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# GOLF COURSE NEWS

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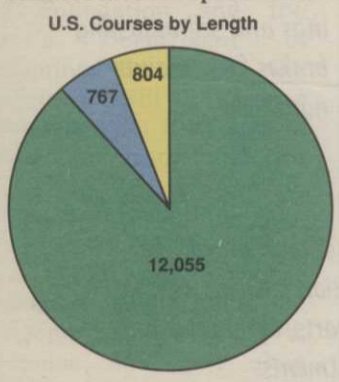
## Recovering from Hugo

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Hurricane struck Carolina courses in random fashion

BY TOMMY BRASWELL  
With Staff Reports  
Some greenskeeping and tree-company crews in the Carolinas continue to clean up golf courses that, in the wake of Hurricane Hugo's 135-mph winds, looked like a giant game of Pick Up Sticks.

Of the \$4 billion trail of destruction Hurricane Hugo left as it hammered the region from Charleston, S.C., to Charlotte, N.C., on Sept. 21, millions of dollars of damage were done to golf courses.

Courses from Charleston to the Grand Strand as well as some 200 miles inland were closed — for days, weeks, months, and some for as long as a year — because of the devastation  
*Continued on page 34*



Photo by Tommy Braswell  
A boat rests on the 12th green at Wild Dunes' Harbor Course on Isle of Palms, South Carolina.

## Europe opens arms to golf experts

BY JAN BELJAN  
Countries from Spain to The Netherlands and from Sweden to the United Kingdom are hoping to go "golf crazy," yet are engulfed in the same mass of red tape that faces golf course builders in the United States, according to experts speaking at

Golf Course Europe '89.  
The exhibition and conference in Wiesbaden, West Germany, in October drew some of the top names in the golf industry from around the globe, and in concert they agreed the opportunities in Europe are great.

"There is a pent-up demand for golf in Europe," said Michael Redd, president of Team Plan, Inc., in Florida. "The opportunities for American professionals are great, but along with them come some constraints — elaborate language, time, working conditions."  
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PGA World Golf Hall of Fame Shrine Gardens honor superintendents.

## Garden honors supers

Shrine Gardens, recognizing golf course superintendents' service and contributions to the game, have been dedicated on the grounds of the PGA World Golf Hall of Fame located in

Pinehurst, N.C.  
Developed by founding sponsor The Toro Co., the landscaped gardens are located at the entrance to the shrine  
*Continued on page 18*

## Supers' needs foster inventions

By PETER BLAIS  
A Florida company has developed a long-sought solution to the problem of fairway grass encroaching into greens and tees.  
Boca Raton-based DonuTTrimmer Inc. has installed the \$50,000 system on an experimental basis on four Southern courses.  
Despite the hefty price tag, company officials claim Greens Encroachment will pay for itself in labor savings within two years.

"It will really be a big thing for the golf course industry in the coming years. It's something we've needed very badly and should become very popular," said Wilmington (Del.) Country Club's Paul Latshaw, one of the country's best-known superintendents.

The Greens Encroachment product is the brainchild and the latest in a string of labor-saving turf  
*Continued on page 35*

# DonuTTrimmer

*Continued from page 1*  
management inventions by company founder Thomas Wait. With tongue firmly planted in cheek, Wait claims the concept for Greens Encroachment, like his other inventions, took root in his own laziness.

"Anything I can find to make my job and others' easier intrigues me," he said.

The need for a more efficient way to maintain some of the Sunshine State's median strips led to the company's flagship product — the DonuTTrimmer edging blade.

In talking to course superintendent and partner Joseph DeMino of Rochester, N.Y., Wait discovered the circular blades (which come in diameters of 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 inches) could also be used to edge around sprinkler and mist heads, bunkers, cart paths and sidewalks in a fraction of the time and cost. Wait and DeMino determined there was a need for the product after attending the 1988 GCSAA International Golf Show in Houston, Texas, and they patented the blades.

To gain exposure, they volunteered to detail the courses at several tournaments including the 1988 Honda Classic held at TPC at Eagle Trace in Coral Springs, Fla., and other 1988 and 1989 major tournaments.

Their efforts were well received by course superintendents attending those tournaments. The response was overwhelming in April 1988 when the first advertisements for the blades appeared.

"Our marketing company told us a new product did well if it got eight to 10 responses a month from a single ad," said Wait. "We were getting that many a day."

Meanwhile, the second product was invented by a local

superintendent and was developed and marketed by DonuTTrimmer.

The Aqua-Quick is a disc made of solid aluminum that can instantly turn any Toro or Rainbird valve-in sprinkler into a 1-inch water source. It can be used with a standard swivel or quick coupler valve. It can also be used directly for syringing greens, tees, hot spots or connecting a temporary sprinkler.

"We had the drought last summer, so it was a good time to be introducing a product like that," said Wait.

Meanwhile, Wait was devising two other products — the Level-Eez and Greens Encroachment.

The Level-Eez allows the superintendent and his staff to drastically cut the time to complete one of their distasteful tasks, raising sunken valve-in-head sprinklers, quick coupler valves and valve boxes. The everything-you-need kit reduces the time to raise a sprinkler head from about 90 minutes to as little as 5 without digging. The stainless steel and aluminum kit raises the object by forcing water around it and pulling it upward with a platform puller. This procedure does much less cosmetic damage than the traditional method of digging and setting the object being raised.

"It looks like your course is full of potholes when the sprinkler heads sink," said Wait. "Carts and mowers are always running over them and can be damaged. Also, a golfer can twist an ankle in one of them. Raising a sprinkler head is one of the worst jobs on a golf course. This makes it a lot easier."

As useful as the other three products are, they don't compare to the possibilities of Greens Encroachment, according to Latshaw, the only superintendent to oversee three of the four major tournaments, the 1978 PGA



Paul Latshaw, right, oversees Greens Encroachment installation.

Championship and 1983 U.S. Open at Pittsburgh's Oakmont CC and the 1987-89 Masters at Augusta National. Latshaw became a consultant and stockholder with the company last June 1.

Fairway grass encroaching on greens has been a problem that has long defied solution. It has been particularly troublesome on Southern courses where the typical bermudagrass fairway chips away at the size and quality of the typical bentgrass and bermuda greens.

The idea for Greens Encroachment came, oddly enough, while Wait was peeling the top off a 12-pack of chewing gum. It occurred to him that a device that would lift an offending grass off the course, like the string lifted the top off the gum package, might do the trick.

He devised a two-piece plastic border, about 8 inches in depth and 1/2 inch in width, that is buried about 1 inch below ground level around the fringe of the green. A manual edging device that fits in between the track is pushed around the green, lifting out the encroaching grass including the stolons that try to root themselves

to the putting surface.

The product will come two ways, the first being a complete package including material, installation equipment and training so the superintendent and crew can install it themselves. The company will also install it, bringing in a four-man crew to put the border around all 18 greens (and tees and other areas if necessary) of an average course in about 20 days, without interrupting play and leaving little or no evidence of the installation.

The cost of the procedure will start at \$50,000 for an average 18-hole course. Greens Encroachment will pay for itself in labor savings within two years based on replacement costs of contaminated sod, Wait predicted.

The company and products were introduced formally at February's GCSAA annual convention. Lines formed at the DonuTTrimmer booth to get a look at and discuss Greens Encroachment, Wait said. The response was so great that Wait and DeMino had to take names and telephone numbers and promise to call back.

The product is currently installed on a test basis at Carolina

Country Club in Spartanburg S.C., Plantation CC in Ponte Verde, Fla. and Loxahatchee CC in Jupiter, Fla.

"That's where we are with it right now," said Wait, who has begun marketing Greens Encroachment and the other three products vigorously in preparation for February's annual superintendent's show in Orlando, Fla., his home state.

He predicts DonuTTrimmer 1990 revenues will exceed last year's 70-percent increase, mainly because of Greens Encroachment.

But Wait said he'll be looking for more ways to make his job, and those of other people in the turf profession, a little easier.

"I've got another five ideas or so rolling around in my head right now," he said, "but our company's goal is to market these four products so everyone in the turfgrass industry can take advantage of these labor-saving devices. I think the industry focuses on safety first, budget second and product performance third. I know our products fit into these categories."

## Hugo

*Continued from page 34*

uprooted or broken to the ground.

"I've never seen any storm of this caliber in my life," said Powell, who has been the club's superintendent for 20 years. "There are huge haps where trees once stood. You could call it a major thinning."

Some of the trees were 90 or 100 years old, Powell said, estimating their value at \$250,000.

The timber company contracted to remove the debris was expected to be 4 1/2 to five weeks on the job.

Powell and his 15-man crew opened the front nine on Oct. 14 and the opening of the back nine hinged on the Greens and Ground Committee's decision on whether to wait for the trees to be hauled off.

Powell attributed much of Hugo's damage to soft ground, saying he thought many of the big trees would not have been uprooted if the summer had been drier.

A few miles away, Quail Hollow CC was in "perfect" condition on the eve of the Senior Tour's Payne-Webber Invitational when the storm tore into town. The result: a canceled tournament and more than 700 down or damaged trees, according to assistant superintendent Mark Harris.

"The press tent was demolished and everything went down," Harris said, but the overall look of the course has not changed because most of the larger trees that fell were along the tree line of the tees and fairways.

The clubhouse also lost part of its roof, but head superintendent Ray Avery's 22-man crew had the front nine holes open seven days later and the back nine open in two weeks.

*Tommy Braswell is a golf writer for the Charleston (S.C.) Post-Courier papers.*



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