The CGA's Dean of Turfgrass Management

The Carolinas Golf Association was the first state/regional golf association to offer an agronomy service to its member clubs, starting in 1982, and currently is one of only three associations to do so. Perhaps more important is the fact that this critical service is **free of charge** to CGA member clubs, excluding expenses.

The cornerstone of the CGA's agronomy service is the staff. Dr. Carl Blake of Raleigh, N.C. visited CGA clubs for 15 years. In the process, he became a legend for his expertise and his sense of humor. Dr. Blake retired after the 1997 season, and the CGA agronomy service has not missed a beat.

Dr. Leon Lucas of Apex, NC became the CGA's second staff agronomist in 1998 and hit the turf running. "This has been a whole lot of fun," Dr. Lucas said. "I enjoy visiting clubs and working with superintendents, their staffs and club members."

A native of Halifax County in North Carolina, Dr. Lucas gained degrees in plant pathology from North Carolina State University and the University of California. He owns four patents. Dr. Lucas returned to NCSU in 1968 as a faculty member in his favorite department. During ensuing years of teaching and writing, he gained expertise in turf diseases. Among his past students are current faculty members in Clemson University's turfgrass department.

Not at all ironically, Dr. Lucas sends his turfgrass samples to North Carolina State and Clemson for analyses. "These are the best turfgrass management schools in the Carolinas," he said. "They do good work with soil samples."

Dr. Lucas made nearly 100 club visits in the last year, with an average cost to member clubs of $76.

Typical of his style, Dr. Lucas said he enjoyed the chance to see superintendents on the job at CGA championships. "The long hours together give us the chance to talk about our favorite topic — turfgrass."

Dr. Leon Lucas, CGA staff agronomist, enjoys speaking about turfgrass. Here Leon talks to the attendees of the 2004 CGA Golf Night and Annual Meeting.