintain the appearance of your business. It helps create an image of excellence and acts as one of your most valuable advertisements. Most people want to work in a business that is highly regarded and has a reputation for professionalism.

3. Provide competitive wage and benefit packages. This allows you to compete for the best job candidates.

4. Employ professional human resource practices. Begin with creative, attractive recruitment ads that promote the job you're offering and your business. Professional practices include your reputation for training, developing and helping people succeed.

5. Keep employees happy. A business' current employees are its best advocates for attracting new employees.

6. Create opportunities to promote your business in your community. Building your public image enhances your ability to attract good people. Many businesses successfully use tours, open houses and public service to promote themselves and to create goodwill in the community.

The best employees always have a choice of where they work, and they'll opt to work for the best employers. If you have a reputation as a poor, or even average, employer, it'll be more difficult to find good employees. Instructors at universities, colleges and tech schools will steer their students to the better employers. Business associates will also recommend the best employees to employers whom they perceive to be good ones.

--- Adapted for Cornell University Turfgrass Times; Volume 12, Number One (Spring 2001)

(The author is the co-author of: Human Resource Management for the Golf Course Superintendent. And a GCSAA seminar instructor of: Managing People for Peak Performance and Job Satisfaction.)



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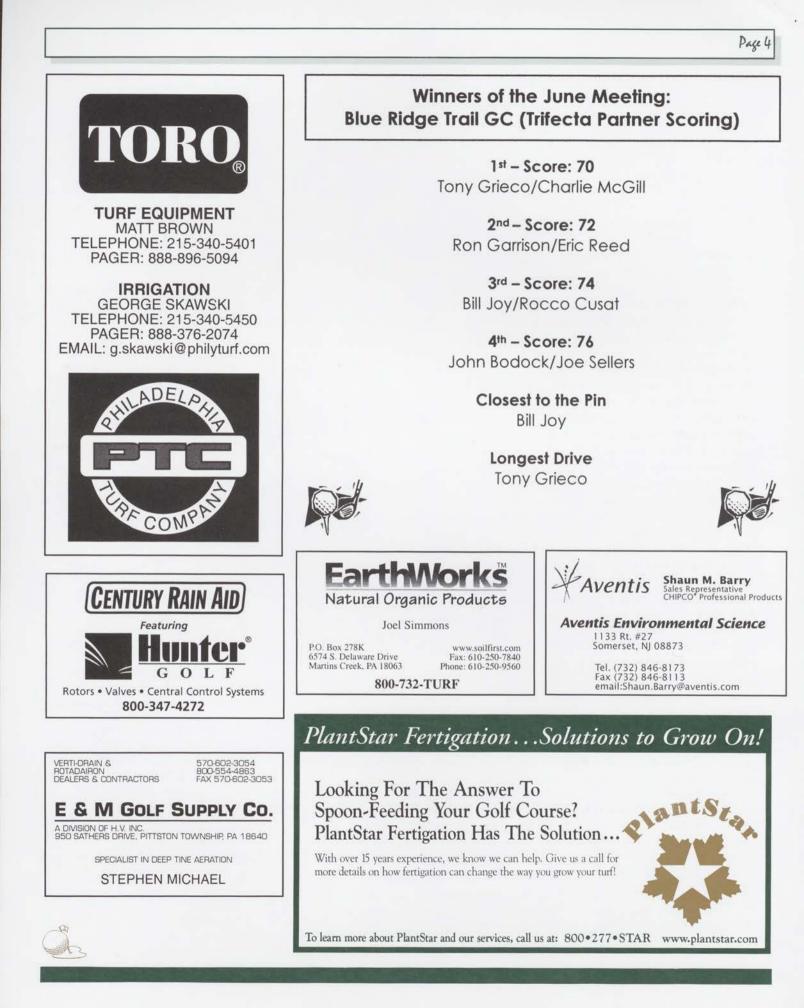
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The invader came like a purple wolf in sheep's clothing, flying out of nurseries and garden centers as fast as the smitten could get their green thumbs on it.

In no time at all, it seemed to be everywhere.

Now it actually is.

"Purple Loosestrife is a very good example of an invasive that started out as a popular garden plant and grew into a big problem," says Terry Schettini, Ph.D., director and ornamental horticulture agent for the Penn State Cooperative Extension of Lackawanna County.

"It was brought in as a garden plant and people loved it. They thought it was gorgeous, but they found out pretty quick it was an animal. No one realized it was that aggressive."

Now a major player on the state Department of Conservation and National Resources' hit list of invasive plants, European Purple Loosestrife is muscling out native plants in wetlands, roadside ditches, shorelines and other moist areas all over North America.

And it's just one of 54 infidels on the list which DCNR maintains to warn gardeners, land-scapers and nurseries about plants that have proven bad neighbors wherever they've moved in. Many, like Purple Loosestrife, have been designated noxious weeds, which makes it illegal to sell or plant them in Pennsylvania.

Why? Because when native plants are choked out, so are the many species of insects, birds and other wildlife that evolved in the native ecosystem.

Usually foreign to American soil, invasive plants are known for their aggressive nature and ability to spread and grow quickly. Trees, vines, grasses or flowers, invasives are extremely hard to control once freed of the limitations of their native habitats.

In its native habitat, Dr. Schettini explains, a plant's growth is regulated by its surroundings, from neighboring plants to insects, diseases, weather patterns and temperatures.

"All these things around it provide balance," he says. "It ends up being introduced to a new place where these things aren't present, and there's nothing to keep it in check."

Trash 'em

Nothing but responsible gardeners and landscapers armed with knowledge and a desire to cut down the invaders where they stand. Just make sure, Dr. Schettini says, to give the fallen a proper burial.

"Say you have English Ivy," he says. "You've got it growing clear up a wall, and that's fine. But then you trim it or dig it up and throw it in the woods, and it starts going like gangbusters.

"People think they're doing something good by dumping it in the woods, and they don't want to put it in the garbage, but that's really where it should go."

To avoid contributing to the spread of invasive plants, Dr. Schettini says talking to professionals and other gardeners and landscapers is essential. Once you've compared notes, much of the rest is common sense, he says.

"If you have a choice between something that's known to be very aggressive and something that's not, lean toward the one that's not," he says.

"That doesn't mean you have to be boring. Look for stuff that may be really fun and exotic for you, but that's been around 10 years. And don't think you need to fill in your garden right away.

"Take it a little at a time and make informed choices. That's the best advice I can give."

FOR THE COMPLETE LIST of invasive plants in Pennsylvania, visit: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/forestry on the World Wide Web.



Pall

Spruce up your Course

By: Tim Roche, 2001 Intern; Glen Oak Country Club

On almost every golf course the essential focus of both superintendent and crew is the turfgrass upon which the reputation of the course lies. Of equal importance, however, and often overlooked is the health and well-being of the tress which add to both the grandeur and the playability of the course. It is essential that careful diagnoses of potential problems and a planned prognosis for the survival of each species on the course be planned in a proactive manner. It is only by such methods that treatment or removal can be planned before the need arises.

The fungus Leucostona kunzei (Cytospora kunzei variety picea) causes Cytospora canker, a stem disease. It appears most frequently on Colorado blue spruces (Picea pungens Engelm.) and Norway spruces (Picea abies (L.) Karst.). The fungus kills areas of bark, usually at the bases of small twigs and branches, creating elliptical to diamond-shaped lesions. If the lesions enlarge faster than the stem, it will create a girdling effect, and the portion beyond the canker dies. The disease normally starts on the lowest branches and slowly progresses to higher branches. The entire tree is rarely killed except when the trunk is girdled. In most conifers, the cankers are usually confined to the branches. White Spruce (Picea glauca (Moench) Voss.), Black Spruce (Picea engelmannii) trees develop trunk cankers more often than other affected species. Spruce trees less than 10 to 15 years old usually do not have Cytospora canker.

Browning of needles and dying of the lower branches of affected trees are usually the first symptoms of Cytospora canker. As the disease progresses, it spreads to higher branches. Occasionally branches high in the tree are attacked even though lower ones are healthy. The cankers produced are not immediately obvious because the affected bark does not perceptibly change color or become depressed. Frequently, amber, purplish white or white patches of resin materialize on the bark in areas where cankers have formed. What color the resin may be, depends on how much air mixes with the resin. Careful removal of a thin outer layer of bark in the area that separates diseased and healthy tissue will reveal tiny, black, pinheadlike fruiting bodies of the fungus in the diseased bark. These fruiting bodies contain minute spores which can be spread by rain, wind, or pruning tools (See Sinclair, Lyon and Johnson. Diseases of Trees and Shrubs for more details).

Control of Cytospora canker requires that all diseased branches be cut back to the nearest living laterals or to the trunk of affected trees. The bark should not be injured unnecessarily, since the fungus may enter through wounds resulting from injuries. Since weakened trees are susceptible to this disease, fertilizing to stimulate vigorous growth may help to combat Cytospora canker. Fertilizing may also stimulate new growth that may fill in small vacant areas in the trees but large dead areas seldom fill back in. Both too much and too little water are stresses that can weaken spruces. Make sure there is adequate drainage and water the trees during droughts.

There are no fungicides that effectively control this disease. For more information, please direct your web browser to Ohio State University Extension Fact Sheet - http://www.ag.ohio-state.edu/~ohioline/hyg-fact/3000/3033.html



DCNR Gives You The Creeps

The State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources says these plants are some of Northeastern Pennsylvania's most dangerous invaders:

- Musk Thistle, flower, designated as a noxious weed in Pennsylvania
- Canada Thistle, flower, noxious weed
- Bull Thistle, flower, noxious weed

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- Purple Loosestrife, flower, noxious weed
- Johnson Grass, grass, noxious weed

The following are worth keeping an eye out for:

- Goutweed, flower, commonly planted in the past
- Dame's Rocket, flower, planted in gardens, escaped and naturalized along roadsides
- Wild Parsnip, flower, found commonly along roadsides
- Japanese Barberry, shrub, escaped from cultivation

(The above appeared in the Scranton Times, Tuesday June 19, 2001; pages 11 & 12)



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Stemming the Invasion in Your Own Back Yard (or Golf Course)

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources offers the following tips to fight the spread of invasive plants:

- Avoid the use of known invasive plants. Learn which plants present a threat, and spread the word.
- Minimize landscape disturbance. Invasive plants thrive on bare soil and disturbed ground where native plant community has been displaced.
- Use fertilizers wisely. High nitrogen levels can give an advantage to invasive species. Try using organic, slowdecomposing composts and mulches.
- Have a land management plan. Have a blueprint for maintaining your land and nipping invasive plants in the bud. Scout for invasives and remove them before they become a problem.
- Dispose of them wisely. Don't dump them somewhere they might get another foothold.
- Replace invasive plants with native and non-invasive species. Removing an invasive plant is not enough. Unless you replace it, it will likely grow back.
- FOR SUGGESTIONS on good replacements and other information on planting native species, visit www.dcnr. state.pa.us/forestry on the World Wide Web.

(The above appeared in the Scranton Times, Tuesday June 19, 2001; page 11)



POCONO ROUNDUP

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE POCONO TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

July Profile - Stonehedge Golf Club

Tony Kenia - General Manager Dan Kenia - Golf Course Superintendent

Located near Lake Winola, Pennsylvania, southeast of Tunkhannock, is a total golfing experience, the Stonehedge Golf Club. With a course yardage of 6,200 yards and a par of 71, Stonehedge offers the low to high handicapper a variety of shots with this challenging layout. This Jim Blaukovich design covers 176 acres of once farmed terrain with bentgrass tees and greens, ryegrass fairways, and bluegrass roughs. Plans for converting the fairways to bentgrass are currently being discussed which will only enhance the courses' aesthetic value.

This family owned golf course hosts nearly 25,000 rounds a year and has nearly 70 regular season golfing

members. The golf course also boasts one of the toughest holes in northeast Pennsylvania. According to the Sunday Times, the par 4, second hole is one of the hardest holes in this part of the state. Its length is hardly short of a par 5, with a second shot being hit uphill to an undulated green that slopes from right to left. The fairway and green are heavily protected by bunkers, which only add to its difficulty. A bogey is actually a solid and average score on this hole.

The scenic views Stonehedge offers accompanied by the quality course conditions provided by the Kenia family, makes it is easy to see why the course is a huge attraction to so many golfers. From those golfers who play casual rounds to rounds of evening league play, the atmosphere inside the clubhouse and on the course allows everyone to feel welcome and leaves long-lasting memorable experiences. For the Kenia family, life is golf, and golf is life. Their hard work is easily seen and very much appreciated.

- By: Jeff Koch



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