



## 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

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## 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

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## 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 linebackers.

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



Greg Norman on GN-1 Bermuda at his turf farm

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 underway for the installation of GN-1 sod

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.



## Houston water

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courses to have an alternative source, other than ground water, in the next seven to 10 years," said Kane. "Increasing water pumping fees is a means to reach that goal.

"We're hoping to get an effluent water source from a development that's on the southside of us," Kane added. "There's a treat-

ment plant already in place, and we'd like to get its effluent. But there's a lot of red tape, with county agencies and such."

Another problem, he points out, is transporting the water. "Who pays the cost there?" Kane says. "It will probably be us. We have plenty of water now, but come next July and August we could be hurting."

### CATALYST FOR CHANGE

One course that has already

lined up an effluent supply is the privately owned Raveneaux Country Club, a 36-hole facility also here in Spring. Management has negotiated a seven-year agreement with a local treatment plant that produces some 3 million gallons per day.

"Raveneaux has contracted for up to half that amount," said Randy George, the recently departed Raveneaux superintendent who is now at Pine Forest

NORTH HOUSTON WATER COST PROJECTIONS					
MILLIONS OF GALLONS PER YEAR	50	\$60,000	\$125,000	\$250,000	\$1,000,000
	150	\$180,000	\$375,000	\$750,000	\$3,000,000
	200	\$240,000	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$4,000,000
	@	\$ .12	\$ .25	\$ .50	\$2.00
WATER PUMPAGE FEES (PER 1,000 GALLONS)					

Country Club. "Currently, the water will be available at no charge. But the associated cost of infrastructure will be absorbed

by the course.

"Before I left, the pipeline from the facility to the course was estimated to cost about \$300,000," he noted. "The water authority has also discussed the possibility of taxing the use of effluent water, as well. The tax would be a source of income to fund the authority's main objective of securing long-term surface water.

"The water use fee, from my point of view, will turn out to be a positive catalyst for change," he added. "These fees and the increases will motivate each and every course to better manage this limited resource or find an alternative answer."

As water rates keep rising, however, the hard financial reality will be reflected on the bottom lines of golf course balance sheets. ■

## Smithco Big Vac

This big tractor-drawn sweeper-vacuum holds over 7-cubic yards of compacted debris. But the first thing you'll notice is how quiet it runs thanks to a polycarbonate liner inside the fan housing. The Big Vac works in combination with an optional Verticut-sweeper head for removing thatch and debris. It's built rugged with strong rectangular tube framing and plastic hopper side-panels to eliminate rusting. It's lower for better clearance and stability.

	SMITHCO BIG VAC	VS	COMPETITION
Fan Housing	Lined for longer life, quieter operation		No liner
Construction	Rectangular tube frame for added strength		Channel steel frame
Hopper	ABS plastic, smooth inner surface, no rust		Light-gauge tin
Tires	Fairway type tires - better flotation / easier on turf		Smaller tires - heavier on turf
Clean Up	Port on side of fan housing for complete cleanout		No easy access to fan housing

## Smithco Sweep Star V62

Our compact, self-contained sweeper-vacuum system is designed for debris removal from both turf and hard surfaces. The sweeper head loosens debris while the vacuum breaks down the materials and loads the debris hopper. Debris is compacted at the rate of 10 to 1. Sweep Star offers you one-pass debris removal, aeration cores, grass clippings and bird dropping removal plus the EXCLUSIVE ability to remove fine debris from hard surfaces.

	SMITHCO SWEEP STAR V62	VS	COMPETITION
Engine	Liquid cooled - smoother, quieter, longer engine life, easier to service		Air cooled, noisier, shorter life
Hopper	4 plus cubic yards		3 plus cubic yards
Clutch	Electric - quiet operation when vacuum is disengaged - easy cold starting		No vacuum disengagement
Tires	13" wide fairway type tires, softer footprint		10" wide turf tires
Controls	User-friendly controls within driver's reach		Driver must dismount to start/set speed
Hitch	5th wheel or standard tractor hitch		Tractor hitch only

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## Florida drought worsens

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and Saturday nights only, and the odd ones Thursday and Sunday nights only. If things don't improve by spring, we'll be in serious trouble."

### LOW LAKE LEVELS

Cool winter temperatures may ease some of the water woes, but turf management adjustments can only be stretched so far. "We certainly do more handwatering," said Plummer. "We have portable sprinklers for mounds and excessively dry areas, granular wetting agents for our mounds, and there's been a reduction in our mowing schedule. The cooler weather enables us to get away with longer periods between mowings on our non-overseeded areas.

"Very low lake levels at this point worry me the most," he said. "Our course is approximately a foot below normal levels. This doesn't sound like much, but we have shallow lakes and only two recharge wells, which are controlled by the county."

This hard drought, which first hit the state in April 1998, is considered the worst since the 1930s, according to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), with 2000 as the driest year on record. "We finished low last year," said Tony Steppich, superintendent at the Golf Club of Jacksonville, "and we're not starting off so well this year, either. ■