

BRIEFS



MINDS MEET ON IPM

MARLBOROUGH, Mass. — "A Meeting of the Minds" is the title of an urban/suburban integrated pest management conference Oct. 13 at Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel. Focus is to highlight what has been developed and working in integrated pest management systems in the turf, landscape and ornaments and structural pest control industries. It will provide a forum for industry leaders as well as educational, environmental and governmental agency personnel to discuss matters of mutual concern surrounding the practice of pest control and integrated pest management.

DEROCCO ENTERS MAINE HALL OF FAME

SOUTH PORTLAND, Maine — Tony DeRocco, a native of Rocco Morice, Italy, who found happiness in Maine via an illustrious golf career capped by almost 30 years as a course superintendent, has been inducted into the Maine Golf Hall of Fame. DeRocco, 87, immigrated from Italy to Hastings, N.Y., in 1921. He caddied at Ardsley-On-The-Hudson, shagged for pro Tommy Harmon at Hudson River CC, and moved into the pro shop as club cleaner. Maine has claimed him the past 65 years. He became shop aide at Summit Spring CC in 1929, pro at Wilson Lake CC in 1934, and at Oakdale CC in 1953, returned to Summit as pro in 1963, then launched a successful stay as superintendent at Poland Spring CC in 1965. He retired as cart maintenance chief in 1993.



Tony DeRocco

METRO TURF FIELD DAY SET

The Westchester Country Club will host the Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Associations annual



Professional Turfgrass Field Day on Oct. 18. A seminar co-sponsored with The Metropolitan Golf Association will coincide with the field day. The seminar will host Dave Oatis, director of the Northeast Region of the United States Golf Association, Green Section along with Dr. Noel Jackson, professor at the University of Rhode Island

W.VA. SUPERS RAISE \$14,000

The West Virginia Golf Course Superintendents Association raised more than \$14,000 for the Scholarship and Research Fund at its annual turfgrass scholarship and fundraiser golf tournament at Wheeling Country Club. The record \$14,000 was raised to support the WVGCSA William C. Campbell Scholarship and Research Fund.

GOLF COURSE NEWS

'Iron' men unite to broaden education, training

By HAL PHILLIPS

WESTON, Mass. — Golf course mechanics associations are materializing across the nation, as technicians organize themselves to meet the ever-increasing challenge of innovation. As equipment continues to change and improve, mechanics need to keep up.

Organizations now exist in New Jersey, Chicago, the Carolinas, the Mid-Atlantic region and New England, with two in Florida.

The benefits are wide ranging. The New Jersey Golf Course Mechanics

Association, for example, has compiled an equipment users list which details, by make and model, the equipment used at each member course. Should a mechanic run into a problem with repair, he or she can quickly locate someone with the same machine who may provide the insight needed to minimize down-time.

"It's sophisticated. The average auto mechanic can't work on this stuff," said Stephen Lucas, the mechanic at Weston Golf Club here and president of the Golf Course Mechanics Association, which is centered in New England states but holds national aspirations.

"Considering the heights of cut we're working with, it's very precise work. You're doing irrigation, sign-making, repair, setting up job assignments. The mechanic is a unique individual.

"I would like to get together with as many [regional mechanic] associations as I can, so we can talk about eventually taking this thing nationwide. That's my dream."

Any hopes that the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA) would adopt a "big-tent" attitude towards course mechanics died

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MAKING INROADS WITH AUDUBON

Hiers exports pro-golf message to the masses

By MARK LESLIE

NAPLES, Fla. — Collier's Reserve Country Club superintendent Tim Hiers, who has delivered the message that golf courses are ecology-friendly to those inside and outside the golf industry, has been presented the first John James Audubon Steward Award.

"Tim is the perfect example of one of those people who was already moving in the right direction" when his club joined the New York Audubon Society's Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses, said John Santacrose, NYAS executive director. "And he's running with the new information we've given him. Hopefully, that will happen with more people."

Presenting the award, NYAS President Ron Dodson said Hiers led the Collier's Reserve course through the rigorous Signature Program process and the facility has become the international model for others to follow. The award, established earlier this year, represents "the highest recognition of leadership in the field of environmental responsibility."

Santacrose said Hiers' involvement in the Signature Program was "like a springboard for him."

Among his new procedures were hiring an Integrated Pest Management specialist, and involving the general public, to the extent that a number of people have helped revegetation projects at neighboring golf courses.

"Tim got a lot of people in Naples, Colliers County and all of Florida involved in the program, has done programs for school-children and things like that," Santacrose said.

Dodson also cited the family-owned Collier Enterprises, the developer of Collier's Reserve, for its "commitment to environmental excellence."

Surprised by the award because he knows "a lot of others who are just as deserving," Hiers said: "I'm glad they have awards like this because superintendents don't get recognized for what they do. It's amazing. You have people in other organizations that don't do nearly as much and, yet, get huge recognition. Meanwhile,

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John Miller with his bluebird print that the New York Audubon Society presented him for completing certification in the Cooperative Sanctuary Program at Hindman Golf Course. The print will hang in the pro shop.

Devotion to wildlife, golf moves Miller's muni to the forefront

By MARK LESLIE

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Here is a man who loves wildlife and golf courses. Most of all, he loves wildlife on golf courses. Hence, John Miller, the city's golf course superintendent, has earned recognition as one of the first Environmental Steward Award winners by gaining full certification for one of his three municipal golf courses in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program for Golf Courses (ACSP).

"I don't think there's anything more beautiful than a golf course early in the morning when the sun's first coming up," Miller said. "The only thing more beautiful is if there's a bunch

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Delhi dedicates new education center

DELHI, N.Y. — More than 100 representatives of the turf industry joined faculty and staff from the State University College of Technology at Delhi, Aug. 16, to dedicate the college's new Turf Education Center here.

The building, which opened to students Aug. 29, is an example of the industry investing in its future, according to Mary Ellen Duncan, Delhi College president. More than \$85,000 toward the \$320,000 educational center was provided through donations from the industry.

Lead gifts included \$33,000 from the New York State Turfgrass Association and \$25,000 from Ransomes America Corp. Also contributing were the Central New York, Finger Lake, Hudson Valley, Long Island, Metropolitan and

Northeastern golf course superintendents associations.

The remaining construction costs were paid by the College Association at Delhi Inc., the not-for-profit auxiliary services corporation that owns and operates the Delhi College Golf Course.

The building illustrates how the college can be entrepreneurial in developing needed academic facilities, Duncan said. "State funds were not available for this project so we turned to other sources and they responded enthusiastically," she said. "We also believe that the strong industry support this project generated is indicative of the high regard Delhi College has earned throughout the turf profession."

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New York State Turfgrass Association President John Liburdi Jr. speaks at dedication ceremonies.



By BOB BRAME

Have you ever looked at a practice putting green after a hard day?

Worse, a practice putting green in late August after the last big outing of the summer? It's not uncommon to see what resembles a war zone.

Dirt peering through thin and weak turf around six, nine or sometimes 18 holes, distributed

over what was a uniform green carpet. Looking closer, you may see ragged and rounded hole edges, and often a dozen or more previous hole locations either too low (nice dark green circular depressions) or too high (four and a quarter-inch scalp patch). It's not a pretty picture. Think about what this same green might look like if holes were not being used to practice.

A practice putting green with



Bob Brame

According to many of the game's great teachers, this is particularly true of putting. If you think you're going to miss

no holes? What a crazy thought! Or is it?

We know that golf is a mental game.

the three-footer, you probably will, or at least it becomes a whole lot tougher to knock in. It is interesting that many golf instructors actually discourage practice putting to a hole.

The idea is that you will condition your mind either to see the ball going in or missing the hole. Either way, it can carry over to the golf course. If you're missing on the putting green, you will expect to continue to on the

course.

What happens when you eventually miss one? Suggestion: practice putting to a spot, or place a tee in the green to putt at. It makes sense. Get the feel of the putting surface without focusing on whether the ball goes in a hole.

Improving your putting game by looking at a spot rather than a hole? Interesting. How about agronomics? Even if holes are changed daily on a practice putting green, wear can be very destructive. Worn and bruised turf is more prone to disease activity and weed invasion. This means more chemicals may be needed to counter the effects of heavy, concentrated wear.

Distributing player wear over a larger area will result in healthier turf and a better playing surface. Sounds great, but how can wear be monitored and holes changed often enough to prevent heavy traffic damage? If holes are changed several times on busy days, what will the putting surface look like with numerous transplanted plugs trying to survive and grow in?

Agronomically, there would be value in not using holes for practice putting.

Why not simply cut the base off the small flagsticks normally used on practice putting greens and sharpen the end? All holes are eliminated.

Now the small flagsticks may be pushed into the surface where desired. As wear occurs, players, pro shop or maintenance staff could quickly and easily move the flagstick. Simply pull it up and push it in elsewhere. Plugs from hole changes are eliminated, as are labor costs to move and repair holes.

Players' practicing efforts to small diameter flagsticks produce a better mental foundation for scoring on the course — an attractive combination of benefits.

Give it a try. Fill in the holes, cut off and sharpen the small diameter flagsticks and "play (practice) away."

Bob Brame is an agronomist with the U.S. Golf Association Green Section's Mid-Atlantic Region. He has recently opened a sub-regional office in Covington, Ky.

Delhi dedication

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Delhi College and its students were vital contributors to the success of the Turf Center, Duncan emphasized.

"More than 245 students enrolled in the college's applied technologies programs completed much of the actual construction work as part of their on-the-job training," she said.

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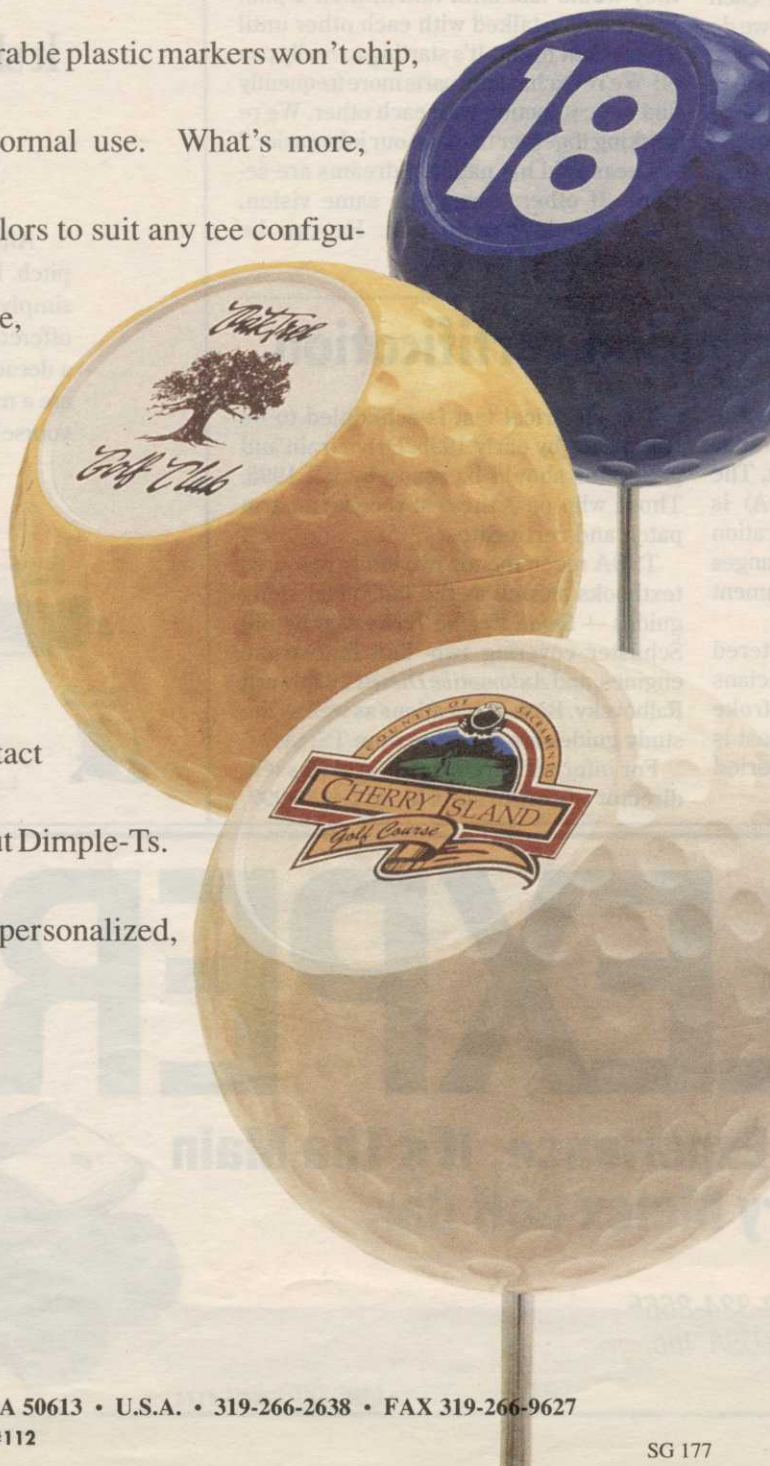
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