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Winter Injury
Makes for
Challenging Start
to Golf Season for
Many

very spring, I find myself greeted by eager golfers with the same question: "How did the winter treat us, Brett?" This year, I couldn't respond the way I'd hoped to. What I wanted to say was, "Winter conditions were ideal. Should be smooth sailing into spring."

The reality, as many in the Northeast know, is that variable temperatures and mixed precipitation wreaked havoc on many area courses. The location and extent of the injury has varied with one common denominator: The turf appeared healthy right after the snow melted, but then as the turf and soil thawed, the damage appeared.

We were all forced to make tough decisions throughout the winter and early spring: Do we remove snow or ice cover? Do we push water off of the greens or let it drain naturally? And should we or shouldn't we have covers on our greens? What I learned this spring was that there is no right answer. What I chose to do at my club, may not have worked at a neighboring club. No two properties are the same.

To help guide all of you through the recovery process and in your communications with your clubs, we reached out to the USGA and area consultants who have provided sensible steps to course recovery. USGA Agronomists Adam Moeller and John Daniels recommend using covers and darkening agents to increase soil temperatures, maintaining adequate soil moisture, and aggressive seeding. With 18 consecutive days in April below average temperatures, we did not see the push in growth most of us wanted to recover greens from the harsh winter. With that in mind, be sure to resist the pressure to open severely damaged greens to play too prematurely. Traffic from play will delay recovery further.

MetGCSA Meeting Notes

Fortunately spared severe winter injury, Knollwood was ready and able to host this year's Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier on April 25. (See page 12 for the golf results.) Throughout the day, stories were



Brett Chapin MetGCSA President

shared and ideas exchanged about how the greens in the Met area will come out of spring and then survive the summer. There is a lot to be learned from this past winter, and plans are underway to discuss winter damage and the recovery process during our Fall Education event.

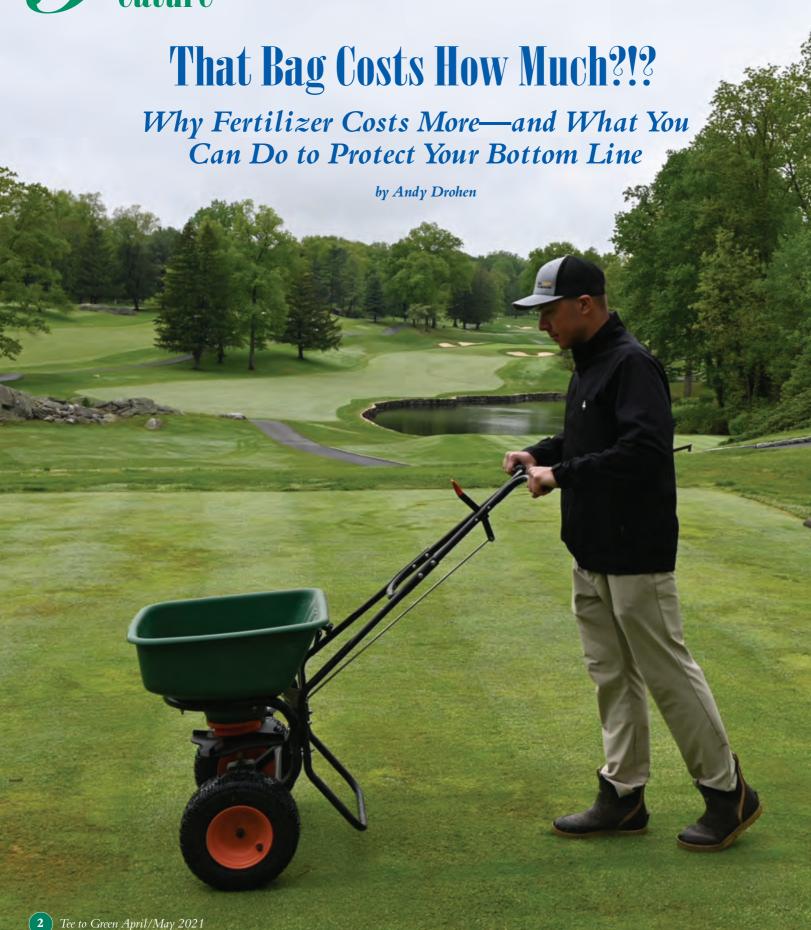
Many thanks to Superintendent Scott Olsen and Knollwood Country Club for being such great hosts. The green complexes have tremendous character, which resulted in many tricky shots.

Special thanks, also, to Anthony Garzia and Woodway Country Club for hosting our annual Superintendent/Guest Event on May 23. Anthony and his team had the course is super shape for the event and were pleased to share the renovation work that has taken place since his arrival at the club.

This year's Invitational brings us back to The Stanwich Club in Greenwich, CT, for what promises to be a great test of golf and a fun day. I look forward to seeing you June 16 at this must-attend tournament.

Brett Chapin
MetGCSA President





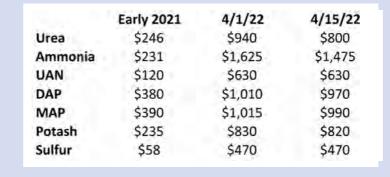


Table 1. Fertilizer prices per ton out of NOLA.

Adapted from "Green Markets," 2022, Fertilizer Dealer Report. Copyright 2022 by Bloomberg L.P.

f you manage turfgrass, you know that the past couple of years have taken a toll on your bottom line. Covid, weather events, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have turned input markets upside down—from fertilizer to grass seed and from chemicals to specialty products. I've been in the fertilizer business for more than twenty years and this is the most volatility I have ever seen.

In this article, I'd like to share some insights into the world of fertilizers, share some thoughts on what the future holds, and spark some ideas on how to save money with your fertility program.

First, let me do some table-setting. I sell trainloads and truckloads of slow- and controlled-release nitrogen, so when I quote fertilizer prices here, I'll be talking about price-per-ton. For scale, a bulk truck of fertilizer is 25 tons, a train car is 100 tons, and a river barge is 1,500 tons of fertilizer. Ocean vessels can carry as many as 44,000 tons.

The other benchmark we use in the industry is NOLA pricing. NOLA stands for New Orleans, LA, which is where a lot of imported fertilizer comes into the country. There are also fertilizer manufacturing plants in that area, situated on or near the river

From Stability to Volatility

Before Covid, the fertilizer market was somewhat stable. We may have seen fertilizer prices move \$10-\$20 per ton monthly; every once in a while, you'd see an up-ordown move in the \$40/ton range. The past couple of years, however, have seen moves of \$50 or more per ton, which went even higher when Russia invaded Ukraine. Table 1 above illustrates how much the costs of the various inputs that go into your bag of fertilizer have increased since early last year.

Why all the crazy fluctuations? As with any commodity, Wall Street exerts major influence over prices. But one of the major culprits has undoubtedly been the COVID pandemic. When Covid started at the end of 2019, travel came to an abrupt halt. In 2020, folks stayed home and spent their travel

money on their properties. Demand for fertilizer increased dramatically.

People started playing more golf too, raising the number of rounds dramatically. More rounds meant more revenue which, in turn, meant more spending and more products purchased to maintain properties — products such as fertilizer. This trend continued in 2021 and looks likely to continue into this summer as well. It all comes down to supply and demand. Higher demand as manufacturing plants struggle to keep up during supply-chain shortages translates into higher prices and rising inflation.

Bad Weather Whammies

The weather didn't help. There were 20 separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters in 2021, just two shy of the record set in 2020! A cold-air outbreak across the central U.S. brought frigid temperatures, snow, and ice from the Plains to southern Texas—the coldest event across that region in more than 30 years, causing power outages for nearly 10 million people. Pipes

froze across Texas, which caused major disruption at chemical plants for months that made ingredients for everything from surfactants to turf chemicals to the polymers used in coating fertilizer. It disrupted the entire supply chain for most of 2021. When Texas and that region started to get back on their feet, Ida, a Category 4 hurricane, made landfall in Louisiana. More than a million residents were without power, including all of New Orleans, which is the shipping entryway to the Mississippi River and home to many fertilizer plants.

The law of supply-and-demand kicked in again and prices rose; in some cases, they more than doubled. For example, urea went from \$230/ton in September of 2020 to \$550/ton in September of 2021. A month later, it was \$700/ton.

Natural Gas and Crop Price Surge Add Fuel to Fertilizer Prices

Along with weather-related disasters, geopolitical events played a major part in rising prices. Perhaps the most prominent example is Russia's invasion of Ukraine. When Russia



Chart 1. Natural Gas price year over year.

Adapted from "Business Insider," 2022, Natural Gas Price Today. Retrieved April 14, 2022, from https://markets.businessinsider.com/commodities/natural-gas-price. Copyright 2022 by Insider Inc. and finanzen.net GmbH (Imprint).

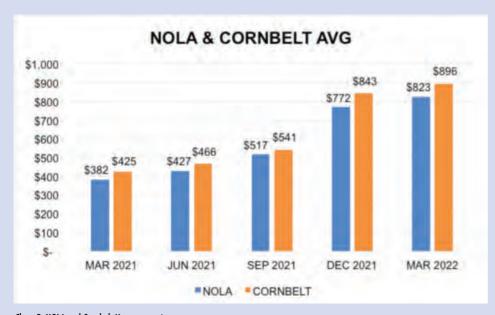


Chart 2. NOLA and Cornbelt Urea comparisons.

Adapted from "Green Markets," 2022, Fertilizer Dealer Report. Copyright 2022 by Bloomberg L.P.

started building up troops along the Ukrainian border, global supplies of natural gas—critical to the manufacture of fertilizer—were threatened. Demand for natural gas grew in response not only to this event, but also to climate change. Colder-thannormal temperatures worldwide forced people to seek alternative energy sources, such as natural gas. This supply-and-demand scenario caused natural gas prices to spike—and continue to rise—as illustrated in Chart 1 on page 3.

With higher natural gas prices came higher fertilizer prices, as shown in Chart 2, above. Other drivers of price increases include rising prices for crops, such as corn and wheat, which are two heavy users of nitrogen fertilizer. When prices are as high as they are now, farmers tend to fertilize more to increase yields and earn more on their crops.

Then there's the Ukraine factor. Ukraine is justifiably known as the breadbasket of Europe. Given the current situation, the country will not be able to supply the same quantity of food as it has in past years. Countries that rely on Ukraine will look to the United States and other parts of the world to replace those missing acres, driving prices even higher. More than ever, this will be an important growing year for U.S. farmers. New reports from the Department of Agriculture show corn plantings are way behind because of wet weather and yields projected to be lower, which will keep corn prices high.

Freight Weighs In

As they say in the late-night TV commercials, "Wait! There's more!"

Adding to the costs already covered are

freight costs. With higher diesel prices, the cost to deliver products to your door has risen drastically. You've no doubt experienced this impact when you've bought fuel for your equipment and vehicles. Recently, prices rose to over \$5 per gallon in the U.S. Fuel and other surcharges will be introduced and these costs will be passed along to you, the consumer.

The pain is being felt globally. Cars, TVs, clothes, and myriad other items we rely on all cost more. The Black Sea hosts major ports for Ukraine. These ports are currently at a standstill because of the war. And because much of the urea used to manufacture fertilizer is shipped from Ukraine via the Black Sea, another global source of fertilizer has been shut down.

When Covid hit, ships became stuck in certain parts of the world. Ports in China and elsewhere would not allow workers on or off ships, fearful of spreading the virus. Ships sat in harbors and in the ocean. Events like the accidental blocking of the Suez Canal by a ship only added to supply-chain woes—and shipping costs. And here again, bad weather didn't help. With heavy rains come higher waters on U.S. rivers like the Mississippi, so transportation up and down those rivers slows. When things are really bad, rivers stop nighttime traffic for fear of crashing into bridges, so trips can take more than twice as long. Hurricane Ida damaged barges here in the U.S, so barge availability has been tight since last August. Building replacements is an expensive and time-consuming process.

What's Next?

Is there any end in sight for high fertilizer prices? Hopefully so, but many think we might never get back to the pre-Covid prices. Recently, we've seen urea prices start to soften a little bit as seen in Table 1. This trend seems to be coming in line with the crop planting season. Typically, the cycle is higher prices in early winter while demand for fertilizer increases into the planting season, then prices wane once crops are in the ground. Remember, we in the turfgrass industry are just small players in the global fertilizer use. We are riding the coattails of the big agricultural producers.

Container freight will remain high for the near term, as will trucking and gas prices, until the Russian war ends. Sanctions will most likely stay in place, so lower prices for fuel will most likely not see pre-Covid prices for quite some time.

Some industry experts feel that by the middle of the third quarter we will start to see urea in the \$600/ton range, with other nutrients hopefully following these decreases. That's still high and supplies will remain tight for several months. China, typically an exporter of nutrients, has not exported this year due to plant closures leading up to the Olympics in an effort to present itself to the world as environmentally friendly. Restarting fertilizing exports would be a positive development and help lower prices.

And Now for Some Good News: There's a Way to Save

Despite all the price pressures I've outlined in this article, you can still save money on fertilizer. In 2016, my colleagues and I developed a presentation "What's in the Bag?" The strategies outlined in that talk are still relevant today.

When you buy a bag of fertilizer, you're typically asking for a certain analysis that you've come to know and love or that is readily available from your friendly distributor. The analysis tells you the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in the bag along with other ingredients like iron (Fe) and other micronutrients. There's also something else in the bag that a lot of folks are not aware of: filler. Filler can be a lot of



Chart 3. What's in the bag break down of 3 different fertilizer blends. From Allied Nutrients

things, but usually, it is ground-up limestone that provides virtually no nutritional value. In other words, you're paying for ingredients that add weight, not value, to the bag. So if your goal is to cut costs, the question is not, "What's the cheapest bag you've got?" but "What's in the bag?"

To illustrate the cost-cutting power of this question, let's look at three blends illustrated in Chart 3, above, all with the same 2:1 N to K ratio. They will all be built with a well-known slow-release nitrogen product called XCU, and all three blends will have a little bit of iron. For the math, we will apply all three bags at the same rate of 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet, a common rate in the lawn care world.

The first bag is a 16-0-8 and was recently priced at \$20 per bag. Doing the math (1 lb. / 0.16) reveals that you'll get a rate of 6.3 lbs. of material per 1,000 sq. ft. Follow the graphic and you'll see that to spread the 16-0-8 over 100 acres, you'll need 549 bags at a total cost of \$10,980.

By way of comparison, let's increase the analysis to a 24-0-12. Since we're adding more nutrients to the bag, the price will be a little higher at \$25.57 per bag. However, since the analysis now has 24% nitrogen, you need only 4.2 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. to get that same 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. Working through the math again, you'll see you only need 366 bags of product at a lower overall cost of \$9,359.

Finally, let's add a little more fertilizer to

the bag and build a 32-0-16 blend. Again, running through the math to apply 1 lb. of nitrogen per thousand square feet, you'll need to use only 271 bags at a total cost of \$8,425, even though the bag of fertilizer is the most expensive at \$31.09. Why is that?

If we break apart the bags of fertilizer, illustrated in Chart 4, below, you'll see the reason the 16-0-8 is the least expensive is that almost half the bag is filler. The downside to the low cost is that you're forced to spread almost twice as much material to feed your turf sufficiently. That means twice as much labor carrying and cutting open bags, more fuel to deliver the product to your business, more fuel to spread the product, more plastic bags to dispose of, and more wear and tear on your equipment.

By way of comparison, as you put more

nutrients in the bag, removing filler, you'll spread 100% nutrients on your turfgrass while reducing much of the costs just described. Bottom line: Filler only adds costs. Removing filler reduces costs. Replacing filler with nutrients is more economical.

With prices so high right now, I encourage you to talk to your distributor reps about what's actually in the bag. Build formulations with the most nutritional value. Now is also a good time to think about how much slow-release nitrogen you're putting out. The more slow-release you can put out, the longer that application will last. This means fewer applications and more savings. For example, going from a 30% slow-release product to a 70% slow-release will increase your feeding from 21 days to 65 days or longer.

I hope this article provided some useful insights into the effects of political and climate-related events on the global fertilizer market—and on all of us. And I hope that my "What's in the bag?" strategy will help you save money and succeed in the face of these enormous challenges.

If you want to keep current with commodity prices—such as gas, oil, and corn check out the "Oil Price Live" App.

Andy Drohen, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is Regional Business Manager-Northeast U.S. and Canada with Allied Nutrients in Granville, MA.



Chart 4. Filler comparisons. From Allied Nutrients

Regional News

Advocacy Day Webinar Brings Legislative Issues to the Table

by Michael Maffei, CGCS

he global pandemic continues to affect the way the New York State Legislature conducts business. With the Capitol remaining closed to visitors, NYSTA, once again, could not hold its traditional, in-person Advocacy Day and committed to conducting another webinar to communicate industry issues and concerns to legislators.

Webinar at Work

Building on the success of 2021, NYSTA once again sent an open invitation to legislators and green industry professionals to a 1.25-hour briefing session webinar. Held on February 17, the briefing session attracted more than 100 industry professionals, including 19 legislators and legislative staff. The goal this year was not to oppose or support individual legislative bills, but to educate legislators on the importance of turfgrass and how we use IPM and BMPs to provide a quality product to society.

The briefing covered:

- The economic impact of the turf and landscape industries in New York State
- The environmental benefits of turfgrass
- The importance of the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund (TESF)
- How the TESF provides support for the work of the New York Golf Course Foundation
- The economic impact of golf and its environmental benefits
- The New York Apprenticeship Program Development
- Neonicotinoids & Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Economic and Environmental Benefits of Turfgrass Management

Setting the stage for the program was North Hempstead Superintendent Tom Kaplun, co-chair of NYSTA's government relations committee, who offered a well-crafted explanation of the economic and environmental benefits of turfgrass.

Tom presented facts and figures showing the economic impact the turfgrass—and

golf—industries have on the State. Tom also pointed out the environmental benefits of turfgrass—that it provides a safe space for leisure activities, replenishes air, provides carbon sequestration, a reduction of runoff and erosion, and temperature regulation.

Landscape Industry in New York State

Larry Wilson of the New York Green Industry Council and Patrick Parker of SavATree demonstrated the importance of the New York landscape industry.

Larry stressed how the industry trained and educated its association members in the use of IPM and BMPs to allow the responsible use of chemical tools required to do their jobs. Larry pointed out the importance of neonicotinoids and the use of BMPs to protect the environment and pollinators in particular.

Patrick showed the economic impact of the landscape industry. He pointed to the 7,000 landscape companies in New York, employing 53,300 people and generating \$4.1 billion in revenue. Maintained landscapes are also beneficial, providing everything from pollution control (water, air, noise, light) to tick control and pollinator protection.

The Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund

West Point Golf Course Superintendent Steve Whipple, president of NYSTA, provided an overview of the importance of the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund. This year, NYSTA is seeking \$250,000 in funding. Steve highlighted the projects NYSTA was able to fund this past year with TESF support.

Ken Benoit, executive director of the New York Golf Course Foundation, showed the impact that TESF has had on the development, continued updating, and enhancements to the Best Management Practices for New York State Golf Courses.

The Impact of Golf

Kevin Kline, director of member services for the Metropolitan Golf Association, spoke about the importance of golf courses. He pointed to the many positive contributions golf brings to the metropolitan area by generating charitable contributions, tax revenue, and employment opportunities and by preserving open space.

The New York Apprenticeship Program Development

Tyler Bloom reviewed his partnership with NYSTA to create a statewide apprenticeship program for the turfgrass industry. This workforce initiative will offer Registered Apprenticeships for golf courses, sports turf, and other turf businesses in New York State. The program will help NYSTA employer partners find and secure talent for specialized positions. (See article, page 7.)

Neonicotinoids & Best Management Practices

Tom Kaplun made the last presentation of the morning on the role of BMPs in the use of neonicotinoids. In Tom's view, BMPs are an extension of IPM. Tom gave an overview of the principles of an IPM program, such as scouting, risk assessment, and decision making. Tom stressed the importance of pollinator protection in turfgrass management with our goal being to protect and increase pollinator populations.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

We would like to acknowledge the following sponsors who supported this year's Advocacy Day webinar: Bayer Crop Science, Capital Region Golf Course Owners Association, Harrell's, Hudson Valley Golf Course Superintendents Association, Long Island Golf Course Superintendents Association, Metropolitan Golf Association, Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association, National Association of Landscape Professionals, New York Green Industry Council, Northeastern Golf Course Superintendents Association, RISE, SavATree, The Scotts Miracle–Gro Company, Syngenta, Target Specialty Products, TruGreen.

Legislator Panel Comments

Todd Vandervort of the The Vandervort Group introduced Senator Michelle Hinchey, chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, and Assemblywoman Donna Lupardo, chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, and he welcomed their comments.

Assemblywoman Lupardo stressed that she works hard to educate her colleagues on what we do and how we aim to be stewards of the environment. She feels our industry is taken for granted and suggested that we all invite our local legislators to our sites and show them our operations. She vowed to do her best to secure the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund appropriation. The assemblywoman was thrilled to learn of NYSTA's workforce development initiative.

Similarly, Senator Hinchey stressed the importance of the workforce development program and applauded NYSTA for its work in this area. The senator is very supportive of the appropriation for the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund and is working to restore, and possibly increase, that funding. In her eyes, the pandemic has showed the importance of open space.

Further Information at Your Fingertips

Tom Kaplun provided a wrap-up and thank you to all who attended. Once again, the webinar seemed to do its part to foster an understanding and appreciation of our industry by New York State legislators.

If you were unable to attend this webinar, you can view the entire session by accessing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YVh RY GXtK4.

For additional information, the briefing paper prepared for Advocacy Day on the Turfgrass Environmental Stewardship Fund can be found on NYSTA's website, www.NYSTA.org. This briefing paper can be sent to your local State legislator or used in a personal conversation with one of them. We hope to see all of you at our Turfgrass Advocacy Day in 2023. Laws and regulations affect everyone, and we all need to be involved!

Michael Maffei, CGCS, golf course superintendent at Back O'Beyond in Brewster, NY, is a past president of NYSTA and a member of the NYSTA Government Relations Committee

Labor Woes No More!

NYSTA Apprenticeship Program May Be the Answer to Turf Industry Labor Shortages

ood news! There's help on the way for turf industry employers struggling to find new hires. NYSTA has initiated a statewide Registered Apprenticeship Program for the turfgrass industry. The program will help NYSTA employer partners find and secure talent for specialized skilled positions in an industry with few trained and educated professionals by providing a career pathway for job seekers throughout New York State interested in working in a green industry business.

According to Dom Morales, a SUNY-Delhi professor emeritus and NYSTA board member who helped spearhead the project, the program will assist employers by providing state-approved training objectives and related instruction for an existing employee or a newly recruited worker.

Three registered apprenticeship programs have been developed and submitted to the New York State Department of Labor for approval and certification. These include Groundskeeper-Golf Course, Groundskeeper-Sports Turf, and Turf Equipment Technician. Once approved, the programs will offer 4.000 hours of structured, on-thejob training, as well as an additional 144 hours of related instruction and certificates from related instruction cooperators over a two-year period. Included in the related instruction are courses offered online from SUNY-Delhi that will go toward an Associate's degree.

Tyler Bloom Consulting was brought onboard to help develop core competencies for the training programs and then market them to employers throughout New York State. "The Apprenticeship Program is an investment," says Morales. "It will take both time and money, but remember, investing in your employees' development is investing in your own success." The program is waiting for approval from the Department of Labor but should be approved within the next month.

According to Morales, there is also a renewed interest in Ag Ed. "A growing number of high school students across the state are showing interest in agricultural careers," he says. "More than 200 high schools in New York State have Agriculture Education and have a Future Farmers of America chapter (FFA). We are exploring the development of a Pre-Apprentice program at the High School level that will enable students to seamlessly transition to a certified apprentice program upon graduation." But Morales also notes that the Apprenticeship Program is suitable not just for high school grads, but also anyone looking for a career change.

For more information, visit the NYSTA website at www.nysta.org.



Rockville Links Recognized With MGA's Environmental Leaders in Golf Award

by Matt Ceplo, CGCS

he highlight of the March 17 MGA Green Chairman Education Series was the presentation of the 2022 Arthur P. Weber Environmental Leaders in Golf Award. This prestigious award is presented annually to an MGA member club that has demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship by meeting a rigorous set of criteria in five areas: Water Quality and Conservation, Wildlife and Habitat, Outreach and Education, IPM, and Resource Conservation. This year's worthy recipient was Rockville Links Golf Club and Superintendent Luke Knutson.

Rockville Links Award-Worthy Accomplishments

Together, Rockville Links and Luke have initiated an impressive number of awardworthy environmental efforts, not the least of which has been educating others on the importance of creating and promoting pollinator habitats. You may have first seen Luke in action when he did a video and BMP case study with Dr. Frank Rossi about pollinators for New York State. Or perhaps you attended a seminar at the Golf Industry Show titled "Bee the Change" where Luke was able to demonstrate his knowledge of creating and promoting pollinator habitats. Perhaps you read the article "Pollinator Promotion" in a superintendent spotlight sponsored by the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation. Did you happen to catch Luke on Par radio speaking about the environmental impact of golf? But outreach is only part of Luke's efforts.

• Creating a Bee Haven. On the course at Rockville, Luke has used honey bee hives to showcase the benefits of maintaining native areas. Through dedicated observation, he discovered that as more native plants become established, the number and diversity of bees has increased. It is safe to say that Luke has become somewhat of an amateur entomologist, being able to identify several different families of bees as well as other beneficial pollinators.

• Keeping It Native. When Rockville Links hired architect Jim Urbina in 2013 to restore the course's original Devereux Emmet design, it paved the way for a variety of environmental enhancements. A tree removal plan took away many non-native and invasive trees while keeping native species for squirrels and nesting red-tailed hawks. It also opened an impressive 44 acres that have been transformed into low-water, low-input fescue areas with four more acres being seeded to wildflower areas. High-rent bird boxes are now available for bluebirds, tree swallows, and wrens, while others attract screech owls and bats that keep mosquito populations in check.

• *Implementing IPM*. IPM has become a way of daily management. To name just a few examples, Luke is committed to using slow-release fertilizers, as well as pitfall traps to monitor ABW adults and degree days to predict disease outbreaks.

Rockville Links uses wells for its irrigation water and has them tested regularly, sending the results to the Suffolk County Water Commission. Luke avoids using pesticides with a high EIQ, and pesticide amounts have tested well below the threshold limits.

• *Committed to Recycling*. Rockville Links has a comprehensive recycling program. All paper and plastic is recycled, and the club has switched to bamboo plates and silverware during outings. Wooden pallets are either given back to distributors for reuse or taken to a pallet recycling facility.

During the restoration, all sod and soil that was disturbed was used to create mounds to screen out the course's leaf and clippings compost area. Some of the compost areas have broken down enough to allow the maintenance staff to plant pumpkins in them. The pumpkins are then used in the fall as decorations around the clubbouse

Fallen trees and large branches are stacked and used as habitat for pollinators, while any wood chips are used as mulch around several flowerbeds. The chef even uses some prime oak and hickory chips for

the clubhouse smoker. Lastly, some wood is split and given to members for firewood.

Recognizing the concerted effort involved, Luke points out that his accomplishments were an accumulation of baby steps that over time led to some significant outcomes. Congratulations to Luke and Rockville Links for their distinguished environmental efforts!

About the Green Chairman Education Series

Designed to educate club leaders and the golfing public about issues affecting the golf course industry, the Green Chairman Education Series offers highly informative talks from industry experts, in addition to recognizing a member club for its environmental efforts

Held this year at Garden City Country Club in Garden City, NY, the event welcomed USGA Northeast Agronomist John Daniels, who talked about the issues dealing with increased traffic, specifically golf carts and their impact on turf.

Adam Moeller, USGA director of the green section education and outreach, presented a lightning round of topics, including labor shortages, increased play, supply chain issues, increasing costs, and rising member expectations.

Tom Kaplun, superintendent at North Hempstead Country Club, did a great job updating us on what the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation has been doing and provided information on pending bills in Albany that may dramatically impact the way golf courses are managed.

Continuing the green theme was Dr. Brian Horgan, who has been doing research on the environmental impact golf courses have on their communities.

Watch for next year's education series, and be sure to encourage the "powers that be" at your club to attend this highly informative event

Matt Ceplo, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Member, is a Class A MetGCSA member.

Six Hold Winning Tickets in the Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle

his year's Annual Bill Caputi Scholarship Raffle, held at the April 25 Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier at Knollwood Country Club, raised an admirable sum for the Met's Scholarship Fund and awarded \$4,000 in cash prizes to six lucky ticket holders.

The raffle is the prime source of the scholarship awards we distribute to deserving Met member dependents each year. Many thanks to all who contributed and also to those who sold tickets for this worthwhile fundraiser.

Congratulations to our \$2,000-grand-prize winner, **Bill Salinetti** of National Golf Links of America. Bill purchased this and a \$250 winning ticket from Fenway Golf Club Superintendent Rob Alonzi.

The other lucky ticketholders were:

\$750 Second Prize Winner

Joe Jakubik, Burning Tree Country Club. Joe bought the winning ticket from Burning Tree Country Club Superintendent Steve Wickstrom.

\$500 Third Prize Winner

Ed Grant, K&J Trees. Ed bought the winning ticket from the website.



\$250 Prize Winners

- **Andy Drohen,** Allied Nutrients. His ticket was bought on the website.
- John Wickes, Davey Tree Co. John bought the winning ticket from Mike Cook, an LAF member.
- **Bill Salinetti**, National Golf Links of America. John purchased the winning ticket from Fenway Golf Club Superintendent Rob Alonzi.

Members on the Move

- **Gregory Coughlin** is the new superintendent at Hollow Brook Golf Club in Cortlandt Manor, NY. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Hudson National Golf Club in Croton-on-Hudson, NY.
- Christopher Steffen Jr. is the new superintendent at Candlewood Lake Club in Brookfield, CT. Previous position: Assistant superintendent at Leewood Golf Club in Eastchester, NY.

Birth

Congratulations to Leewood Golf Club Superintendent **Tim Walker** and his fiancé, Patty Thornton, on the birth of their baby girl, Reagan, on March 6.

In Sympathy

Our sincere condolences to **Tim Gerzabek** and his family on the passing of his father, Frank M. Gerzabek, 90, on May 10. Memorial contributions may be made to Notre Dame High School, 1 Notre Dame Way, West Haven, CT 06516 or Sacred Heart Academy, 265 Benham Street,

Upcoming Events

Upcoming MetGCSA and Industry Events

MetGCSA Invitational Tournament

Thursday, June 16 The Stanwich Club Greenwich, CT Host: Scott Niven, CGCS

Summer Social/Clambake

Monday, July 11 Orienta Beach Club Mamaroneck, NY

Summer Picnic

Thursday, August 18 Bedford Memorial Park Bedford, NY

The Poa/Met Championship/ Met Team Qualifier

Monday, August 29
The Apawamis Club
Rye, NY
Host: Mike McCormick

Army Black Knights vs. UConn

Saturday, November 19
Michie Stadium, West Point
Join fellow MetGCSA and HVGCSA members, friends, and family for the West Point
Family Football Day and Tailgate party.
Food & beverages will be compliments of our two associations.

To register or for further information, contact Susan O'Dowd at 914-909-4843 or sodowd@mgagolf.org.

MetGCSA Holiday Party

Thursday, December 8 Emma's Ale House White Plains, NY

MetGCSA Winter Seminar

Wednesday, January 11, 2023 Westchester Country Club Rye, NY

Industry Events

Rutgers Turfgrass Research Field Day: Golf & Fine Turf

Tuesday, July 26
Rutgers Horticultural Farm II
New Brunswick, NJ
Save the date, and watch for details. Call
973-812-6467 or visit www.njturfgrass.org
for further information.

UCONN Turf Field Day

Thusday, July 28
UConn Plant Science Research and Education Facility
59 Agronomy Road
Storrs, CT
Registration starts at 7:30 a.m.. The program runs from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

The 16th Annual Dr. Joseph Troll Turf Classic

Monday, September 12

Pelham Country Club

Pelham, NY
Host: Jeff Wentworth, CGCS
This year's UMass Alumni Turf Group fundraiser will be hosted by Pelham Country Club in support of turf education and research at the University of Massachusetts. MetGCSA member and Pelham Country Club Superintendent Jeff Wentworth is this year's honoree, recognized for his achievements in the turfgrass management industry.

Please plan to attend this worthy fundraiser. Entry forms and additional information are available online at www.alumniturfgroup.com.

2022 GREEN EXPO Turf & Landscape Conference

Tuesday – Thursday, December 6 – 8 Borgata Hotel & Casino Atlantic City, NJ

The New Jersey Green Expo offers a comprehensive educational program providing cutting-edge applications and tactics to guarantee green industry professionals' success on the job.

For further information, call 973-812-6467 or visit www.njturfgrass.org.

Spotlight

The Stanwich Club to Host MetGCSA Invitational

by Kevin Collins

n June 16, Scott Niven and The Stanwich Club will host the MetGCSA for its annual Invitational Tournament. Foursomes are composed of the superintendent, head professional, and two club officials from Met member clubs. And this will be no walk in the park on this difficult, challenging course. From the back tees (7,445 yards-par 72) the course has a rating of 77.2 and a slope of 145. So be sure to bring your "A" game!

How The Stanwich Club Came to Be

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the populations of Greenwich and Stamford exploded, and right along with it, the desire for recreation. The two private golf clubs in the area, Greenwich Country Club and Round Hill Club, had long waiting lists to get in. That prompted a group of members from both clubs to start investigating the possibility of building a new course.

One piece of property interested both groups. It was a 270-acre estate known as Semloh Farm, bordered by North Street and Stanwich Road, north of the Merritt Parkway. The property featured several lakes, a greenhouse, and 15 fountains in the extensive gardens. Today's fairways were used for grazing cattle.

The Round Hill and Greenwich groups joined forces to form the Norwich Development Company, and they hired golf course architect William Gordon to inspect the site and make recommendations. He reported back to the group, "If you let this property get away from you, you're crazy."

Taking this to heart, in the fall of 1962, Norwich Development purchased 186 acres of Semloh Farm and sold 84 acres as perimeter house lots. Included in the sale was the main house and four other buildings to The Stanwich Club, which had been organized that summer. William Gordon and his son David designed the course. The estate's manor house became the clubhouse and opened in June of 1964. The course opened for play one month later.

The course is long and challenging. The

greens have plenty of contour and are well guarded by bunkers on their front corners. Lakes and streams come into play on eight holes. It's a true test of golf.

Scott Yesterday and Today

Scott's dad, Russ, had everything to do with Scott becoming a golf course superintendent. "I was born on the Marine base in Quantico, VA," says Scott. "My dad spent eight years as a Marine. He worked as an Air Traffic Controller, but he was also in charge of recreation on the base. He played all sports very well, but he most enjoyed playing the 18-hole golf course and was a scratch golfer."

When Russ left the Marine Corps, he began working at Claremont Country Club in Claremont, NH. "Claremont was a 9-hole track. It had great bones. It was the social center of the town," Scott remembers. "My dad was the general manager, became a PGA Class-A Pro, and also was the superintendent. I started working there in the summer when I was 7 years old. I was driving a tractor by the time I was 10."

It wasn't too long before Scott's dad decided the purchase his own golf course. He bought the Angus Lea Golf Course in Hillsboro, NH. "It was a family business," Scott laughs. "My dad, brother, and I took care of the course, and my mom and sister operated the clubhouse. I'd get up every day before school to mow greens before going to class.

After high school and a brief stint at the University of New Hampshire, Scott transferred to the University of Rhode Island to pursue a degree in Turfgrass Management. This was before golf course internships, so every summer during college, Scott returned to Angus Lea to work on the family course. He graduated in 1976.

Scott's first job as an assistant was at Greenwich Country Club, where he stayed for three seasons before accepting the superintendent's position at St. Andrew's Golf Club in Hastings-on-Hudson, NY. "I met and spent some time with Jack Nicklaus



Scott Niven, CGCS

when they were just starting to rebuild it. I worked there for two seasons and, before construction started, took the super's job at Siwanoy in Bronxville," says Scott. He stayed at Siwanoy for two seasons, and when Stanwich opened up, he seized the opportunity to move there. That was 39 years ago.

Though other opportunities presented themselves over the years, Scott has no regrets that he's stayed put. "Staying here has been the best decision of my life," says Scott. "The membership has been fantastic."

In the 39 years since Scott's been at Stanwich, there have been numerous projects completed to improve the course. About 13 years ago, all the greens were regrassed to A1/A4 bentgrass and subsequently converted to USGA specifications. The bunkers have been redone a couple of times. There's been plenty of new tee construction, a couple of new irrigation systems, over 4,000 trees have been cut down on the property, a new maintenance facility was constructed, and all the ponds were dredged.

A legacy that Scott is extremely proud of are the 29 alumni he mentored at Stanwich who moved on to become golf course super-

Scorecard

Knollwood Opens Tournament Season With Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier

by Bill Cygan

intendents. Not all are still in the business, but notably, many still are.

Beyond his work as a superintendent, Scott has been very involved giving back to the industry having served on the MetGCSA board for 11 years (MetGCSA president 1988/89), the GCSAA Research Committee, GCSAA Golf Committee, and the Tri-State Turf Research Foundation for 12 years, serving a term as the group's president.

Beyond Stanwich

Scott met his better half, Dana, at Gambit's Lounge in the Westchester Marriott back in 1982. You had to work at it in those days since dating sites hadn't been invented yet. They fell in love and married in 1984. Their union produced two children, Nick and Heather. About two months ago Heather gave birth to a son, Tripp. Now there's a grandson in the mix.

Scott loves golf and skiing, and it's been a family affair. The Nivens have skied all over the world, including Italy, Austria, France, Switzerland, Canada, and the U.S. The family even skied at an indoor facility in Dubai. Scott's other passion is the New York Jets, something that Scott and I have taken a lot of abuse over. But better days are coming. J–E–T–S, Jets, Jets, Jets!!

And a wonderful day is assured on June 16 for the MetGCSA's Invitational at Stanwich! See you all there!

Kevin Collins, a member of the Tee to Green Editorial Committee, is NE/Mid-Atlantic Territory Manager for Ocean Organics.

hile many area clubs were still recovering from winter injury, Knollwood Country Club kicked off the MetGCSA tournament season with the Annual Dave Mahoney Two-Ball Qualifier on April 25.

A full field of more than 80 participants meant that 10 teams would be eliminated for the season-long match play. Host Superintendent Scott Olson had the course in great shape and was able to put recent restoration work by Golf Course Architect Ian Andrew on full display. The historic course played fun and fair and provided the necessary challenge to narrow the field. An added bonus was the newly constructed Par 3 nineteenth hole, which gave contestants a just-for-fun extra shot on their return to the clubhouse.

Special thanks to the entire staff at Knollwood Country Club for providing a wonderful event to kick off the 2022 golf calendar, and especially to Scott and his staff for having the course in prime condition.

Friendly Reminder!

As a friendly reminder, please be diligent recording scores and maintaining your GHIN handicap. Keeping an active Handicap Index helps to maintain the competitive spirit of the Dave Mahoney Two-Ball and makes the event both fun and fair.

Event of the Day Results

Gross Team Winners

- 71 Tom Ashfield, Quaker Ridge GC Andy Drohen, Allied Nutrients
- 72 Steve Whipple, West Point GC Dave Lippman, Westchester Turf

Net Team Winners

- 63 Jesse Shannon, Manhattan GC John Wickes, Davey Tree Company
- 67 Mike Cook, Class LAF
 Dave Peterson, Silvermine GC

Longest Drive

#5 Keith Kohlasch, TPC Products

Closest to the Pin

#3	Tom W	Veinert, Plant Food	3'1"
#8	Jeff We	entworth, Pelham CC	4'8"
#11	Scott T	retera, Harrell's	13'9"
#16	Scott N	Viven	31'10"
	The Sta	ınwich Club	

#19 Dave McCaffrey
Metropolis CC
4'5"

Qualifier Brackets and Match Deadlines

Check out metgcsa.org/events for the latest First and Second Flight brackets and wins. And be sure to complete your matches by the following dates:

First Round ~ June 30 Quarter Finals ~ August 11 Semi-Finals ~ September 15 Finals ~ October 20

Bill Cygan, a member of the Tournament Committee, is superintendent at Silver Spring Country Club in Ridgefield, CT.





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