



## BRIEFS

### 12 SUPERS JOIN SOFTSPIKES BOARD

ROCKVILLE, Md. — Softspikes Inc. has named 12 golf course superintendents to its advisory board. They will assist with future product development and will meet as a group to discuss matters relevant to plastic cleats and golf course agronomy.

The 12 members of the Softspikes' Superintendents Advisory Group are: Patrick Cooper, Royal Oaks Country Club, Dallas, Tex.; Shawn Emerson, Desert Mountain, Scottsdale, Ariz.; Dean Graves Chevy Chase Club, Chevy Chase, Md.; John Kopack, The Legacy Club at Alaqua Lakes, Longwood, Fla.; Tony Mancuso, Bellerive Country Club, St. Louis; Jim Nicol, Hazeltine National Golf Club, Chaska, Minn.; Steve Potter, Woodholme Country Club, Baltimore; Steve Renzetti, Quaker Ridge Golf Club, Scarsdale, N.Y.; Mike Sauls, Butler National Golf Club, Oak Brook, Ill.; David Stone, The Honors Course, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Jim Wells, World Woods Golf Club, Homosassa, Fla.; and Virginia Woulfe-Beile, Rock Spring Golf Course, Alton, Ill.

### DISNEY COURSES WIN AUDUBON NOD

ORLANDO, Fla. — Audubon International has awarded Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary status to all five courses at Walt Disney World Resort. "We're excited to have all of our championship courses designated as sanctuaries," said Gary Meyers, manager of sports turf and golf course management. "We have a strong commitment to maintaining the balance between the game of golf and the environment. The wildlife our guests will see during a round of golf are equally as valuable as the course itself." Disney World courses include Palm and Magnolia, the two oldest courses; Lake Buena Vista; and the Bonnet Creek complex, with two 18-hole layouts, Osprey Ridge and Eagle Pines.

### ROBERTS SEED EXPANDS SALES STAFF

TANGENT, Ore. — Roberts Seed Company (RSC) has hired Megan Prine as a sales representative. A recent graduate of Oregon State University with a bachelor's in crop and soil science, Prine was active in the college of agricultural sciences, serving two years with the Ambassadors for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources. She will report to Denise DeHart, sales manager at RSC.

## In battle against Canada geese, superintendents wield new weapons

By JOEL JOYNER

PALATINE, Ill. — For years, superintendents have used trained border collies to chase Canada geese from their greens and fairways. But there are new and improved methods of dispersing the big birds, and they don't require dog food.

Canada geese, protected by the Migratory Bird Act, have grown to an army of 3 million strong in the United States. Mowed turfgrasses are like a smorgasbord to these grazing beasts. When they descend on a course in big numbers, they are capable of destroying — and defouling — large sections of a layout. A single goose can produce one to three pounds of feces a day, creating an unsightly situation when a gaggle of 100 decides to leave its calling card.

Jim Bland, director of Integrated Lakes Management in Gurnee, Ill., reported that a single 100-acre lake in northern Illinois was home to an estimated 12,000 Canada geese as part of a wintertime superflock. "Lawns can be carpeted with feces," he observed.

Golf course superintendents know the

drill: fireworks, whistles, shotguns, visual threats and chase and scare tactics. The geese, however, are just as stubborn and territorial. But to combat this growing invasion, new products and strategies are available, such as lasers, GooseChase and FlightControl.

### 'LASER GOOSE-DISSUADER'

The experimental laser device, also known as a "laser goose-dissuader," has been tested along Lake Galena in Pennsylvania, where an estimated 17,000 geese liked to roost.

U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) wildlife services demonstrated the \$3,500 "flashlight" in January this year and successfully terrified the geese into searching for a new home. "The laser beam



Canada geese patrolling a course

shaved the geese off the lake like a razor on black stubble," said Matthew Blanchard, a writer for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

Powered by AA batteries, the laser cleared approximately 95 percent of the birds from the lake. "When they see the red light, they are terrified," said Chris

Continued on page 12

## Houston-area clubs facing stiff rate hikes for water

By JOEL JOYNER

SPRING, Texas — Water is getting tight in Texas. Pricier, too.

Here on the northern edge of Houston, the water authority has hit golf courses with a nasty punch. Not only are water rates escalating, but courses have been "encouraged" to slash their use of fresh water.

The North Harris County Regional Water Authority (NHCRWA) has doubled the cost of water to 25 cents per 1,000 gallons.

The idea, of course, is to conserve an increasingly precious resource. The costs are expected to increase again — and again — to as much as \$2, soon.

"Nobody's real happy," said Richard Kane, assistant superintendent here at the Willow Creek Golf Club. "In the past, as recently as 1999, all you had to pay for was the well permit. It's been hot and dry here in the state of Texas for the past few summers, so these fees will effect everybody."

Golf courses use between 35 million to 200 million gallons of water per year to keep their turf playable. New courses, trying to get their turf established, typically use up to 150 million gallons. At \$2 per 1,000 gallons, those new courses will be paying about \$3 million to irrigate their layouts.

"The water authority's goal is for golf



Continued on page 13

## Wallace joins Turf-Seed, to handle N.E.

HUBBARD, Ore. — Victoria ("Vickie") Wallace has joined Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green Corp. as an agronomist and Northeast professional sales representative.

Since 1983, she has served as an agronomist and was involved with professional turfgrass sales and marketing with the former Lofts Seed Co. In her new position with Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green, she will support turfgrass managers and distributors in the Northeast from her base in Exeter, R.I. She will promote Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green products to golf course and landscape architects, superintendents, turfgrass sod producers, sports turf managers, and landscape professionals.



Victoria Wallace

Wallace will also lend support to both Turf-Seed and Tee-2-Green Corp.'s marketing divisions in Hubbard. She will also represent both companies at national and regional trade shows.

Wallace holds a bachelor's degree from Penn State and a master's from the University of Rhode Island.

Turf-Seed products include the new Kentucky bluegrass varieties Blackstone, Brilliant, Moonlight, and NorthStar.

## 'Super' Bermudagrass does star turn on sports fields

TAMPA, Fla. — The New York Giants weren't the only ones taking a pounding on Super Bowl Sunday this year. The turf here at Raymond James Stadium was fine enough to putt on before the game, and tough enough to take brutal hits from 300-pound linemen and slashing tailbacks.

The GN-1 hybrid Bermudagrass turf was imported to the field from Greg Norman's turf farm in central Florida's Avon Park. In total, 65,000 square feet of turf were transported to the field on Jan. 11, where frigid

night temperatures and even some ice gave cause for concern. "We had a few delays in putting it down because of frost," said George Toma, the NFL's long-time turf consultant. "But this turf is tough. It's more aggressive than other Bermudas."

Toma said that the field was cut to 5/8th of an inch, the lowest ever for a Super Bowl, and that iron and plenty

of water were added to "green it up" before the game. "It made it through with flying colors," he said of the GN-1 turf that has made its second Super Bowl appearance in the past three seasons.

### GOING ON GOLF COURSES

In Corona, Calif., plans are also under way for the installation of GN-1 sod



Greg Norman on GN-1 Bermuda at his turf farm

at the new Trilogy at Glen Ivy Golf Course. Dave Mastroleo, superintendent at the course and at the Tierra Rejada Golf Course in Moorpark, said he chose GN-1

for Trilogy based on its performance at the Tierra Rejada course that opened in December of 1999. "The turf is a deeper green than other Bermudagrass varieties," said Mastroleo.

"It holds its color longer into fall and winter, it has a tremendous recovery rate, and is easier to seed into because it's less tight than other turfs," he said.

## Canada geese

Continued from page 9

Croson, a USDA technician.

The test was a first in an outdoor experiment. Caged herons at the USDA's National Wildlife Research Center in Sandusky, Ohio reacted in a similar fashion when the red dot of the laser struck them.

### READY, AIM, SPRAY

Manufactured by Bird-X, GooseChase is listed as an environmentally and ecologically safe product designed to render the birds' food unpalatable. "The geese came in flocks ranging from 20 to 50 birds," said Jay Smith, assistant superintendent at the Yankee Hill Country Club in Lincoln, Neb. "We tried blasting a shotgun over their heads, but it didn't deter them.

"With insufficient snow cover, we have problems with the geese during winter and early spring," he said. "They come in, peck at our short grass, and make ruts and holes in our greens."

GooseChase is a concentrate made from extracts of grapes, the same active ingredient that gives Concord grapes their characteristic flavor. "It worked quickly, and there was a very distinct line of effectiveness between where we sprayed and where we didn't," said Smith.

### A 'BIOLOGICAL FENCE'

FlightControl uses the same active ingredient as GooseChase, but with a different formulation and concentration rate. The strength of the formulation determines the length of time the substance remains effective on the grass.

The repellent is described as a "biological fence" to herd geese away from areas where they interfere with human activity. "It works, no doubt about it, but it's just another tool as far as I'm concerned," said Bob Ribbans, superintendent at the Forsgate Country Club in Jamesburg, N.J. "We also use noise makers. It's just like with people - if you annoy them long enough, they'll leave. But if you have water, you'll have geese."

FlightControl has an additional feature: a visual deterrent. Once applied to the turf, the solution absorbs ultraviolet light to make it appear spotted or unsightly, at least to a goose. The chemical apparently alters the visual attractiveness of the turf to discourage geese from stopping by for a snack or perhaps a long stay. If the treated site is not enough to dissuade the geese, the "harmless intestinal reaction" from feeding should dishearten them.

Some superintendents, however, are hesitant to recommend the products. "I don't know about

the practicality of it," said Brad Helms, superintendent at the Palatine Hills Golf Club in Palatine, Ill. "Come spring and fall you can't mow for two weeks, and that would be difficult.

"We gave it a try," he said, "and the geese would eat right up to the sprayed area, walk across the treated grass, and go in to the lake. The only cure would be to spray the entire area and that would be cost prohibitive." ■

## Sam Hocutt

Continued from page 10

tor of fertilizers and chemicals.

Hocutt, a certified golf course superintendent, knows the difficulties of shuffling jobs. Before he situated himself at the Pawleys Plantation course, where he's been for eight years, he worked at numerous courses in the Carolinas, including Roanoke Country Club, Marsh

Harbour, Oyster Bay, Heritage Club, Carolina Pines and the Heritage Club.

### COMPUTER BUFF

Hocutt used an Apple computer in the early 1980s to track the inventory at a golf maintenance shop. "I moved up to the windows 3.1 as soon as it hit the market," he said. "My fascination led me to take the computer apart just to put it back together again. I crashed my

first IBM about a 100 times just to see if I could fix it. Fixing computers for my friends led me to getting a business license in 1998."

That same year, with a programmer's assistance, Hocutt created a program, Aquatrack, to complement the Sitepro Osmac irrigation program by Toro. It will log all the commands used by radio to let a superintendent view them on the computer. ■

# Now we pack a vac!



Smithco Big Vac



Smithco Sweep Star V62

These new Smithco Sweepers also pack more power and features than the competition.