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 turn 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.

Bob Heron

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

'We could have had 100 volunteers, without question, which shows the industrywide dedication to Pinehurst and the U.S. Open.'
— Paul Jett, superintendent of Pinehurst #2 course

'Water is getting so expensive, if not more, than providing electricity. It's our biggest challenge of the future.'
— George Frye, Kiawah Island Resort's Ocean Course superintendent

Y2K:

Two little numbers, one big problem

By MARK LESLIE

"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 beginning — and 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 system failures.

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From Canada with love:

Bubble covers for greens

By MARK LESLIE

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 superintendents have used Bubble Covers on several greens with "mixed results," but, he said, he finds the covers "a viable alternative to other winterizing routines of other golf courses around the world."

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NEW TURF CARE TAKES BENT TOWARD DEEP SOUTH

By MARK LESLIE

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.

Continued on page 21

Superintendent, thy middle name is Invention

GOLF COURSE NEWS

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Continued on page 21

December 1999

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Bentgrass care
Continued from page 17
• Watering, not syringing.
• Keeping the nutrition level up in the summer time.
• Top dressing every three weeks.
• Light grooming and brushing every third week.
• Core aerifying twice a year, removing the cores and top dressing every three weeks.

"There is a misconception that bentgrass needs to be watered continuously," he said. "Water actually develops an excellent environment for diseases. It causes poor microbial development, and attracts nematodes, which are aquatic animals.

"If we can manage the water, we can manage the root zone so that the grass will take care of itself," Engelke added. "With good root development, the plant will air-condition itself. Water moving through the plant will dissipate heat. Internally, the plant does this through evapotranspiration."

Indeed, in late December, three months after planting G-2 bentgrass over an existing sod layer, Ehrbar reported roots 6 to 7 inches deep. And, he said, he made only one fungicide application during the summer that he tested. G-2, L-93 and Crenshaw bentgrasses before his final decision to plant. "We found that a drier soil profile is much less prone to disease than water-soaked," Ehrbar said.

"This is the best bentgrass over an existing sod layer, Ehrbar reported roots 6 to 7 inches deep. And, he said, he made only one fungicide application during the summer that he tested. G-2, L-93 and Crenshaw bentgrasses before his final decision to plant. "We found that a drier soil profile is much less prone to disease than water-soaked," Ehrbar said.

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• Core aerifying twice a year, removing the cores and top dressing with pure sand.

"If we can manage the water, we can manage the root zone so that the grass will take care of itself," Engelke added. "With good root development, the plant will air-condition itself. Water moving through the plant will dissipate heat. Internally, the plant does this through evapotranspiration."

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