MAINTENANCE

Y2K AND THE EVERYDAY

President Clinton may have been telling the populace that all was hunky-dory in regards to Y2K scares, but golf course superintendents generally took matters into their own hands early in 1999 in order to be prepared for the turning of the millennium clock. From upgrading computers and software programs to stocking inventory, superintendents were preparing, late into the year, for the moment the clock ticks from 12:00 midnight to 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1, 2000.

Meanwhile, they continued to wrestle with hurricanes, droughts and diseases; invent some interesting devices for operating their maintenance shops and keeping their turf alive and well; contribute in a major way to new research efforts by the U.S. Golf Association and the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program; and even handle day-to-day business.

Turfgrass scientists continued
their drive to breed bentgrasses that reach into the deep South and Bermudagrasses that will thrive in the Transition Zone.

And as time seemed to race on for most, some superintendents took the lead of Gordon Witteveen of the Toronto Board of Trade Golf Courses — and slowed down by retiring.

Bunker rake blower aerases root zone

NAPLES, Fla. — A new portable turf aeration blower system can supply oxygen to the root zone of putting greens, suck water out of a green's drainage pipes, and even blow away surface debris in sand bunkers.

Superintendent Darren Davis of Olde Florida Golf Club here reports the versatile blower is "another great tool in our golf course maintenance equipment arsenal."

Davis has two of the self-contained blower units which can be mounted easily onto a turf truckster bed, trailer, tractor three-point hitch, or on the back of a riding bunker rake.

The blower, he said, can move a significant amount of air through the perforated drainage piping of a U.S. Golf Association approved system.

A leaf and debris blower can operate for hours with an auxiliary fuel tank.

From Canada with love: Bubble covers for greens

TORONTO — Be it laser shooting, Global Positioning Satellite technology or soil sensors, some of the greatest advances in the world of golf have been borrowed from other industries. Enter the latest: Bubble Covers, originally designed to lay over swimming pools to keep them warm.

Quebec superintendents have been experimenting with Bubble Covers to protect their greens from winter injury, and, according to Serge Gauthier, they have found success while saving money.

Speaking at the Canadian International Turfgrass Conference here, the superintendent at Islesmere Golf and Country Club in Laval, Quebec, said his Scotland-based firm, Bubble Covers Ltd., has been growing in popularity since 1997.

According to Gauthier, Bubble Covers are made with a bead of air that floats on the surface of the water. The covers are easily removed from the greens to allow for mowing, fungicide applications or other maintenance.

George Frye

New turf care takes bent toward Deep South

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — With his sights keen on growing the cool-season bentgrass into the Deep South, Dr. Milt Engelke has broken the mold of turfgrass care and developed a regimen he feels will, once and for all, make his dream come true.

He already points to success here, working with Old Marsh Golf Club superintendant Steve Ehrbar, the Texas A&M professor said, "We feel strongly that we will be okay with the regimen."

What does it entail?

• Lean water management, irrigating every fourth day.

• Frequent flushing.

Continued on page 21

Y2K: Two little numbers, one big problem

"On New Years Day I wouldn't want to be on a golf course because the sprinkler systems will probably be going nuts," said Pebble Beach Co.'s Dominic Van Ness.

Van Ness, director of the Information Services Department, foresees major problems coming — and then perhaps snowballing — when the world's clocks tick from midnight Dec. 31 to 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1.

The situation has been dubbed "The Year 2000 Crisis," or Y2K, and the scenarios of its effects are endless — from hospitals where lives may hang in the balance to golf courses where the effects will be more mundane, but perhaps far more far-reaching than at first glance.

The whole thing seems so simple. Many computers are programmed to recognize only the last two digits of a year. So when "00" appears at 12:01 a.m., Jan. 1, 2000, it could be interpreted as 1900 or, on some computers, 1980, 1984 or even 1999. This could cause turmoil in how data is analyzed or result in freeze-ups or massive crashes.

Quotable Quotes

"Southern superintendents like to tease us about working six months a year. We tease them that it's a tough job to kill Bermudagrass."

— Bob Heron

Canadian Superintendent of the Year

Water is getting as expensive, if not more, than providing electricity. It's our biggest challenge of the future.

— George Frye, Kiawah Island Resort's Ocean Course superintendent

Continued on page 20

Superintendent, thy middle name is Invention

A leaf and debris blower can operate for hours with an auxiliary fuel tank.

Flagstick storage using unused ceiling space

By TERRY BUCHEN

PARAMUS, N.J. — Irrigation technician Dave Zollinger turned wasted space into valuable at The Ridgewood Country Club here, at the same time solving where to store flagsticks for the 27-hole facility.

Zollinger's "brilliant idea," said superintendent Todd W. Raisch, "was to store all of our spare flagsticks on the horizontal and sloping ceilings, which is totally out of the way from any of our activities."

Zollinger bought enough fishing pole holders at a local store to handle all the flagsticks. Each unit can hold six flagsticks. The holders have a foam-type slit so when the circular part of the flagstick is pushed all the way in it snaps into place.

Not only do the fishing pole holders work well, they are inexpensive, Raisch said. "Storage space is always a para..." Continued on page 19

FEBRUARY

New turf care takes bent toward Deep South

By MARK LESLIE

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