

BRIEFS



TOWN JOINS GRIFFIN LLC

VALDOSTA, Ga.—Griffin L.L.C. recently named Owen Towne as its new global business director, specialty products. Previously, Towne was the director of international turf and ornamentals for Novartis. Towne will be responsible for the expansion and development of the Griffin L.L.C. line of specialty products throughout the world. Towne will report to Walter Hobgood, vice president of operations, and will be based at Griffin's global headquarters in Valdosta, GA.



Owen Towne

AMERICAN CYANAMID NAMES KALIK AND THOMAS TO NEW POSITIONS

PARSIPPANY, N.J. — American Cyanamid Company, a manufacturer of specialty products for professional markets, has named Rich Kalik marketing manager for the turf and ornamental group. Kalik's new responsibilities include managing marketing, communications and sales programs for current Cyanamid products. The company has also named John Thomas, Ph.D., senior technical manager for the turf and ornamental group. Thomas' new responsibilities include providing technical support for current Cyanamid products. He also continues to give technical support for MACH 2 turf insecticide by RohMid L.L.C., a joint venture between Rohm and Haas and American Cyanamid.



John Thomas



Rich Kalik

COUILLARD JOINS THE SCOTTS COMPANY

MARYSVILLE, Ohio—The Scotts Company has expanded its team of turfgrass scientists with the addition of Andree-Anne Couillard, Ph.D., specializing in product development. Couillard will be responsible for the identification, planning, and implementation of research programs leading to new or improved Scotts turf fertilizer products.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

VGM Golf aims new program at superintendents

Scotts Co. latest to get on board

By MICHAEL LEVANS

WATERLOO, Iowa — What started out as a buying group for pro shop managers has moved its way into the maintenance shed.

VGM Golf Inc., part of an alliance called VGM Group, has developed a Superintendents Division that the organization said will save courses money on everything from fertilizers to hole cutters while keeping — in most cases — existing distributor relationships in place.

"As our membership of pro shop managers grew, and our members asked for more and more services, it was a natural for us to add superintendents," said Mike Sawyer, VGM Golf's national sales manager.

It's VGM's goal to roll its more than 1,500 members — mostly pro shops — into the Superintendents Division.

Here's how it works: VGM Golf never touches the product. Instead, it negotiates a sales program with manufacturers based on volume and passes the savings on to its member courses — the more member courses the better the deal. In turn, VGM negotiates lower minimums, extended dating, cash rebates, freight discounts and related member premiums.

The VGM member contacts its sales representative or distributor, place an order, give a VGM number and the member is locked into the negotiated price.

"We don't resell, so we keep the sales rep involved," said Sawyer. "Many times distributors hear the term 'buying group'

COMPANIES INVOLVED

- The Scotts Co.
- Western Golf
- Standard Golf
- Fox Valley Paints
- Washer Systems of Iowa
- Pickseed West
- Bushnell
- Skin Research Lab
- Club Pro Products
- Perma-Sign
- DME Rangefinder
- Wittek
- Kirby Marker System

and think they're out of the picture. That's not the way we work. We try, whenever possible, to keep the distributor in the picture."

One-time fees to join the superintendents group are \$360 for a 9-hole facility and \$480 for an 18-hole facility. Savings vary from product to product.

"I assume we might have a price increase," said Sawyer. "Because, just like any-

thing else, the more our members save the more our service is worth. We do, however, grandfather our current facilities. If you're in at \$480 now you'll be in at that price 10 years from now."

At press time, VGM had firmed up pro-

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Single-rider golf car market heats up

By MICHAEL LEVANS

EXETER, Pa. — Pride Golf, a new division of scooter and liftchair manufacturer Pride Healthcare, has entered the single-rider golf-car market with a bang.

It was recently announced that Pride Golf's car, the second single-rider to enter the golf market from the home medical equipment industry, will be the vehicle of choice for disabled golfer Casey Martin, should he earn a berth in this year's U.S. Open at The Olympic Club in San Francisco.

Pride was chosen following a recent testing session held by The United States Golf Association (USGA) in Denver. "They [USGA] were looking for a cart for Casey and if yours met certain specifications they invited you to send a cart out for testing," said Pride spokesperson Craig Otto.

"We sent one out, they put it through the paces and it turned out that it was the most suitable cart for him. It's a great way to get started," Otto added.

Pride will soon be entering the market with two models. No details were available at press time.

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NEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH: REDEXIM CHARTERHOUSE'S TIDY TURF

KINGSTON, Pa.—Redexim Charterhouse has introduced a product that allows turf professionals to combine the tasks of dethatching, sweeping and flail mowing into one machine. The Turf Tidy features a unique floating head that can be easily adapted to one of the machine's three key functions. First, the machine is a dethatcher that removes thatch and opens up the surface to revitalize turf. A change of attachments allows the Turf Tidy to function as a powerful sweeper, vacuuming up clippings, cores and other debris. The flail kit attachments turn it into a flail mower that cuts long grass down to a manageable length. For more information, contact 800-597-5664.

Textron/Ransomes: The dust settles, new structure emerges

By TREVOR LEDGER

IPSWICH, Suffolk, England — Now that the dust has settled on Textron Inc.'s takeover of Ransomes PLC, a clear picture of the group's strategy and structure is emerging.

The new company is called Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products and is headed up by the former president of Ransomes, Peter Wilson. As president of the new worldwide organization, Wilson is based in the company headquarters here in Ipswich. The American arm of Textron Turf Care and Specialty Products is based in Racine, Wisconsin, USA, with Jacobsen's Phil Tralies as president. Tralies will report to Wilson.

Peter Wilson is naturally excited with the developments at what is now a very well placed market competitor.

"It creates a very strong company from both a financial and technical viewpoint," said Wilson. "It gives us a wonder-

ful range of products and we obviously have a leading range of brands."

Does this mean that the company will need to rationalize production due to product overlaps? Wilson doesn't think so.

"We obviously do have products which overlap at the moment, but we've made a commitment that we have the right resources to ensure that where we have leading brands, be they Ransomes, Jacobsen or whatever, we will continue to ensure that we retain market leadership.

"As we continue to develop new products we will obviously be looking for commonality across the different brands but also to differentiate between them in different ways. The very fact that the new company is lumped together via its name and the common business of fine turf care suggests

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Plant Health Care, Griffin Industries form strategic alliance

PITTSBURGH—Plant Health Care Inc. (PHC), a microbial biotechnology company, has formed a strategic working alliance with Griffin Industries, Inc., of Cold Spring, Ky., makers of Nature Safe Natural & Organic Fertilizers.

Under the alliance, the companies will cooperate on the research and development of unique microbial biofungicides and biofertilizers designed specifically for use in the commercial turf and horticulture markets.

The companies plan to combine the beneficial bacteria, mycorrhizal fungi and biostimulant technologies developed by PHC, with the animal protein meal technology produced by Griffin to make the first multi-purpose biofungicides on the market.

According to the companies, the first product produced under the alliance is in university and field trials and is expected to be available later this year.

"Scientists have understood for years

that strains of certain soil microorganisms, such as *Bacillus*, *Pseudomonas* and *Streptomyces* species and mycorrhizal fungi greatly improve plant resistance to many soil-borne diseases," said Wayne Wall, PHC's president and chief executive officer. "Our scientists are developing and testing 'microbial cocktail' biofungicides that will provide an alternative to chemical products for disease control and improved plant resistance to disease."



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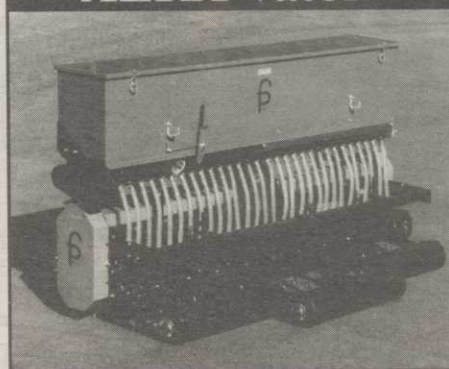
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— Carey Mitchelson, Course Superintendent, Twin Lakes G.C., Oakland Township, MI

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CIRCLE #153

Johnsons moves into Ireland

BOSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE, England—Johnsons Seeds has appointed Spraychem Golf as sole distributor for the company's sport and amenity products in Ireland. Spraychem Golf will sell Johnsons' entire grass and wildflower seed range direct to the golf industry.

Based in Dublin, Spraychem Golf is a supplier to the amenity sector throughout Ireland and Northern Ireland. "It was recognized that a link with a reputable grass seed company such as Johnsons was essential for development," said Patrick Cantwell, sales director for Spraychem Golf.

VGM aims at supers

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grams with Western Golf, Standard Golf, Fox Valley Paints, Washer Systems of Iowa, Pickseed West, Bushnell, Skin Research Lab, Club Pro Products, Perma-Sign, DME Rangefinder, Wittek and The Kirby Marker System.

But the jewel in the crown, said Sawyer, is VGM's recent deal with The Scotts Company.

According to Alan Figley, national accounts manager at Scotts, involvement with VGM increases the company's visibility, especially courses that may not be using Scotts products.

"We see this as an extension to our direct sales force," said Figley. "And for our current clients who are VGM members, we view this as a new opportunity since those clients will be able to purchase more product than they were in the past."

However, according to Figley, there was another, albeit unforeseen, bonus in joining the alliance.

"The development of a supplier alliance was something that didn't cross my mind at first," he said. "You have a buyer alliance formed by the volume purchasing, but we realized that the suppliers that belong to the group become a family, too. We haven't realized the full potential of that yet, but we realize that there's additional opportunity there. Sometimes it takes a third party to bring something together."


According to Sawyer, VGM is in negotiations with more than 12 vendors to land new programs. "One of the things we're most hopeful for right now is turf maintenance items, since they are the biggest ticket item. In the next six months, we should have one of those vendors in place," he said.

Single rider

Continued from page 59


Waukesha, Wis.-based Ortho-Kinetics Inc., one of Pride's chief competitors in the home medical equipment field, is ready and waiting to take Pride on in the golf market. Ortho-Kinetics launched its Fairway Division at the beginning of this year.

Although geared toward the physically challenged golfer, the single-rider car is being marketed as a way for courses to get back to the 4-1/2 hour round.



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