MAINTENANCE

BRIEFS

By MARK LESLIE

Turf-saving urethane spikes winning converts nationwide

In this high-technology era, golf course superintendents have water-injecting aerators, weather satellites, computerized irrigation systems and floating mower decks. They have deep-tine aerifiers, turf groomers and even grasses that can withstand a flood of effluent. But some greenskeepers feel the greatest advancement is a product made for players: SoftSpikes for golf shoes.

"In 20 years this is the best thing I've seen in the areas of golf halls, clubs and maintenance," said John Malloy, former superintendent at Wyndstone Golf Club in North Barrington, Ill., who is now growing in the Jack Nicklaus-designed Bearpath Golf and Country Club in Eden Prairie, Minn. "It's something everybody could use and save a lot of wear and tear.

When Scioto Country Club in Columbus, Ohio, bought SoftSpikes for its members, the spikes' popularity "leapt and grew. We had a tremendous response," said superintendent Mark Yoder.

Agronomically, financially, and in terms of wear and tear on the golf course, the clubhouse and equipment, SoftSpikes are winning converts by the droves.

Four high-profile clubs — Wyndstone first, then Scioto, Pine Valley Golf Club in Clementon, N.J., and Muirfield Village in Dublin, Ohio — have led the way, mandating that the urethane SoftSpikes be worn on their courses.

"In this area it has caught on at a lot other clubs," said Yoder, adding: "All the guests get new SoftSpikes for free charge. They're geared up in the locker room to change the spikes quickly. If the golfers want their old spikes put back on, they'll do that, too. But no one, does they are so much more comfortable."

"What we're trying to do in the end," said Malloy, "is improve the condition of golf courses. This is one thing a player can do without spending [the golf course] an agonistic price tag."

The plasses are many, according to Malloy and Yoder.

"It will save a club $10,000 to $20,000 a year just in damage to a course's carts and bridges and carpeting in the

Atlantic super build research green in Truro

By BONNIE LESLIE

TRURO, Nova Scotia, Canada — You walk before you run. So the Atlantic Golf Superintendents Association has built an experimental golf course in Truro, a step in the development of a turfgrass research institution.

"Basically, our long-range plans are to have a turfgrass research center at Nova Scotia Agricultural College, said Blake Palmer. The Superintendent at Rockwood Park Golf Course in St. John, New Brunswick, Palmer is chairman of the newly formed Atlantic Turfgrass Research Foundation (ATRF) and a past president of the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association.

The Guelph Turfgrass Institute at the University of Guelph in Ontario does the bulk of turfgrass research in Canada, but "their growing conditions are not like ours in Atlantic Canada," Palmer said, ex-chairman of the Canadian Turfgrass Research Foundation, which funds Guelph research. "You have to grow grass here to understand how difficult it is. We get everything but the kitchen sink thrown at us in the wintertime."

ATRF members hope to rectify the research gap.

"One step in that direction is being taken by the Department of Environment and Department of Agriculture, which are conducting a joint $230,000 research project dealing with integrated pest management.

Eight or nine golf courses in Nova Scotia are working with Department of Environment plant pathologist Linda Rankin in the three-year project, now in its second year."

The research green at Nova Scotia University's turf management and horticulture programs, professor Nick Christians said during the August meeting of the Golf Course Superintendents Association. "There appears to be a downturn in business and engineering jobs and those students are coming too," the ISU educator said. The IGCSA announced an Oct. 20 deadline for the return of scholarship applications. Last year, the organization awarded $4,000 to six students. For more information contact 319-378-9203.

FOCUS ON STRESS MANAGEMENT

Turfgrass stress management will be the topic at three separate seminars sponsored by the Golf Course Superintendents Association and its local chapters. The sessions will be held Oct. 12 in Billings, Mont.; Oct. 27 in Portland, Maine; and Jan. 11 in Charlotte, N.C. The instructor is Dr. Joseph DiPaolo, formerly of North Carolina State University and currently a senior technical support specialist for a major turf and ornamental products manufacturer. For more information contact 800-472-7878.

Biodiversity Treaty Vote Delayed

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Its switchboard swamped by a reported 1 million phone calls over three days, the U.S. Senate voted in mid-August to postpone a vote on the International Convention on Biological Diversity. Many from the golf industry responded to a call to block ratification of the treaty, according to Dr. Michael S. Coffman, who spearheaded the effort. Emanating from the 1992 Earth Summit, the treaty was not signed by then President George Bush, but has since been signed by President Bill Clinton. The most extraordinary aspect of the Biodiversity Treaty, Coffman said, "is that it's already being implemented in the United States, even before it has been ratified by the Senate."

MAINE FUND-RAISER

ARUNDEL, Maine — The Maine Golf Superintendents' Association's annual golf tournament to raise money for scholarships for students studying turfgrass culture and to support turfgrass research will be held at Cape Arundel Golf Club here, Sept. 20. Further information is available from the MGCSA office at 207-781-7678.

Event: Party at Fort Wayne's Pine Valley Country Club maintenance crew relax during last year's annual barbecue.

BY PETER BLAIS

FORT WAYNE, Ind. — Party on Fort Wayne. That's the call heard at Pine Valley Country Club in early August when a group of 25 or so members get together, toss in $100 apiece and throw a mid-season bash for superintendent Steve Mueller’s grounds crew.

"It's a way of saying thanks for all the hard work they do to keep the course in shape," said course member Jim Reifeneger.

This year's 4th annual celebration was held Monday, Aug. 1, a day the course is closed for maintenance. Organizers combined course crew and course members into teams and staged a Florida Scrambles tournament. Chipping and putting contests followed.

During the hamburger and hot dog barbecue that afternoon, crew members on the winning teams received cash prizes based on their team's performance during the tournament and skills contests. The affair was topped off by a raffle during which every crew member received between $40 and $200.

"I've worked at three other courses and I've never seen anything like this," Mueller said. "It's a very friendly club. The course members talk to the crew and get to know them very well."

Long-time course member Hughie Johnston first proposed the party as a way to show appreciation to crew.

Lab changes will propel EPA into future

From Staff Reports

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Carol Browner plans to move expeditiously to implement laboratory plans she believes will shape the agency's science program for many years to come.

Responding to recommendations made by a Steering Committee, Browner is poised to move EPA "to the cutting edge of government science." In a memorandum to move EPA "to the cutting edge of government science" and as a belated set of procedures that have led to claims the EPA is "held hostage" to uneven science.

Declaring a Nov. 1 deadline, Browner has called on implementation groups to report to her with specific action plans. They are to address Steering Committee recommendations on mission and management — which Browner concurs with — including:

• Designating four national laboratories

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