

On The Green



The custom-made tent kept things warm and growing at Turner Valley G&CC.

Canadians beat the cold

The greenhouse effect

By MARK LESLIE

TURNER VALLEY, Alberta, Canada — Contrast and compare: Turner Valley Golf and Country Club rebuilt three greens four years ago at a cost of \$250,000, and the greens were out of play the entire season. Last winter, during the off-season, it rebuilt and sodded two greens for \$80,000. And this winter it is resurfacing and seeding one green for \$3,000.

How? With specially built 10,000-square-foot tents that serve as mini-greenhouses, creating what superintendent Kent Plumer called "the perfect environment" in this cold environment in the foothills of the Canadian Rocky Mountains.

Plumer and assistant Gary Taylor are thrilled with the results of this innovation, which Taylor said, is "basically an expansion of the idea of turf covers." It originated at Bearspaw Country Club in Calgary, said Plumer, who couldn't explain why others aren't trying the method even though "a lot of local guys have come out to look."

"I'm sold on it. Rebuilding greens is a costly venture no matter what you do. With this, the propane costs are the most," he said. At a cost of \$4,000 apiece, Plumer had Calgary Tent and Awning Co. build the tents of semi-transparent, tough material similar to woven nylon seed bags.

The first experiment came during the winter of 1992-93 when Turner Valley rebuilt 8,000- and 6,500-square-foot greens to U.S. Golf Association specifications and sodded them with bentgrass.

The tents were installed over greens, staked down with 18-inch durable metal hooks every foot, and inflated with 1 million BTU propane-powered heaters. Once the tents were inflated to their 14-foot ceilings, the heaters were reduced

to 500,000 BTUs and the tents kept at 72 degrees, with 85 percent humidity.

The tents were inflated the first of April and the greens were playable on opening day, May 15.

Plumer put the cost of the 7,550 liters of propane used at \$1,729 for the two greens. He rented the two heaters, two fans and two tanks for \$1,400 a month. The cost of the two greens, driven by the high price of sod trucked from Vancouver, was \$80,000.

Unhappy with the sod, Plumer decided this winter to seed the final putting surface in his reconstruction program. On Oct. 15, crews tore out the old push-up green, reshaped it, added sand amendments, and put the tent pegs in. Come the first of March they will inflate the tent and fertilize and seed the green.

"Our goal is to open by June 1 and be ready for our Classic tournament on June 6," Plumer said.

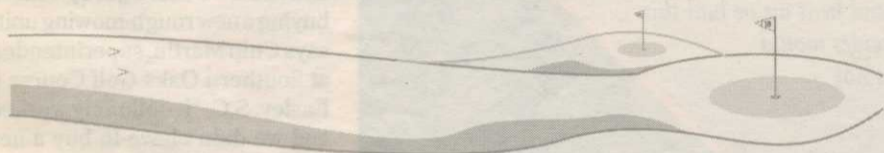
Taylor said they will use the tents again and again, as part of a resurfacing program to rid the greens of poa annua.

To that end, they decided it was worth beating the rental fees by buying a \$1,700 generator to handle the fan and heater and hook into the propane tanks.

"We should be able to strip a green, reseed it and have it up and running for the opening day in the spring for \$3,000 plus labor," Taylor said. "We feel it is far more economical to do it ourselves and we won't lose that playing time. Playing on temporary greens for a season isn't acceptable any more, especially with the competition in this area."

In the resurfacing program, Plumer expects bentgrass, under a tent, will outcompete poa annua. And with good cultural practices, the Turner Valley crew will be able to keep the poa out permanently.

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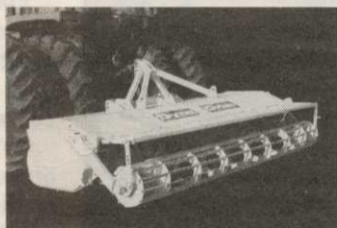
Maybe that's why Wadsworth owns five of them with more on

order. He adds that more people would buy Dyna-Drives if they could see them in action and that architects, engineers and designers should

specify them. We appreciate his honesty.

We can't add much to John's comments except its tines are self-cleaning, and it comes with no PTO, wheels, axles, tires or gearbox so it's truly low maintenance.

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Turner Valley timeline

Turner Valley Golf & Country Club superintendent Kent Plumer provided this timeline and cost rundown for resurfacing his 13th and 18th greens with sod under a tent during the winter:

March 1: Blew up tents to draw frost out for 24 hours. 1 million BTU heaters used.

March 29: After waiting for bad weather to subside, blew up tents. Shaped green surface.

March 30: Incorporated fertilizer into greens. Sodded 18th green.

March 31: Sodded 13th green.

April 7: Rolled greens.

April 13: Prepped surrounds of both greens.

April 15: Sodded 18th green surrounds.

April 21: Sodded 13th green surrounds.

April 25: Mowed greens to 7/16 inch.

April 26: Top dressed greens.

April 28: Mowed greens to 7/16 inch.

April 29: Removed the tents. Used Hydroject on the greens to encourage new root growth.

May 3: Mowed to 3/8 inch.

May 9: Mowed to 3/8 inch.

May 11: Top dressed greens.

May 15: Rolled the greens and cut to 1/4 inch.

May 22: Opened the holes for play.

COSTS

Tents: Two tents, purchased for \$4,000 each.

Heaters and fans: two 1 million BTU heaters, rental \$500 per month each; and two 5,000 CFM fans, rental \$150 per month each.

Propane tanks: Two 1,000-gallon tanks, rental \$50 per month each

Propane: 22.9 cents per liter.

Total propane used: 7,550 liters.

Cost for propane: \$1,729 for two greens.