Canada Geese are just plain foul for superintendents

Head 'em up, round 'em out, goosehide

By Peter Blais

You name it, he's tried it—wire, pyrotechnics, swan decoys, dogs, round-ups. "There are no cut and dried solutions, but..." Thompson said. "But when they landed, and then seemed to forget about going home, we started to call them just plain foul."—George Thompson

When they landed, and then seemed to forget about going home, we started to call them just plain foul.

—George Thompson

Goose repellent may soon be available

A repellent may soon be available to keep Canada geese away from shore and off the golf course. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and LESCO, a manufacturer and distributor of golf course maintenance equipment and turf products, are working on such a product. The food-grade powder can be mixed with water and sprayed along shore.

"The initial test results have been encouraging," said a LESCO spokesman. "Something could be available in the next few years." The repellent appears to be environmentally compatible, which should be helpful when the Environmental Protection Agency decides whether to approve its use, according to the company spokesman.

"It has extremely attractive toxicology characteristics," he said. "A similar product is used as a food and drug additive. A lot depends on the EPA, but we don't anticipate any major problems."

LESCO is doing extensive field testing this year. "We need to improve the formulation to make the mix more accommodating for application on turf," he said.

Most of the government work has involved testing in standing water near airports where birds occasionally venture and interfere with flight patterns, and in testing ponds containing toxic chemicals, he added.

"The USDA has looked at it for other uses, but we think it could work on golf courses," he said.

Canada geese are rounded up (above) at the Country Club of North Carolina for shipment to another state. The map (right) shows the flight corridors the birds use during their yearly migration down the East Coast.

GOLDF & COUNTRY CLUB SIGN PROGRAMS

Attractive Durable Sign Programs
- On and off course
- Main Entrance Signs
- Interior Signage

Sign Programs for the Country Club
- Fitted to the Unique needs of individual courses

Sandblasted Granite Sign Faces
- Sandblasted Wood Signs
- Photographically Silk Screened Signs

Designers & Manufacturers of Sign Systems & Sales Centers

For Residential Builders • Since 1976

ON THE GREEN

GOLF COURSE NEWS

Continued on page 61

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS

GOLF COURSE NEWS
Birds or Animals a PROBLEM??

**Scare them away with SHELLCRACKERS®**

*that safely disrupts eating & nesting habits.*

**THE BALLMARK REPAIRER**

This unique repair tool was developed over 40 years ago by Pete Stewart, Superintendent at Butlerfield Country Club, Hinsdale, IL. It was widely distributed by George A. Davis Company and is still demanded by many Golf Course Superintendents. It is now available through MASTER of the LINKS.

**Ask Your Golf Course Distributor for**

INNOVATIVE MAINTENANCE PRODUCTS

From Master of the Links

PO. Box 52 • Lombard, IL 60448-0052

(708) 627-8879 (MASTERY)

**Sod Stripper™**

cuts a strip of sod for your small turf repairs.

**Call for Brochure 800-456-4351**

**Geese**

Continued from page 62

dealing with the goose problem for years. But there are other means he has used successfully and will continue to use to discourage geese from calling his course home.

According to Thompson:

- Dogs are the most effective way to discourage geese from taking up residence. Dogs chase the birds away from shore and into the water.
- "Geese will feed a little on aquatic vegetation such as milfoil. However, they are grazers and if they can't get on the turf to feed, they will go elsewhere," Thompson said.

English setters, springer and Brittany spaniels, golden and Labrador retrievers have all worked well on golf courses. Patrolling the course early in the morning or whenever large concentrations of geese are in the area has worked well. Bringing it back to the kennel rather than leaving it on the course after the job is completed helps keep the dog's interest level high. The morning ritual should be treated as a job, not a lark.

Superintendent Bob Phipps of Shorehaven Golf Club in East Norwalk, Conn., uses Betsy, a 1-year-old Labrador retriever mix to patrol his courses mile-long stretch of Long Island shoreline, 40 acres of salt marsh, five ponds and four brooks.

"The geese have been driving me crazy," Phipps said. "The dog works great until she runs out of gas chasing them through the water. We keep her inside the maintenance building at night. She's a great watchdog, too. I wouldn't want her to catch me trying to break in here."

- Pyrotechnics work well if used immediately when geese try to land on lakes or ponds, Thompson said. Banging, screaming or whistling shells can be fired from pistols or shotguns. They are loud, so check with local authorities regarding noise ordinances and warn nearby members and residents.
- "Have someone assigned to monitor your golf courses on a daily basis," Thompson said. "In most cases, the screamers will do the job. However, if the geese refuse to leave, get two or more pistols, or shotguns, and stalk the birds in the early morning or evening and shoot the crackers or bangers over their heads."

- A single strand of wire placed about six inches above the water line near heavily played areas can force geese into less-used areas.
- Styrofoam swans placed in family groups of two adults and several young per surface acre can discourge geese from landing. Swans are very territorial. While live ones chase geese, they will also pursue golfers who venture too close. That's why the Styrofoam models are preferred. Swan families should be placed along the main flight lines where they are easily visible by flying geese.
- Obtaining permits to shake or freeze the eggs of nested birds helps control goose populations. Birds will re-nest if the eggs are simply removed or broken. A goose will sit on the frozen or shaken eggs for several weeks before realizing they won't hatch.
- Repellents may be available soon, Thompson added. The Department of Agriculture is working on a product made from the essence of grapes. The dye can be mixed with water and sprayed along the water's edge. Lesco Inc. has experimented with it and reported some promise.

"Thompson said he has talked with superintendents throughout the country about Canadian geese. Those along major flyways have all reported problems. "If you have excellent conditions for them, they will return," Thompson said. "So it is important to be diligent and persistent in your quest for a goose-free environment."