# The Green Sheet

Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

Volume 27 Issue 5

Founded ~ April 11, 1939

August/September 2020

# **September Meeting**

Regents' Glen Country Club 1625 Indian Rock Dam Road York, PA 17403

Host - Kevin Shue

## Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Registration - 11:00 AM Boxed Lunch - 11:30 AM Golf - 12:30 PM Shotgun Appetizers/Cash Bar - Following Golf

There will be a CPGCSA Board of Directors Meeting at 9:30AM.

# **Superintendent Profile**

Kevin Shue became the Golf Course Superintendent at Regents' Glen Country Club in 2012. He attended Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School's two-year certificate course and graduated in 2006. Before becoming the superintendent at Regents' Glen Country Club, he was the assistant superintendent at the Country Club of York from 2004-2011. Kevin is married to his wife Heather for six and half years and they have an eight-year-old daughter, Kaylee. Kevin loves spending time with his family and hunting.

# **Host Course Profile**

Regents' Glen Country Club was designed by world-renown architect, Arthur Hills, Regents' Glen is located in York, PA and opened in 1998 as a full-service private country club. The golf course, a Par 72, is 6,339 yards from the blue tees and has a slope rating 71.3. The practice area consists of three level teeing area, a chipping green with three approaches, and two practice greens.



Along with the fully stocked golf shop, the amenities consist of the Glen Grill, Box Hill Fine Dining Mansion, fitness center, pool, and bocce courts.

# The 2021 Golf Industry Show is Going Virtual

Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, GCSAA announced today that the annual education conference and trade show will be presented in a virtual format instead of the previously planned in-person event in Las Vegas.

The decision was made in conjunction with GCSAA's presenting GIS partners, the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) and the Golf Course Builders Association of America (GCBAA). The organizations say the virtual event will offer an experience that continues the Golf Industry Show's long tradition of connecting attendees, exhibitors and industry experts through a week of unparalleled educational opportunities and access to golf facility solutions for industry professionals.

In addition to the education, trade show and special events that will take place live on the virtual platform the first week of February, attendees will also have the option to view or review all content from the show for an extended period after the event concludes.

The theme of GIS 2021 — "Your space. Your pace. All in one place." — not only reflects the ability of participants to attend the show from the safety of their homes or offices and consume the content when they want to, but also speaks to the convergence of industry experts that is a hallmark of GIS and will remain so in the virtual format.

Registration for the 2021 Golf Industry Show will open Oct. 13 on the <u>Golf Industry Show website</u>.

GIS 2021: Q&A with GCSAA CEO Rhett Evans

https://www.gemonline.com/headlines/gesaa-news/ news/2021-golf-industry-show



### The Green Sheet

### USGA NORTHEAST REGIONAL UPDATE Aeration in 2020 September 04, 2020 Volume 58, Issue 17

Paul Jacobs, agronomist, Northeast Region

Organic matter management is critical to provide healthy turf and good playing conditions. Hot weather and moisture extremes this season illustrated what can happen to turf if organic matter is not properly managed. The southern portion of the region has seen plentiful rain whereas areas in the northern

part of the region recently entered a severe drought. Whether you have received a lot of rain or it's been dry, it has been a hot summer throughout the region, and turf loss was quite common in areas of the course with excessive organic matter.

The ideal timing of core aeration is a hot topic and often becomes controversial when agronomic principles clash with the golf calendar. Due to state-mandated golf course closures this spring, many facilities are contemplating pushing fall aeration off to later in the year to give golfers more time to enjoy great playing surfac- Excessive organic matter content es. For some, this is a great idea and will not result in any major was common in areas of turf deconsequences. For others, aeration cannot come soon enough.



cline throughout the 2020 season.

Below are several factors to consider regarding the timing of core aeration this year.

Current condition of turf health: Many facilities suffered varying degrees of turf loss or decline this year. If turf has declined, especially if it declined in large quantities, aeration should not be delayed. The aeration process offers a great opportunity to reestablish turf and give it a break from aggressive maintenance practices.

**Recovery time:** Aerating later in fall – i.e., mid-October or later - will significantly delay the recovery process. For many courses, aerating at this time means the greens will not recover until the following spring.

Current organic matter content: If organic matter levels are higher than desired or if they were a contributing factor to turf decline this year, consider aerating in late summer AND later in the fall. An additional aeration treatment can expedite the organic matter removal and improvement process.

Winter injury: There are several factors that influence the likelihood of winter injury, but if aeration occurs later in the season and aeration holes do not heal, there is a greater likelihood for desiccation injury. Courses with open, windswept sites should be especially cautious.

Courses that have committed to sound cultural practices for many years are in a position to consider moving aeration later into the season this year to give golfers a few more weeks of great conditions. For many, this change would be temporary and may come with risks depending upon location. To discuss aeration timing in more detail, contact your regional USGA agronomist.

> Northeast Region Agronomists: Adam Moeller, director, Green Section Education – amoeller@usga.org

> Darin Bevard, director, Championship Agronomy - dbevard@usga.org

Elliott Dowling, agronomist – edowling@usga.org

Paul Jacobs, agronomist - pjacobs@usga.org

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# **Membership** News

We would like to welcome the following individuals into our association.

Nathan Thompson, Assistant in Training LedgeRock Golf Club..... Class C

Nicholas Sama, Equipment Manager LedgeRock Golf Club..... Class EM

If you know of anyone who is interested in membership into the association, please have them contact Wanda at 717-279-0368 or <u>cpgcsa@hotmail.com</u>.

Please see a list of our Association Sponsors on Page 15. Please Support Them as they Support Us!

Membership information is also available on the Central Penn website at: <u>www.cpgcsa.org</u>



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### The Green Sheet



### Hiring Practices By Sharon Wilson

Posted on August 18, 2020

https://golfcoursetrades.com/hiring-practices

These days, job seekers are looking more closely at how employers protect their frontline workforce from the health concerns brought on by the coronavirus pandemic. In many cases, workers are making more money by staying home. There are still qualified individuals with a strong work ethic, seeking a job and who are in demand. With a shortage of desirable candidates available, your workplace practices could make the difference in their decision-making process. So, how can employers provide safety training and assure prospective (and current) employees that their well-being will be respected?

Employers know that frontline workers searching for a job have historically cared most about schedule flexibility, higher wages, and a supportive culture. But in the wake of the global pandemic, many frontline job hunters are reprioritizing these factors, and adding some additional criteria.

Now, job seekers will be looking closely at how employers protect their frontline workforce from the health concerns brought on by the virus. Between transparent communication, proper safety training and precautions and health checks at each shift, the hourly workforce is looking at a new set of factors to ensure they feel prepared and engaged to do the work.

One option might be to use an online platform to communicate with all employees. Particularly in situations whereby teams met as a group to receive instructions, communicating online is a more attractive option. According to Steven Kramer, CEO and president at WorkJam, a technology company supplying scheduling, communication, learning and recognition to clients' non-desk workforce, "Employers need to double down on employee empathy, instilling their workforce with the tools to create a safe environment—fostering employee welfare while encouraging customers to return."

### CONDUCTING THE SEARCH

The online employment bulletin board, Monster.com, says, "...Many employers are unsuccessful in their efforts to find qualified candidates.... One cause of this problem is that many employers don't fully grasp the demographics of today's hourly, frontline workforce. While many employers aim recruiting messages only to younger people, about one-third of these workers are actually 25-44; slightly less than one-third are 45 or older. Many employers also recruit for full time positions when many hourly workers would prefer 30 or fewer hours per week."

While those making the hiring decisions may not be trained HR professionals, they will still need to take a marketing approach to seeking a candidate who will be qualified, loyal, and responsible. Experts suggest a few key points:

- Make recruiting a 24/7 activity, even when you don't have an immediate opening. Let's face it: the best employees are the ones who are typically employed. Starting a long-term relationship with those who wish to "keep their options open" or who are not ready to start immediately gives you a talent pool to choose from when needed.
- After meeting with an applicant, stay connected. You can bet your favorite candidates have applied to multiple companies. Make sure they see yours as the most supportive opportunity.
- If you are competing with large companies for workers, you can use the flexibility inherent to your smaller size to develop the kind of corporate culture that attracts quality applicants.
- Have a way for applicants to contact you after-hours. After all, if you are available only during regular business hours, you discourage the very people you should be trying to recruit all the good people who are busy working.

Marketing your job posting should be more than placing a single ad in a local paper or online site. Consider using social media ads and be sure to have a "Career Center" on your website.

### THE JOB DESCRIPTION

It may sound elementary, but one aspect of your search should be to know exactly what you're looking for by having a job description. Internationally-known authority on recruiting, selecting, and hiring and president of Humetrics, Mel Kleiman, CSP, writes, "Recruiting hourly employees is easier and more efficient when you have a job description that specifies the key attributes the ideal jobholder will possess. Looking for an employee without knowing exactly what you need is like going grocery shopping without a list: You spend more time and money than you should, you don't get everything that you need (while simultaneously splurging on things that you don't really need), and you usually have to go back and do it again."

The job description formalizes what is expected of an employee and because it lists the mental and physical capacities required, and why the job exists, as Keiman points out, it "is the best defense against claims of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act."

While you may have hired dozens of people in the past, this is a very different time with very different conditions. To hire and retain a worker successfully in this environment, you need to look at it like a full-time job. You're competing for the best; why not give it your best shot?



# **How To Control Worm Casts**

Bv Alistair

http://www.greenkeepingeu.com/how-to-control-worm-casts/ July 9, 2019

Earthworms can and do benefit golf courses but excessive casting can have a detrimental effect on fine turf surfaces. Here, Dr. John Dempsey PhD reviews the scientific data on available casting controls at a time when most chemical treatments are no longer legal.

Worm castings are causing significant problems for the majority of sports turf managers throughout the UK and Ireland, with chemical controls no longer available, what means of control do greenkeepers and sports turf managers have? This topic was the subject of a seminar at BTME in Harrogate in January 2019. In this article we mention the benefits of earthworm populations but also highlight the detrimental effect excessive casting can have on fine turf surfaces. We will explore the earthworm biology and importantly, review the scientific data on available casting controls.

Earthworms are a vital component of the natural ecosystem, they can modify soil properties via their burrowing, incorporation and breakdown of organic matter, and mixing of soils, they also create pores within the soils allow-

ing for improved water percolation and increased aeration. Because of this, they are viewed as beneficial in most agricultural and managed systems.

There are 26 species of Earthworm found in the UK:

- 18 species are non-casting
- Eight species are casting which can create problems in managed amenity and fine turf areas
- Life span depending on species can vary between four and eight years
- The main casting species are the lob worm (lumbricus terrestris), black headed worm • (aporrectodea longa) and grey worm (aporrectodea calignosa).

The lob worm lives in vertical burrows up to three meters deep and feeds on fallen leaves and decaying organic matter, with a population of approximately 20 to 40 per meter squared.

The black headed worm lives in open alkaline grassland and cultivated soil and has a size of 12 cm long. It feeds on soil and its population is approximately five to 20 per meter squared.

The grey earthworm feeds on soil in mainly arable and pasture lands.

### **Ecological functions of earthworms**

Earthworms have many important ecological functions. In soils these include residue mixing, organic matter decomposition and nutrient recycling. Their burrowing activities allow for increased aeration and drainage, and nutrient and chemical movement through the soil profiles. Their casting helps with soil structure and fertility and, of course, worms are a food source for many birds and predators. As an example of the importance of earthworms in soil ecosystems, in the Netherlands, soils reclaimed from the sea at first did not have any earthworms. In these soils, the formation of topsoil with reasonable organic matter content did not take place, resulting in poor crop growth. Following a program which introduced earthworms into these reclaimed soils, a dark topsoil layer was formed, and crop growth increased significantly.

Earthworms have two primary requirements: moist soil and an organic-matter food source. Supplies of both are plentiful on the average golf course. Consequently, earthworms often populate greens, tees and fairways. The benefits of earthworms in turfgrass systems cannot be ignored either. Low populations can lead to thatch accumulation, slow organic matter decomposition and nutrient recycling, soil compaction and reduced water infiltration.

However, in amenity turfgrass systems, excessive surface worm casting negatively impacts many important areas of successful turfgrass management, these include: reduced surface playability, increased weed and disease ingression, reduced mower efficiency and a negative impact on the overall aesthetic appearance of the sports surfaces.

High Sand Low Sand 90 80 70 Number of casts per square 60 50 40 30 20 Mar. 15, 1999 Oct. 18, 1999 Sep. 15, 2000 Oct. 15.2000 Mar 10 200 Count Dates

The effect of sand topdressing, applied over two years, on worm cast suppression

The effect of excessive worm casting on maintenance machinery and fine turf surfaces







### Worm control in the past

Until recently, surface casting was controlled to some extent by the use of a number of chemical options, these option have been withdrawn leaving turf managers searching for viable alternative control strategies.

Earthworm control in the past, that is from the early 1900s, firstly relied on Mowrah Meal, derived from the seeds of Bassia latifolia, which, when watered into the soil, irritated the earthworms, causing them to come to the surface where they were physically removed. From the 1950s, controls involved a number of highly toxic chemicals, which although highly effective in controlling surface casting, were extremely hazardous to the environment and humans. These included: copper sulphate, potassium permanganate, derris dust (an extremely poisonous chemical to invertebrates), lead arsenate, and mercuric chloride (extremely poisonous to humans and to other mammals).

In the more recent past: chlordane (organochlorine), was used from the 1960s to the early 1980s – very persistent in the soil lasting up to seven years or more in certain soil types such as heavy clay based soils, carbaryl and thiophanate methyl. Carbendazim, which was primarily sold as a fungicide, targeted casting species only, results were variable but it was the mainstay for cast suppression and remained in use until recently. It was the withdrawal of carbaryl that caused the current widespread concern among turf managers.



Research from University of Connecticut showing the effect of sand topdressing on worm cast suppression

### What controls are available and are they effective?

A number of controls have over the past few years been suggested and been researched. Cultural controls have been studied as a means to suppress castings, these include grass clipping removal to reduce organic matter, thus reducing earthworms' food sources, acidifying fertilizers and topdressing with angular sands or abrasive aggregates.

Other methods which may have efficacy are the use 'soil conditioners'. As mentioned, the first successful means of cast control involved Mowrah Meal as an expellent, the active ingredient of this is a compound called saponin and recent research has provided results showing positive cast suppression leading to a number of products becoming available to turf managers.

There have been a number of studies into the removal of turfgrass clippings as a casting control, but these have to date provided no positive results. One such study, from Penn State University, looked at the effect of organic matter reduction and concluded this had no effect on casting volumes. A second study, conducted over two years to evaluate clipping removal and hollow-core aeration as methods to reduce casting, concluded that both these procedures had no effect on casting reduction.

The Penn State study also included the effects of ferrous sulphate as a surface acidifier, sand topdressing and saponins. Preliminary results show that saponins produced best results, with no effect on castings from sand topdressing, in fact they observed increased casting after topdressing.

Rutgers University researchers have also studied methods to reduce casting. They looked at a range of options:

- Three categories of fertilizers.
- Liming.
- Sand topdressing.
- Elemental sulphur applications.
- Sand topdressing combined with sulphur applications.

They concluded that fertilizer effects were not evident until the third season of the trial, when organic fertilizers doubled the number of castings, while the synthetic fertilizers had little effect.

Lime applications were deemed to have little to no effect on casting activity. Sand topdressing has been promoted for a number of years as a means to reduce surface casting, it is surmised that the abrasive-

### The Green Sheet

ness of sand particles and their susceptibility to drought influences both species composition and earthworm numbers in the soil. However, research has produced contradictory results. This study from Rutgers found that topdressing had a notable impact, but only on courses where casting activity was already high, with casting being reduced by 50 per cent after three seasons at some golf courses.

Paige Boyle is a presidential doctoral research fellow at Utah State University, studying turfgrass ecology. Her research into earthworm ecology and casting on fine turf surfaces concluded that, short term, sand topdressing made the casting problem worse, where past studies showed topdressing reduced casting. This appears to be the case in that a sustained topdressing program is required for results to be positive. Research into the efficacy of the topdressing effect on casting from 1999 in the US and Canada indicates that topdressing requires a long-term commitment, and multiple applications are necessary in order to have a significant impact. A similar result was concluded by researchers at University of Connecticut in 2009, where sand topdressing produced significant reductions in casting, interestingly the texture of the sand particles had no impact on these results.



Left, reduction in earthworm casting on a creeping bent green, following treatment with saponin. Right, reduction in earthworm casting on a perennial rye fairway, following treatment with saponin.

Surface acidification helps in reducing worm cast activity by reducing soil pH ... or does it? Surface acidification requires the applica-

tion of compounds such as sulphate of ammonia, ferrous sulphate and sulphur. The Rutgers study mentioned above produced interesting and relevant results in this area. They concluded that elemental sulphur applications had the most rapid and dramatic effect, reducing earthworm casting within the first season of application by as much as 97 per cent, compared to untreated plots. The potential to scorch turf was a concern with applications of elemental sulphur. Researchers initiated trials to identify the maximum rate that can be applied without risk to the turf rates of 146 kg/ha elemental sulphur (90 per cent) in a single application during spring or late summer without damaging fairway turf. They found the combination of sand topdressing and elemental sulphur was the most effective treatment in their trials.

### Soil conditioners (saponins)

Mowrah Meal applied as expellents was successful in the past as it acted as an irritant to the earthworms, saponin compounds sourced from tea seed meal were the active component in this process. Natural saponin compounds are thought to disrupt the mucous coatings on earthworms, causing desiccation and death. Mowrah Meal is no longer commercially available, but earthworm-expelling fertilizers containing saponins derived from tea seed meal (a by-product of tea oil manufacture) are currently marketed for use on turf in a number of countries, including the UK and Ireland. There is some data supporting the suppression of casting following saponin treatments. Research carried out at the University of Kentucky determined a single tea seed meal application reduced castings in replicated plots by more than 95 per cent for at least five weeks. In a second trial at the same site, tea seed application reduced casts by 98 per cent after two days, and 83 per cent after 30 days. A sequence of laboratory trials confirmed that the chemical basis for tea seed meal's activity on earthworms is the natural triterpene saponins found in tea seeds.

Expellents such as saponins may not necessarily work on all earthworm species, aporrectodea and lumbricus spp are susceptible but amynthas spp less so. Saponin treatments need to be well watered into the soil profile and repeated before each peak of casting activity because they have little or no residual activity. Also, earthworms hatching from cocoons are not affected and may repopulate the site over time.

### Conclusions

Earthworms are an important component of ecosystems - vital for healthy soils!

They have beneficial effects on soil structure, organic matter recycling and provide food sources for many species. Of the 26 species of earthworm found in the UK, three of these – the lob worm, black headed worm and grey worm can cause significant disruption to fine turf surfaces reducing surface playability, increasing weed and disease ingression, reducing mower efficiency and negatively impacting the aesthetic appearance of sports surfaces.

With the withdrawal of all chemical controls a number of other options have been explored with a view to cast suppression. These include reduction of organic matter, sand topdressing, surface acidification and the use of saponins. Of these, long term sand top-dressing combined with surface acidification with sulphur appears effective.

The use of saponin-based products also appears to effectively suppress castings, but these treatments need to be applied frequently during peak activity.

The seminar 'Disease suppression without fungicides – can it be done?' was presented during Continue to Learn, at BTME 2019.

Dr. John Dempsey, PhD BSc (Hons), was course manager at Royal Curragh Golf Club, Ireland's oldest golf club, from 1993 to 2019. He has a first class honors degree in turfgrass science from Myerscough College and a PhD in turfgrass pathology at the University of the West of England's Centre for Research in Biosciences. He is also a member of Greenkeeping's editorial advisory panel



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# **Spotted Lantern Fly - Why Should You Care**

SLF is a serious invasive pest with a healthy appetite for our plants and it can be a significant nuisance, affecting the quality of life and enjoyment of the outdoors. If not contained, spotted lanternfly potentially could drain Pennsylvania's economy of at least \$324 million annually, according to a study carried out by economists at Penn State. The spotted lanternfly uses its piercing-sucking mouthpart to feed on sap from over 70 different plant species. It has a strong preference for economically important plants including grapevines, maple trees, black walnut, birch, willow, and other trees. The feeding damage significantly stresses the plants which can lead to decreased health and potentially death.

As SLF feeds, the insect excretes honeydew (a sugary substance) which can attract bees, wasps, and other insects. The honeydew also builds up and promotes the growth for sooty mold (fungi), which can cover the plant, forest understories, patio furniture, cars, and anything else found below SLF feeding.

SLF is currently found in 26 counties in Pennsylvania, all of which are under a state-imposed quarantine. The quarantine is in place to stop the movement of SLF to new areas within or out of the current quarantine zone and to slow its spread within the quarantine. The quarantine affects vehicles and other conveyances, plant, wood, stone products and outdoor household items. Counties within the quarantine zone: Allegheny, Beaver, Berks, Blair, Bucks, Carbon, Chester, Columbia, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Mifflin, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, York. In addition to Pennsylvania, SLF is also found in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia.





# GCSAA HEALTH PROGRAM

GCSAA has partnered with Association Health Programs (AHP), an insurance broker who specializes in unique and costeffective association insurance solutions, to offer our members quality and customized health care options.

The creation of a program was based on members feedback. Now, as part of a large pool of national associations, all GCSAA members (excluding Friends) will have access to this program.

In addition to health insurance, members have access to other related types of insurance, including dental and vision, disability, life, accident, long-term care, and Medicare supplements.

### To begin the inquiry process

You will be required to complete the online census form to determine your eligibility. This form will provide AHP the necessary information to be able to advise you. AHP will only respond to GCSAA members.

### **Begin the inquiry** »

https://www.gcsaa.org/about-gcsaa/membership/membershipbenefits/health-insurance



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# Summer of Golf continues: July rounds up 20%

Rounds of golf were up **20%** nationally in July, outpacing June's 14% gain over last year. This two-month rebound has allowed the golf industry to climb from a 16% year-to-date deficit on April 30 to now a **3% lead over 2019.** 

It almost seems inconceivable given the loss of 20 million spring rounds from course shutdowns and virus-related anxieties. And the good news is likely to keep coming, at least from a play point-of-view. Indications from several golf course management companies, Troon, KemperSports and Billy Casper Golf Management among them, are that August has been nearly as good.

To put the July jump in perspective, only three times in at least the past 151 months has the industry seen a monthly rounds-increase of 20% or more, per Golf Datatech's reports. All three were during a heatwave in late 2011/early 2012, yielding surges in play at courses in the north that were typically closed and at a time of year when percentage increases can be misleading. To have a jump this significant during a high-volume summer month is unprecedented and reflects approximately **10 million** more July rounds versus a year ago.

Our latest year-end forecast has us up 2% to 6% year-overyear. Consider this – we haven't seen more than a 5%Y.O.Y. increase since 2012 (during that surreal winter heatwave).

www.thengfq.com/covid-19

# **CPGCSA July Golf Results**

Congratulations to our Golf Tournament winners from the July meeting at Carlisle Barracks Golf Course.

1st - Brad Helcoski

2nd - Jeff Green

3rd - Randy Super

4th - Chris Martin

Closest to the pin #11 -Randy Super

Closest to the pin #6 -Tim Rismandel

Thanks also to Jeff Green and his staff for a great day on the course!

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