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Brief bits of news from in and around the golf business... 

There was an identification error in the August issue. In the article, "New Concepts for Landscaping Tees," Forsgate CC was identified as Faragote. It also creeped in on page 32 of Part II in the September issue. We apologize and congratulate the Forsgate CC for such fine landscaping.

Stanley Zontek, Director of the Northeastern Region of the USGA Green Section, noted in the June, 1980 issue of The Greenmaster that a narrow collar around the green might speed up play. In his example, he states that a ball "will tend to roll a greater distance from the putting green surface" on a wide collar, facing a golfer with a longer chip shot. On a narrow collar, the ball would stop closer to the pin, with a better opportunity for a long chip shot. On a narrow collar, a golfer might have to take.

Florida Golfweek has reported that twenty members of the Florida Golf Management Association reported an average revenue per golf car, of $1,850.60. The reported high was $2800 per car. The high figure was from a course which charged $3 in summer and $5 in season. The course charges a $350 trail fee for private carts, does not make carts mandatory, and expects a battery life of two years. It is an 18-hole semi-private club.

The Irrigation Association has published a booklet entitled "Guidelines for Involvement", which is subtitled "How Can We Make Our Voice and Opinions Heard and Recognized?". If you are interested in influencing the plight of your profession, the booklet spells out how to do it. Copies are available for $5.00 from The Irrigation Association, 13975 Connecticut Avenue, Silver Spring, MD 20906.

E-Z-Go Textron and Golf Car Systems, Inc. in Clearwater, Florida have announced a national joint marketing and service agreement. Golf Car Systems will market the E-Z-Go cars under their GCS full maintenance program. The program will be offered by both E-Z-Go and GCS throughout all the golf car manufacturer's U.S. factory branch territories. The purchase agreement means that GCS will lease the gas and electric 3- and 4-wheel cars to private clubs and resorts.

Merit Kentucky bluegrass has been released to International Seeds in Halsey, Oregon, for production and marketing on a world-wide basis. Merit is licensed for sale in Canada as Regent Kentucky bluegrass and has been tested at a variety of Canadian locations since 1972. Merit was recently approved for inclusion on the OECD approved cultivar list.

Lofts has a new grass seed mixture called "Summer Stress". Formulated for tolerance to summer heat and drought, Summer Stress includes 90 percent Rebel turf-type tall fescue and 10 percent Baron Kentucky bluegrass.

Lofts Pedigreed Seed held its fourth annual Field Day recently at its Martinsville, N.J. Research Farm. Some 400 attendees viewed over 3,000 plots that Lofts maintains for research. The afternoon session began with a discussion on Fusarium roseum with Robert O'Knefski, Cooperative Extension Agricultural Agent of Nassau County, Dr. Reed Funk of Rutgers University, and Dr. Noel Jackson of the University of Rhode Island. Dr. Henry Indyk of Rutgers led a discussion on Fall fertilization.

Paul Voykin, at Briarwood CC has installed the first 2-row Rainbird system in the Chicago area. Halloran and Youch of Glenview, Illinois did the installation, the new pumphouse, and the lake fill line. The superb Briarwood installation, is in Paul's opinion, one of the best in the country and has performed well beyond his expectations during the summer with its record hot temperatures, humidity and wilt.

Dr. William Meyer of Turf Seed in Hubbard, Oregon, has developed a new variety of chewings-type fine fescue called "Shadow". The variety was screened for powdery mildew resistance and has shown improved resistance to leaf spot. It is described as having a medium dark green color with leaf width similar to Banner or Jamestown.
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Watkins, ir. author to retire this year

James A. Watkins, author of the Turf Irrigation Manual, and director of training for Weather-matic's College of Irrigation Knowledge® will retire at the end of this year. He has been a part of the turf irrigation industry for more than 45 years and served as director of training for Weather-matic since the college was opened in 1967. He has conducted 120 classes during that time. The current version of his book is now in its second printing and is used by colleges, universities and irrigation designers worldwide.

Watkins has served on the Telco Industries Board of Directors since 1951. He has traveled world-wide as irrigation lecturer and consultant, and has assisted the American Society of Plumbing Engineers, the Texas Turf Irrigation Association and the Better Business Bureau in the development of industry standards, testing and consumer protection guidelines.

Richard B. Choate has assumed the post as director of training, while Watkins will continue as consultant for Weather-matic on special projects such as future revisions of the Turf Irrigation Manual. Choate has 21 years of experience as an irrigation designer, including 13 years as training instructor and chief systems design consultant for Weather-matic.

More people golfing despite inflation

Overall golf participation increased by 7.1 percent during the second quarter of 1980 despite inflation and recession, according to the latest figures released by the National Golf Foundation. Coupled with a 9.6 percent gain in the first quarter, the growth rate is running at 7.1 percent, compared with 4.4 percent at this point last year.

Some reasons for the increase include the fact that people are staying closer to home because of the high fuel costs. Forced labor layoffs are creating more leisure time with unemployment pay. Some regions, however, did report decreased play. The Mountain region, which includes Washington and Mt. St. Helens, reported a 41 percent decrease. The Mountain region reports a 41 percent decrease and the South Atlantic reported a 28 percent decrease. The biggest gains came in the West North Central region with 18.8 percent increase, and the South Central with 8.8 percent increase.

Trade Comm. revokes golf car dumping

The U.S. International Trade Commission published in the June 11, 1980 Federal Register, their determination that, due to changed circumstances, an industry in the United States would not be threatened with material injury if the dumping finding concerning electric golf cars from Poland were revoked. As a result, the Department of Commerce is revoking the finding of dumping applicable to electric golf cars from Poland being imported by Melex USA.

The Poles began to import Melex cars in 1971 and 959 cars entered the market that year. Imports increased rapidly up to 1975 with a total of 10,000 cars being imported. In 1975, a finding of dumping was brought forth and numbers dropped to 6000 units in 1976. The anti-dumping laws say that a foreign producer sells at less than fair value when it markets goods in the U.S. at prices lower than in its home market. This was difficult, in the case of Polish cars. There aren't any golf courses in Poland, thus no cars are sold there. Therefore the price was arbitrarily determined, using Canadian prices.

The USITC's public report, "Electric Golf Cars From Poland", contains the views of the Commissioners and information developed during the investigation. Copies are available by calling 202/523-5178, 212/466-5599, the Office of the Secretary, 701 E. Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20436.

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Landscaping the green: Part I

By J.A. French and R.P. Korbobo

A golf green, no matter how superior the quality of the turf, without a suitable landscape to "finish" it, is much like a diamond in the rough without a proper setting. The diamond may be of the finest cut and extremely expensive, but place it in the palm of your hand and it can actually look rather commonplace. Put the same diamond in a high quality "setting" of a ring, necklace, or stick pin, and like magic it takes on the aura of beauty.

It is the same thing with a fine golf green. It can have the greatest turf possible, it can be contoured with professional subtlety, it can be located on the most prestigious course in the land—but without a proper landscape setting, i.e. a green background and framing, it is "just another green".

This happens all too often, even on courses that comprise "the tour". We believe that a golf course can and should be much more than just a place to hit a ball around until you get it into the hole.

Great golf holes should also be beautiful

Think back—or start looking from this day on—to all the courses you have seen or played, and recall how few holes really caught your attention for their sheer beauty. Not many! A few great courses may have half of the greens with spectacular backgrounds, but most courses are fortunate to have four or five such holes with only adequate landscaping associated with its greens.

Our guess as to why there are so few truly beautiful golf holes is not for reasons of expense only, but also one of putting off to the future what should be done this year. Golfers can be so intent on their game that they do not take the time to actively appreciate where they are during their round of golf. (Professionals are the most extreme in this—they must concentrate on their game or they will be out of work!) The golfer, along with the fisherman and hunter, are the lucky people for they have chosen these activities for their off hours enjoyment. The angler or huntsman must take the landscape as he finds it.

The golfer is set aside from the other two in that he is surrounded by mostly a man-made scene, and has the opportunity to create the living beauty that is the golf course. Even though concentration on the game is essential, an awareness of the beauty of the course is another reward of playing the game of golf. It is obvious, therefore, that any drab, uninteresting green should be given a planned background planting. We refer to groupings of plants varying in size, shape and texture, against which the green is looked at and played up on.

Isolate the green

The first goal of such a landscape setting is to more or less isolate the
area immediately around the green from the rest of the course. The player’s line of sight should not be able to reach beyond the green on to the next tee, green, or fairway. Ideally, the golfer should only be aware of the hole he is playing on and not have his concentration broken by activity on adjacent holes.

When the players arrive on the green itself, they should have the feeling of being in an area that is practically set aside for silence, stillness, and privacy. We do not mean for them to be walled in by deep, dense foliage. It should only suggest that these desirable conditions do exist.

Give the golfer a target

By placing a green planting in back of the green, the flag becomes easily visible as you look to the green while preparing your shot to the pin. It will be able to hold the golfer’s undivided attention. No one will have to ask where the flag is. In reality a proper background planting assists the golfer in judging the distance to the flagsticks. The green then becomes a very definable target. This especially so when it happens to be a blind green. With good tree selection and placement, and after the trees get some size to them, the golfer can use the tops of the trees as his aiming point. How much better for a member hosting a newcomer to the course to say “shoot for the tall trees” instead of “shoot for the smoke stack or that billboard.” (See Sketch #1 which shows through the green background to another hole and houses off the course.)

Framing

Framing the golfer’s view to the green as he moves up the fairway serves several purposes: Obviously, it adds to the beauty of the green, if the correct shape of tree, or trees, are used. Also, by adding a forward framing element in front of the green, the edge of the fairway can be brought into the green traps in a gentle curve, adding definition to the green and the approach to the green. Also the green approach can be somewhat “toughened up” by careful placing of these trees.

No place for engineering practice

A great deal of experience with, and knowledge of trees, plus the game of golf, becomes necessary at this point. Just to stick a pin in the center of the green and then take an instrument and swing an arc behind and to the sides of the green, so one can then plant a row of trees on this arc, is to invite the worst kind of golf course landscape design. This is where the art of creating a landscape composition must come into play, so that the end result will not look crowded and unnatural, but as if the landscape existed there always. (See Sketch #2 illustrating the mistake of an overly balanced planting.)

Know your plants

The landscape architect or designer uses plants much like the artist uses his paints. The chief difference is that the shapes on the canvas will remain the same, whereas plants in the ground will keep changing over a long period of time, as long as the trees are living. Time becomes a factor to be reckoned with in addition to color, form, texture, terrain, depth of field and even climate. The designer, by understanding all these variations, must be able to visualize the end product even before he puts his pencil to the drawing board.

Patience and imagination are essential

We simply cannot stop such growth processes at any given point. It is an ever changing entity even into old age. The same is true with any landscape planting. So we must know the steps through which these trees will progress. We can then know which species to select and precisely where to place them—even though to begin with they might be small. The initial effect—unless much money is available for large plants—is usually less than adequate. But even when small plants are used, an immediate effect is felt by the placement of the trees—and the promise of larger sizes to come and how it will appear.

Part II will continue in November.