

SMT emerges

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Player Design, Hurdzan Design Group and Gene Bates Golf Design have all expressed a willingness to work with SMT. "Several project agreements are being finalized for the near term," said Parker.

"Our services are based on the precept that all soil properties — chemical, physical and biological — should be monitored and managed," said Haines. "Historically, the industry has focused primarily on the management and manipulation of chemical properties, while hoping the physical and biological properties would somehow take care of themselves.

"We want to help architects and superintendents become more completely informed concerning soil deficiencies *before* the golf course is built. Once the deficiencies are identified, sound modification and management programs can be implemented."

Porous ceramics and humate materials will play a significant role in these modification and management programs — this should come as no surprise, seeing as SMT rose from the ashes of Innova Corp., a firm that concentrated on the U.S. distribution of Isolite, a porous ceramic.

Parker was executive VP at Innova, while Haines served as VP of technical operations. Though Isolite was a useful product and the firm was owned by Japanese industrial giant Sumitomo Corp., Innova encountered all sorts of financial difficulties before declaring bankruptcy in February 1993.

"If you boiled it all down," Parker explained, "it simply failed financially. It filed Chapter 11 to reorganize but couldn't come up with a plan... It was a public company so anyone could've offered an alternative plan. But no one did."

At the request of the Innova board of directors, Parker and Haines stayed on during the early stages of protection. But after three months, they left and the case was dismissed from Chapter 11 and Innova formally went under last June.

"When we left Innova, Lou and I felt we had a new lease on life — we were freed from being Isolite salesmen," Parker said. "Innova centered on one product, Isolite... But Innova was all about establishing fiscal opportunities for distributors, whereas Lou and I were more interested in establishing a place in the golf course industry, getting superintendents and architects on board, and starting the long process of product introduction."

During his three years at Innova, Haines had plenty of time to find out what porous ceramics can and cannot do. For instance, he firmly believes porous ceramics are not necessarily water savers.

"They increase water *storage* in certain coarse soils," he said. "But they're best at oxygenizing the root zone. And when it comes to drainage, they increase percolation rates in bad-draining soil."

SMT has contracted with Aimcor to provide porous ceramic

products, said Parker.

Haines also discovered the power of humate materials — very concentrated forms of peat that have been composted over millions of years. By manipulating the humus content in soil mixtures, the environment for rootzones can be markedly improved with limited chemical intervention, especially when fine-tuning USGA greens mixes, he said.

"I keep coming back to this," Haines said, "but there are three important soil properties: physical, biological and chemical. If you can keep these three things in balance, you don't need so many chemicals."

Terra settles with Dupont; acquires Androc Products

SIOUX CITY, Iowa — Terra Industries Inc. has announced that its subsidiary, Terra International, Inc., has reached a settlement of its dispute with E.I. du Pont de Nemours and Company (DuPont) over Benlate claims.

According to the settlement, both Terra's lawsuit against DuPont in Iowa state court and Dupont's lawsuit against Terra and its insurers in Delaware state court will be dismissed. In addition, DuPont will assume responsibility for all pending Benlate claims.

In the coming months, Terra will resume its role as a wholesale and retail marketer of DuPont agricultural products. Benlate is a DuPont fungicide product that Terra, along with other crop protection product manufacturers, formulated for DuPont under contract in 1988-1990, growers who

used Benlate began to file claims alleging that Benlate had damaged their crops and plants. In 1991, Terra and DuPont each filed suits against the other over settlement of the Benlate claims. With this agreement those suits are being withdrawn.

Terra has also announced the acquisition of Androc Products, Inc. of Hopkins, Minn., a marketer and distributor of specialty and vegetation management products. According to Larry Pfeleiderer, professional products sales manager of Terra's Northern Division, Androc's customers can expect their current business relationship with Androc to continue with Terra. Joining Terra as a result of the acquisition are salesmen Ted Weidenfeller, Mark Crosswell and Richard Schulte; and Daryl Olson, warehouse manager/inside salesman.



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