BY BILL ROLKE

"Gotta practice my putting game," you say as you step out into the backyard with putter in hand.

Fantasy, you say?

Nope.

Putting Greens International is making it possible across the country. It has developed a patented, artificial putting green that can give the serious golfer the opportunity to practice his approach game and improve his putting skills.

The greens can be contoured, sized and undulated to the customer’s specifications. "Best of all," said president Jerry Carr, "these greens will need no chemical treatment, mowing, or upkeep other than an occasional sweeping when leaves and other wind-blown debris land on the surface."

While driving ranges are nearby most golfers, for many, the chance to practice chipping and putting, Carr recognized this many years ago, but because of his experience in the lawn and landscaping business, realized a natural backyard green would be very expensive to install and maintain. And, finally, weather conditions would restrict play.

Serious golfers were impressed by:

• it can be almost any shape, size and pitch;

• its low maintenance;

• it is non-fading, unaffected by heat or cold, and has an expected 12 to 15 year life; and

• it can be used immediately after a hard frost or heavy rain.

Using it for outdoor entertainment of guests is yet another plus factor.

Other market areas for the putting greens have been untapped. Hotels and motels are interested in installing them to attract guests, as are some driving ranges. Carr is looking into the national market. As soon as the national market is in place, Dealers will be taught how to install the greens and provided with the patented turf materials.

Installation of adjacent putting greens would help satisfy the Japanese golfer's quest for a balanced golfing experience, Carr reasons.

What comes after Japan?

"Well," Carr said, "I've always wanted to see Australia."

The artificial greens are not being considered as substitutes for regular golf course greens.

In fact, Carr felt installations at courses would be our only area managers want to offer a practice green for use when the natural greens are closed due to weather or maintenance.

After a year of installing greens in central Indiana, Putting Greens International is moving into the national market. Through shows, meetings and video programs, it is offering the concept to landscape companies. Dealers will be taught how to install the greens and provided with the patented turf materials.

As well as the national market is in place, Putting Greens plans to move into the international market. Japan may be the first target. The Japanese are avid golfers, but have limited opportunities to play due to extended waiting periods at public courses and exorbitant club membership fees. As a result, the average Japanese golfer spends most of his golfing time at driving ranges.

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