

Low Country

Continued from page 1

planning to do. What do you think?" explained Tinkey, who is also president of the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association. "We have a tradition on Hilton Head of being environmentally sensitive. We wanted to continue the tradition, but at an accelerated pace.

"We want to remain on the cutting edge of environmental protection while ensuring the highest standards of aesthetics and playability for golfers and homeowners. But that's a delicate

balance."

That's why Royal Golf & Tennis (RG&T) sought help, in the form of the South Carolina Coastal Council which, needless to say, was happy to be consulted.

"They've been willing and able to work with us," explained council biologist George Madlinger. "And instead of saying, 'You can't do that,' we've been able to work out some compromises.

"I don't think it has cost them anything more. They've been able to do wonders, let me tell you."

A good example of this cooperation took place at Planter's Row Golf Course, part of Port Royal, a

54-hole complex managed by RG&T.

The track was scheduled for closing in order that all 18 greens could be replaced. While the course was under repair, 6,000 trees and shrubs were planted and the local Audubon Society helped create nesting areas. Active bird watching is now conducted on the course, and there's even a family of otters living nearby.

One of the major issues along the South Carolina coastline has been stormwater runoff. Royal Golf & Tennis has worked with the council to create vegetative buffers — especially around in-

lets or lagoons — that act as filters and provide wildlife habitats.

Todd Ballantine, principal of Ballantine Environmental Resources, worked on this natural buffer system.

"The golf course management company [RT&G] took it upon themselves to get the proper information," said Ballantine. "In the long run, I believe the aesthetics they've created have made the courses unique — and on Hilton Head, you have to be unique to survive."

At another Royal Golf & Tennis course, five acres of superfluous turf were recently replanted with

wildflowers, thus reducing the chemicals and water needed for maintenance. It's also more pleasing to the eye, Tinkey added.

"We just think it's the right thing to do," said Tinkey. "Our environment is awfully precious. We also want to be ahead of the curve on telling the public that golf courses can be a positive influence on the environment.

"That's something our industry has not done well over the years."

Madlinger, for one, sees a healthy precedent in the making.

"Hopefully we can create some sort of national trend."

Groups join forces to market Hilton Head

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. — The Hilton Head Island Visitor & Convention Bureau and the Low Country Golf Course Owners Association have started a joint marketing plan to inform golfers of the value of a Hilton Head golf vacation.

A *Golf Planner* includes information on special value packages offered at some of the region's best-known resorts including Sea Pines, Shipyard, Palmetto Dunes, Port Royal, Country Club of Hilton Head, Old South Golf Links, Hilton Head National, Executive Golf Course, Rose Hill Club, Island West and Pleasant Point.

The planner includes extensive information on the resort and public-access courses in the area.

"Many people know about the excellence of Hilton Head Island golf, but golfers today are looking for extra value as well. With the *Golf Planner*, we're offering the convenience of a handy, easy-to-use guide to help our visitors choose a quality, affordable golf vacation," said Low Country GCOA President Mike Tinkey.

The *Hilton Head Island and South Carolina Low Country Golf Planner* and a "Fast Fax" informational package are available free from the convention bureau by calling 800-523-3373 or by FAX at 803-785-7110.

Golf Resources takes over Madera Muni GC

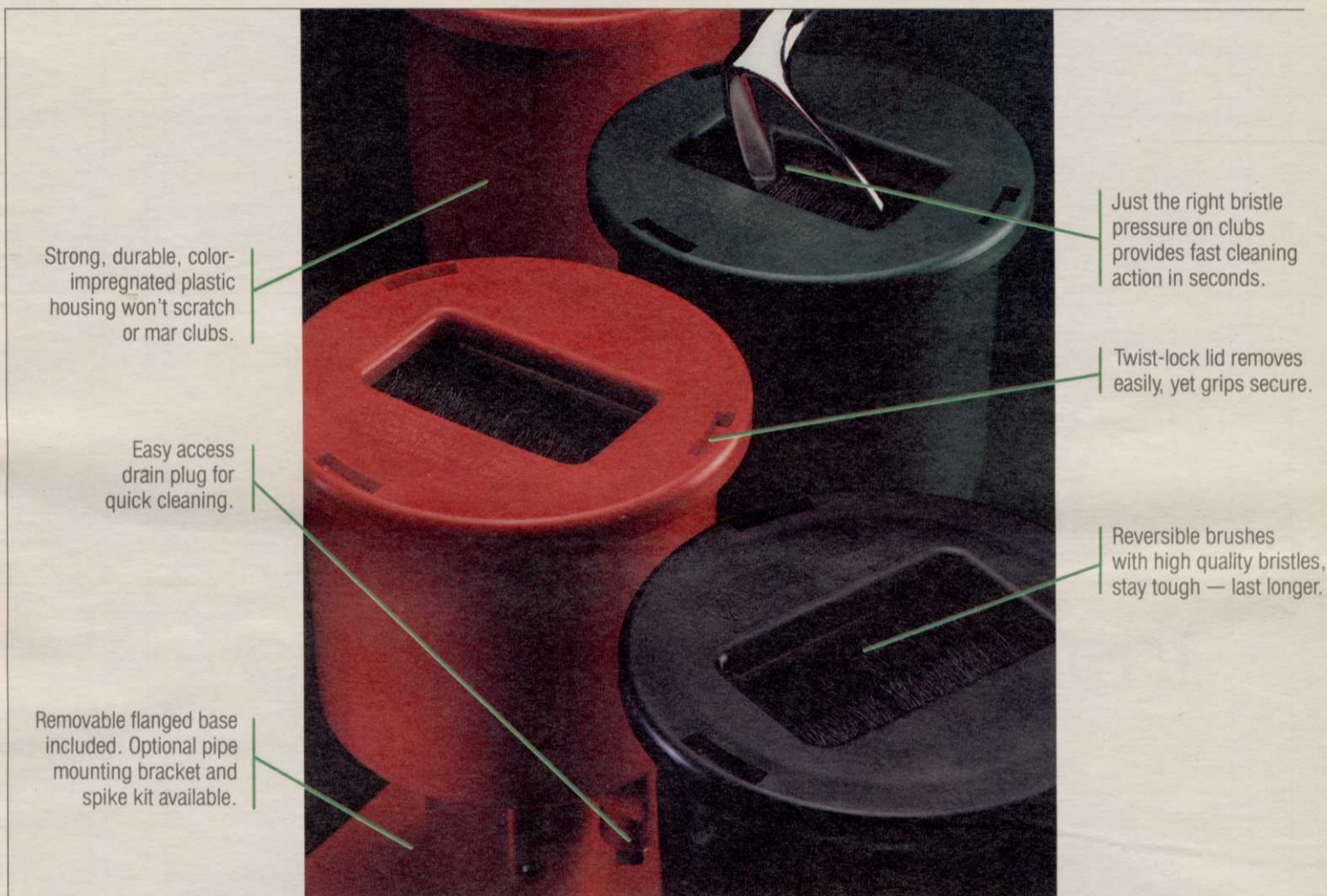
MADERA, Calif. — What the city could not do, a private company will attempt.

Golf Resources Inc. of Auburn has been awarded an interim contract to manage the financially troubled Madera Municipal Golf Course.

The City Council will pay the company \$5,000 a month for four months to manage the course.

It will pay Golf Resources an additional \$4,000 to develop recommendations on how to improve, maintain and advertise the course and operate the golf shop and restaurant at a profit.

GOLF COURSE NEWS



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