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Penncross turns 40

Continued from page 39

"Time and time again we go through these trials and others jockey for three years, then you see Penncross is still the best," said Rose. "The bents are getting better all the time, and Penncross won't be nearly as dominant in 10 years. But there will be Penncross sold in 10 years, and people will still be pleased with it."

The careers of Penncross and Rose are nearly concurrent. Penncross was released in 1955, and Rose got out of the military service a year later. After becoming aware of the new creeping bent at an Oregon Seed League meeting the following winter, Rose got interested, secured some stolons from Musser and planted a small field in 1958.

"The quality wasn't good," Rose admits. "I happened to go on a trip back to Penn State and met Dr. Joe Duich. "There

was some turf conference going on and I was waiting outside in the hall for about an hour. Finally, a bunch of them found out I was growing Penncross, and soon they were all out in the hall talking to me.

"All the researchers claimed the seed that was getting to me wasn't Penncross. Even today you see stories about substitution, and that's certainly what happened back then. We had an all-night session to discuss the problems. Out of that, Penn State decided to release Penn-cross to us exclusively and we committed to growing only certified seed."

Rose helped form the Penncross Bentgrass Association, the exclusive grower and marketer of Penncross, in 1971, included most of the 14 growers that remain members today. Turf Seed, Inc. does the actual contracting with Penncross growers, while Tee-2-Green markets the product.

Duich has continued his relationship with

Tee-2-Green, consulting to the firm ever since. And the rest, as they say, is history.

"It took a while to realize what we had," Rose explained. "Penncross got down to about a dollar a pound and everyone was complaining. But we've kept the same price for 10 years, through the shortage years in the 1980s. Now everything's back up again."

Forty years is an amazing run for a single strain of bentgrass, and Rose knows it will end someday. This explains why Tee-2-Green has invested in new strains to compete with its own product.

"Our new bents are absolutely spectacular," said Rose. "I like to think they're breakthroughs in creeping bentgrasses. These grasses demand to be mown at 1/8 of an inch. They'll stand up to it, and no other grass will. We're going to call it Penn A-1. But Penncross is still the king, by 10-fold. Everyone's still shooting at it, even ourselves. But that's what happens when you're no. 1."

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CALENDAR

September

7-8 — Southwest Horticultural Trade Show in Phoenix, Ariz. Call 602-966-1610.

7-10 — RISE Annual Meeting in Arlington, Va. Contact 202-872-3860.

9-12 — America Society of Irrigation Consultants Annual Conference in Atlanta. Contact Wanda Sarsfield at 510-516-1124.

9-12 — Club Managers Association of America Leadership/Legislative Conference in Pentagon City, Va. Contact Kathi Driggs at 703-739-9500.

12-13 — Turfgrass Research Conference and Field Day and Landscape Management Research Conference and Field Day in Riverside, Calif. Contact Susana Denney at 909-787-4430.

17-19 — Southeastern North Carolina Professional Turfgrass Conference in Sunset Beach, N.C. Contact Dr. Bruce Williams at 910-253-4425.

19-21 — Virginia Tech Turf and Landscape Field Days in Blacksburg, Va. Contact David Chalmers at 703-231-9738.

24-27 — Florida Turf Assn Annual Conference & Show in Tampa, Fla. Contact Susan Callahan at 800-882-6721.

October

7-10 — American Society of Landscape Architects in Cleveland. Contact Mindy Peckham at 202-686-2752.

9-12 — 49th Northwest Turfgrass Conference in Stevenson. Contact 360-754-0825.

11 — West Texas Turfgrass Conference in Snyder, Texas. Contact Pam Deeds at 806-354-8447.

31 — The Carolinas Golf Investment Seminar in Pinehurst, N.C. Contact Andy Hinds at 910-379-1400.

November

4 — 6th Annual Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School and Alumni Awards Banquet in East Brunswick, N.J. Contact 908-828-6900.

4-7 — Georgia GCSA Annual Meeting at Jekyll Island. Contact Karen White at 706-769-4076.

9-10 — Golf Course Expo in Orlando, Fla. Contact Golf Course News Conference Group at 207-846-0600.

13-15 — Women in Golf Summit '95 in Pinehurst, N.C. Contact 904-254-8800.

* For more information contact the GCSAA Education Office at 913-832-4430.

Verti-drain suit

Continued from page 39

were going to sue.

"There was no patent infringement here. We researched it very carefully. This is strictly a sales ploy by Redexim."

According to Estes, Southern Green ended its relationship with Redexim in 1993. The firm put its Soil Reliever on the market in 1994, he said.

The Verti-Drain product line is represented in North America by Emrex, Inc., an independent importer, and a national network of more than 30 distributors. According to Charles Otto, president of Emrex, Redexim caught wind of the Soil Reliever's emergence and sent Southern Green a cease and desist order in October 1994, on the basis that it was a copy.

"On Nov. 4, the folks at Southern Green literally raced to the courthouse and filed a suit," said Otto. "Instead of responding to the cease and desist, they filed a suit which said, basically, that 'Redexim is trying to ruin our business.'"

According to Otto, in May of 1995, Redexim tried to have the Southern Green suit dismissed. However, a dismissal judg-

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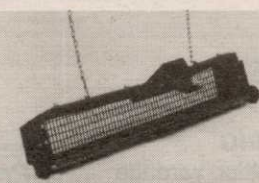
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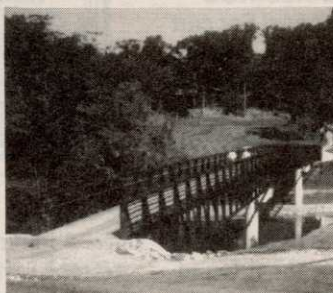
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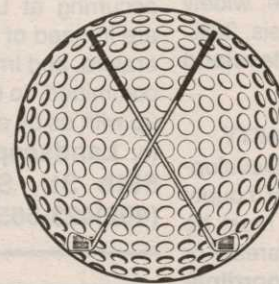
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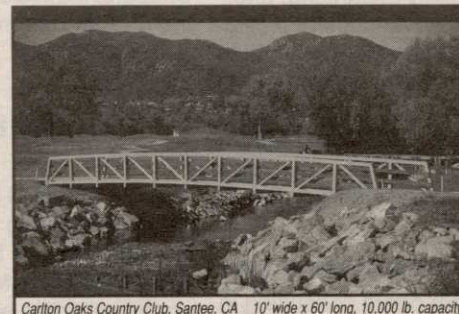
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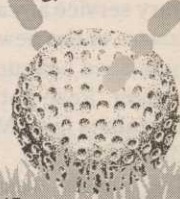
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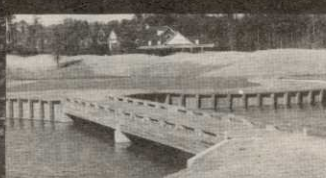
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Verti-drain suit

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ment would have required a separate action, which Redexim didn't care to pursue, said Otto. Consequently, Redexim served counter claims on July 14.

"The fact that it's a countersuit is a technicality," said Otto. "Basically what it means is, Southern Green saw it coming and tried to take an aggressive stance by suing first.

"[The Soil Reliever] is a knock-off as far as we're concerned. There are some differences but we don't think it's as good... They admitted, when we talked to them, that they wouldn't have had the idea if they hadn't worked for us.

"The real problem is, there's confusion in the marketplace. Among the distributors on the front lines, it's getting pretty ugly. We welcome competition in the industry. It's a just a question of how that competition develops."

In a statement, Redexim stated the countersuit reflects Redexim's philosophy to vigorously defend and protect its investments in the development of innovative and patented technology, and to protect related proprietary rights. In recent litigation in Germany, Redexim was awarded damages for patent infringement under the European counterpart of Redexim's United States patent on deep-tine aeration machines.

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