

YIPES! STRIPES

Achieving the chore for half the labor

By TERRY BUCHEN

One day I was thinking to myself: "How can we get the appearance of the single-striping effect of a walk-behind greensmower while using a triplex greensmower?"

We had a Toro Greensmaster 3000, purchased in the late 1980s. It had individual reel shut-offs on the outer two reels. We ordered a third reel shut-off for the center reel and installed it after talking with the local distributor, who said it was okay to have all three reels with individual on/off capabilities.

The next step was to call the factory and ask if the center reel could be kept in the "Up" position with the use of bungee chords, while not damaging the up/down hydraulic system. The factory said it was okay because, when the center reel is in the "Up" position, the hydraulic system by-passes the hydraulic system. Having the center reel in the "Up" position obviously helped avoid confusing the operator for the next step.

We began mowing greens using only the two outer reels. The striping pattern was identical to using a walk-behind mower, though it takes a good operator to mow the unmowed area between the mowed stripes.

In essence, we doubled our mowing capacity compared to using a walk-behind unit. The only major difference was the triplex obviously has a flotation head versus a fixed-reel unit on the walk-behind mower.

Doing the victory lap using the two outer reels, both clockwise and counterclockwise, will give the walk-behind appearance as well.

This is a good alternative to the traditional clean-up method of using all three reels, both clockwise and counterclockwise, to help eliminate the dreaded "triplex ring"!

At least two reels must operate in the "mow" position. Please contact the manufacturer at the factory — no matter who makes your triplex unit — to see if it's okay to shut off the center reel and keep the center mowing unit in the "Up" position, so the unit is not damaged.

One extra thought: Install wheel rollers on both the front and the rear of each mowing unit, as the individual reel units will not sway as much. You will get a better and lower height of cut, as the bed knife will be at a better angle.

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This past January, I was at the British Turfgrass Management Exhibition Seminar '94 in Harrogate, Yorkshire, England, and enjoyed the trade show very much.

On display — and prompting quite a bit of curiosity, with long

lines to match — was a twin-plex greensmower. It's made in Japan by Baroness, is marketed by Saxon Industries, and is called the Saxon Twin.

It is somewhat similar to a triplex greensmower except the center reel is non-existent.

It has height-flotation tires. It's a walk-behind that has a sulky attachment as an option. It has two forward speeds and one reverse.

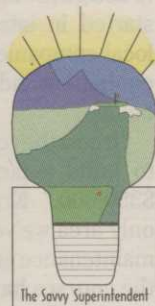
Overall width is 70 inches. The two reel units are 22 inches wide

with nine blades each. The total machine weighs in at 341 pounds. It has an 8 hp engine and the mowing height is 3/16 of an inch with the standard bed knife and will go much lower with a tournament variety bedknife.

I hope that this unit makes its way to America some day, as it has unlimited potential. It is interesting to note the manufacturers in this country experimented with a similar mowing unit back in the 1950s and '60s, but it never made it to market.



The Saxon Twin, manufactured in the United Kingdom.



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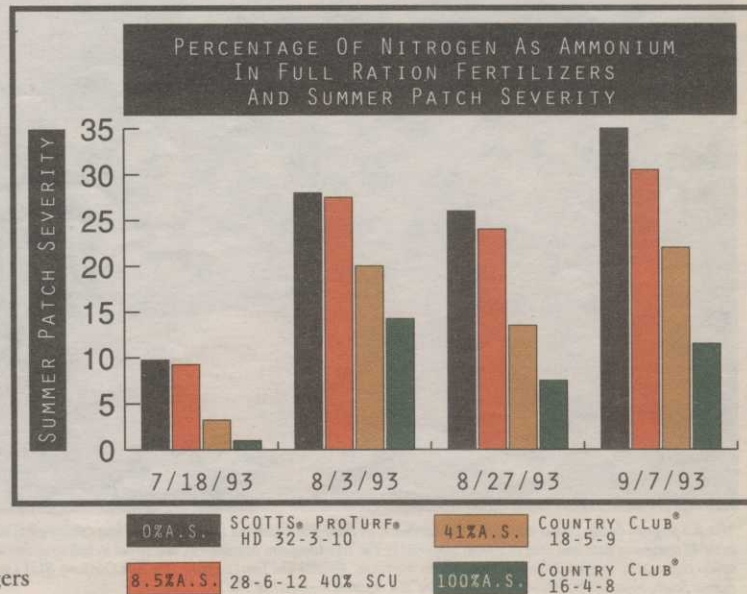
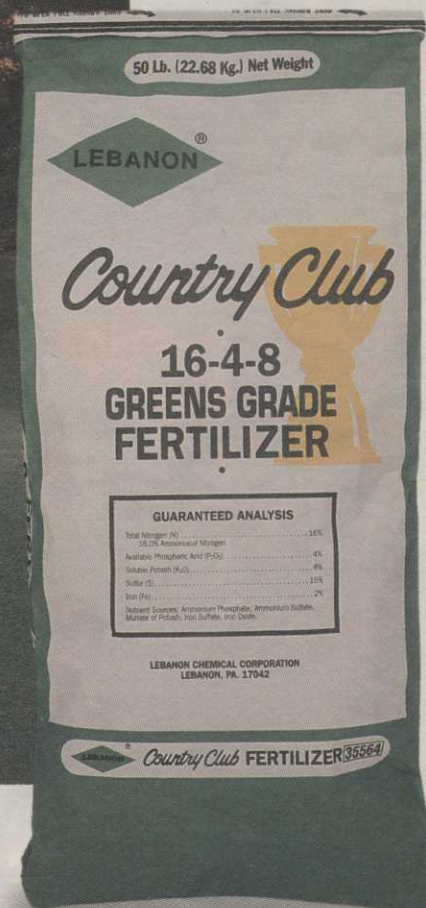
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CIRCLE #119