

Going Postal

■ WE'VE GOT MAIL

Geese Are Good for Nothin' or Are They?

Larry Aylward's article about being nice to geese (Pin High, July) was hard for me to get through. I've been a superintendent for 30 years, and a goose hunter and ecologist for 40 years. Here are my observations:

The truly wild Canada goose is one of the most majestic and intelligent creatures in nature. The metropolitan goose, on the other hand, is a nuisance and a threat to the wild species I respect so much. My golf course is in Montana in the heart of goose country. Each spring, as the first nesting pairs of geese arrive at our course, we take whatever means are necessary to instill fear in them. From then on, they understand the danger and avoid the course.

I respect the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's decision to allow states to manage their own goose problems. I believe most of our industry would agree with this support.

**Don Tolson, Superintendent
Stock Farm Club
Hamilton, Mont.**

Ten years ago when we opened, we saw geese twice per year during their migration. Eight years ago, the first pair nested here and have done so every year since. This year, seven pair nested here and are raising their young on the course. The problem is compounded by the fact that the Chattahoochee River forms one of our course's borders. At times, we have several hundred geese on the course.

Given the amount of dung they produce, that number of geese can make for a rather unpleasant golf outing. It also makes for a rather bad day for the equipment tech that has to make a field repair. Additionally, 20 geese pecking at or feeding on bentgrass in Georgia during July or



DAN BEEDY

August can be extremely stressful on an aging superintendent like myself.

Over the last eight years, we have spent countless time and money in an effort to rid RiverPines GC of these annoying creatures. Most of our efforts (all legal) have been to no avail because once they nest, you can forget harassing them into leaving. As far as I know, we have tried every method available short of a border collie.

Personally, I find it difficult to understand how their "endearing qualities" negate the fact that they are trashing my golf course. Finally, I think you might change your tune if you had 50 or so geese pooping on your lawn daily.

**Bryan Hensley, Superintendent
RiverPines Golf
Alpharetta, Ga.**

I hate to agree with environmental wackos (not that I am accusing you of being one), but I'm also not sure that Canada geese need to be killed. It has been my experience that geese will become scarce when they are made unwelcome.

We simply run off any geese that flock in as soon as they arrive. I herd them on to shore, sprint towards the geese and throw a stick over them. They become spooked enough to fly and soon realize that it is no use trying to nest or reside on the golf course. I have never injured any geese doing this and now rarely have geese visit the course. I have taken up the practice of letting one

couple nest in out-of-the-way ponds, and they seem to chase off others. Park employees and airport personnel can use the same practice to rid their facilities of geese.

Ten minutes a day to run off the flock will result in geese trained to stay away. The dominant mind wins. Don't let a lack of determination result in unnecessary killing.

**Scott Brooke
The Golf Club at Hawks Prairie
Lacey, Wash.**

The Club Managers Association of America (CMAA) has recently started working with GeesePeace to assist clubs in handling their geese problems. GeesePeace is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building better communities through innovative, effective and humane solutions to wildlife conflicts. GeesePeace works with local governments and community leaders to ensure full support and availability of community resources to resolve wildlife conflicts humanely.

**Henry Walmeyer
Director, Industry Affairs
CMAA
Alexandria, Va.**

Editor's Note: Superintendents can find out more about the program at www.geesepeace.org

Another Bright Idea

I'm a golf course mechanic at Zollner GC in Angola, Ind., and I've developed and applied for a patent on a device to transport

walking greens mowers ("You And Your Bright Ideas," June).

It replaces trailers and has cut our mowing time by one-third. This device has greatly reduced damage to mowers and damage to the course. It attaches to a utility vehicle with two hitch pins and allows the mower to be moved on and off in seconds. In most cases it secures the mower without hold-down straps or latches. It has no parts that wear out, such as tires, bushings and bearings.

**Dan Zimmerman
Mechanic, Zollner GC
Angola, Ind.**

Pebble's Cypress Not a Hardwood

I enjoyed Larry Aylward's excellent piece on the new tree at Pebble Beach's 18th ("Meet the New Tree," July). Having played there several times with the old tree, it is great to learn that less-is-more design prevailed, and a single tree became the solution to replace the loss of the original.

However, we all should take note that a Cypress is not a hardwood, as Aylward implies in his closing remarks. Hardwoods are the botanical group of trees that have broad leaves, produce a fruit or nut, and generally go dormant in the winter. This new tree will do none of this. Instead, it will simply play havoc on all who test the 18th.

**Forrest Richardson, Architect
Forest Richardson & Associates
Phoenix**

Feel like going postal? We want to hear from you. You can e-mail your letters to Frank Andorka at fandorka@advanstar.com, fax to 440-891-2675 or send them via snail-mail to: 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Make sure to include your name and phone number for verification. Letters may be edited for length or relevance.