

LANDSCAPING

Royal garden challenge met by Ohio landscaper

When Jordan's King Hussein comes to town, Cleveland hustles.

The Mideast ruler paid a visit in June to the reknowned Cleveland Clinic for his annual check-up.

Waiting for him at the clinic was a beautifully-landscaped garden featuring some 5,000 flowers, myriad ground cover, manicured Kentucky bluegrass, some 30 newly-planted trees, and yes, a flag of Jordan painted into a garden slope.

What the King didn't know was that two weeks prior to his visit, the area was nothing but a construction area parking lot (an addition was being built) with the usual features—heavy equipment, dirt, and more dirt.

That was before Cavotta Landscapers Inc. of Cleveland took over.

The way the schedule worked: the concrete contractor had two days to lay sidewalks and curbs; Cavotta had four days to spread the topsoil, install an irrigation system, and plant the flowers, groundcover, sod (1,200 yards), and trees.

"They gave us a blueprint," vice-president Phil Cavotta recalls, "but everyone purchases their materials in April and May so there was nothing available. We had to summer-dig material."

With Cavotta frantically "pulling strings" to secure materials, site supervisor Kathy Trhlin-Russ barking signals, and a crew of sometimes as many as 18 working nearly round-the-clock, the challenge was met even though everything that was planted had to be checked by ever-present Secret Service people.

By June 8, one day before the King's visit, the garden was complete. "The big thing was the coordination of everything. It took a big effort on the part of everyone who was involved," says Cavotta. "I even pulled my dad out of retirement for this job."

It wasn't a small job. The garden area measures some 6,000 sq. ft.



Part of the 6,000 sq. ft. garden prepared in four days by Cleveland's Cavotta Landscapers Inc. in preparation for a visit by King Hussein of Jordan. Upper left inset is Phil Cavotta.

When things "slow" down, Cavotta maintains the 80 acres of the Cleveland Clinic "campus," with as many as 18 workers on-site even in the winter months. "It's like an airport here. You can't shut it down," he says.

SEED

Pickseed introduces Bronco bluegrass

Bronco Kentucky bluegrass is making its debut this month as a turfgrass developed specifically as a mix component with turf-type tall fescues.

Dr. Jerry Pepin, director of research at Pickseed West Inc., developer of the grass, says Bronco has good overall turf quality, heat tolerance, and disease resistance.

Bronco features a leaf width of 3.2 mm, a vigorous rhizome system that facilitates active spreading, and a moderate tiller density to create less competition with tall fescues.

Pepin recommends a tall fescue/Kentucky bluegrass mixing in 95-5 to 90-10 mix ratios. The mix is recommended for both professional and home lawn use.



Baseball field clinic

Chief groundskeeper Roger Bossard explains maintenance of infield and skinned areas of Comiskey Park's baseball field during a clinic held July 23, 1986. The clinic was co-sponsored by the Chicago White Sox and the International Minerals and Chemicals Co. More than 100 Chicago-area athletic field managers from schools, colleges and parks attended the one-day seminar.

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SHORT CUTS

NO FUN AT ALL...A record-breaking drought along the eastern seaboard tried the patience of many turfgrass managers this year. Lawn care and landscape management companies, obviously, had plenty of troubles keeping clients happy. Golf course superintendents were busy keeping courses playable, despite heavy irrigation. By the middle of July, Baltimore was typical of drought-stricken locales. And in that area, any turf not irrigated was deep brown. "When you go dormant in late May, you don't know what to expect," lamented Howard Gaskill of the Baltimore County Department of Recreation & Parks. "I do know that I've greatly increased my seed order this year. This weather sure does take a lot of enjoyment out of being a golf course superintendent."

WELL-TRAVELED...Patrick O'Bryan of Chicago has seen golf courses in so many parts of the world, he could serve as special counsel to the GCSAA. O'Bryan, featured on the front page of the *Wall Street Journal* last May, has seen land mines in the rough in the Falkland Islands and Soviet gunfire across a fairway in Afghanistan. He has played India's Royal Calcutta course, Iceland's Golfklubbur Akureyrar, and Egypt's Oberoi Mena House, 150 yards from the Great Pyramids. "I've got a bit of nomad in me," O'Bryan aptly claims.

SONAR SYSTEM...In the height of the pesticide scare, the Water Conservation and Control Authority of Lake County, Fla. has developed a system to warn people when any of its 25 lakes will be treated with Elanco's Sonar or other aquatic weed controlling chemicals. Executive director Will Davis puts a notice in the local newspaper and posts florescent orange warning signs around the lake. If that isn't enough, his staff goes door to door to every house on the lake to personally explain the treatment. Still, one homeowner pumped treated water from a lake and killed his lawn. The Water Authority replaced the lawn, but has since implemented a policy to survey lake residences after a treatment and videotape anyone using the water.

FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS..."What You Should Know About Professional Lawn Care," a full-color booklet answering six important questions posed by homeowners, is available from the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. The booklet was a joint project of the PLCAA and the Union Carbide Specialty Products Division. It addresses such questions as the safety of lawn care chemicals and the precautions taken by LCOs. Booklets are 25 cents each. For copies, write the PLCAA at 1225 Johnson Ferry Rd., NE, Suite B-220, Marietta, GA, 30067.

CORRECTION...An incorrect application cost was quoted for Limit turf regulator in the June "Short Cuts" column. Monsanto has not yet established a treatment cost for its turf regulator for the residential market. The cost of a professional application of Limit is currently \$60 per acre.

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on the F930 and F935) and you can forget about ever having to trim. You can cut around any tree or shrub, and leave an uncut circle of grass only 14 inches in diameter. Or use the turning brakes and mow right around a fence or lamppost.

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While space here is limited, the list of terrific features on our front mowers isn't. To find out more, just write John Deere, Dept. 75, Moline, Illinois 61265. Or call 800-447-9126 toll free (800-322-6796 in Illinois) for the name of the dealer nearest you. If you're in the market for a front mower, we challenge you to check out the other guys, and then look at us. We'll only look that much better in comparison.



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THE KILLING FIELD

The Scott Halbrook story is a worst-case scenario. It should be required reading for all athletic turf managers. In this exclusive WEEDS TREES & TURF interview, Scott's dad and lawyer reveal the grim details of *death on a bad field*.

by Heide Aungst, associate editor



The shock of his only son's death left Alan Halbrook numb.

Scott Halbrook, a healthy, good-looking 19-year-old athlete, was too young to die. Because he was killed practicing the sport he loved—baseball—Scott's family cannot forget the accident.

At Marist High School in Eugene, Oregon, Scott lettered in football, basketball, and baseball. When offered a baseball scholarship at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Scott took the first step toward realizing a longtime goal — playing professional baseball.

But the dream ended tragically before Scott even had a chance to play a game for the Beavers.

On March 2, 1982, Oregon's soggy spring weather forced coach Jack Riley to hold baseball practice on the AstroTurf of Oregon State's Parker Stadium. (AstroTurf is a synthetic turf manufactured by the Monsanto Co. The team regularly played on natural turf.)

Local newspaper reports said Scott, playing left field, was injured in a collision with the shortstop while both were running for a short pop fly to the outfield. Scott died of head injuries three days later.

Scott's family—parents Alan and Betty, sisters Alana, Vinci, Janice, and Vicki—had no reason to doubt the story he heard of Scott's death...until the anonymous phone calls started.

The caller, according to Halbrook, said the artificial turf in Parker Stadium needed to be replaced. It wasn't the actual collision that killed Scott—it was the impact of Scott's head

on the worn-out AstroTurf.

The original AstroTurf field was installed in 1969, replaced in 1974, but problems were detected, and it was replaced again in 1976. During that replacement, however, the old pad was left down.

When the Halbrooks searched for answers, Oregon State quickly cut off all communication. Halbrook obtained a test which had been conducted shortly after Scott's death. The test, done by a Monsanto competitor, showed the field to be intolerant to a human body falling on it.

Oregon's state adjuster offered a \$5,000 payoff — "in good faith" — to Halbrook's family.

Halbrook filed suit against Oregon State, Monsanto, and Sports Install Inc., a subsidiary of Monsanto.

Attorney Dan Holland of Eugene uncovered internal Monsanto documents concerning the condition of Parker Stadium. One, dated November, 1981 (four months before Scott's death), rated the field in serious need of repair, judging by Monsanto's own grading system. Holland says the Monsanto inspector later claimed that the drop-test machine, a device used to measure field hardness, was broken that day, so he rated the field by walking on it.

Another document said the field was as hard as frozen sod or hard-packed clay.

Still another document, dated January, 1982 (two months before the accident), blatantly stated, "This field needs to be replaced!" Later, there was a question as to whether that document should have been dated January, 1983.

Monsanto's defense in the case has been that Scott's head injury was caused by the collision, not when his head hit the AstroTurf. "There's a real debate over whether the death