Charcoal looms as high-use product

Charcoal could become a growth product in Japan where it is being used to improve soils and absorb chemicals on golf courses. Japan’s charcoal production peaked at 2.22 million tons in 1956, but has declined steadily since, according to The Japan Economic Journal. Today it is used primarily for cookouts by campers and yakitori (grilled chicken) chefs.

Charcoal is a low-tech product made produced by heating wood (often scrap wood) in the absence of air. Water is driven off, leaving behind innumerable pores and giving it enormous porosity. The pores trap various kinds of molecules making it an ideal absorbent for golf courses.

According to Japan’s Forestry Agency, charcoal could be used to absorb chemical residues from grass that otherwise could pollute ground water. It can also improve certain types of acidic soil. The calcium and potassium in charcoal provide a favorable environment for bacteria that enrich the soil with nutrients used by plants. Charcoal also improves soil’s capacity to retain water. Approximately 17,000 tons of charcoal are used annually to improve poor soil conditions in Japan.

Cleveland votes to remodel Manakiki

The Cleveland Metroparks Board of Park Commissioners has voted to improve 70-year-old Manakiki Golf Course at a cost that could reach $1 million. Architect Craig Scheiner of Dublin is designing a master rehabilitation plan for the Donald Ross course that could include a continuous cart path.

Schreiner said he will concentrate on the course’s drainage problems as well as the need for bigger tees and more hazards. The analysis should be completed by mid-August with work beginning by October. The facelift is expected to take two to four years to complete.

Marietta down for one year

The Marietta (Ga.) Country Club will close for up to a year while a $1.8 million reconstruction takes place after the city takes over the club in September.

The city is purchasing the club for $8.6 million and will issue a revenue bond for $9 million to cover the purchase and reconstruction costs.

The course will close Sept. 30 and remain so for the next 10 to 12 months. The city manager sent out requests for proposals to design and/or manage the course. Responses were due back July 25.