

A tale of bales of barley straw and algae

By MARK LESLIE

TORONTO — News flash: Folk remedy strikes at the heart of the pond algae problem.

While science and technology are striving to remove algae from ponds, some superintendents are accomplishing the task with a simple bale of barley straw.

"Generally speaking, I'd say it works," said Gordon Witteveen, director of golf maintenance for the Board of Trade's five golf courses here.

Witteveen, who has two or three bales of barley straw in each of his half-dozen ponds, said, "We've implemented it and had pretty darn good success."

Two bales per acre of pond is sufficient, he said. He also suggested wrapping the bale with chicken wire or fishing net to prevent its falling apart when it decomposes. The bale floats, anchored by a string tied to a cement block.

"In Canada we can't use any dye or chemicals for aquatic weed control in non-self-contained ponds. If the pond is self-contained, you can use chemicals, but you must get a permit for every application," Witteveen said. "Mechanical harvesters, or long rakes can take algae out. Fountains work well, too. This [barley straw] is another tool."

But why would barley straw rid a pond of algae?



ON THE GREEN A bale of barley straw floats atop a one-acre pond on the 8th hole on the East Course at Toronto's Board of Trade Country Club.

"This is my theory," said Dr. Eric Nelson of Cornell University, who has seen this method work. "It ties up nitrogen during decomposition of the barley straw. And since it's the nitrogen in the water that promotes algal blooms, they stop."

"I have not seen any research to prove this. But it makes sense. When you mulch plants with wood chips sometimes those

chips pull nitrogen right out of the plant."

One difficulty could be in finding pure barley straw to begin with. But the farmers Witteveen works with have a large percentage of barley in their fields, he said.

Meanwhile, using the bales adds a novelty to the course, right? "Everybody is talking about it on the golf course," Witteveen said. "They're asking, 'What are these bales of hay?'"

Trash talkin'

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ceptacle, is constructed with cinder blocks covered with painted stucco. A 12-inch drain pipe was installed at the bottom of the ramp with a 24- by 24-inch catch basin for drainage during a storm. A high-pressure hose off of the irrigation system makes clean-up easy.

A trash dumpster, ranging in size from 20 to 28 cubic yards, is usually used.

"While they are emptying the dumpster, we use a front-end loader to clean up any spilled debris, sweep up any smaller debris and then hose off the entire area," Wood said. "If the truck picking up the dumpster brings an empty one along, the turnaround time is limited to clean up the ramp area."

While the filled dumpster is hauled to the landfill, it must be covered at all times.

When an employee empties a maintenance vehicle, they simply slide the debris into the dumpster. On rare occasions, a dumpster is delivered with higher sides than normal, which forces an employee to shovel debris up over the side of it.

But Woods said: "We request our normal height dumpster, where the top is flush with the concrete apron, but they just aren't available sometimes. The total outside area of our maintenance complex, including the trash dumpster area, is completely lighted, using photo-electric cells with timers."

The Links Golf Course
1997 Clubhouse Drive
Somewhere, CO 59000

Memo from: The desk of Tom Smith
Greens Committee Chairman

Memo to: Bob Barlow, CGCS

Subject: Accessory Budget

Bob, Golf Course Solutions is refurbishing metal accessories for many of the top golf courses and management companies in the country..

Please present the pros and cons of refurbishing our metal accessories with Golf Course Solutions vs. refurbishing in house or buying new....

Thanks!

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GREENS COMMITTEE ACCESSORY BUDGET PRESENTATION

ACCESSORY BUDGET - 3 YEAR PROJECTION

Accessories	No.	New Accessories	In House Refurb	GCS Inc Refurb
Ball washer	18	\$3,024	\$1,727	\$994
Post	18	405	324	279
Ball washer base	18	1,188	486	418
Foot Scraper	18	783	432	396
Trash Bracket	9	306	216	198
Putting Cups (Aluminum)	36	594	447	324
Benches - 6' park style bench	9	3,915	1,806	1,953
Tee Markers - custom forged	108	2,160	1,179	864
Sales Tax		742	0	0
TOTAL		\$13,117	**\$6,617	\$5,426

** NOTE: Our in house refurbishment lasts about 1 year. I multiplied our annual in house cost by 3 times to calculate a life cycle equivalent comparative cost to Golf Course Solutions.

PROS & CONS COMPARISON TO GOLF COURSE SOLUTIONS REFURBISHMENT

PROS	CONS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saves money - over 70% more to refurb our ball washers in house when compared over equivalent life spans. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GCS Inc's powder coat finish looks far better than ours and is much more durable. GCS Inc installs anti-seize set screws. All welding is included in the price. New accessories cost as much as 140% more. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Golf Course Solutions' stuff looks better than new! Reduces time demands on staff. Can reduce staff or refocus on more important projects. Provides a cost effective way to change the color of our accessories like we've talked about before Golf Course Solutions can powder coat paint our bench ends and retrofit our benches with maintenance free recycled plastic lumber for about half the cost of a new bench. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have to ship accessories to GCS Inc.

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