

Readying a new course for spring

By PETER BLAIS

SCITUATE, Mass. — Spring preparations for a new course are a tad different than readying an established track for the first swings of a new golf season.

"Overseeding and bunker work are the major differences between prepping a new rather than an established course," said Jeff Carlson, head superintendent at Michael Hurdzan-designed Widow's Walk here and Cornish, Silva, Mungeam-designed Olde Scotland Links in Bridgewater. The two Corcoran Jennison Hospitality-managed facilities are scheduled to open in July. Carlson also oversaw the grow-in of Ocean Edge in Brewster, another Corcoran-Jennison layout that opened in 1986 and that he continues to oversee as CJH's director of grounds.

"You do a lot more overseeding at a new course," Carlson said. "But you have to wait until May around here to make sure that what you put down the previous year hasn't caught.

"You do a lot more bunker work at a new course, too. We have some bunkers we filled last fall and others we haven't filled yet. It depends on the location and the contractor's style. But as a result, you end up doing a lot more weeding, edging and spreading than you would on an established course."

Irrigation and drainage are two areas requiring additional attention at a new track. A superintendent spends a lot of time troubleshooting his irrigation system coming out of a course's first winter. "Frost can push up heads and warp pipes, things you would have corrected or been familiar with at an established course, but that you have to locate at a new one," Carlson said.

"At a new course, you also end up with a lot of frog ponds, areas that just don't drain well. Those areas would have been taken care of over the years at an established course. You just have to feel your way around and through these problems at a new course."

Carlson lays in an extra supply of grass seed to deal with the anticipated overseeding work. He also warehouses additional topsoil and fertilizer. "Fertilization is a key," he said. "You have to wait for the grass to pop up on a new course before you lay down fertilizer. You have younger, more fragile turf and less soil than you generally have on an older course. So that initial fertilization is critical."

Carlson plans on a larger payroll and getting his seasonal help on site earlier in the spring on a new course to deal with the additional work. "You have a lot of new equipment on new courses and you have to be careful, especially with the mowers," he explained. "The frost pushes up rocks and irrigation heads. Mowers can take a beating. You have to tell your operators to watch for those things and take their time doing those first mowings."

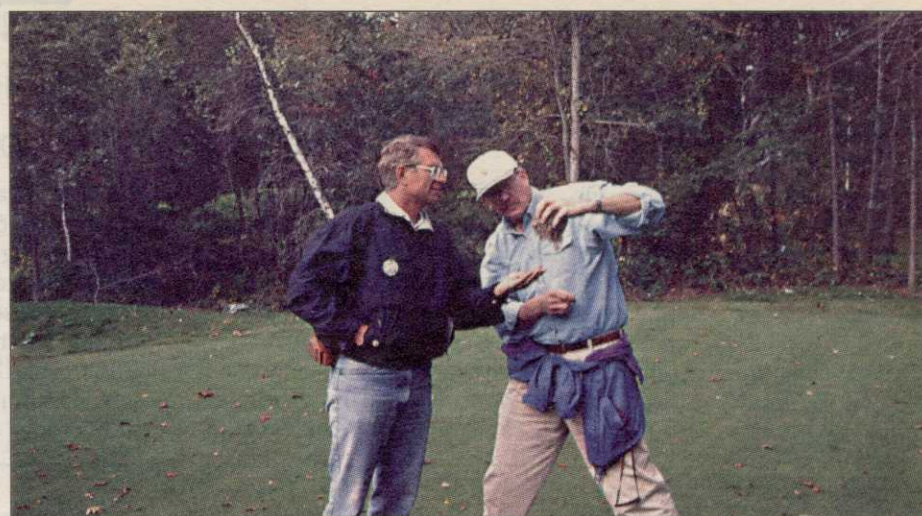
Southern courses are a different beast. Although they have more flexibility regarding opening dates, the ideal time to open a course in Florida would be October, according to Tim Hiers of Collier's Reserve in Naples.

"A course would be emerging from its first season of heavy play by spring," Hiers

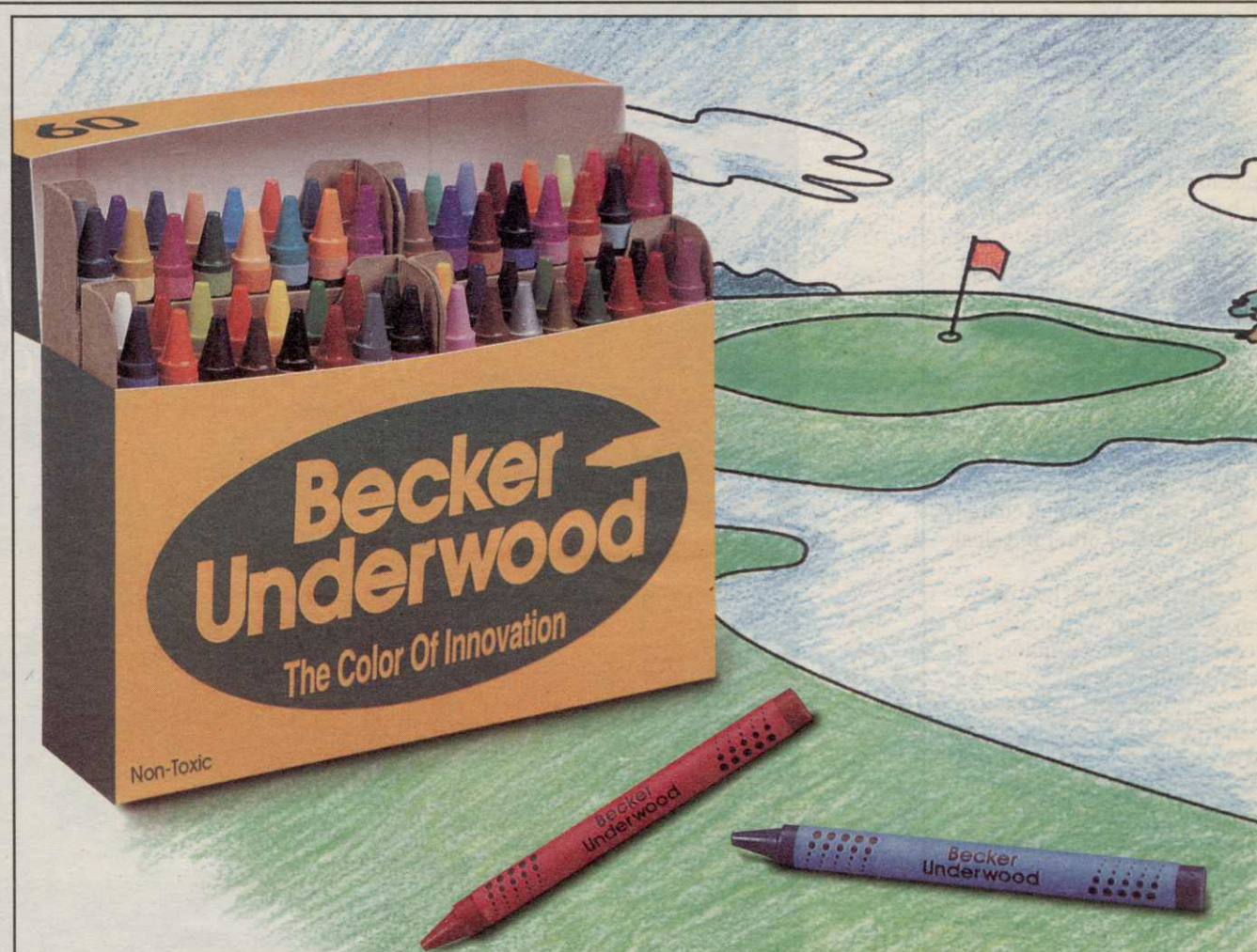
noted. "If there is anything I would do differently with a new course it would probably be to hit it with more fertilizer because of the lack of natural organics that are built up over the years in older soil.

"It's kind of like a 16-year-old as opposed to a 60-year-old. The younger person generally needs to eat more than the older one. Same with a golf course. The younger one generally needs more fertilizer than the older one."

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Architect Mike Hurdzan (left) with Soils Management Technology's Lou Haines at Widows Walk GC.



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Rubigan has always been extremely effective preventing patch diseases. Applying the active ingredient in Rubigan (fenarimol) on a granular carrier insures that all of the active ingredient reaches the soil surface for improved efficacy. Patchwork must be applied preventively for most effective control. For more information, call Riverside at 800-345-3330.

CIRCLE #310

Barricade application gives season-long control

DES PLAINES, Ill. — Barricade herbicide's flexible application timing allows superintendents to apply in very early spring, yet still retain season-long control.

Supported by Kansas State University research, where Barricade and other pre-emergence herbicides were applied in late fall and early spring, Barricade showed the same consistently high level of performance.

"Its extended residual opens up numerous application options," said Gene Hintze, turf and ornamental business manager for

Sandoz Agro. "An early-spring application — on ground that is not frozen — can provide up to 26 weeks of control."

Barricade herbicide offers consistent control of crabgrass, goosegrass, annual bluegrass, spurge, knotweed and 25 other grassy and broadleaf weeds. Its unique, non-staining active ingredient can be applied at rates as low as one-fourth of that required for other preemergence herbicides. For more details call 800-248-7763.

CIRCLE #311

Fertilizers

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highest percentage of water-insoluble nitrogen (WIN) for reasons of safety and longevity, they should realize that some of the WIN of some products, such as UFs, may not be available in a single growing season. By comparison, the WIN in IBDU is virtually 100-percent available in a single season.

To select the most economical and predictable product, the fertilizer's WIN percentage must be closely evaluated. The WIN percentage actually is composed of two parts: cold water-insoluble nitrogen (CWIN) and hot water-insoluble nitrogen (HWIN).

HWIN is the percentage of WIN that is not available in a single growing season. The higher the proportion of CWIN to HWIN, the more controlled-release nitrogen will be available in a single season.

Besides the solubility of the fertilizer compound, golf course superintendents need to consider several factors when selecting the proper fertilizer. These can include soil type, soil moisture and the desired rate of nitrogen release. Uncoated, slow-release fertilizers would be a good choice on USGA Green Section greens for the following reasons:

- Reduced leaching relative to soluble fertilizer.
- Reduced burn potential relative to soluble fertilizer.
- Absence of protective coatings means they are less affected by spike damage.
- Uncoated greens fertilizers typically are available in smaller particle sizes than coated fertilizers, so they are less likely to be picked up by mowers.

One other factor influencing the use of slow-release fertilizers is a golf course's labor force. Fewer required applications make uncoated, slow-release fertilizers ideal for use when labor is at a premium.

New course prep

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At a new course that has been overseeded, a superintendent could benefit from warming soil temperature to jump-start the underlying Bermudagrass and increase coverage on new greens. "Some superintendents will use carbon or Milorganite, something dark to absorb the sunlight and warm the soil a few degrees," said Lon Chatfield, a superintendent at Bonita Bay (Fla.) Country Club.

"Some cultural practices, like a light verticutting, would help. Fertilizing with a quick-release material like ammonium sulfate could get some additional coverage."

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