

# THREE RIVERS GREEN

A PUBLICATION OF THE GREATER PITTSBURGH GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS ASSOCIATION



## Greetings From Chase Rogan

**GCSAA MID-ATLANTIC REGION  
 REPRESENTATIVE**

I hope everyone is experiencing a prosperous 2013 season and enjoying the recent trend of (relatively) cooler temperatures. As fall approaches, I wish you a strong finish to the year.

I want to share a little bit about what the GCSAA Field Staff program has to offer. As your representative, I will provide a conduit of information between members, chapters, and GCSAA headquarters. Of course, information is knowledge, and there is a wealth of information spread across the Mid-Atlantic region and GCSAA therein. As a resource for you, I seek to help you tap in to that information, and absorb some of the workload associated with your daily duties.

For example, we have an outstanding government relations team at GCSAA. While they work hard to report information to you, it is nearly impossible to keep up on everything. I understand that. If you have a question about a recent legislation, a watershed authority matter, or simply how to implement a new BMP, please get in touch. I can utilize resources to get an answer in a timely manner, and remove the leg work for you. Likewise, I hope to be a

point source for news regarding other agronomic successes or issues within the region. My lines are always open, and there is no matter too small. If I can assist you in outreach, or getting a message across to your golfers and/or board, I'm happy to help!

We want to support you in any way possible, and see your career flourish. Moving forward, my other goals include: assisting members in utilizing GCSAA services; assisting chapters in business and strategic planning when asked; serving as an advocate and active participant in government relational matters; and engaging members and student bodies.

In closing, I want you to know that GCSAA is striving to elevate the profile of its members and advance the profession. We are your biggest fans, and I want to be your biggest supporter too. My hope is that I can earn your trust, and help you attain your professional goals you already work so hard for.

Best,

*Chase Rogan*



## GPGCSA Family Night Was a Blast!

The seats were good, the view was spectacular and the family friendly atmosphere was enjoyed by all. The Pittsburgh Pirates and Zambelli Inc. put on quite a show as the 1st Place Pirates beat St. Louis 7-2.



more photos on page 11

### IN THIS ISSUE

President's Message	2
Going Natural	3
2014 Educational Opportunities	8
GPGCSA Scholarship & Research Tournament	9
Ins and Outs of Certification	12

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The mild season has continued into August and although results vary from different regions, the general consensus is that it was a relatively wet year. Constant summer rains made it difficult to stick to normal maintenance plans and adjustments were made on a constant basis. As we move into fall, many are looking forward to aerification, and fall agronomic programs. Summers not quite over yet, but I hope the fall weather we have been having lately continues long into October.

While the majority of GPGCSA planning occurs during the off season, our normal events throughout the year have continued to provide opportunities for networking and camaraderie. The golf meetings began this year with mini golf, and have progressed through the scholarship and research tournament at Allegheny Country Club thus far. Our Sponsor Appreciation outing is scheduled for August 12 at Butler Country Club. That outing is to thank the top

level sponsors of our association for joining at the highest levels. As you read this, that outing will be over, but our next scheduled outing will be at Hillcrest Country Club on September 19th. And, don't forget to put the annual meeting on your calendar. This year's annual meeting will be held at Rolling Rock Club on October 7th.

This year, Family Night at the Pirate game was once again a quick sell out. This was certainly no surprise, and the 50% increase in tickets available this year allowed more members to take part in the event. With fireworks, a concert, and all you can eat seats, it's sure to be a continued success for years to come.

My term as President will end in October, and Ian Hoffman will settle into the position to lead the organization for the coming years. I was honored to serve in this capacity and will continue to be a part of the organization hopefully for years to come. I'm very thankful for the

people I have met and worked with over the years, and proud of our accomplishments in providing value for our members. Serving the association definitely gives you a greater perspective of our industry, and affords you the opportunity to be a part of the solution for creating value. While there is certainly commitment involved, I would encourage you to give back to the organization that tries very hard to support our profession and ask to join the board. We can always use people who want to be a part of the solution. Many years ago Eric Materkowski encouraged me to be a part of the organization and I have been committed to that ever since. Thanks to Eric for getting me involved.

Finally, since all of the activities that the organization is involved with do not happen on their own, I would like to thank Michelle Shaw, our executive director. During her tenure, she has dealt with a myriad of personalities serving in the Presidents role for the organization. She is the constant that keeps us informed, and sees to it that our ideas and plans actually come to fruition. Thank you and good luck moving forward to the incoming Executive Team of Ian Hoffmann and Jason Batchelor, as they matriculate into their leadership roles of President and Vice President.

I hope to see you all at the final two meetings of the year, at Hill Crest, or Rolling Rock. Once again, thank you for having me as your association President. As always, I welcome your comments and suggestions for improvement, and if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I look forward to another great year, and wish you all the best for the many years to come.

*Toby Kiggins*

**Golf Course Superintendent  
Green Oaks Country Club**

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# Going Natural - Maintenance tips keep weeds at bay and balls in play

By Kyle Miller, Senior Technical Specialist for BASF Turf & Ornamentals

In an industry pressured for cost savings, superintendents must consider every option, and that includes going natural. Called by many names, including native, natural and naturalized, these areas can help make a golf course more marketable during these difficult economic times by providing increased aesthetic interest for golfers.



*Space mature plants apart in naturalized areas to give golfers room to walk in and play a missed shot back onto the fairway. For these areas, lovegrass, fescues, broomsedge and bluestem work particularly well.*

Naturalized areas help create a contrast to intensely managed turf and improve wildlife habitat. While an aesthetic case for naturalized areas is easily made, many superintendents are converting intensely managed turf to naturalized landscapes to cut their input costs related to fuel, fertilizer, irrigation, pesticides and labor. The deep root systems of these naturalized areas, for example, are more tolerant of environmental stresses and require less irrigation. But don't confuse going natural properly with letting nature take over.

Left to grow at nature's will, naturalized areas are bound to become large weed patches and overgrown eyesores that can become a no-man's land of irretrievable golf balls. Unlike turf and groomed landscapes, a naturalized area's success relies on a different type of plant management and a low-maintenance but methodical approach that includes both pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides.

## Choosing plants and planning maintenance

The types of indigenous or non-native plants a superintendent chooses for naturalized areas have a significant impact on maintenance needs.

Monostands or mixes consisting of fescues, lovegrass, bluestems, broomsedge, wheatgrass, indiagrass and others pro-



*Mow naturalized areas twice a year: once in the spring for a fresh growing season and once in the fall before plants go into dormancy.*

*continued on page 4*

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vide a clean contrast to playable turf and require minimal maintenance inputs. Great for sloped areas prone to erosion, some varieties of mixes even offer natural weed defenses.

Native flowers and wildflowers add color to a course's greenscape but require more care to ensure seasonal blooms and growth succession over invasive, aggressive weeds. When grown from seed, wildflowers may take up to three years to provide the desired impact. Some of the most popular choices for golf courses include cosmos, yarrow, baby's breath, black-eyed susan, primrose, poppy and Shasta daisy.

Controlling weeds in a naturalized area inhabited by wildflowers can challenge superintendents. Herbicides meant to knock down broadleaf weeds may also kill wildflowers, which are categorized as broadleaf species. As a result, these wildflower areas may require hand-weeding and spot-spraying to remove unsightly broadleaf weeds. You can control weedy grasses, however, with selective herbicides. If you're planting wildflowers, con-

sider the size of the planting area and understand that these areas will require some hand-weeding to achieve the full benefits.

### Getting started on going natural

Establishing strong, healthy plants is key for weed management in low-maintenance, naturalized areas. When establishing a new area, use a nonselective chemical treatment to eliminate weeds and then lightly till. Then use a low seed rate per acre to avoid thick stands of vegetation. Be sure to time seeding with seasonal rains to minimize the need for irrigation. With new areas, it's important to communicate progress to members because plants may take years to develop and achieve the desired effect.

Using established plants, if available, eliminates the need to wait for the area to develop. Plant them in the fall to make the most of favorable soil temperatures and decreased weed pressure. You also can cut costs by building an out-of-sight nursery to grow native varieties until they're ready for planting. Space mature plants



**Monostands and mixes such as fescues, lovegrass, bluestems, broomsedge, wheatgrass and indiagrass can provide a clean contrast to playable turf and require minimal inputs.**

apart so players have room to walk in and play a missed shot back onto a fairway. A number of grass options, including lovegrass, fescues, broomsedge and bluestem, work well in these areas.

### Managing weeds

A golf course's routine maintenance should include seasonal thinning, trimming, mowing and spraying naturalized areas in order to sustain the integrity and playability of the course landscape.

*continued on page 5*



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A management plan starts with an inventory of current herbicides in the chemical storage building. Categorize your existing herbicides by application timing, use areas and weeds controlled (see chart). Note pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides, whether use sites are appropriate for wildflower areas and native grass areas, and their control of broadleaf weeds, sedges and grassy weeds. While many herbicides labeled for golf course use don't list native grasses and wildflowers specifically, language on the label usually allows you to evaluate the herbicide on your particular species. Test the product on a small area to determine tolerance before making applications to larger areas. In addition, many product labels include native grasses and wildflowers that are tolerant of a particular herbicide in the ornamental section of the label.

Make pre-emergence herbicides the pillar of any naturalized area maintenance plan. Most pre-emergence herbicides labeled for golf course use evolved from crop applications, which typically control tall and unsightly weeds commonly found in natu-



*While superintendents should apply herbicides yearly as part of their routine maintenance schedule, other practices like mowing and thinning the vegetation can promote healthy growth and keep the area playable.*

ralized areas. These include grassy weeds such as barnyardgrass, foxtail, johnsongrass, panicum and witchgrass, as well as broadleaf weeds like lambsquarter, pigweed, spurge and smartweed. Since most pre-emergence herbicides affect only the roots of germinating weed seeds, they're generally labeled for use on mature grasses with a well-established root system. Using herbicides to preventively control weeds will be the most cost-effective strategy. If you can prevent outbreaks with

one product application, you'll save the time and expense of applying multiple products on multiple weed varieties.

Apply herbicides annually as part of routine maintenance. Other strategies such as mowing and thinning the vegetation will promote healthy growth and keep the area playable.

Also consider mowing naturalized areas twice a year: once in the spring to provide for a clean, fresh growing season, and then again in the fall before plants go into dormancy. Spring and fall are ideal times to apply a pre-emergence herbicide to control weeds.

After an area has been established for a few years, consider getting a permit for a controlled burn of the area. Scheduling an annual burn during the early spring months encourages hearty growth and renews soil. Once new growth appears, apply a pre-emergence herbicide before grassy and broadleaf weeds invade the area. Post-emergence broadleaf herbicides are effective

*continued on page 6*



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tive on naturalized grass areas, but eliminating unsightly grassy weeds can be more challenging. You can choose between several available post-emergence grass herbicides, so study product labels closely to determine if your stand is tolerant to the herbicide.

Naturalized areas on golf courses continue to develop as a trend. And while they're not maintenance-free, naturalized areas reduce the amount of management required on the course and increase aesthetics. Properly managed naturalized areas are mutually beneficial to superintendent budgets and player expectations. And when created and managed methodically, naturalized areas can give superintendents a visually appealing contrast to the manicured playing areas.

### A step-by-step breakdown to scheduling maintenance

1. Mow in the spring and apply a pre-emergence herbicide.
2. Monitor the amount of wildlife living in the naturalized area — if animals or insects have become pests to players, decrease the amount of food- and shelter-giving plants.
3. Spot-spray and hand-weed as needed if weed pressure increases during summer months.
4. Mow in the fall and apply a pre-emergence herbicide before dormancy hits.
5. If allowed, consider burning to clean out debris and vegetation to promote new growth.
6. If desired, label the indigenous grasses and flowers to both educate players and help remind maintenance crews which plants are intentional

### Herbicides for naturalized areas

Product Name	Active Ingredient	Company Name	Application Timing		Use Areas		Weeds Controlled		
			Pre-emergence	Post-emergence	Native Grasses	Wildflowers	Grasses	Broadleaves	Sedges
<b>Pre-emergence grasses and broadleaves</b>									
Barricade	proflaminate	Syngenta	X		X	X	X	X	
Dacthal	DCPA	Amvac Chemical Corp.	X		X	X	X	X	
Dimension	dithiopyr	Dow AgroSciences	X		X	X	X	X	
Pendulum	pendimethalin	BASF	X		X	X	X	X	
Surflan	oryzalin	United Phosphorus Inc.	X		X	X	X	X	
<b>Post-emergence nonselective</b>									
Finale	glufosinate-ammonium	Bayer		X	X	X	X	X	
Roundup	glyphosate	Monsanto		X	X	X	X	X	X**
<b>Post-emergence sedges</b>									
Basagran	sodium bentazon	BASF		X	X				X
Sedgehammer	halosulfuron methyl	Gowan		X	X				X
<b>Post-emergence grasses</b>									
Acclaim Extra	fenoxaprop-P-ethyl	Bayer		X	X	X	X		
Drive XLR8	quinclorac	BASF		X	X		X	X	
Fusilade II	fluazifop-P-butyl	Syngenta		X		X	X		
Segment	sethoxydim	BASF		X	X*	X	X		
<b>Post-emergence broadleaves</b>									
Confront	triclopyr + clopyralid	Dow AgroSciences		X	X				X
Lontrel	clopyralid	Dow AgroSciences		X	X				X
SpeedZone	carfentrazone-ethyl + 2,4-D + mecoprop-p + dicamba	PBI/Gordon		X	X				X
Three Way	dicamba + 2,4-D + MCPP-P	Lesco		X	X				X
Trimec Classic	2,4-D + MCPP + dicamba	PBI/Gordon		X	X				X
Turflon	triclopyr	Dow AgroSciences		X	X				X
Various	dicamba	Multiple manufacturers		X	X				X
Various	2,4-D	Multiple manufacturers		X	X				X

Consult individual product labels to determine individual species tolerance. Most product labels allow users to evaluate species not on the label.

User assumes all risk. This is a partial list of products and is provided as a guide.

\* May be used in fine fescue

\*\* Suppression

# GPGCSA MONTHLY SKILL PRIZES

## The Madison Club - April 23, 2013

Hole #3	Closest to Pin	Mike Bosh
Hole #6	Longest Drive	Brian Bates
Hole #8	Closest to Pin	John Ferruchie
Hole #15	Closest to Pin	Chris Farrell
Hole #17	Closest to Pin	Chris Farrell

## Butler Country Club - August 12, 2013

Hole #1	Longest Drive	Paul LaMarca
Hole #4	Closest to Pin	Doug Douglas
Hole #6	Closest to Pin	Rich Kinkella
Hole #8	Closest 2nd Shot	Eric Wygant
Hole #9	Longest Putt	Jason Batchelor
Hole #10	Closest to Pin	Jon Cuny
Hole #11	Closest 2nd Shot	Keith Perl
Hole #13	Longest Drive	Doug Douglas
Hole #15	Closest to Pin	Paul LaMarca
Hole #18	Longest Putt	Mike Blackwood

## Valley Brook Country Club - May 21, 2013

Hole #2 Red	Closest to Pin	Brandon Crago
Hole #7 Red	Longest Drive	Paul LaMarca
Hole #8 Red	Closest to Pin	Terry Gwinn
Hole #9 Red	Longest Putt	Wayne Conley
Hole #3 Gold	Closest to Pin	Ken Flisek
Hole #6 Gold	Closest to Pin	Ron Darragh
Hole #9 Gold	Longest Putt	Mike Blackwood

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# 2014 EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

**Eric J. Wygant, CGCS**

**A**s we start looking to the end of another golf season, it is time to take a step back and breathe easier knowing that snow is right around the corner. Winter is a good season to take some time for yourself and spend time with your family. It is also a time to network with your peers and reflect on the past year. And there is no better place to do this than the many conferences and educational opportunities scheduled for the offseason.

I originally was going to use this article to exclusively plug our GCSAA seminar on Tuesday, January 14, 2014 and our Integrated Pest Management Symposium on Wednesday, January 15, 2014 at the Four Points Sheraton in Cranberry, Pa, but decided to make you aware of several educational opportunities in our area. Even though we have two great speakers in Dr. Jeffery Borger, Pennsylvania State University, and Dr. Michael Agnew, Syngenta for our two half-day GCSAA Seminars, I also wanted to make you aware that the team from Penn State is hosting their annual Penn State Golf Turf Conference on November 12 – 14, 2014. This is a great conference which gives a good perspective on the past year and what is on the horizon. Coincidentally, some of these same professors will be in Cranberry at our IPMS in January, which has an excellent day of education in its own rights. The IPMS program is designed to give you current information and allow you to get all the credits you need for your three year certification period in Core, Category 6, 7, and 9, but I digress.

The Golf Industry Show will be in Orlando, FL this year on February 3 – 7. This is probably one of the best venues the GCSAA uses for this conference and is a great place to network and keep up on the latest and greatest in golf course maintenance. They have plenty of education on hand to get those much needed CEU credit. As a matter of fact you can also get CEU credits for attending our GCSAA Seminars and the IPMS in Cranberry, and the best thing yet, is that if you are a GPGCSA member Michelle takes care of submitting them for you. It is that easy!

Moving on, the last on my list of conference promoting is the ever anticipated an-

nual Western PA Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show on February 25-27 at the Four Points Sheraton in Cranberry, PA. As a matter of fact, Cranberry is also the home to our... never mind I think you know. The PTC does a great job every year bringing the superintendents together with the vendors for a great place to interact and make the final preparations for the upcoming season. Vern always puts together a great educational program and Mr. Bettel does a great job pulling the show together. For those of you who do not know, Vern is also known as Dr. Borger and... that is right, he will be one of our speakers at the GCSAA Seminar! The great thing is if you see him in January at our small venue it is like watching a concert at the Roadhouse, up close and personal, versus the Star Light Pavillion...or whatever it is called now a day.

So that pretty much does it, but I do want to mention the Northwest and the Mountain and Valley Superintendent Associations have good educational opportunities as well so check them out for details. I would encourage you to attend all of these conferences because it is a great way to

keep up with what is trending and how it can help you and your course. There may even be a talk on exactly what "trending" is in terms of social media which is taking us by storm. I hope everyone had a great season and look forward to seeing you at a conference or two, or at least at the GCSAA seminar on Tuesday, January 14, 2014 and our Integrated Pest Management Symposium on Wednesday, January 15, 2014 at the Four Points Sheraton in Cranberry, Pa.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

**NOVEMBER 12-14, 2014**

*Penn State Golf Turf Conference, State College, PA*

**JANUARY 14, 2014**

*GCSAA Seminars, Cranberry, PA*

**JANUARY 15, 2014**

*Integrated Pest Management Symposium, Cranberry, PA*

**FEBRUARY 3-7, 2014**

*Golf Industry Show, Orlando, FL*

**FEBRUARY 25-27**

*Western PA Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, Cranberry, PA*

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# 2013 GPGCSA Scholarship and Research Tournament

The 23th annual Scholarship and Research Tournament was held on July 8, 2013. The weather was perfect and 25 teams came out to raise money for scholarships for local students and research for issues facing our industry. This was the third consecutive year the event was held at Allegheny Country Club. Many thanks to the entire staff for making the day a success. A special thank you goes to Dave Dickson and his staff for the great conditions and for continuing to serve as hosts for our most prestigious event.

The winning team from Keystone Turf Products consisting of Steve Marofsky, Brian Baker, Judd Pittler, and Brad Chutz posted a score of 125. Second place was taken by the team from EH Griffith with Paul Lamarca, Tony Horvath, Bob Capranica, and Randy Zidik posting a score of 126. Third place went to the team from Valley Brook with Will Martin, Craig McRoberts, Richard Herrington, and Dan Blemker posting a score of 131. Fourth place went to the team from Green Oaks with Toby Kiggins, Bill Wedner, Harry Zionts, and Chas Coleman posting a score of 133. And finally, fifth place went to the team from Club Car of the Alleghenies with Bud Roberts, Mike Bosh, R.P. Stringfellow, and Ken Koronowski posting a score of 134. The course certainly played difficult that day so those winning scores were evidence of some great golf.

The Keystone Turf Products team will hold the trophy until next year and it will be in team captain, Steve Marofsky's possession. Thank you to all those that participated, sponsored a sign or sent a donation for this year's event. Your continued attendance and participation ensures that future events in our region can be scheduled at a wide variety of courses in the area. Please check our website, like us on Facebook, and sign up for updates on twitter @gpgcsa for future events and information.

<p><b>First Place</b>  <b>Keystone Turf Products</b>                  Steve Marofsky                  Brian Baker                  Brad Chutz                  Judd Pittler</p> <p><b>Second Place</b>  <b>EH Griffith</b>                  Paul LaMarca                  Tony Horvath                  Bob Capranica                  Randy Zidik</p> <p><b>Third Place</b>  <b>Valley Brook Country Club</b>                  Will Martin                  Craig McRoberts                  Richard Herrington                  Dean Blemker</p>	<p><b>Fourth Place</b>  <b>Green Oaks Country Club</b>                  Toby Kiggins                  Bill Wedner                  Harry Zionts                  Chas Coleman</p> <p><b>Fifth Place -</b>  <b>Club Car of the Alleghenies</b>                  Bud Roberts                  Michael Bosh                  R.P. Stringfellow                  Ken Koronowski</p>	<p><b>SKILL PRIZES</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>#3</td> <td>Closest to the Pin</td> <td>Steve Marofsky</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#5</td> <td>Closest 2nd Shot</td> <td>Randy Zidik <i>(In the hole)</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>#8</td> <td>Closest to the Pin</td> <td>Joe Hepner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#9</td> <td>Longest Putt</td> <td>Harry Zionts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#10</td> <td>Closest 3rd Shot</td> <td>Jeff Davies</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#11</td> <td>Longest Drive</td> <td>Judd Pittler</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#13</td> <td>Closest to the Pin</td> <td>Jim Guesman</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#15</td> <td>Closest to the Pin</td> <td>Rick Ban</td> </tr> <tr> <td>#18</td> <td>Straightest Drive</td> <td>Bill Stowers</td> </tr> </table>	#3	Closest to the Pin	Steve Marofsky	#5	Closest 2nd Shot	Randy Zidik <i>(In the hole)</i>	#8	Closest to the Pin	Joe Hepner	#9	Longest Putt	Harry Zionts	#10	Closest 3rd Shot	Jeff Davies	#11	Longest Drive	Judd Pittler	#13	Closest to the Pin	Jim Guesman	#15	Closest to the Pin	Rick Ban	#18	Straightest Drive	Bill Stowers
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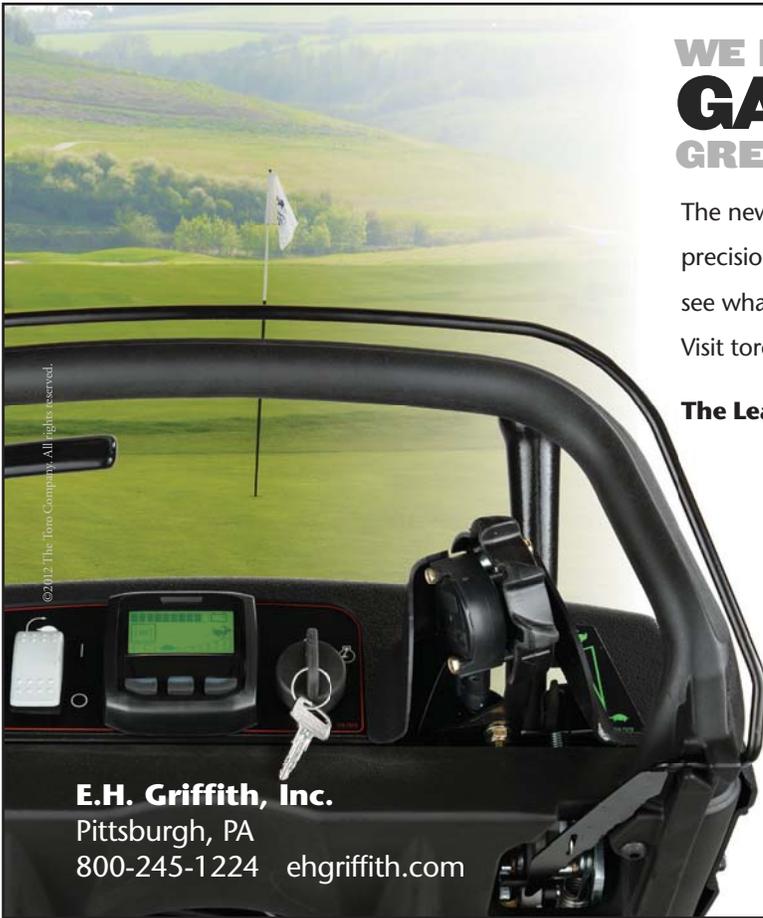
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# The Ins and Outs of Getting Certified: It's Well Worth the Effort

**A**s just about every turf professional knows, the Certified Golf Course Superintendent (CGCS) designation is the highest level of recognition a golf course superintendent can achieve. In the job market, it is a professional designation that sets you apart from others, especially when pursuing a higher-level position. Once hired, it shows your employer that you are continually striving to enhance your skills and remain on the pulse of the industry as you pursue the continuing education needed to maintain your certification.

Though earning this status has always meant satisfying a series of criteria, in 2001, GCSAA made the requirements for becoming certified considerably more stringent. About 25 percent of GCSAA Class A members currently hold the CGCS status, but admittedly, the number pursuing certification seem to have fallen off. The word on the street is that many superintendents are discouraged by what now appears to be an overbearing and time-consuming amount of work.

What follows is a rundown on what it takes to become a certified golf course superintendent. Hopefully after reading the article, you'll be inspired to carve out the time to pursue your certification and join the ranks of the GPGCSA members who are certified golf course superintendents today.

## First Things First: Becoming Eligible

Before you can begin the certification process, you have to be sure you meet the minimum requirements. These include years of experience as a superintendent and level of education. Your educational level will dictate how many years of experience as a superintendent you will need and how many education points you will have to complete before moving forward with the certification process.

The eligibility requirements don't stop there. You also must:

- Be currently employed as a golf course superintendent.
- Possess a pesticide applicators license or pass the GCSAA'S IPM exam if your state or country does not have a pesticide license.

- Complete the online Self-Assessment Tool, which can be found on the GCSAA's website.
- Complete a certificate portfolio.

## About the Self-Assessment Tool

Working through the online self-assessment helps you identify how you measure up to the competencies needed to perform successfully as a superintendent – and on the exam. Under each competency, you'll find the education resources – seminars, books, or articles, – available to help you strengthen any gaps you might uncover in your knowledge and abilities in all areas. Another bonus: You'll receive .5 CEUs for completing this assessment.

## About the Portfolio

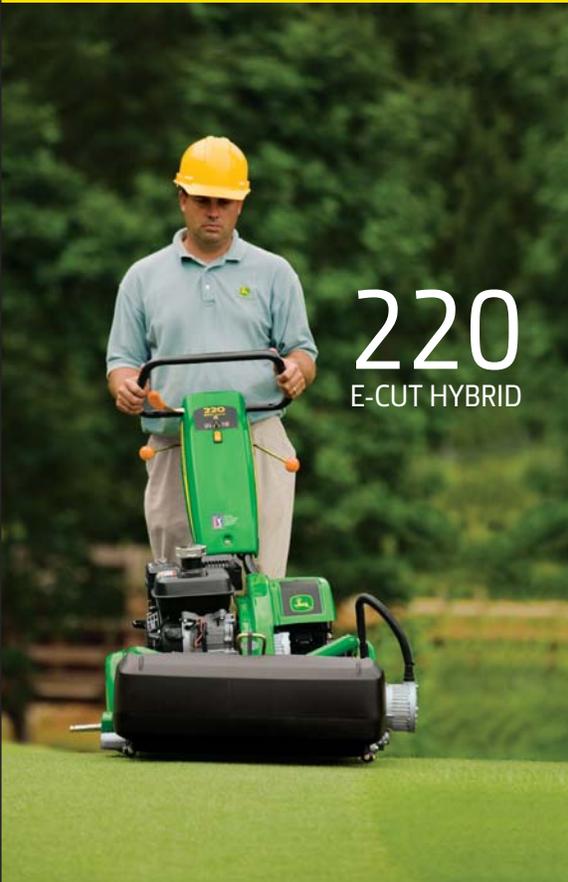
Here's where things get a little more challenging. The certification portfolio is a collection of 33 sections that have to be completed before you can submit your application for the program. These sections are divided into three parts: Work Samples, Skill Statements, and Case Studies. The

portfolio was created to evaluate your understanding and application of the management and problem-solving skills needed to run a successful golf course operation.

I know, right now you're thinking, "You have to be kidding me, right?" Admittedly, the portfolio is one of the biggest stumbling blocks in superintendents' motivation to become certified. It is a lot of work, but you can begin building a portfolio at any point in your career, even as an assistant, and if you're a superintendent, you're probably already doing what's required in some of the sections anyway. Take the Work Samples section. Here, you have to provide evidence of tools and documents that you use to manage staff. This might include employee reviews, employee training, job descriptions, or a meeting agenda ... things you have pretty readily available.

One thing you should be sure to do is download from the GCSAA's website is the Portfolio Scoring Rubric. This is a great vehicle for helping you make sure that you do not leave any part of an answer out. It is

*continued page 13*



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what the judges use to grade your portfolio, so reviewing it can prove to be a great time-saver, particularly since any errors or omissions will require that your portfolio be returned to you for revision.

Right now, you have two options to putting together your portfolio: You can create an electronic portfolio, or you can submit a paper-based version. Regardless of which method you choose, GCSAA provides helpful templates on its website that are designed to guide you in the creation of your portfolio while ensuring that you include all the necessary information.

If you choose the paper-based portfolio, you have to download the templates onto your computer, type in the answers, and print three copies of everything. Then you have to put them into separate binders and mail two of the copies to GCSAA, where they would then be sent to two different judges to be graded.

The new-and-improved electronic option allows you to enter your information directly into your e-portfolio by copying and pasting your information from the templates or from something you might have already saved on your computer. Your portfolio will be accessible for five years from the last time you opened it. Another plus with this method is that you will receive your results from the judges more quickly because there is no time wasted waiting for items to be mailed back and forth.

### Completing the Certification Eligibility Worksheet

You'll complete this worksheet, which you can find on the GCSAA website, to establish and document your eligibility requirements. Once you've met the requirements, GCSAA will send you a certification application form to complete and submit with an application fee and your portfolios.

### The Application

When your eligibility is approved and you have your portfolio ready to go, you can submit your application. Once the application is received, you will have one year to complete the remainder of the certification process, which includes the written exam, the attesting of your golf facility, and the evaluation of your

continued page 14

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portfolio. The exam and attesting can be completed in any order within the one-year period.

This means planning ahead is essential. You have to keep in mind that:

- The attesting of your course must be conducted during the growing season.
- A 6-day waiting period is required between exam retakes. So if for some reason you have to retake a section of the exam (you're allowed two retakes), you have to be sure there's ample time remaining in your one-year applicant period for completion. It really pays to wait until you're well prepared to take the exam before submitting your application.
- If any additional information or materials are needed for your portfolio, it must be returned for reevaluation during your applicant period.

## The Exam

The exam is a closed-book, multiple-choice test consisting of three parts with a total of 211 questions. You must pass each section of the exam with at least a 67 percent.

The Self-Assessment Tool mentioned earlier will identify for you the materials or seminars that will help you pass this exam, so it's important that you be honest with yourself when you work through this online assessment

On the test, there are some things that you're expected to know from memory, such as the volume of a cube, converting cubic feet to cubic yards, calculating the percent slope, USGA specifications for greens, the GCSAA's Code of Ethics, general knowledge about turf species from all geographical areas, and how to figure depreciation. You are also expected to have some general knowledge about the Audubon Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, formulas for other, more difficult math problems are provided.

As noted earlier, you have one year to pass the exam but there is a 60-day waiting period between retakes, so plan ahead!

## The Attesting

Fulfilling the attesting requirement may be the easiest part of the program for some

and the most nerve-racking for others. This is when your local chapter assigns two certified superintendents to come and evaluate your golf course operation. This evaluation is conducted during your course's growing season and covers four major areas: course conditions (based on your budget), maintenance facility, recordkeeping methods, and communications skills.

You can prepare for this visit by downloading the grading form that the attestors will use to evaluate your course. There is also the "Attestor Guidelines" booklet available as a PDF, and an "Attestor Training Video," which also covers everything the attestors will be looking for.

## For Questions About the Certification Process

If you have any questions or concerns about the program, a great resource is Penny Mitchell, the program's Senior Manager of Certification. She can be reached at [pmitchell@gcsaa.org](mailto:pmitchell@gcsaa.org) or at 800-472-7878.

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