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WESCO TURF HISTORY

By Billy Gamble

(Editor's note: As we continue to celebrate the 40th anniversary year of the *Florida Green* magazine, we salute the Toro Company, the longest continuous supporter of the magazine, with this history of Wesco Turf. Thanks to Billy Gamble for sharing the information and photos for this article. In coming issues we will continue to profile the companies who support the *Florida Green*.)

Wesco Turf, Inc. was created in 1987 when William (Bill) Gamble III purchased Wesco Zaun from the Toro Company. Bill joined Wesco with a background in the hardware business, most recently as vice president of sales and marketing, and part of the leveraged buyout group that bought McCulloch Chain Saw from Black

and Decker. Prior to that, Bill had a long career with Rockwell and Porter-Cable power tools.

Bill came to Wesco with a simple philosophy. If you take care of your customers and associates, the business will take care of itself. Superior parts and customer service has been the hallmark of our company. We hire great people and put them in the right job. We manage to have some fun as well.

'Pride in excellence' summarizes our company culture. It sounds cliché until you learn that Wesco has won more than 100 awards from our vendors, including 'distributor of excellence' from Toro four times. Our people want and expect to win. Wesco's business has evolved from a consumer-product-based business reliant on the power-equipment dealer channel

to one that is largely golf- and grounds-driven.

The explosive home development growth in Southwest Florida over the past 20 years fueled an unprecedented number of golf courses being built. Wesco was in the right place at the right time... offering the right products and services.

In 1998, Bill and his brother John, bought an adjacent Toro distributorship, Zaun Equipment, renaming the company, Wesco Turf Supply, Inc., with locations in Lake Mary and Jacksonville. John had his own storied career at Ingersoll-Rand as Group Vice President of the Hardware & Security Products business. Wesco Turf Supply benefited through John's leadership and the processes and culture learned at Wesco Turf, Inc. Together, the businesses grew consistently for the next 10 years.

THE WESCO TURF TIME LINE

1932 Charles "Charlie" Zaun founds Zaun Equipment in Jacksonville, Florida.

1981 East and West Florida territories split. Zaun Equipment retains the East portion of the territory. The West portion of the territory becomes Wesco-Zaun, under the ownership of John "Jack" Cantu, former president of The Toro Company.



1954 Ben Reemelin purchases Zaun Equipment and takes on the Toro line. As Florida's development brings burgeoning markets. West Coast branches are later established by Duke Newton in St. Petersburg and in Fort Myers by Jimmy Reemelin.



The Wesco Turf, Inc. regional headquarters: The picture on the left is the Sarasota office; the one above is the Lake Mary office. Submitted by Billy Gamble

In 2008, Bill and John consolidated the two companies to optimize the assets and create greater synergies among the selling divisions, operations, service, etc. Today, Wesco Turf, Inc. proudly represents Toro, Club Car utility vehicles, Bernhard reel and bedknife grinders, Lastec mowers, Salsco turf rollers, Rahn turf groomers, Golf Lift, Flowtronex pump stations, ProGro waste water treatment systems, Paige irrigation, American Flow Control, Clow gate valves, Harco ductile iron and PVC fittings, Lasco swing joints and slip fittings, Nibco valves, Ametek and Carson valve boxes, Baldwin filters, and a few other commercial product lines.

The business philosophy and customer-driven culture remains unchanged from the seeds that Bill Gamble planted back in 1987. Gamble said, "We take care of our customers and associates, and the business continues to grow."



Leaders of the Wesco Turf family, Bill and Billy Gamble. Submitted by Billy Gamble



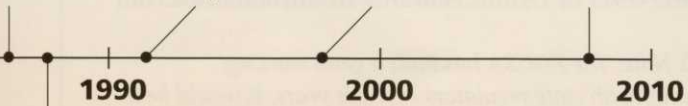
The Wesco Turf service shop in Sarasota. They take care of new set ups, repairs, warranty work, loaner and rental equipment maintenance and pre-owned equipment reconditioning. Photo submitted by Billy Gamble

1986 Ben Reemelin sells Zaun Equipment to Tom Bruns. In August, Wesco-Zaun moves its headquarters to Sarasota.

1991 Zaun Equipment moves its corporate offices to Lake Mary, leaving a branch location in Jacksonville.

1998 The East territory of Zaun Equipment is sold to Bill Gamble and the name is changed to Wesco Turf Supply, Inc., headquartered in Lake Mary, Florida, with John Gamble as President.

2008 Wesco Turf, Inc. and Wesco Turf Supply, Inc. are merged into one corporation. Thus, the two distribution houses have come full circle and are reunited.



1987 Following the death of Jack Cantu, The Toro Company purchases Wesco-Zaun and changes the name to New Wesco. Five months later, Bill Gamble purchases New Wesco, changes the name to Wesco Turf, Inc., and sets the company on course to become Toro's premier distributorship.



URGENT! MSMA INFORMATION ALERT TO GOLF COURSES

On August 6, 2013, the following Florida Golf Courses MSMA Information Alert was issued to remind everyone about the current MSMA usage requirements.

“Recent inspections by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services indicate that some golf courses may be in violation of current requirements regarding usage of MSMA.

To assure compliance, remember:

- “The label is the law.” Using a pesticide in a manner that is inconsistent with the use directions on the label is a violation of the Florida Pesticide Law and the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and can result in enforcement action
- Currently marketed MSMA products bear labels that prohibit use in Florida golf courses and turf. These labels limit the use of MSMA in Florida to cotton in specified counties. Application of such products on golf courses constitutes a misuse or misapplication, which can result in citations for non-compliance. Misuse or misapplication leading to contamination of soil or ground water may also be deemed by environmental authorities to be a pollutant “discharge” pursuant to 376.305(13), F.S., and create liability

for environmental clean ups.

- Some golf courses may be in possession of existing stocks of earlier MSMA products that are labeled for use on Florida golf courses. These products may be used in accordance with the label until stocks are exhausted.

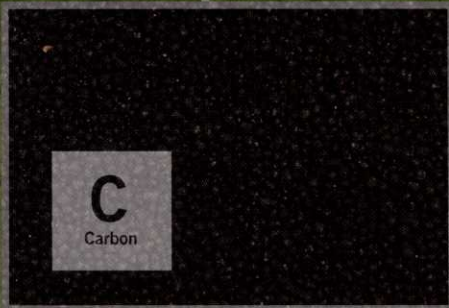
It is critical that golf course superintendents across the state comply with all MSMA label restrictions. Continuing violations may lead to rulemaking to eliminate all MSMA usage for golf courses in Florida. For additional information or questions please contact:

Dennis F. Howard, Ph.D.
 Chief, Bureau of Pesticides
 Division of Agricultural Environmental Services
 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
 (850) 617-7917 or Dennis.Howard@freshfromflorida.com

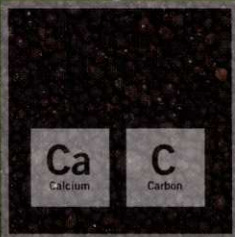
(Editor’s Note: The FGCSA has built a good working relationship with state regulators over the years. It would be a shame to let a few people to destroy that trust and goodwill we have developed. We call on all superintendents and vendors to make sure they follow the law in all that they do.)



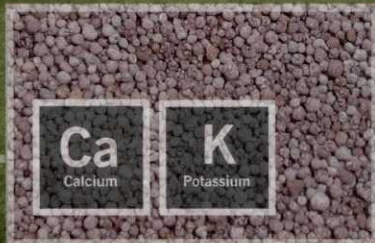
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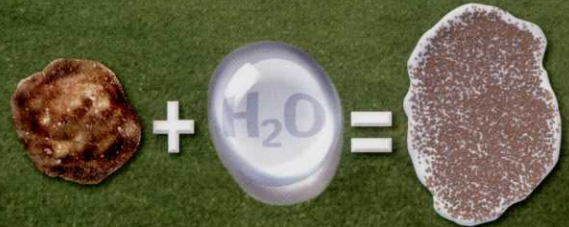
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BALL MARKS AND BIRDIES



**GREEN SIDE UP
By JOEL JACKSON**

Metaphorically speaking, I've made a couple of ball marks recently that I needed to repair before the Green Committee revoked my membership.

In the Spring *Florida Green* I incorrectly identified the name of the club of the GM member of the winning team at the Central Florida FTGA Research Tournament. I

printed a correction in the next issue to make amends. Dedicated writer/editors are pretty fussy about getting it right, not getting it first, which is not a big deal in a quarterly publication anyhow. Thankfully, we're not in a 24-hour news cycle.

In the last issue, in the 40th Anniversary article, I wrote that the *Florida Green* ran the two-page foldout cover format for 15 years from 1983 to 2008. A quick review on the calculator app on your smart phone and it is obvious that I must have had an inter-cranial malfunction, commonly called a brain cramp!

Meanwhile up in Connecticut, Daniel Zelazek, the photographer who shot those foldout covers was not having a brain cramp and his phone call, though mostly congratulatory on the anniversary issue, reminded me that it was 25 years that he took those iconic covers. Do the math!

Forget ball marks, in the Official News section in this issue, I was sad to read that some golf courses were taking divots in the pesticide regulations by using off-labeled MSMA for weed control.

If turf use in Florida is on the label (that would be old stock) you can use it. If folks are trying to skirt the law, FDACS will catch you when they make their visits. The fact that we have had some violators means they will likely focus on your MSMA application records and tour your pesticide storage room.

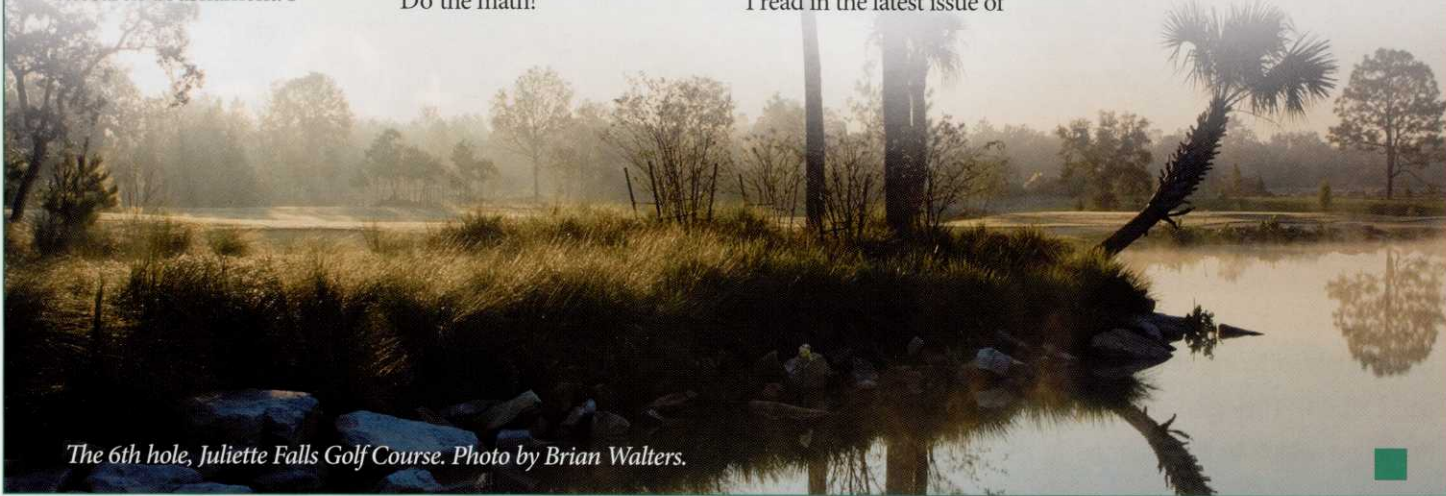
Another head-scratching divot was the low participation rate in the 2013 Rounds-4-Research program. Florida only had 37 courses out of roughly 1,200 total courses participate. We need to fix this divot ASAP, so we can fund turf research that helps the environment and the industry.

I did manage to find a couple of birdies to talk about when I read in the latest issue of

the *Golf Course Architecture* magazine, that several new courses were coming on line in Florida very soon. It doesn't mean that the trend of course closures is over, but every new one that opens is positive news.

Architect Erik Larsen is rebuilding the Selva Marina course in Jacksonville and the new Atlantic Beach course is due to open in 2014. Meanwhile down in Sarasota, architect Carl Wilczynski has 15 holes shaped at Esplanade and expects completion in the next few months.

Have a great golf season everyone and help your club management attract and help new golfers "Get Golf Ready!" Hope to see you at a chapter meeting when I make my rounds of events. And tournament chairmen, it's OK to have a "Tee It Forward" division so everyone can have fun playing golf!



The 6th hole, Juliette Falls Golf Course. Photo by Brian Walters.

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