

AUGUST 2020

ONCOURSE

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
ONTARIO GOLF SUPERINTENDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Golf Course Architecture in Ontario

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Superintendents Transition to GM Roles
Becoming a Superintendent,
Are You Ready?

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



By Tim Muys,
OGSA President.

Over the past few months we have all been forced to make tough decisions quickly as we shifted to new ways of working on account of COVID-19. Most courses are reporting increased rounds played with a staggering amount of cart traffic to compound the wear and tear put on the grounds. Not to mention the fact that much of it has happened during what has turned out to be one of the hottest summers on record in our Province.

You probably haven't been thinking much about the OGSA during this busy time, but rest assured, we have been thinking about you.

With many of the usual opportunities for planned events and gatherings being cancelled due to the pandemic, we have been considering how to best provide the services and benefits that were formerly given during in-person events, including our conference, education, and of course social and networking opportunities.

Your board of directors is treating this time of social distancing and cancelled events as a time of opportunity – a time to collect data in order to figure out how we can develop new and alternative ways of membership engagement and new ways to provide critically important resources and information to our members.

You are an integral part of our organization, and as such we want to find out how you wish to receive our programming going forward. We would also like to know how you, your staff and your organization are dealing with the impact of COVID-19, and how the OGSA can provide additional support during these difficult times.

To that end, you can expect to receive a survey from us soon. I encourage you to participate in the membership survey. Your valuable input will help us to plan short term and long term for the organization, and will assist us in creating scenario plans which will allow us to continue pursuing the mission statement of our organization: "The OGSA is committed to serving its members, advancing their profession and enriching the quality of golf and its environment".

The OGSA was formed in 1924, with the purpose of providing up-to-date information regarding the needs and challenges facing superintendents and to elevate the status of the profession to benefit all members. In order to keep serving this purpose, we plan to use the data that we collect from our survey to prioritize where the OGSA should spend our future resources in order to meet the current needs of our members as the pandemic continues. We will of course tweak things as we go along as the situation with the virus continues to evolve.

Our association serves a critical role in addressing the emerging concerns of our membership as we adapt to "the new normal". We're here to support you during these challenging times, keeping you up to date regarding the impact of the virus on our profession, the industry, and the association.

I know we will all rise to the challenge. After all, superintendents know better than anyone how to pivot when something out of the ordinary happens, whether it is a drought, a flood, an invasion of pests ... or a global pandemic. ■



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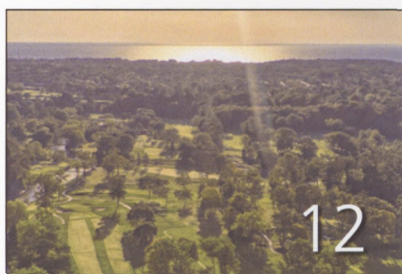
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Bigwin Island, 6th hole at sunrise.
Photo provided by Doug Carrick.

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EDITORIAL MESSAGE

It's business as (un)usual this year for golf course superintendents and as you've read in Tim Muys' President's Message and in What's New, the OGSA has been working hard to stay in touch, plan for the future and pull together another great issue of ONCourse. I know most summers are beyond busy for superintendents, assistants, technicians and our suppliers, but this year according to Doug Breen, who has shared his clever take on this year's golf season, "golf courses are full - like 1986 full. With no summer sports, roller coasters, and European vacations - we're seeing new golfers, prodigal golfers, and more play from existing golfers." Keeping this in mind, we really want to thank our volunteer writers Kendra Kiss, Chris Lecour, and Mike Pellerin for finding time to add researching and writing this issue's articles to their long list of to-do's.

Well thought out plans for the future are one of the keys to success. Sure, the universe will throw a wrench in the plan from time to time, but a good plan helps us to navigate through these times and stay, for the most part, on course to achieve long term goals.

For those who are planning to grow their careers, we've included an article about superintendents transitioning to general manager roles featuring insight from John Gravett, Phil Scully and Jason Hanna. This is complimented by an article on what to expect when preparing to apply for and land the superintendent role.

Although plans for renovations might be put on hold for a year or two, we thought this was a great time to get to know a few architects in Ontario. Some of whom have taken the stage at the Ontario Golf Course Management Conference over the last two years. We've reached out to Christine Fraser, Keith Cutten, Jeff Mingay, Doug Carrick, and Ian Andrew to get their thoughts on golf course architecture in Ontario.

With such an influx of golfers and cart activity on the course this year, finding time to maintain peripheral gardens might be tough. Chris Cummings shares tricks and tips on how to maintain gardens more efficiently throughout the season.

We've also featured Robert Clark, superintendent at North Bay G&CC, and a very interesting article on plant parasitic

nematodes, written by Cam Shaw and Barry Endicott has taken us down memory lane in Looking Back, 2005. Last, we'd like to thank everyone for sharing their today in Ontario photos on twitter...we've include a few of our favourites in Member Moments. On behalf of the ONCourse committee, we hope you enjoy the August Issue. Have a great rest of the season! ■



*Courtney White,
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WHAT'S NEW

By Sally Ross, Executive Director, OGSA.

OGCMC 2021

Adapting to change is never easy, and in a situation that is in a constant state of flux, it's even harder. This month, your Board of Directors agreed unanimously that the OGSA will not hold an in-person conference in January 2021.

As many of you know, the association relies heavily on the conference revenue and the support of our supplier sponsorships that we receive at the show to fund operations. Thankfully, due to prudent fiscal management and the strong fiduciary actions of our Directors over the past few years, we are in a position to weather the storm in our 2020/2021 fiscal year, with the hope that we can bring the conference back, even if it has to be modified somewhat, in January 2022.

UPCOMING INITIATIVES

We will look at investing time and effort in a new, more streamlined website with a simpler and more efficient approach to our membership management activities. We have researched a few membership management programs, and reached out to many GCSAA chapters asking for their recommendations for the systems they use. We want to take the opportunity to pursue this change which will enable us to better serve our membership into the future.

In lieu of the conference, we look into creating strategic partnerships with those associate member companies who support programs and events, to provide training modules and presentations for all our members to access when they have the time to take the training.

Thinking ahead to the 2021 golf season, we are working on an inclusive and new format for one or two golf events (if we safely can execute them in 2021). We want to involve every segment of our membership at these events to hopefully allow for some face to face networking, albeit a little less close together. We are positive that by next season, even those who do not typically attend golf tournaments, may want to "get out there" and see the friends they have missed since the virus hit.

GTI MOVE

We still have no idea when the move of the GTI will take place, details surrounding the completion of the new building, costs that are related to the move have not yet been established by the UofG, but this will be another activity that we need to review, plan and execute, when the time arrives.

#TodayInOntario2020

Our members will still qualify for our social media awards this coming fall, so please keep taking those wonderful pictures and sending them to us, for the magazine and put them up on twitter, with our #todayinontario2020 hashtag and @OntarioGSA

SUPERINTENDENT RECOGNITION PROGRAM

One activity we have modified, is our Superintendent Recognition Program and while we were unable to execute in person presentations, we have and will be acknowledging with a plaque all those Superintendents who host GAO events this summer. Thank you in advance for sending your photos in to commemorate the event. Please remember to stay safe and social distance for your photos!

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

We will also be reviewing our scholarship program as the Board believes these items take precedence, despite the fact that this coming fiscal year we will, for the first time in as long as I can remember, have to budget a deficit. Supporting members through the Heritage Award, the future of our industry through the Turfgrass Award, and our Assistants through the Kirkpatrick Bursary is high on our list of priorities.

So as summer marches on, we have a plan, at least for the foreseeable future and after that, we remain hopeful that we can get together again soon. ■



Gerry Fox, Superintendent, Dalewood GC, Host of the Ontario Women's Amateur & Mid-AM Championship.

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The 4th Hole

Member since 2011

Robert Clark

Superintendent, North Bay Golf & Country Club

By Mike Pellerin, Superintendent, Saugeen Golf Club. Photos provided by Robert Clark, and North Bay G&CC.

About the Course

About the Course: Built on a former farm in 1921, overlooking the city and Lake Nipissing. The original 9 was laid out by Stanley Thompson and the second 9 was built in the mid-60's. While not a long course it is still a challenging one with water coming into play on 13 of 18 holes.

Private, semi-private, public, municipal, resort? Private

Architect: Stanley Thompson

Number of holes: 18

Number rounds annually: 25 - 30,000

Practice Facility: No

Other staff:

Mechanic, Gord White,
Assistant, Duncan Kirk,
Second Assistant, Dan Walters

Robert Clark was introduced to course maintenance at young age. In fact, the first time I met Robert he might have been all of five years old. I worked with Robert's father who was the equipment technician at the Idylwyld Golf and Country Club. Andrew's wife would visit with the kids and he would take them around the course for cart rides. Little did I know that little boy would one day become a colleague and someone who would eventually take over my role as superintendent when I left the North Bay Golf and Country Club.

Maybe it was the early exposure to maintenance that sparked the interest in becoming a superintendent. When asked who has been most influential on his career Robert speaks of the support he has received from his parents. "My dad has been in the industry for most of his life. Both of my parents instilled my hard-working mentality. I have always known that I can reach out to seek advice about issues on the course or



Robert Clark, Superintendent, North Bay Golf & Country Club.

about interviews. They have always told me what I needed to hear".

Robert's first job was at the Idylwyld in Sudbury. He started in the turf department and eventually began working in the kitchen. He had enjoyed working in the kitchen and after a few seasons he eventually put himself through the Chef Training Program at Cambrian College. Shortly after school he

In the Hot Seat

Q: Favourite Major?

A: The Masters

Q: Best piece of turf equipment?

A: Hard tie between the Toro Procore 648 and Stihl 391

Q: Lowest round ever and where?

A: 85, Muskoka Lakes G&CC

Q: Ultimate foursome: You and which three?

A: Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson, Jim Furyk

Q: Favourite meal?

A: Spaghetti

Q: Favourite movie?

A: Anything Quentin Tarantino or Guy Ritchie

Q: Favourite golf course?

A: Tobacco Road GC

Q: Favourite course designer?

A: I don't have a specific favourite designer but enjoy pretty much any course.

Q: Favourite Band?

A: The Offspring

realized that his true passion was with turf and decided to change career paths.

Robert headed south and worked a season at Bond Head before returning the Idylwyld as a second assistant. Robert's boss, Jay Sisko, encouraged him to enroll in the Turf Managers Short Course the following winter. Soon after completing the Short Course, he accepted a position at Muskoka Lakes Golf and Country Club as the Second Assistant. Jim Flett, the superintendent at Muskoka Lakes recalls, "I was looking for a guy that was hands on and someone who had a reputation of being a hard worker." After a season Robert moved into the Assistant's role and as Flett said, "he rose to the challenge". The year 2013 proved to be exceptionally challenging. Flett remembers the severe winter damage as an extreme battle, "I believe we both learned a lot from that experience and going forward we'd do some things differently".

One of Robert's best memories comes from his time at Muskoka Lakes where he was lucky enough to witness an employee, Nigel Eves score a hole in one on the 12th hole during their round. After five seasons at Muskoka Lakes, Robert would leave to take on his first superintendent position when he joined the North Bay Golf and Country Club.

Robert leads a crew of nine at North Bay.



(L-R) The Clark Family, Arran, Vanessa, River and Robert.

He speaks highly of their hard work, passion for the job and their fun-loving nature. "We try to keep on the lighter side of things. It's not work if you love what you do." Robert's dog Arya spends most days with him on the golf course and tags along from task to task. Growing up Robert was actively involved with the Army Cadets and says a big lesson he had learned was to lead by example. "I always try and to show my staff that I am willing to do any job that needs to be done. I always engage my staff, keep them happy and laughing which motivates them to complete the task at hand". Long term employee and equipment technician Gord White enjoys the work atmosphere and leadership Robert provides. "He is always ready to get down and dirty if needed, he leads by example. He has earned my respect by letting me do my job without interference. He is very approachable and considerate to suggestions." The biggest piece of advice Robert can offer

to someone who is just starting out is "Work hard, stay positive, learn from your mistakes and try to see the lighter side of things!"

The North Bay Golf and Country Club has been in existence since 1921. The property has tons of character and a solid layout that demands player accuracy off the tee. It can be challenging to manage at times as it sits on the escarpment and there is not much soil to work with. Winters can be problematic and there is always a concern for ice damage even under the best of conditions. Robert's twitter handle is @dirtfarmer89, @bedrockbobby may be more appropriate considering the lack of dirt under the grass. Robert and his team have been focused on improving growing conditions over the past few seasons with tree removal being high on the priority list. Since joining the club Robert has completed the rebuild of several tee complexes and has improved the playability of the ladies tees resulting in a

What You Need to Know

Predominant grass type: Poa/ bent mix

Types of greens: Push up

Course length: 6509 yards

Size of greens: 1.7 acres

Size of tees: 1 acres

Size of fairways: 8.5 acres

Major Challenges: Drainage and Trees



The 11th Hole.



North Bay G&CC clubhouse.

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North Bay Course Chairman and Vice-President, Jordie Leggett has nothing but good things to say about Robert and the quality of work he brings to the club. "He started at the NBGCC as a young superintendent, finding his way. He has matured into a seasoned professional with invaluable knowledge and experience. We are lucky to have him as part of our senior management team."

Outside of work Robert and his wife Veronica have a young family. His daughter River is 5, and his son Arran is 3. The family spent last Christmas, visiting the east coast of

Canada. As much fun as they had, Robert's ideal vacation would be an all-inclusive destination with beaches and palm trees.

Hockey keeps him busy in the winter and baseball rounds out his summers.

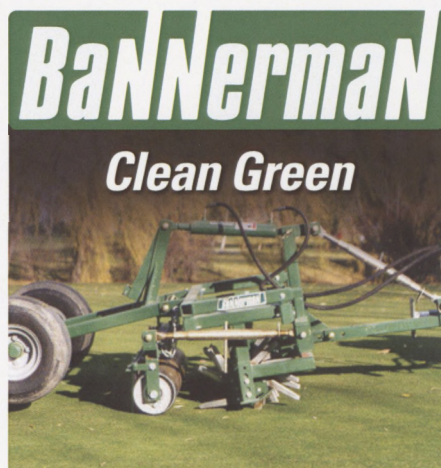
Robert has been an OGSA member for nine years and has been a superintendent for five. The North Bay Golf and Country Club celebrates its centennial in 2021 which will be an exciting year for the club. The members can be assured that Robert and his team will be dedicated to making it a season to remember. ■

"Robert started at the NBGCC as a young superintendent, finding his way. He has matured into a seasoned professional with invaluable knowledge and experience. We are lucky to have him as part of our senior management team."

– Jordie Leggett, North Bay Course Chairman and Vice-President



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Superintendents Transition to GM Roles



Credit Valley Golf Club. Photo provided by Jason Hanna.

By Chris Lecour, Technical Sales Representative – Georgian Bay, Target Specialty Products.

There has long existed the idea, at least in golf business circles and certainly among turf managers, that superintendents would naturally make excellent golf course general managers.

Several golf clubs in the GTA have former superintendents as their current general manager or COO, a move that seems to have gained popularity in recent years.

Phil Scully has literally grown up at Granite Golf Club where he currently serves as general manager at the private club. Scully joined the club as an assistant superintendent in 2001 just as the club was emerging from its grow-in and was preparing to open. He was promoted to superintendent in 2007 and general manager at the

beginning of 2020. He counts himself fortunate to have been able to participate in numerous projects at Granite Golf Club over the years. Scully also believes that successful superintendents master the art of communication and promotion. "This stems from the inherent passion we all have for our little pieces of property and the overwhelming need to tell anyone who will listen about what we do and why we do it." This ability and desire to tell a story can manifest itself in successfully selling a board or committee on the need for an improvement or investment on the golf course or in the clubhouse.

There may be something about Granite Golf Club turning out strong club managers, or perhaps the club just has a knack for hiring emerging club leaders in the early stages of their careers. John Gravett, current general manager and COO at The Toronto Golf Club, was the superintendent who hired Phil Scully back in 2001 when he was the superintendent at Granite Golf Club. Gravett had formerly been the assistant superintendent at The Toronto Golf Club and superintendent at Credit Valley Golf Club. Eventually he would become the GM & COO at Granite Golf before leaving to take the same position at The Toronto Golf Club in 2009.

Gravett believes that most superintendents already possess a number of skills that would lay the groundwork for them to pursue a role as general manager: accounting and financial management, human resource management, department leadership, knowledge of golf operations, legislative knowledge, facilities management, and interpersonal and communications skills. Other skills that would directly assist aspiring managers prepare for such a role, including food and beverage management, club governance, membership marketing, and strategic planning can be gained through a number of institutions of higher learning or professional associations such as the CSCM (Canadian Society of Club Managers) and the CMAA (Club Managers Association of America).

Jason Hanna recognized the benefit of getting involved with

Reasons usually cited why Superintendents make good General Managers:

- They manage the largest asset and typically the largest budget at the club,
- Superintendents by nature tend to be problem solvers, a desired trait among club leaders managing multiple departments that cater to sometimes demanding guests,
- Their ability to manage projects would seem to lend itself to upper management at most facilities,
- Those multitasking skills necessary for managing large projects are easily transferable to other areas of the business.



Jason Hanna, COO, Credit Valley G&CC.



John Gravett, General Manager & COO,
The Toronto Golf Club.



Phil Scully, General Manager, Granite Golf Club.

the CSCM. Hanna is the current chief operating officer at Credit Valley Golf and Country Club. Hanna joined the club in 2007 as the assistant superintendent and was promoted to course and property manager in 2014. He assumed the role of interim COO in early 2019 when Ian Webb, long time and beloved manager at Credit Valley was diagnosed with glioblastoma. Sadly, Webb passed away in September 2019 and after a thorough search to find his replacement, Hanna was formally appointed as his successor in February 2020.

While Hanna's ascent to his current position came amid unfortunate circumstances, he was more than prepared for the role as he took an interest in joining the CSCM long before the opportunity at his home club came up. He enrolled in some courses to widen his skill set with an eye towards becoming a general manager someday. Hanna is also quick to credit both his Board of Directors and his current superintendent, Chris Bouwers with making the transition so seamless. He and Bouwers had worked together so well and for so long that they often completed each other's sentences and it was an easy progression from superintendent to COO with Bouwer's help.

Faced with a delayed opening and restrictions due to COVID-19, managing member and guest expectations has been vital to the success of each club this spring. At The Toronto Golf Club, "once we opened our challenges were manageable due to the extensive pre-planning and training and hard work of our senior management team" says Gravett. At Granite Golf Club, communication was key, not only keeping every avenue of communication open but making members and staff aware of situations as they unfolded so there were no surprises for anyone. Hanna points to another important consideration for managing people during COVID-19, something only an astute manager would notice. Caring for the individual. "Everyone has different levels of anxiety. Some were very apprehensive, but now things have become routine," thanks no doubt to policies and safety protocols put into place.

All three would agree that their involvement in professional associations and a lifelong desire for professional development have been key to their success in this industry. Besides their involvement

in club manager associations, both Scully and Gravett are former past presidents of the OGSA. "I've been fortunate enough to spend my entire career actively engaged in professional development opportunities in provincial, federal and international superintendent and manager associations" says Gravett. "Even if you are not interested in a career in club management, I would recommend that superintendents and assistants reach out to organizations like the CSCM to learn more about club management as it will only help you better understand how clubs

operate and bring more knowledge to your respective roles." Scully would agree: "What I have always appreciated as a superintendent is the open and uninhibited desire to share information and resources between industry professionals. This culture of inclusiveness is magnified and encouraged through the associations...equally important is for superintendents to push themselves out of their comfort zones. Writing, public speaking and financial management outside of annual departmental budgets are all essential skills."

Hanna's advice for anyone with an eye towards advancing their career in club management is simple: "Get out of the bubble." He used to think the golf course was 'it', but has long since realized that every piece of the business has to work for the club

to be successful. He has also realized that the number of hours required to be successful has not changed, those hours and priorities have just shifted. Scully has adapted to the increasing demands on his time as well. "The one part of the job I underestimated was the demand on your time. This can be overwhelming and time management is crucial. I'm still working on balance between work and life, I'll let you know how that goes after year one."

Credit Valley Golf Club, Granite Golf and The Toronto Golf Club recognize the value in promoting superintendents to the most senior leadership roles in their organization. They were not the first golf clubs to do so and as more superintendents recognize their potential to "get out of the bubble", they surely won't be the last.

Special thanks to Jason Hanna, Phil Scully and John Gravett for their time and contributions to this article. ■

I would recommend that Superintendents and Assistants reach out to organizations like the CSCM to learn more about club management as it will only help you better understand how clubs operate and bring more knowledge to your respective roles." – John Gravett.



Becoming a Superintendent, Are You Ready?

By Kendra Kiss, Lead Technician, Magna Golf Club.

Progression is defined as *the process of developing or moving gradually toward a more advanced state*. From working as a general labourer, to intern, to technician and now an assistant to the superintendent, I often think about my next move and two questions come to mind. How do I achieve this and what can I expect when this opportunity presents itself?

I have had the chance to hear Carol Rau from Career Advantage Golf speak on two occasions. According to Rau, the first step is figuring out what you need to do to prepare for the superintendent role in the first place. Start with focusing on the interview and work your way back. She notes that one of the key differences between interviewing for an assistant role and a superintendent role, is the hiring decision-maker. Superintendents want to talk about all things turf: our industry education and our skill sets on the course. When applying for a superintendent role, although we still need to focus on our hard skills, the hiring decision-maker will look for so much more. Rau explains, "A typical hiring committee will be comprised of business executives who have a completely different perspective of golf management. In your cover letter, resume, and interview answers, instead of just focusing on the tasks relating to caring for turf, focus on your business skills and soft skills. Hiring committees want to hire a complete professional, not just a turf technician. Highlight your leadership, integrity,

Hiring committees want to hire
a complete professional, not
just a turf technician. Highlight
your leadership, integrity,
teamwork, communication, and
organizational skills.

teamwork, communication, and organizational skills. Let that hiring committee know that you will drive success for their overall golf facility, not just the maintenance department. This can be the key to unlock success in getting your first job as a golf course superintendent!"

Over the last year or two, there has been a wave of assistant superintendents who have landed superintendent jobs across Ontario, some as successors, and some have moved to new clubs. I was able to reach out to a few of them to gain a better understanding of what's required to be successful as a new superintendent.

When asked what skills they feel are critical to the superintendent role, the general sentiment reiterated Rau's thoughts on honing your business skills. A good understanding of accounting, excellent budgeting skills, and an aptitude for completing paperwork and invoicing are definitely essential when in the superintendent role. It's also a good idea to brush up on your writing skills because the better you are at communicating through emails and reports, the more respected your professional opinion will be. And, work on your people skills. "Make sure you are really good with people! They will make or break you," says Grant Murphy, Barrie CC, who became a superintendent in 2019.

With any new role, despite your best efforts to prepare, there are always surprises. Time management skills are essential. Jonathan Smith, from Mississauga G&CC, who became the superintendent in 2016 notes that "it's surprising the number of different directions one can get pulled in a day."



Jonathan Smith, Superintendent, and his team, Mississauga G&CC.

Steve Sibbald, who recently got the superintendent role in March of this year, at Hidden Lake GC, agrees that planning and organizing can be overwhelming for a first time superintendent. "Coming from a well-oiled machine at my previous property and now making those decisions alone has taken some time to get used to. We are starting to build a decent routine with the staff and things are coming together."

For Stephen Hicks, who joined the ranks in 2019 at Brantford G&CC, the need to be an excellent communicator came as a slight surprise. "It is impossible to OVER communicate. Listening to feedback, explaining expectations, discussing the history of the club with members, interacting with other departments, and so on."

You've tackled the professional development skills list, but how do you know that you're ready to become a superintendent? Murphy shares, "I think you know when you're ready to 'take the risk' but if you're unsure, listen to what other people tell you, they know better than you often times."

Before submitting that well thought out resume, it's also worth considering what you're getting into when taking on a superintendent role. Smith shares that one of the most difficult part of managing the property is that, "There are so many elements that are out of our control and we need to be ready to adjust plans quickly and accordingly. We work in a demanding industry, there are always so many moving parts and expectations are high. To get the most out of courses we need to have great people. Assembling the right team and then fostering the right culture is imperative and certainly be challenging at times. I am extremely fortunate to work alongside such a fun, yet determined group."

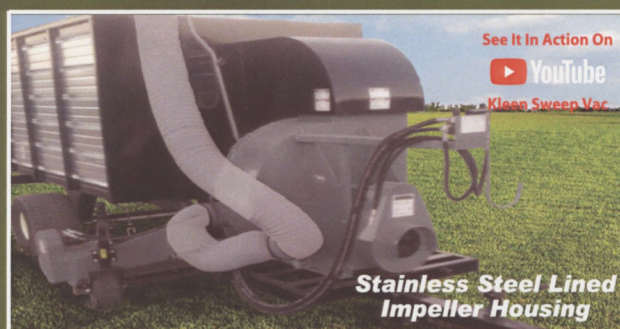
Another challenging part of the role that an assistant may not have encountered is disciplining team members. This is where effective communication skills come into play so the employee clearly understands what went wrong, expectations moving forward and consequences if these expectations are not met. Hicks shares, "Never allow yourself to get frustrated by small gripes or comments, but still listen openly because there are sometimes small pieces of information that are of absolute immediate importance."

So for all the other assistants out there preparing for their chance to become the next superintendent, I hope these tips from those who have made the leap will help when your turn comes. If you believe it you can achieve it. ■

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Golf Course Architecture in Ontario



Bigwin Island Golf Club, 6th hole. Photo provided by Doug Carrick.

"The most successful course is one that will test the skill of the most advanced golfer without discouraging the duffer while adding to the enjoyment of both."

– Stanley Thompson

By Kendra Kiss, Lead Technician, Magna Golf Club.

When I first started in this industry, I began, as I think most of us do, raking bunkers, cutting greens, and just falling in love with the outdoors. I still remember watching the sunrise at Kananaskis Country GC light up the Rocky Mountains in the distance, while I drove the curves of the course toward my morning task. These serene moments inspired me to consider the beauty of golf course architecture and its impact on one of the most challenging of games we play today.

In 2019 and 2020, the OGSA Golf Course Management Conference (OGCMC) included two sessions featuring architects; an architect's panel in 2019, and Christine Fraser's talk about how superintendents can influence design. I reached out to the architects who took the OGCMC stage, Ian Andrew, Jeff Mingay, Christine Fraser, and Keith Cutten, as well as Doug Carrick to capture their thoughts on Ontario's place in golf course architecture history and what makes a golf course great.

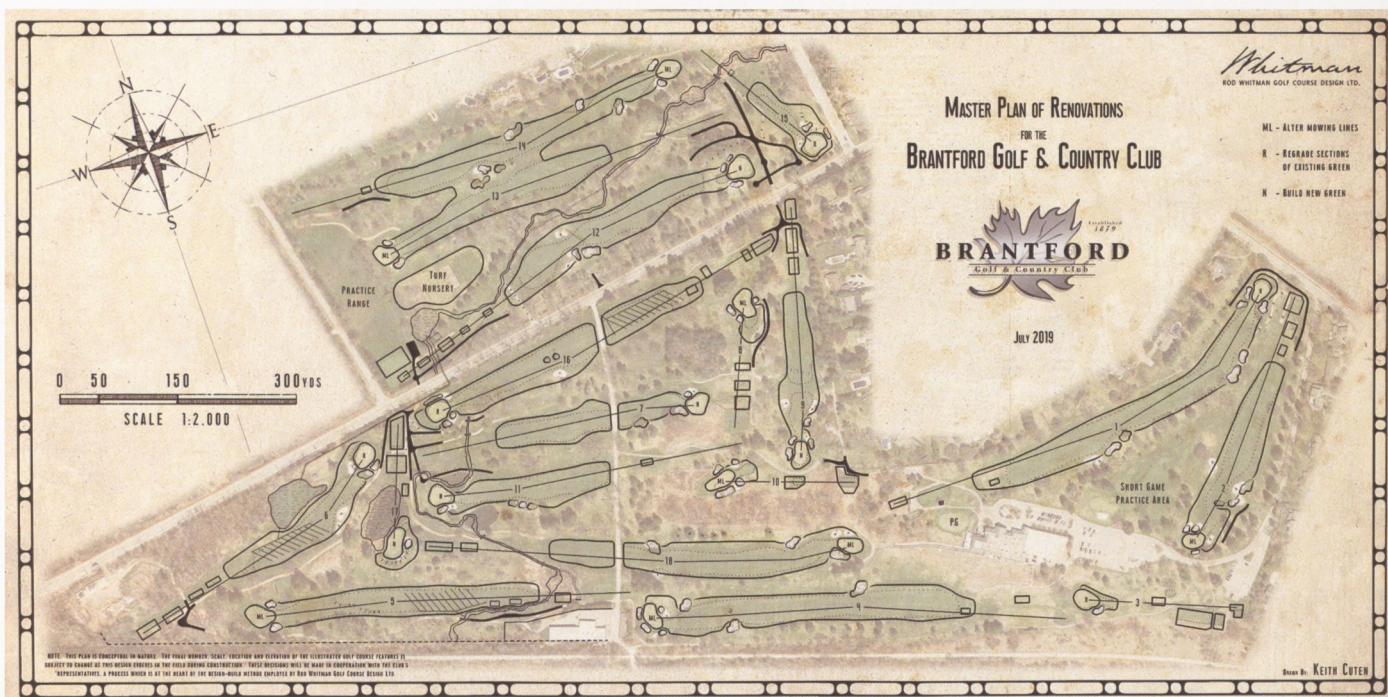
One thing that is apparent with this group is that the interest in golf course architecture came at a young age. For Carrick, it was developed while playing competitive amateur golf in his teens at both the provincial and national level at some of Canada's best golf courses.

Mingay, was influenced by his father who had a huge interest in golf and books. "I started reading those books, including some classics on architecture. This helped me realize that golf course design and construction was an actual profession."

Andrew, was watching a golf tournament at Pebble Beach Golf Links when he was 13 and thought, "That's a cool job." Cutten knew he wanted to be a golf course architect following his first summer working at Cherry Downs GC when he was 17. After he completed three years of design and drafting in high school, he sat down with his father to plot out a future career path in golf.

As for Fraser, she was born into the world of golf. Her maternal grandparents built a golf course outside of Kingston in 1976 which they still manage to this day. She spent every summer at the golf course learning rules, etiquette and technique. Later, she was awarded a NCAA Division One Varsity Golf scholarship. After graduating Fraser did not want to compete at such a high level and needed to find a different path but still wanted to remain closely tied to golf. Architecture seemed like a good fit.

As these architects have established their careers, they have developed their preferred approach to design often drawing inspiration from the Golden Era greats, like Harry Colt, Donald Ross, A.W. Tillinghast, Willie Park Jr., Walter Travis, Alister



Brantford Golf and Country Club, Master Plan of Renovations. Photo provided by Keith Cutten.



Osprey Hoot 2nd hole. Photo provided by Doug Carrick.



Summit construction meeting 2011. Photo provided by Doug Carrick.

MacKenzie, Stanley Thompson, and Robbie Robinson (a former design associate of Thompsons). And in some cases, they draw inspiration from each other. When asked, Andrew adds to his list of inspiring golf course architects, "Doug Carrick because I worked for him and my initial ideas reflected some of his."

Inspiration does not come from the work of others alone. Andrew believes in the philosophy that the land dictates the golf course architecture, rather than the architect imposing their ideas over the land. Mingay agrees. "The great courses are laid out to take advantage of existing opportunities - natural green sites, undulation, long views, specimen trees...a varied collection of interesting putting surfaces and surrounds are equally important for greatness, elevating a smart routing. Even if they don't realize it, a majority of golfers love playing in a uniquely beautiful natural setting."

Cutten reminds us that, "At its core, golf is a game, and games are meant to be fun and with magazine ratings and professional standards constantly looming over course designers, this simple

fact has been frequently forgotten. A golf course doesn't need to be cluttered with an abundance of bunkers, trees, and other hazards to present an adequate challenge."

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Cutten Fields, 13th and 16th holes under construction. Photo provided by Jeff Mingay.

"Northern Ontario is very unique and the courses that expose or accentuate the Canadian Shield are truly unique in Golf. The courses around the Muskoka's are quite different from anything else I have seen."

– Ian Andrew

So what makes a golf course fun, but challenging? Carrick explains that designing a variety of shots, length of holes, use of clubs, hole orientation, and visual patterning make a golf course memorable. Incorporating enough flexibility provides a meaningful challenge to the most skilled golfers and provide the average golfer an enjoyable experience and appropriate level of challenge.

For Fraser and Andrew they feel that a course that incorporates a choose-your-own-adventure approach to design can elevate the fun while presenting new challenges. Fraser shares, "A course that offers

the player various possible strategies and routings to get to the pin often captures the interest of the most types of players. This allows them to test both the ground and the air game and challenge the player to make a decision, invite players to be strategic and harness their mind game and course management techniques."

Although Ontario isn't the home to the oldest club in Canada, that honor goes to the Royal Montreal GC (1873), "Ontario, specifically Toronto, could easily be argued to be the cradle of Canadian Golf," says Cutten. Golf course architecture in Ontario was born in 1876,

What are your favourite hidden gem courses in Ontario?



Keith Cutten



Christine Fraser



Doug Carrick



Jeff Mingay



Ian Andrew

"There are so many hidden gem golf courses in Ontario. Having grown up on Ontario's public golf courses, my fondness always resides with public golf. Strategic but affordable layouts are really the key to growing the game. One of my favorite examples of this is Tarandowah Golfers Club in Springfield." – **Keith Cutten**

"My favourite hidden gem is Tarandowah Golfers Club, in Springfield, Ontario." – **Christine Fraser**

"Cataraqui, Midland, Craigowan, Beverly." – **Doug Carrick.**

"Donald Ross' Roseland municipal in Windsor is really good. And, most golfers in Ontario probably don't know about. Lakeview, across the road from The Toronto Golf Club, is really cool too. I also nominate Cherry Hill in Fort Erie. The great Walter Travis worked some magic with that flat piece of ground." – **Jeff Mingay**

"Norfolk G&CC. The best 9 hole course that few have ever heard of or seen, and Kawartha G&CC. It should be far better known in Canada" – **Ian Andrew**



Bigwin Island 18th hole at sunrise. Photo provided by Doug Carrick.

with the development of third oldest club in Canada, The Toronto GC, which moved to its current location in 1911, and was designed by British architect, Harry Colt. However, nipping at its heels are the Brantford G&CC (1879), Niagara On The Lake GC (1881), London Hunt & CC (1885), and Perth GC (1890) all earning a spot in the top 10, on the 150 Oldest Active Clubs in Canada list published by Golf Canada in 2017. Carrick notes, "Ontario has in many ways set the standard for high quality golf in Canada. I think it is due to the combination of golf properties that are ideally suited to the game of golf, the high quality of design character and the high level of maintenance found on many of Ontario's golf courses."

The group agrees that southern Ontario is blessed with the ideal golf terrain - gently to moderately rolling, but not extreme - and Ontario's courses are also enhanced with mature trees, forest and other natural features.

Perhaps one feature that helps to set Ontario apart is the dramatic northern Ontario landscape. The Boreal Forest, the abundance of lakes, and the Canadian Shield which cradles Muskoka, Haliburton and Kawartha Lakes regions make room for courses like Bigwin Island GC, Muskoka Bay Club, Oviinbyrd GC, Grandview GC which showcase beautiful rock outcroppings that can't be found anywhere else in Canada. Andrew notes, "Northern Ontario is very unique and the courses that expose or accentuate the Canadian Shield are truly unique in Golf. The courses around the Muskoka's are quite different from anything else I have seen."

Courses don't have to be the biggest or carry the largest budgets to have an excellent layout in Ontario. Andrew sums it up the best when he says, "Great golf architecture is a perfect marriage of design and presentation that brings out the best in that design. No marriage of the two and you can only get good golf." ■



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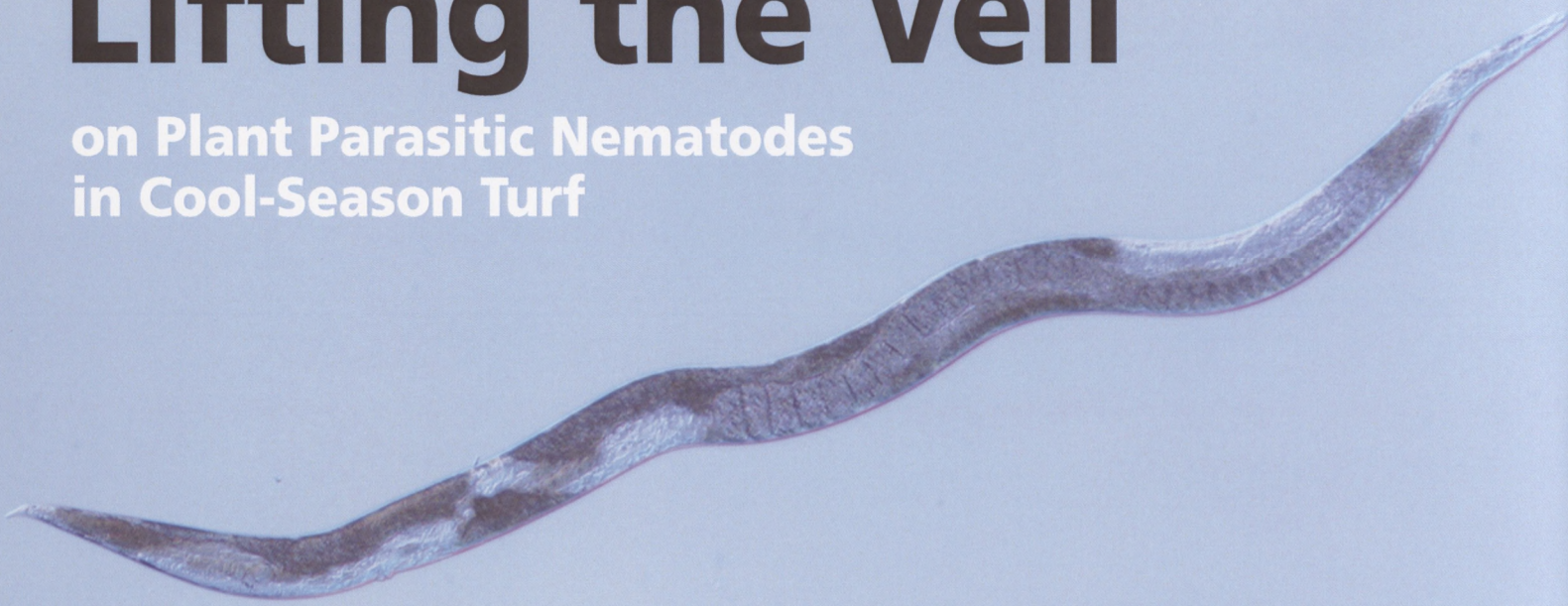
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Lifting the Veil

on Plant Parasitic Nematodes in Cool-Season Turf



Subanguina radiculicola or the grass root-gall nematode. Photo provided by Dr. Nathaniel Mitkowski.

By Cam Shaw, Communications & Outreach Coordinator, Guelph Turfgrass Institute, University of Guelph.

To our colleagues working in warm-season climates, plant parasitic nematodes (PPN) are a serious concern throughout the growing season. These microscopic, worm-like creatures thrive in persistently warm environments and have come to be known as a primary pest of turf in such regions. Many of you have likely come across horrifying images on social media or heard stories of the often-catastrophic aftermath PPN have the potential to cause. Yet here in the North, where cooler climates prevail and our winters create significant challenges for the nematode life cycle, this pest tends to be overlooked or dismissed as a non-issue. Through discussion of newer research findings and opinions from industry leading investigators, this article hopes to convince golf course superintendents to take a second look at this ubiquitous turf pest. PPN are here in Canada – that we know for sure. They are in your soils right now and although their threat as a primary pest may

be peripheral, their potential as a significant contributor in the turf stress equation should not be negated.

Over the years, a number of studies have been conducted on PPN affecting turf in

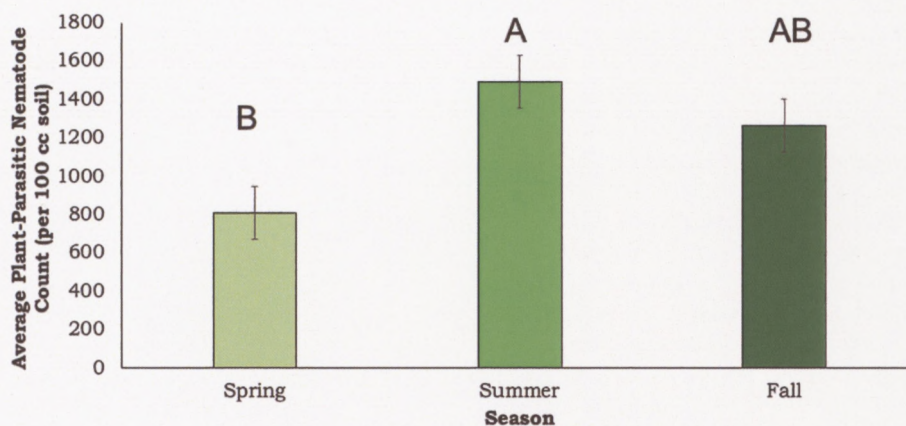
Ontario and across Canada. Particularly of interest was a study done by Dr. Katerina Jordan's research team in 2013 funded in part by the Ontario Turfgrass Research Foundation.

PPN affecting turf study by Dr. Katerina Jordan's research team in 2013 highlights:

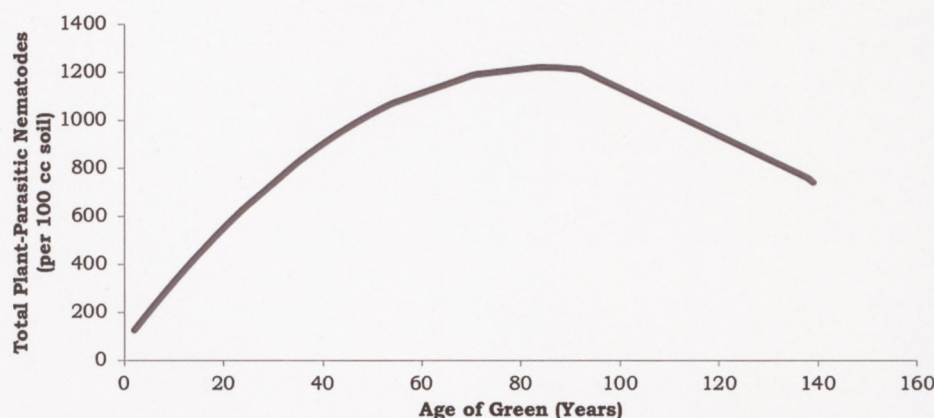
- 99% of soil samples collected from Canadian golf courses had PPN present.
- Five predominant genera of PPN were identified. They were: Spiral, Ring, Stunt, Root-knot and Cyst nematodes.
- Populations of PPN were highest during summer periods.
- Samples from greens between ages 50-100 years had the highest populations.
- Samples taken from coastal regions appeared to have highest populations (especially Vancouver due to warmer winter periods).
- Rolling frequency and percentage of *Poa annua* populations tended to be correlated with nematode populations.
- Soils more likely to hold moisture through available pore space was also linked to nematode populations.

Historically, it was believed that the shorter summer periods and frigid winters of the North curtailed nematode population growth enough to prevent any chance of reaching damage threshold levels. In part, there is some truth to this. In many parts of Canada, and specifically in Ontario, we do tend to see peak nematode counts resting below 1000 / 100 cc of soil. If you were to reference a threshold chart (provided below), you would quickly see that these figures generally rest below the currently accepted damage thresholds. But the point this article is trying to make, is that even populations of <1000/100cc of soil can still potentially have a negative effect on turf – perhaps not as a primary stress contributor, but more so as a secondary or tertiary contributor. As well, we often see numerous genera feeding in the same area so although each nematode species may not be at threshold levels individually, as a cumulative group they increase damage and stress in the plant. What we are suggesting is that PPN in cooler climates should be considered more akin to the way minor traffic stress, moderate shade, minimal thatch or reduced air flow also add to the cumulative stress a turf plant endures in a growing season. In saying this, it is the belief of many within the field of nematology that knowing how nematode populations on your property ebb and flow will help you to better understand the full picture of the role they play in your turf's stress equation. In other words, understanding, how PPN may be influencing the health of your turf throughout the growing season, from green to green and from year to year may be key in helping you manage your greens over time.

Nematode research on turf in cool-season climates is still in its infancy. Although nematology is a study that has been around for almost 200 years, much is still yet to be understood about these fascinating creatures. For example, the published damage threshold charts that we currently use as a guideline for PPN is, admittedly, a suggested range and can have tremendous variance from region to region, property to property and even green to green. For example, in an article written for GolfDom in 2017, Dr. Nathaniel Mitkowski of the University of Rhode Island suggests that factors like turf species, soil-type, and growing environment can have a significant impact on how PPN affect turf. In the article, Mitkowski writes: "While 3,000 stunt nematodes per 100cc of soil likely place significant stress on *Poa annua* plants growing in a push-up soil with only one-half inch of root in the middle of July, the same



PPN distribution and population counts fluctuating throughout the growing year on cool-season turf. Data shown here is based on samples collected throughout Canada (2013). Note: Bars with different letter designations are considered significantly different from each other.



Distribution of PPN populations based on age of golf course putting greens across Canada (2013).

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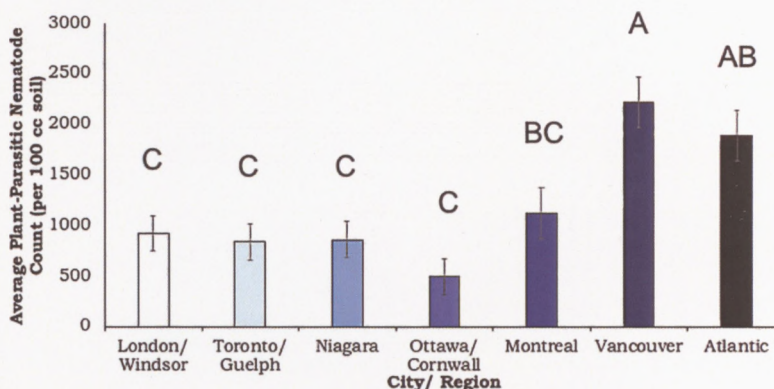
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number of nematodes is unlikely to have any effect on a sand-based creeping bentgrass (*Agrostis stolonifera* L.) green with a rooting depth of 5 inches in the fall.”

Perhaps another reason that PPN have continued to elude any level of mainstream acceptance as a pest in cool-season climates is due to the unpredictable, diffuse and often non-descript stress patterns they create. In discussions with Dr. Katerina Jordan of the University of Guelph, she states that it is often quite difficult for golf superintendents to recognize and diagnose symptoms of PPNs in the field. “They can easily be mistaken for root pathogens, anthracnose, and even general abiotic stressors,” says Dr. Jordan. In Mitkowski’s 2017 GolfDom article, he shares the same opinion. “Every superintendent can identify a disease like dollar spot, brown patch or pink snow mold. But [plant parasitic] nematode damage can dramatically vary in appearance.” Mitkowski goes on to discuss that in many cases where PPN are the culprit, golf course superintendents often don’t find out until much later after they have exhausted a number of unsuccessful (and expensive) fungicide drenches targeting root pathogens with no exhibited recovery. Even if diagnostic samples are sent off, they may



Site-specific distribution of PPN populations across sampling regions throughout Canada. (2013).
Note: Bars with different numbers are considered significantly different from each other.

Nematode	Threshold *A	Threshold *B	Threshold *C	Severe Stress threshold *C
Stunt	800	300	800 - 1000	2000 - 3000
Lance	400	150	400 - 500	1000 - 2000
Ring	1500	1500	2000 - 3000	> 4000
Spiral	1500	600	2000 - 2500	4000
Cyst	500	n/a	n/a	n/a
Root Knot	500	100	500-700	> 1000
Sting	n/a	20	n/a	n/a
Needle	n/a	n/a	100-200	> 500

*A - Umass turfgrass Disease Diagnostic Clinic

*B - Cornell University

*C - University of Rhode Island (published by GolfDom in 2017 and provided by Dr. Nathaniel Mitkowski)

Various PPN damage threshold data for cool-season turf collected from various recognized academic institutions specializing in turfgrass and pathology. Notice how some damage thresholds vary from institution and region.

come back negative for pathogens and tend to suggest an abiotic issue ... all the while PPN were the issue, or perhaps a significant contributor to the issue.

It is this general lack of understanding and dismissal that intrigued Dr. Katerina Jordan to continue her research in this area and set up a nematode sampling service through the GTI Diagnostic Clinic, which she oversees. “The goal of this service is to help golf course superintendents in Ontario and across Canada become more familiar with how plant parasitic nematode populations fluctuate throughout the season and from year to year on their properties. Collecting data on these pests now can help diagnose issues down the line as well as help to generate more accurate and predictable threshold models for Canada-specific regions,” says Dr. Jordan. This is why use of the service is so important. Not only are you learning valuable information about your property’s relationship with nematodes, but you are also helping to contribute to ongoing body of knowledge in the field of nematology.

The great news about nematode sampling is that it is relatively cheap compared to traditional diagnostic services. Since

diagnosticians are only looking for one thing, it dramatically shortens the time interval for putting together an accurate and thorough count and diagnosis. Another important detail when it comes to sampling for nematodes is the concept of benchmarking data. Taking samples at various times throughout the year is an ideal way to capture how populations fluctuate throughout the course of the season – even when your turf is healthy. It may seem counterintuitive to take samples when turf looks great, but this will help to determine a better understanding of what populations of PPN are tolerable on your property. It will also be ever more valuable when compared against population counts in times when symptoms or suspected PPN damage may occur. In essence, over time you will be collecting and quantifying your own property’s unique damage threshold data.

In closing, it is not the intention of this article to create panic and have all readers assume PPN are causing significant damage to their properties. Rather, the intention is to help golf course superintendents gain further understanding of the potential role that PPN can play in that complicated and cumulative stress equation your turf endures year to year.

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Severe damage to a mixed annual bluegrass/creeping bentgrass green caused by high levels of lance nematodes. Damage had been observed repeatedly for a number of years in the same location, typically during mid-summer, but had gone undiagnosed. The superintendent increased levels of aeration and seeding to damaged areas, but nothing less than chemical application would solve the issue. Photo and caption taken from 2017 GolfDom article by Dr. Nathaniel Mitkowski.



Example of the non-descript and diffuse stress symptoms that PPN can create in cool-season turf. Photo provided by The Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

If you are not currently taking nematode counts on your property, perhaps this article may inspire you to do more investigating in this area. The cost is low and the potential benefits of the returned data could be invaluable.

If you wish to know more about the nematode count service offered through the GTI diagnostics clinic, be sure to check out the FAQs section and sampling details listed on the diagnostic service form found through the GTI website at www.guelph turfgrass.ca. ■

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The 2005 OGSA Board of Directors



The Board of Directors in 2005 were as follows: (L-R Back row) Jarrod Barakett, Deer Ridge; Chris Andrejicka, Essex; Rob Ackermann, Weston (past pres.); Bob Burrows, Rosedale (vice); Randy Booker, Dundas Valley; Jeff Alexander, Parry Sound; (Front Row) Trevor Clapperton, Dalewood; Paul Scenna, Donalda (pres.); Sean DeSilva, Taboo; Doug Breen, Golf North; Rob Gatto, King's Forest; and Jeff Stauffer, Credit Valley who was unavailable for the photo.

Office administrators were Dorothy Hills, Pat Thomas and Deborah Badger. John Bladon, Nu-Gro Corporation, was editor of Green Is Beautiful.

ON THE MOVE

John Parker, Trafalgar, moved to Beaverdale. Brian Brooker moved to Hornby Glen. Ted Ellis, Blue Springs, moved to Huron Oaks. Mark Prieur, Markland Wood, went to Trafalgar. Mike Pellerin went to North Bay. Ryan Beauchamp, St. Thomas, went to Glen Abbey and Wade Beaudoin went to St. Thomas. Peter Kinch, Glen Abbey, went to Lambton. Dave Svab went to Buckridge. Jason Pickering went to Tamarack Ridge. Jason Bindi went to Nobleton Lakes. Paul Brown went to Bushwood. Bob Heron retired and Paul Scenna took over at Beacon Hall. Scott White, took over at Donalda. Brian Taylor went to Mystic.

Tim Steen left Vandembussche and joined Engage Agro. Josh Dewar went to Saltech Ontario. Ian Bowen, the Rock, went to Hutcheson Sand and Mixes and Jason Winter went to The Rock. Barry Endicott, Nobleton Lakes, went to Gordon Wendover Construction and Simon George went to Maple Turf Supply.

ACHIEVEMENTS

At the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, Rhod Trainor, Hamilton, was selected as Superintendent of the Year. Neil Acton, Deer Creek, and Ted Ellis, Huron Oaks, received their 25 Year membership pins.

Norman McCollum retired as Research Superintendent at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

Dr. Switzer was inducted into the Ontario Agricultural Hall of Fame for

his contributions in various positions in agriculture that resulted in the creation of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

IN MEMORIAM

Keith Nisbet (1917-2005) was the owner/superintendent of Westview Golf Club. In 2001, he received the CGSA's highest honour for outstanding performance, the John B. Steel Award.

Rene Muylaert (Life Member) passed away on May 7th in Strathroy. He designed many courses in the GTA: Chinguacousy, (now the Caledon Country Club), Glen Eagle, Diamond Back, St. Andrew's Valley, Horseshoe Valley, Nobleton Lakes, Pheasant Run, Hawk Ridge, Heritage Hills, Sparrow Lakes and Peninsula Lakes. His brother Charlie did the construction.

Mac Frost passed away on March 30th. Mac owned Cedar Brae, Parkview, Brookwood,



Trevor Clapperton received recognition for his efforts to host the Pro-Super at Dalewood G&CC.



(L-R) Keith Rasmus hosts President's Day at Scarboro G&CC; presented by Paul Scenna.



President's Day, winning team.

Spring Lakes and Vespra Hills. Mac was the winner of the John B. Steel Award in 1993, inducted into the Ontario Golf Hall of Fame in the builders category in 2005 and was a founding sponsor of the Guelph Turfgrass Institute.

Ted Charman passed away. Ted had been the superintendent at Toronto Ladies, London Hunt and the National.

TOURNAMENTS

The 37th Presidents Day was held at Scarboro Golf and Country Club, hosted by Keith Rasmus. 1st place winning team was from North Halton, Dean Baker (superintendent) with a score of 120.

The Spring Field Day was held at the

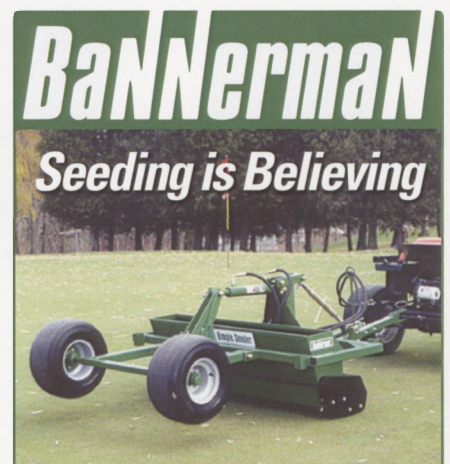
Guelph Lakes Golf & Country Club hosted by Don Heinmiller. Dr. Clayton Switzer presented the winning trophy to Bruce Burger with a 72. Other scores were Scott Gardener 72 and Paul Scenna 76.

The Pro Super was held at Dalewood Golf and Curling Club, with Trevor Clapperton as host. The winning teams were: 1st, Kelly Barnet, Fox Glen, 2nd Martin Kopp, Brampton and 3rd Paul Dermott, York Downs.

The 60th Annual Alex McClumpha Tournament was held at Lakeview Golf Course hosted by Bruce Burger. Low scores were Thom Charters 71, Bill Fach 75, Rick Trainor 77, Rhod Trainor 78 and Tom Brain 79. Thom Charters won the George Darou Trophy presented by Turf Care. ■



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6 Steps to Successful Garden Maintenance



The mad rush of spring has come to an end. Your projects are done, your plants are planted, you've added compost or mulch to your beds and now you are into garden maintenance mode for the rest of the season. So what should you focus on to maintain healthy, beautiful gardens?

Weed

I'll start with the one thing nobody loves to do - WEEDING! No matter what, weeds will climb into your garden beds, but there are a few tricks to reduce them and make your life easier.

Anywhere there is bare soil there is an opportunity for a weed seed to germinate. Mulching helps to prevent this and the industry standard is 3-4" thick to suppress weed seed germination. Chances are, not every bed can be mulched but you can out-compete them by densely bedding healthy plants to prevent sunlight from hitting the soil where weed seeds can germinate.

Next, know the source of the soil that you use to improve or build a new bed. Contaminated or unsterilized soil sources will contain weed seeds and it will cost you in the end through maintenance.

A high quality soil will give even the laziest gardener success. High organic humus type soil which is light and fluffy makes removing the entire weed, most importantly the root, much easier. Aim to pull as much of the root as possible. If you do not, you'll be back in a week to pull that weed again, only this time the root mass will be bigger and more difficult to pull.

Water your beds the day before weeding them to give the soil time to soften and expand. This will make removing the weed

and root system easier and the job less time consuming.

And, never let weeds drop seeds in your garden beds.

Prune

Understanding your plant material is very important when planning how much to prune and when. Spring flowering shrubs should be pruned directly after flowering is complete. If you prune too late, you risk flower bud development for the next season, and if you prune too early, you will prune the current year's flower buds off. Keep your pruning shears as sharp as possible at all times for clean cuts for faster easier healing.

Deadhead

Deadheading is the removal of spent flowers and seed heads. I find deadheading to be one of the most important tasks in the garden because it helps to promote overall plant health.

There's no doubt that when it comes to annuals removing spent flowers clean the plants up and makes them look prettier. But, what you're also doing is encouraging those plants to force more blooms, increasing the blooming for an extended period. You are also preventing seed production. By stopping or slowing the plant's seed production it continues to put energy towards healthy new growth and healthy new blooms. Plants going to seed, give up their natural defenses, often becoming diseased and unhealthy looking.

A lot of people think deadheading is a task only for annuals but that is not true at all. In the world of perennials and shrubs it is the same, but different. Typically, you won't get re-blooming when you remove spent

flowers and seed heads from perennials and shrubs, but you will encourage vegetative growth and root development which will keep uninvited pests and disease away. This can also help with winter hardiness in some perennials and shrubs. Understanding the perennial or shrub is important for determining where to make your cuts.

Water

Water management is the Goldilocks of garden maintenance. We want to avoid killing our plants with disease by over watering or watering the wrong part of the plant. We also don't want to kill our plants by not using enough of it. We need to be efficient, and get it just right. Pay attention to the weather and get water into soils before they become hydrophobic. This way when the temperature climbs you're not in panic mode. If you have annuals in planters you should make sure you have adequate drainage, like holes in the bottom of the planters for excess water to drain through. Keep your soils moist and don't wait for an emergency or signs of drought stress to do your watering.

Fertilize

Fertilize annual plantings every two weeks. Be sure to give a deep watering in between fertilizing to flush salts from the fertilizer through. Fertilize perennials in the spring with a well balanced fertilizer with micro nutrients and then fertilized based on plant health throughout the season. Use a well balanced fertilizer application with a little less nitrogen in the fall. Your fertility will be dependent on the quality of your soils.

Last, but not least...

keep notes

Now that you are in maintenance and growing mode, pay attention to what is doing well and what isn't. Do the plants look healthy? Are there perennials that need to be split in the fall because they've slowed flower production? Does anything need to be moved due to overcrowding? Are there irrigation changes to be made? Environment changes?

Enjoy the rest of your maintenance season, and start planning your fall projects! ■



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MEMBER MOMENTS

#TODAYINONTARIO



1: Killdeer Hatchlings. **Daniel Gelder**, Devil's Paintbrush. |
2: Coyote pups living on the course right now. **Matt Booth**,
Oshawa G&CC. | 3: A family moment. **Leslie Thompson**,
Scarboro G&CC. | 4: Apparently these are Tiger Beetles. They are
endangered in Ontario. They can run 9 km/h that's about twice as
fast as me. **Joel Johnston**, RiverBend Golf. | 5: Rose-breasted
Grosbeak coming to visit a Baltimore Oriole. More backyard
visitors. **Al Schwemler**, The Toronto GC. | 6: Insert edgy slow
play comment here! **James Horvath**, Richmond Hill GC.





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Summer 2020 Make Hay While the Sun Shines.

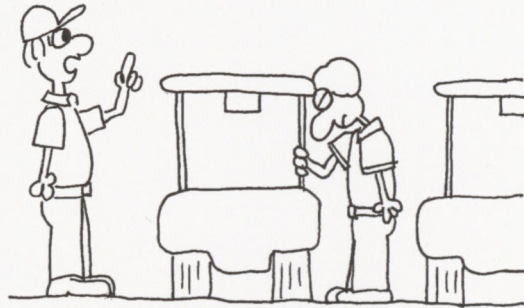
By Doug Breen, Superintendent,
Golf North Properties.

For many years, I've said that golf courses aren't really in competition with other golf courses. Rather, they are in competition with all the other places where the public can spend their time and money. There's a pecking order for green fees - which is a function of course design, multiplied by the level of maintenance/service, minus the square root of the number of miles from a major population centre. This combination of factors has ensured that each course's pricing vs. other venues is reasonable - and golfers vote with their wallets to let us know if we've made a mathematical error. In reality, our real competition is with things like cottage weekends, Canada's Wonderland, minor sports, and family togetherness.

But this is 2020 - the Summer of COVID-19 - and most of our competition has been forced to remain closed. Golf, due to its nature and structure, is one of a handful of activities which is not only relatively safe for the participants, but perhaps more importantly, one that they feel safe doing. There are lots of businesses re-opening with sparse crowds because it turns out that people are awfully nervous. While restaurants are still having trouble filling 50% of their 30% indoor capacity, golf courses are full - like 1986 full. With no summer sports, roller coasters, and European vacations - we're seeing new golfers, prodigal golfers, and more play from existing golfers.

I have undertaken extensive research on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. I sift through the original posts, but spend even more time perusing the comments section. That's where the cesspool of humanity really shines! The results of my utterly unscientific study are that people can essentially be divided into three groups.

The first group - are the nervous. I heard someone on CBC Radio last night, who said that they hadn't been outside in four months. She has groceries delivered to her apartment and goes out onto her fire escape for fresh air - that's it. I have some friends and family



Here's the plan. Because of COVID-19, we're going to give everyone their own cart during the longest drought and the busiest summer in decades. Also, many of the golfers will be beginners. All we need you to do - is make sure there's no damage to the course, no carts break down, the fuel budget remains the same, and the broken carts need to be back in service immediately without a source for parts. All good?

in their 80's, and to be honest, some of them don't do much more than that at the best of times! But it's not just the oldsters - I know people much younger than I am, who haven't been into their place of work since March. The timid won't be attending rock concerts, golf courses, restaurants, or anything else in the foreseeable future.

The second group - are the tin-hat society. They're convinced that this is a grand conspiracy by Bill Gates, the Liberals, and 5G cell signals to turn us all into robot slaves. You'll see them running around licking shopping cart handles to show how free they are. All of their social media posts include the word sheeple. Until recently, I was unaware how many of these people are in my social circle. Many of this group are playing golf, refusing to wear masks, and frightening

my mother.

The third group - are the rest of us. We're concerned about COVID-19 but aren't paralyzed by it. We see some over-the-top reactions, but don't think that it's all some global conspiracy to eliminate cash. We go where we feel safe, and avoid situations where we don't. Fortunately for our business, golf is an activity which most people in this group are comfortable doing.

The math is pretty simple - if 2/3 of Ontarians are willing to play golf, and 90% of businesses are closed (or scary), then we are bound to be busy, and busy we are. If you want to know how active a course is - never ask the Pro Shop, because they always think they're "jammed". Ask

the Superintendent. We're having a lot of trouble getting routine maintenance done on the course, never mind extra irrigation, topdressing, or god forbid aeration. This is old hat to those of us old enough to remember the late 1980's when public golf courses were as chaotic as a Guns n' Roses tour bus, but many of you won't have experienced this before because the last couple decades have been more like a Kenny G tour bus.

The key is to keep your head down, come in early, and do everything that you can do to help the golf course generate as much revenue as possible while this boom lasts. Hopefully we can retain some of these new and returning golfers, and pray that the summer of 2020 won't be an anomaly. As my Dad used to say, "Make hay while the sun shines - soon it will be winter, and we can sleep then." ■

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