homestyle

Let's Share!

Share tips from your outdoor or indoor plant experience, give us a tour of your plant site, or let us know what you enjoy most about these plants and people who grow them. Contact news@ yankton.net Attn: Brenda Johnson or write P&D, 319 Walnut St, Yankton, SD 57078, Attn: Brenda Johnson. See "Plant Exchange" blog on Facebook or www. brendakjohnsonplantex-change.wordpress.com

June Plants Tips

ANGIE LUKEN, SUMMER gardener at the Kopetsky Ace Hardware Greenhouse, 2404 Broadway Ave., Yankton (605) 260-2813, first saw ideas for "Pallet Gardens" on Pinterest for a personalized and practical space saving garden container for plants. "Pallet Gardens are becoming popular all over the country," Luken said. She refers to wooden retail or heavy equipment pallets often recycled or sent to the landfill. "They are versatile in that one may use them lying flat on the ground, stacked to keep the rabbits out or vertically attached to a wall or fence. To build a pallet garden you will need a used pallet, some plywood, garden liner, soil and a selection of flowers or vegetables, all of which are available at your local Ace Hardware store in

• First, turn the pallet upside down. Staple on the garden liner that you have cut to fit the back of the pallet. Liner holds the soil in place when you add it later. It works best to do this on a table or workbench so you don't have to bend over so much.

• Next, secure a piece of plywood to the back of the pallet to hold the liner in place. Turn the pallet over and add soil to each of the rows of the pallet. Plant your flowers or vegetables in each row.

 To jazz up your wall or garden before planting, one could paint the pallet a fun color and add chalkboard paint so chalk could be used to identify each of the plants.

Finally, attach the pallet to a wall or set it up in the garden.



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON Columbines are easy to grow, low maintenance, drought tolerant plants for our region.

Dibbles And Bits

• COLUMBINE IS A LOW

maintenance, drought tolerant perennial that establishes easily and may re-seed if desired in the flowerbed in our region. It is "deer resistant" and blooms early in the season. Columbine varieties are available with choices of flower size and color. Hummingbirds and pollinators are fans of columbine.

 When do you hold young or mature storm damaged trees to prune them for repair? Or when do you fold them? These are questions addressed in the May Pest Update, by Dr. John Ball, Extension Forester, South Dakota Cooperative Extension. He says, "If the top of a young tree is broken from the heavy snow, prune it back to the highest upright branch that is at least half the diameter of the trunk. This limb will assume the role of a new leader. This technique works well for deciduous and evergreen trees as long as the snapped leader is less than about 3/4-inch diameter." He has further tips for pruning and considerations for mature tree repair at: http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/forest-health/ tree-pest-alerts/

Want to save water and money with your lawn irrigation system. Waren Muller, general manager of Hillcrest Golf and Country Club and certified golf course superintendent, suggests a way for homeowners with lawn irrigation to save water and money. Ex: If you water 20 minutes per session, 4 times per week, try watering 60 minutes per station once per week. If your lawn still looks good after a week wait another day or two. When your lawn starts to look a little dry water 60 minutes per station and see how long you can wait before watering again Over time your lawn will become more durable to drought. In spring and fall in Yankton, you may not need to run your irrigation system but a handful of times if at all, and that will save you money and water. This method accounts for natural rainfall and other conditions that require more or less water during the transitions of the

Plant Exchange

Par For The Course

Linking Hillcrest's Golf Turf And Home Lawns

BY BRENDA K JOHNSON

P&D Correspondent

Who hasn't admired an expansive green golf course? What does it take to care for it? How does golf turf care compare to that of home lawns? What does it take to achieve the green turf for golfers? How do you get and keep a fast course in South Dakota?

Waren Muller is Hillcrest Golf and Country Club's general manager and certified golf course superintendent. He shares his insights on turf grass compared to the home

CARE OF GREENS

"I mow every day," Muller says. "Most of the day I spend outside working, with a portion (inside) on other operations of the facility. You have to be on the property and see what changes. It changes fast. I know the front right of nine will be dryer than the backside of seven.

Muller has managed the classic designed 18-hole golf course the past 11 years. Golfers recognize the course as one of the top in South Dakota. Hillcrest will host the Dakotas Tour Pro-Am Invitational, August 6th - 9th. Other events will target men, women, and children this season.

Muller's prime outdoor job is walk mowing the putting greens. Greens are the most precisely even surfaces on the golf course.

"It's the preferred way to take care of the playing surface. Walk mowers (leave a) smoother, better playing surface, better quality cut, and it's appealing," Muller says. He walk-mows in opposite directions to achieve the striped appearance.

He refers to a golf walk mower that only has wheels for transport and uses a heavy roller to smooth the greens and trim the bentgrass. Golf walk mowers are cost prohibitive for home lawns. These mowers smooth uneven surfaces because beneath the putting green is sand, not soil like a lawn.

'Most golf courses today have 12 inches of sand on the greens. Hillcrest greens weren't built that way, but have been top dressed with sand so may times over the course of 60 years, so the base is about 8 inches." he says. Sand covered with growing bentgrass provides a flexible smooth putting green.

"If we have an inch of rain, our bentgrass greens are drained and ready for play," he says. "You can't do that with a soil base. (Turf) roots are oxygenated and compaction from foot traffic is alleviated. Drainage reduces grass disease." Bentgrass grows well in sand, whereas lawn grass grows better in soil and requires less water

and fertilizer. Bentgrass is a preferred cool season dense grass for putting greens where it can be grown. Thin blades can be mowed quite short. This produces a smooth even surface. Augusta National Golf Club is reported to have cooling systems installed below their greens. This keeps the sand cool so that bentgrass can be grown for putting greens. However, bentgrass requires frequent mowing to look attractive. Bentgrass also needs more fertilizer, water, dethatching and aeration maintenance than Kentucky bluegrass or fescues that are common in home lawns. Bentgrass is prone to fungal

disease. "We mow the bentgrass under 1/8th inch during the growing season," Muller says. 'My lawn at home, I mow at

The crown of the grass

above the roots needs to be protected for grass to live. Putting greens can be high traffic areas.

"We constantly top dress with sand to protect the crowns where the growing points are. Bentgrass has the ability to carry on photosynthesis and respiration in that small blade surface, unlike lawn grass."

Game of golf demands a fast, consistently smooth

green.
"We mow greens every day. You can't get that if you don't. Bentgrass is growing. If you don't cut it off and smooth it out every day, you'll have a bumpier, slower putting green.

Newer low-mow Kentucky bluegrass varieties grow in the rest of the Hillcrest Golf Club course. Some home lawns grow these varieties. Muller looks for course turf features such as early spring green up and late season green quality. He prefers fewer water and fertilizer inputs and less maintenance

than bentgrass. Hillcrest Golf Club doesn't have a standard golf opening date for golfing or closing date due to changeable weather. This year mowing began in March and typically ends November 1st. Tree trimming and other projects continue almost year round.

'We put growth regulators (that slow grass growth) on almost all our acreage except the course rough, he says. "We do that to limit how much clippings we have a day. It keeps some surfaces smooth and in some cases, reduces mowing." Rough and fairways are low-mow Kentucky bluegrass.

Rough is maintained closer to requirements of a home lawn. He fertilizes it once in

June and would consider an early fall application except cost is a major consideration. More fertilizer means more mowing. At home his preference is to spread a similar amount of fertilizer over five

applications for the season. Fairways are kept under three-quarters of an inch and need more fertilizer to live at that height. Growth regulators seem to help fairways with spread of fungal disease as well. Fairways have to be moved 2-3 times a week. Muller thinks that fuel usage, labor, and emissions are lower when he applies growth regulators.

FASTER PLAYING SURFACE

Growers, lawn and garden enthusiasts, and golf superintendents learn about seasonal transitions. A flowerbed of growing plants cannot look the same in May and August in South Dakota Muller grows turf. He has to work with Mother Nature during the season.

"The way the course plays, it's slow in spring and it speeds up in June as the grass grows. In July the course slows down because it's often humid and hard to dry out. The course plays slower, and sometimes you throw in a disease, sometimes moving faster than you can put chemical down," he said. Another transition for him is August.

"It is dry and you are coming out of disease season and you can't get enough water and your crop is healing up from a long summer and you move to the end of September. Humidity is lower and the plant is moving "food" from the leaves to the roots. With less moisture in the fall combined with the natural physiology of the plant the course naturally speeds up in the fall.

Golfers want the golf superintendent is to make the greens

"We can make the ball roll one or two feet faster compared to the day before. We know how many feet we'll speed up the

at Hillcrest Golf and Country Club. He spends much of his day making sure the golf course looks attractive and plays as fast as possible. BELOW: Bentgrass sprigs (left) are grown in the golf course nursery for small greens repairs. On the sand based greens, the bentgrass blade will be mowed to less than 1/8th inch length above the crown. Roots grow longer in sand. Bentgrass has nap and will readily lay in one direction or the other when greens are smoothed. Low-mow variety Kentucky bluegrass (right) is mowed to different heights on the fairway and rough. These varieties are available to homeowners.

ABOVE: Waren Muller is certified golf course superintendent

green with the walk mower. But if it rains a half-inch in between, will be softer and slower than if it

CONSERVATIVE INPUTS

Muller takes the guesswork out of sand and soil moisture. Moisture supplies the living turf of the greens and indirectly affects the speed of the rolling golf ball. His moisture meter measures moisture in the top three inches under the turf.
"At the maintenance facility

I can manually control all 200 sprinkler heads (of the irrigation system). I never put the same amount of water everywhere. Typically I water all the fairways, or all 18 greens at once. I adjust percent of water rate based on temperature/evaporation rates." He follows weather reports.

Like home lawns, some spots on the course hold water differently due to sun or shade or wind or śoil. He makes water adjustments for those areas.
"I have had irrigation going in

the rain. If I think we are going to a get .10 of rain I may try to add another .10, so I can go three, four or five days without watering' He is also precise on what the course needs in fertilizer applica-

tions.
"Unless you are seeding or sodding, South Dakota soils have enough phosphorus. If you put phosphorus on an established lawn, it's a waste. You're just helping crabgrass put down roots," Muller said. Most annuals get enough potassium in South Dakota soil too. Potassium helps winter hardiness. His staff don't put any phosphorus or potassium on the rough, only nitrogen."

Muller's moisture meter measures irrigation needs. Fertilizer constraints are factors for a fast playing surface. He thinks his water and fertilizer inputs are conservative. He compares them per acre to homeowners' lawns with irrigation systems and five fertilizer applications. He balances fertilizer requirements and costs and applies what is needed. Hillcrest has more maintained acres and requires more rough inputs compared to a more modern course like Dakota Dunes Country Club, where he worked

Grass clippings are spread out in the rough and fairway clippings aren't collected. Greens and tee clippings are collected and spread out on the property or taken to the landfill.

"United States Golfing Association has backed the move to return golf courses to a more natural state and reduced inputs and take some perfection out of the game. At Hillcrest, we try to limit inputs of water and fertilizer but it is designed as a classic course to be maintained this way," he said. Muller gave the example of Fox Run as closer to the more modern way courses are

PHOTOS: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

designed and managed.
"We are constantly reseeding and sodding something." Muller and his staff spend time on many other course related activities. "We usually don't seed after June We try not to sod in July if we can help it. We start seeding again in mid August. In October we renovate some areas. We have laid sod in December. One of our suppliers is Olson Sod of Meckling. They have a good product."

Muller has heard the comtoday. I guess it's the same for everybody." He tries to be consistent. Rain the night before, blowing wind, and humidity in the air may cause some differences on the course. Maybe it's the transition in the growing season. Once in a while there's a staff concern. Muller doesn't try to ruin a player's afternoon off, but it can happen. You may find him playing golf and answering member questions on Thursday afternoons. He says he's not an accomplished player, but that playing the course makes him a better golf grass grower.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

 "Understanding Water Conservation For Lawns and Sports Turf" by David Chalmers, SDSU

associate, www.lgrow.org
• "Fertilizing South Dakota Lawns-- A 10-point Checklist For Cool Season Grasses" by David Chalmers, SDSU associate, www. Igrow.org
• Online search: "Low-mow

Kentucky Bluegrass Variety Performance for Fairways" by Chicago District Golf Association, Derek Settle, Tim Sibicky, and Nick DeVries.

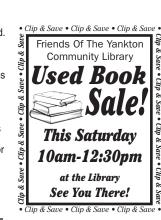




PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON Stirrup hoe gets its name from the shape of the blade that scrapes the soil to cut weeds. Her view is that weeding is more effective when soil is less disturbed.

Garden Tools For Weeding

BETH PREHEIM OF YANKTON has gardened for more than 25 years. As many gardeners who weed and perform other gardening tasks, she has found her favorite tools. Read about hers and share your favorites with us.

"I brought my two favorite garden tools to the garden today," Preheim said. "This is a stirrup hoe. Soil has to be somewhat dry." She leans with hoe in traditional two hand position and push/pulls the sharp stirrup-shaped metal across the soil surface, barely moving soil, but cutting field bindweed and other weeds off just below their stems.

"I don't turn the soil, exposing

more weed seeds. Often I leave the weeds once cut, to dry out as mulch. Everything I plant, I keep the stirrup hoe spacing in mind," she said. It's about four inches across the stirrup. Her stirrup hoe came from Johnny's Select Seeds.

This single hand held tool is called a 'Garden Bandit,'" she said. 'You can get close to plants. It ex-

tends my reach about a foot." Her garden plot beds are usually three feet square. This tool came

from Pinetree Garden Seeds. These tools have lasted about 15 years," she said.



Friday, June 5 7:40 am Rockin RibFest Todd Larson, Kristy Wyland) 8:20 am Yankton Area Arts (Julie Amsberry)