



Another wildlife success story in Collier County is the fox squirrel. A study done by the University of Florida credits golf course habitats for preventing the loss of fox squirrels in the area. I saw at least a half dozen of them on while riding the course. Photo by Joel Jackson.

men in the past six years. John Teller was the green chairman who hired me in 2000. We worked together for five years. John Campbell was on the selection committee and has also been on the green committee since 2000. This has made for excellent consistency in planning of projects and accomplishing the overall goals of the club.”

Taylor also feels that any successful superintendent should be available for member interactions and be seen on the job. Taylor dedicates time Saturday mornings to be in the pro shop, the putting green and range tee area. He said this is prime time to engage avid golfers and board members and answer any questions they might have. From October to May Taylor writes a monthly article for the club newsletter to reach out to all members.

During the week Taylor walks and/or rides the entire course daily,

logging six miles. It might be walking 18 and riding 18 or walking 9 holes on each course and riding the other nines. Taylor keeps two pairs of shoes and socks for just such course inspection, a tip he picked up from Joe Boe in a *Florida Green* article many years ago. Taylor says, “You see so much more at 2-3 miles per hour. Plus the exercise is good for my health and reducing stress. Most any course can look good at 15-20 mph from a golf cart.”

Since every course has site-specific needs, there are no magic-bullet solutions that you can copy from one course’s recipe for healthy turf, but there are things that might help similar situations. Royal Poinciana — like many Collier County courses — sits on a shallow soil profile with lots of limestone just below the surface. Finding good usable soil can be a challenge and Taylor says that with the recent

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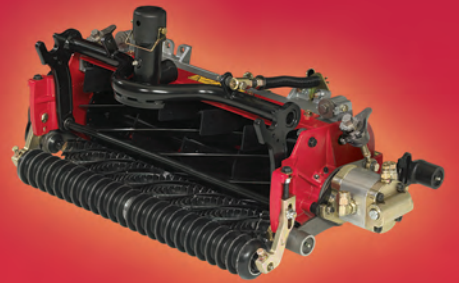
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renovation projects just about all the good soil has been excavated.

With rock so near the surface, irrigation management is critical and Taylor and his staff have been trying to find that perfect balance between too much and too little water to apply to keep playing conditions top notch. The effluent is high in sodium and bicarbonates so they manage pH with pHairway acid-injection pumps into the irrigation lines, and more than half the fertilizer applications are liquid spray rather than dry granular. When granulars are used, they are complete blends with slow-release nitrogen sources. They have been using progressively less nitrogen over the years, looking for a happy medium and boosting potassium and micro-nutrient rates to keep the turf healthy and hardy.

Taylor said, "Pest control and IPM programs are mostly curative with only a couple of exceptions; one being nematode and mole cricket control on the Pines course with Ormond bermuda. The nematodes and mole crickets have a field day on that older turf and so Curfew applications have been made to control those populations. We skipped Curfew this year and used Chipco Choice for cricket control with good results. In the past we would clean up recurring hot spots with Nema-cur. Of course that product will not be available after next year.

"The Pines Course is scheduled for renovation soon and the upgrade in turf will help reduce chemical applications. Weeds like tropical signalgrass are tough. They are hard to pull manually

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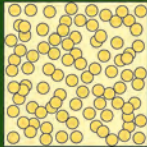
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*(Text continues on Page 38)*



**Colorful Tee Markers**

*During the golf season, colorful pots of flowers served as tee markers on Tuesdays and Wednesdays for the Ladies' 18 and 9 hole events. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

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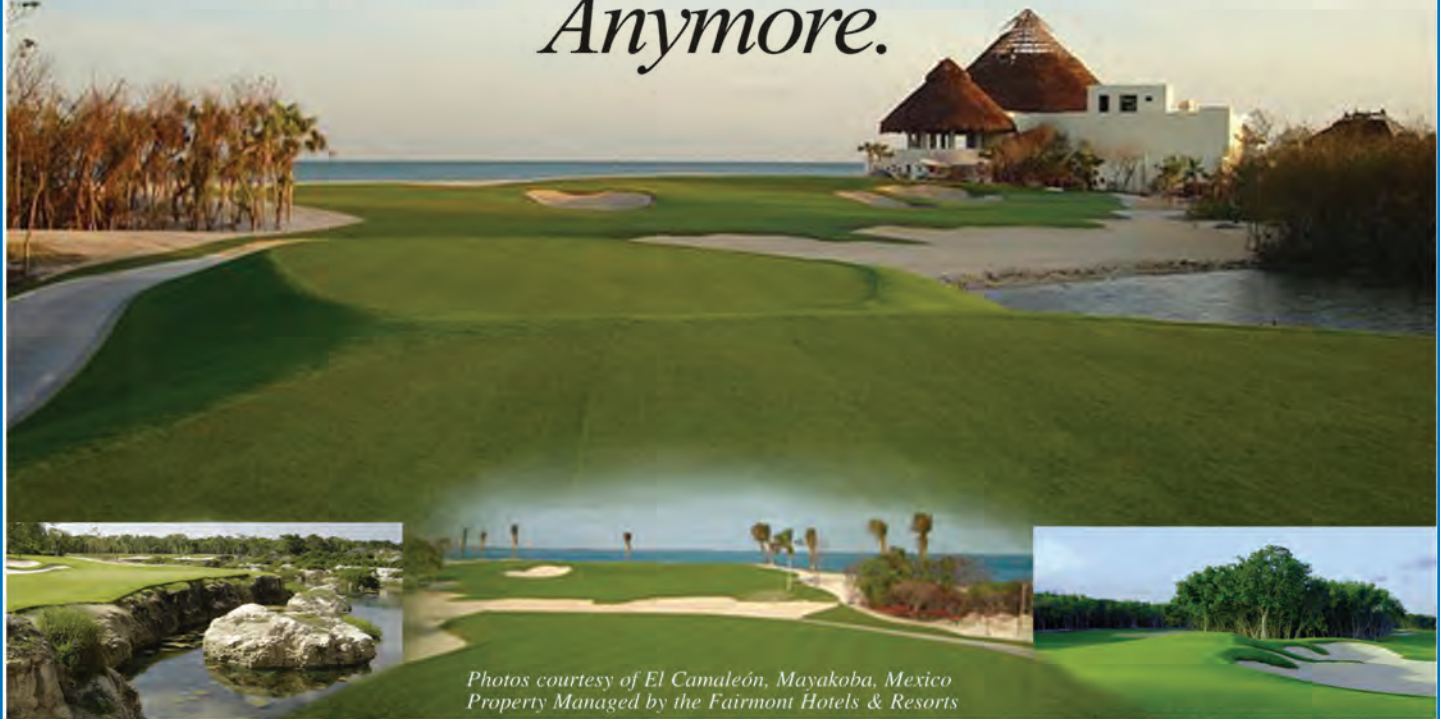
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*El Camaleón Golf Course at the Mayakoba resort on the Riviera Maya just south of Cancun, Mexico is Greg Norman's latest masterpiece. The 7,000-yard layout is unique, not just to Mexico but to the entire world of golf. The course bends through three distinct landscapes - mangrove jungles, limestone canals and stunning oceanfront stretches of sandy beaches. El Camaleón is also a world-class showcase for SeaIsle1 Seashore Paspalum. The tees, greens, fairways and roughs are all getting rave reviews. No wonder the PGA chose El Camaleón for its first-ever tour event in Mexico. If you've got water quality problems or poor soils, you should consider SeaIsle1 even if you've got an inland location. SeaIsle1 can tolerate most types of alternate water sources, including effluent, wastewater, gray water, brackish water and even ocean water for*



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**Dazzling Color**

*While native plants dominate both course landscapes, dazzling color highlights can also be found in formal beds and wildflower fields. Pines Hole #9, 490 yard, par 5. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*



*Eastern Bluebirds have become so prolific on Naples area golf courses that biologists are transplanting some of the birds to help bolster the Everglades bluebird population. Photo by Joel Jackson.*

and now it looks like we are losing MSMA. Again the weed problems are more evident in the older turf grasses. The new course is much less of a problem and we are on a strict program of having each employee pull 50 weeds a day. It is hard to accomplish sometimes, but it works.”

Taylor’s cultural practices to keep the greens in top shape are typical of most other premier courses in the area. Frequent light verticutting and topdressing to control thatch/biomass build-up, and three aerifications in summer with 5/8-inch tines when play is slow and he can rotate closing the courses.

Every three or four weeks during the winter he closes one course on Mondays after 1p.m. to hydroject the greens. Judicious use of Primo year around has turned out to be a blessing as heights of cut have been raised to help the plant but still maintain great greens.

Royal Poinciana has been a fully certified member of the Audubon Coop-





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## Wetlands Projects

*Several wetlands restoration projects were part of the complete Cypress Course renovations in 2004 and 2005. Hole No. 14, 176 yard, Par 3. Photo by Daniel Zelazek.*

erative Sanctuary program since 1996. In fact at last count 70 percent of the courses in the Everglades GCSA were members of the Audubon International program.

That is a great statistic in the face of continuing mounting pressures from activists for the ban of fertilizers and chemicals. The Everglades Chapter can speak with credibility when it comes to the table to debate the issues.

Meanwhile Royal Poinciana walks the environmental talk by hosting annual bird and wildlife tours led by local ornithologist George McBath during the winter. The club also hosts wildlife tours for members; grandchildren at Christmas and Easter. Jean Mears organizes these tours, putting together goody bags for the kids with wildflower seeds, recycled pencils and erasers. The

kids also receive a brochure on birds and mammals of southwest Florida.

As Taylor says, “Give any kid a disposable camera, ride them around the golf course and it is an hour of fun, education and entertainment. McBath makes the tours interactive by opening bird boxes to show nests and how to build habitat for animals with simple brush piles in out-of-play areas. It’s important to educate future generations about the positive impacts golf courses can have.”

I started this article wondering how Taylor managed to take on so much responsibility at the same time. There is no easy answer. It takes hard work to be successful and try to lead a balanced life. Taylor comes in early and works late. He gets his work responsibilities done so he can be a coach for his kids

and a volunteer for his associations. And of course he has worked hard to provide a positive work environment for his employees. He believes in being firm and fair, but the bottom line is the work has to be done right with no excuses.

It is often said growing grass is only 10 percent of the job, so we have been looking at the other 90 percent for a change. We’ve spent a lot of time talking about finding the right people, fostering good working relationships up and down the chain of command and getting the job done responsibly.

Taylor said it best, “There are people who make things happen. People who watch things happen. And people who wonder what just happened.”

Are you *interested* in your profession or are you *committed* to it? ■