

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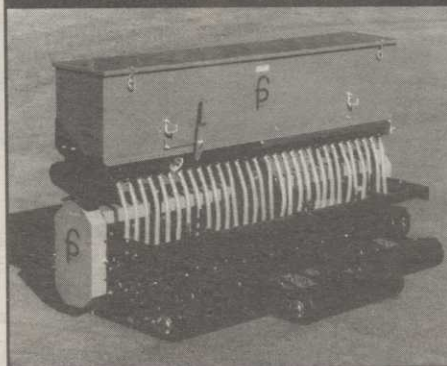
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— Carey Mitchelson, Course Superintendent, Twin Lakes G.C., Oakland Township, MI

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## 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

Continued from page 59

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

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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.