

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Sharon Arnold, Public Relations Counsel, 239-275-5758

MEDITERRA PLANTS ECO-FRIENDLY GRASS AT SPORTS CLUB

NAPLES, Fla. (July 1, 2008) – The Sports Club at Mediterra stands amidst a lush expanse of grass that represents an environmentally friendly innovation in landscaping.

The turf is Empire zoysia, a hardy variety that requires less than half the water and a third of the fertilizer of the widely used St. Augustine grass.

“We put this in as an experiment,” says Scott Whorrall, Mediterra’s director of golf operations, of the 26,000 square feet of turf that surrounds the Sports Center. “We’re looking to see if it’s the next big grass. It’s too early to tell whether we can truly save water, but it is certainly nicer looking and more pleasant to walk on than the old St. Augustine grass.”

With stringent water-use regulations in force throughout the region and a growing number of communities passing laws limiting the use of fertilizer to protect water quality, it’s important for developments such as Mediterra to find turf and landscaping plants that require less of both. Empire zoysia performs well on both fronts.

Working with Mediterra on this trial are Mayer Berg, owner of Riverland Nursery in Fort Myers, and Mike Pope, national sales manager for Bethel Farms in Arcadia and acting president of the Sustainable Landscape Council.

“Scott is a leader in sustainable landscaping,” says Berg, who is also a member of the council. “Mediterra was the first golf course to earn the Audubon International Silver Signature Sanctuary status and this project is in keeping with that philosophy.”

Discovered in Brazil, this grass possesses a deep root structure that allows it to tolerate drought. Its dark green, densely packed blades provide a lush, soft carpet of grass that requires little fertilizer to maintain. It’s also shade tolerant and chinch-bug resistant.

“When there’s a drought, it turns brown but comes right back when it gets water,” says Pope. “St. Augustine will fight the drought until it eventually dies. Chinch bugs like dry areas. It’s a perfect recipe for catastrophe. It’s a one-two punch. Drought and chinch bugs. That’s where we see Empire survive on a long-term basis much better than other varieties.”

Once-a-week watering keeps Empire zoysia looking green and healthy. In addition, it can be cut to 1 ½ inches in length, rather than the 3 inches recommended for St. Augustine. That means fewer cuttings and less maintenance.

The minimal amount of fertilizer it requires is another big plus. Communities such as Naples, Sanibel, Lee and Sarasota counties have laws that limit the use of fertilizers containing phosphorus and nitrogen because both nutrients can wash off lawns and into waterways, causing algal blooms that kill fish and marine grasses.

Empire zoysia needs infrequent fertilization and, during the summer rainy season when fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorus are banned, zoysia continues to thrive.

“It can be greened up with iron,” says Pope. “It’s a healthier way of growing.”

The Sports Club at Mediterra is undergoing an expansion that will increase the building's existing 7,852 square feet to more than 14,000 square feet. Bonita Bay Group, which is developing the 1,697-acre North Naples master-planned community, is adding three spa treatment rooms, including a couple's treatment room, and a multipurpose room with a catering kitchen that will function as a large classroom.

The project is expected to be completed late this year. A growing membership prompted the expansion project.

The Sports Club is in Mediterra's Piazza and currently includes a tennis pro shop, pool, exercise and spa treatment rooms, a fitness center with Cybex machines, True cardiovascular equipment, Precor ellipticals and a snack bar.

Bonita Bay Group is developing Mediterra with the same commitment to meticulous planning, environmental stewardship, integrity and attention to detail that is evident at its flagship community, Bonita Bay.

The community is being created with the intimacy, charm and classical style of the Mediterranean region of Europe. The overall master plan for the 1,697-acre community may include up to 950 residences and more than 1,000 acres of open space. Residents are eligible for membership in The Club at Mediterra, which offers two Tom Fazio-designed championship golf courses, a 25,000-square-foot clubhouse, named best clubhouse twice by the Collier Building Industry Association, and the Sports Center. The private Mediterra Beach Club on the Gulf of Mexico features an elevated swimming pool, expansive sundeck, and indoor and al fresco dining overlooking 200 feet of shoreline. All residents enjoy miles of bicycle paths and nature trails leading to a series of themed neighborhood parks. Parque Celestial, featuring an array of astrological references, was awarded the American Society of Landscape Architects' Florida Chapter Award of Excellence. The community's second park, Calusa Play Park, offers children and adults an opportunity to learn more about the Calusa Indians, the earliest inhabitants of Southwest Florida.

Mediterra was named Community of the Year by the CBIA for four consecutive years, received the Award of Excellence for Open Spaces from the Florida Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and has been honored with the Environmental Leaders in Golf Award from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America and Golf Digest magazine in the private course category. It was also named by Golf Magazine as one of The 50 Best Golf Communities in America and by Travel + Leisure Golf and Links magazines as one of the top 100 golf communities in America.

Mediterra is now offering luxury coach homes from the \$600,000s, villas from the \$900,000s, single-family homesites from \$300,000 and custom homes from \$1.6 million to more than \$7 million. Mediterra is a private, gated community. Homebuyers and Realtors can request additional information or arrange an escorted tour by visiting the Mediterra Sales and Information Center, located just inside the entrance to the community on Livingston Road two miles north of Immokalee Road in North Naples. For additional information call toll free 866-851-6645 or visit the Web site at www.mediterranaples.com.