

# Replacement parts: Part I

## A Roundtable discussion

One of the great things about the business of golf is that the people, both industry and superintendent, are willing to get together and talk; to air their mutual problems and try to come up with a solution. Such was the case when **GOLF BUSINESS** asked 18 industry representatives and superintendents to sit in on a roundtable discussion of replacement parts. The only guidelines were that the discussion be open and constructive.

**GOLF BUSINESS** taped the discussion which resulted in some 100 pages of manuscript. In order to give complete coverage to what transpired, we are going to run a series developed from the manuscript. This first installment will cover how some of the companies route their parts requests.



**Jack Krug**, Jacobsen Division of Textron, out of Racine, Wisconsin, describes how the system at Jacobsen works: "I'll tell you how we do it, don't do it.

Assuming that the user, the customer does not have the part on their shelf, and that's another topic for discussion, the first step is the servicing distributor. If that distributor has the part, the problem will be solved quickly. If, on the other hand, that distributor does not have the part, the next natural step is for the distributor to go to the manufacturer to get the part. Assuming that that machine is down and is costing the consumer money, time is the most important factor in moving that part to the user. The distributor would, in Jacobsen's case, contact the factory, using the "unit-down" system that we currently employ. The "unit-down" system is a system within a system which dictates that the part has to be pulled in 48 hours, or less, from receipt of order. That order is phoned in on a toll-free line and goes directly into a small department whose sole existence in life is to try and come up with that part.

"We do four different things to try to get that part. If it's on the shelf, no

problem, it goes out the same day. If, on the other hand, it's not on the shelf, then the next step is to go to the manufacturing level to see if the part is available there. Unit-down has priority over everything, including production. If there is only one of that part, the user gets it.

"Let's assume it isn't there. The third step is to get on the horn to our distribution around the country to locate that part someplace and then make a transaction from point A to point B to get that part flown in. The fourth option, and the one we don't like to do but will, is if there is a machine in the crate and that part is on it, it comes off.

"OK. If that fails we have no options but to back order the parts, inform everybody of the bad news, and then try to set a creditable promise date. That's when we begin to catch the flack from the user. He doesn't care about our promise and I can't blame him. That, however, is basically our procedure."



**Roy Eldred**, The Toro Company: "When you buy, or invest, in a product, what do you expect? What are your expectations as owner of that piece of equipment? I think it

is how well your expectations are satisfied that allow you to form a perception of whether or not we as a manufacturer are satisfying those needs. That perception really becomes your actual experience.

"I'd like to tell you just what, from our standpoint, our mission as an original equipment supplier, designing, manufacturing and selling products for your use, is from my vantage point. I'm responsible for the parts operation of Toro. Our mission is to enhance the sale of Toro products by providing a very high level of after-marketing parts service. That says that my number one concern is customer satisfaction. You might say that could very well be a sales objective related to parts. In other words, you have got a

certain goal that you've got to meet for the year. I approach it in this way: If I make customer satisfaction goal number one, I'm also going to achieve my sales goals in the process. We're dealing in a repeat market, replacement market, and if we don't take care of the customer today, he's going to go to somebody else tomorrow.

"Now, we obviously can't do all of this from our one location in Minneapolis. We depend upon a distributor organization. I think it is very important that we have local representatives that customers can call upon with some convenience. You must have a commitment locally to see that your needs are taken care of and that your investment is protected.

"There are literally thousands of parts in a system and there is no way one distributor could ever stock every part for every product. We wouldn't want him to have every part for every product on his shelves. It is very key that everybody in our whole organization make money at whatever they're doing because if they can't, they're not going to be there to satisfy your needs and see that the investment is taken care of.

"Out of the thousands of parts that are in the system, it is easy to understand why maybe a weldment or a frame would be on back order, but why would we have cutter bars and bed knives on back order? Those are difficult questions to answer and usually it is not related to our ability to forecast need. Usually it is something through the distribution system that causes that to happen. But I can assure you that as a manufacturer, we are working very hard to see that our supply organization is in place, that it is functioning, and that the people are trained and that they understand the business. We don't expect them to carry everything for our products. For those that we don't expect them to carry we have a procedure at Toro to allow them to get whatever they need within a time frame that will satisfy the owner of our products.

"I think we've got some systems in place, we've worked with our distributors in identifying parts that should be stocked at distributor level, we recommend parts for every product that we produce and sell, we

have emergency priority methods for our distributors to get the equipment they need within the shortest period of time possible, directly from us and we try to do the best job we can communicating whenever those needs cannot be filled promptly within a time frame the customer might expect."



**Tom Mascaro**, Turfiber: "I think it would be wise at this point to identify the problem and start from there and work backwards.

Identifying the problem in

parts, I've been in this field many years as most of you know. It is the Superintendent himself, whose job is on the line when he can't get a part. I've seen a few Superintendents fired over the years because they couldn't get a brand new machine working and the chairman or somebody got mad at them and said you shouldn't have bought it, probably didn't want him to buy it in the first place. Nevertheless, the problem is right there, the Superintendent's job is on the line. I've heard Superintendents saying that they would not deal with a company any longer because they just didn't supply the parts. That's how they feel about it. Now it's your problem with the Superintendent, as I see it, as long as his job is on the line. The other thing is that down time is pretty expensive.

"Now these are the basic problems. The biggest problem is how to solve them. I've been advocating a system over the years and that is that the engineer who designed the machine can predict what is going to go bad. He knows where the Archille's heel is, where the parts are going to break, but he doesn't transfer this information as he should or it gets lost in the shuffle. The other problem is the salesman himself, who isn't familiar with the machine, he has never been told of the weak points, he's only been told of the strong points. So he sells a machine without really knowing that it is going to break sooner or later and there are parts that wear out faster than other parts.

"When the Superintendent buys a machine, he ought to buy a bucketful

of parts, right then and there. That's his assurance that the machine will keep running. At one time, I advocated that manufacturers tried shelving with their own parts numbers so that the Superintendent could stock up. I have never seen budgets that have listed parts inventory. It is treated as a secondary thing and the importance isn't placed on the thing that really creates more problems than anything else."



**Reed LeFebvre**, Superintendent, Plant City CC, Florida: "Part of the problem is that golf course suppliers perse or equipment is generally only about 20-25

percent of the manufacturers' total goods so to speak. If we are 20 percent of your business, we get, theoretically, 20 percent of your attention to our needs. You know there is a big market for snowmobiles, there is a big market for other commercial things and they come higher in priority than we do. This may be one of the reasons why we have, I would say it is insensitivity. Sometimes we get the feeling that it is that when we go to get a part. It is kind of a frustrating thing when you go to get a part, you've got a piece of equipment down and you're in the middle of a job, and let's say they don't have the part. They say we don't have the part, we'll have to back order it. Now, most of the time you throw your hand up and say well it's going to be three weeks before you get it, so there goes any schedule you had. You might just as well hang it up. I think that comes under insensitivity as far as the parts people down on the local level. It would be ideal if there were ten Superintendents working in the parts department. You could go in and say I need this part and it looks like this and they could spot it right away. That's no excuse for not having a parts number, but what they don't realize is that when you're down, you're down! It's costing you money just like a gas station that doesn't have any gas to pump.

"one of the other big areas where I find there seems to be a problem is with a distributor who handles other manufacturers' equipment. This seems to be where you run into a

problem of being able to get replacement parts within a reasonable amount of time. Now, reasonable depends on what part you're ordering. Some parts may break down once every ten years, and reasonable has to be a little ways down the road. But for a common usage part, I don't think that there should be any longer length of time for you to be able to get it than it should be straight from the manufacturer. In other words, there is some sort of communication lag between manufacturers.

"If I need a part, I want you to be sure or to guarantee me that you're going to supply me with the parts I need. This is what I look for in whatever I go to get. I buy service."



**Wayne Sloan**, Gulf Stream Land & Development:

"I think the problem that we have is maybe two or three or four fold so the solution is going to vary with

the problems. I think first of all that the consumer has to do a better job of planning. The manufacturer needs to help out in this area as far as planning the lists of replacement parts that are most likely to wear out. There has to be a real marketing effort in this area.

"I'm sure this would be a benefit to the manufacturer and the distributor two, three and four fold, because that's just that many less dollars you're going to have to have tied up in inventory. This also gives additional parts out in the field which can be swapped between "good old buddies".

"Getting back to urgencies, everything is not urgent, but everything is treated as urgent. If we can cut down on the number of urgencies in the system, then reaction to true emergencies will be better. I think we can eliminate a lot of urgencies by going about things in a different fashion than we have in the past.

"The other thing that strikes me in looking at the cost of labor, both distributors and manufacturers', is that packaging of high usage items with a little better price than if they were sold one by one. We can cut the cost on these things and maybe make it a little more appealing for people to buy. You're saving some dollars in inven-

tory stock costs."



**Bruce Oliver,** Zaun Equipment Company: "I need a replacement part. Communication and identification is extremely important. When a customer is

communicating, he should know to the best of his ability what he really and truly needs. He may have an incorrect number, he may have no number and try to work on identification. That is tough.

"I think the things that we've tried to do in the last few years is to better communicate in service schools and in the delivery of a piece of equipment. A customer has to sign that he has received the parts book and instructions. We're trying to protect ourselves as far as product liability, so there are

certain things that he has to have to begin with.

"Usually it is not the Superintendent, but someone who works for him, who begins the communication to our order entry department. The thing that is most important is to identify the problem. Somebody calls and they'll say: 'Do you have something?' Now, they don't say I've got a machine down, they don't really say they're going to buy the part, just do you have it. If we look up on the board and say 'No, we don't', well, they slam the phone down and really don't identify what the problem is: Is the machine down, do they want us to get it for them? Then lo and behold, about three weeks later, somebody will recommunicate with us and say where is my part? They didn't order it to begin with.

"So communication/identification is right at the grass roots of this thing. The distributor is really the middle guy. We sell the product and live on the service. And if we don't have it, we have no purpose for existence. Manufacturers made it, customers

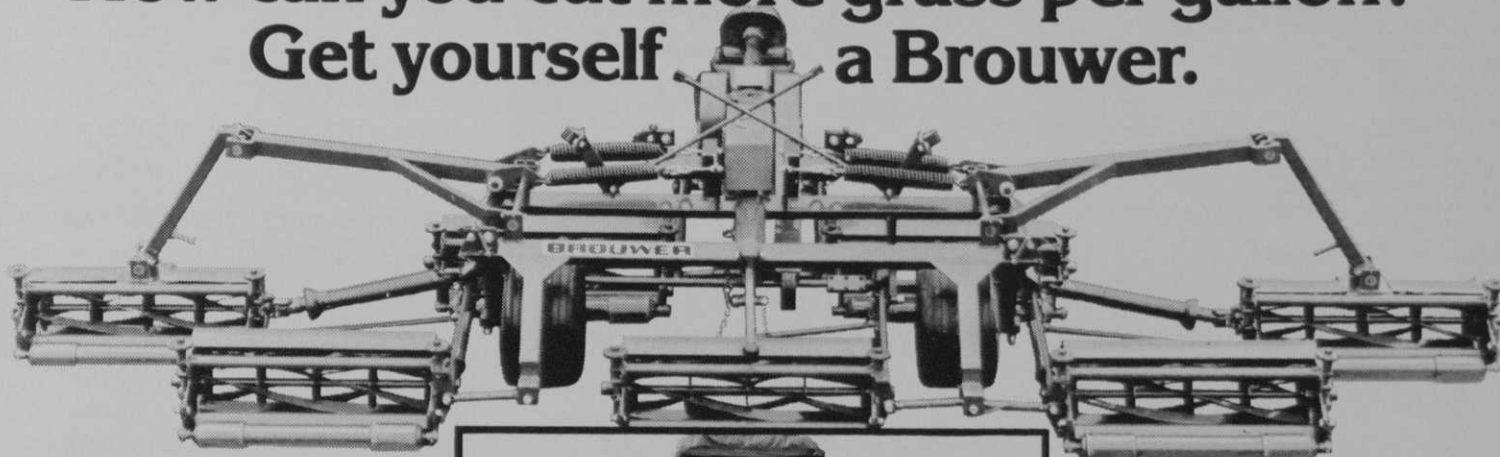
purchased it. We've got to provide service."



**John McKenzie,** Superintendent, Walt Disney World, Windermere, Florida: "Are we talking about the part that we really need, or the one that we're planning on

needing? On the manufacturers level, I'd like to see something that suggests listed parts and the time to replace them. Just breaking it down, take bearings for instance: If you're going to get three years use out of a bearing, tell the guy who is buying it. The engineers have to know, let's face it, the economy is based on planned obsolescence. They're going to know that hydraulic lines are good for two years. Tell the guy: In two years you need to

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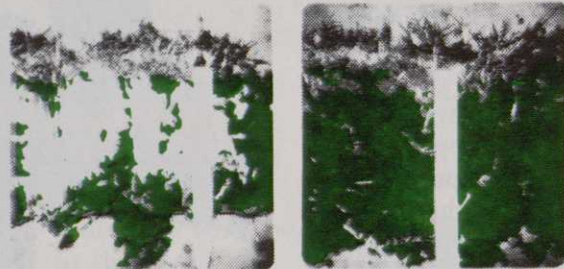
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"When a guy's got 18 holes on a limited budget and he's down, he's down. I get phone calls during the year saying help me out, I need a hand greens mower or something like that, I'm down. Here, I think it's the distributor's responsibility to go ahead and have some backup equipment for that man. Or if the guy has a greens mower down, the distributor should wheel the demo down there and let him have it until he can provide the service that is necessary.

"I'm saying, sure it's good to go ahead and plan your parts. In our business you do all the planning you want, but it's still a surprise breakdown that hits you. When I'm down, I call people all across the state. I'll call friends of mine that are Superintendents and say I don't care if we have to spend three hours to go somewhere. It's better than four weeks. I think on the distributor level, they can communicate among themselves also. Car dealers do it all the time. Not everybody can go to a computerized system or a teletype, but a phone call is simple."

(Editor's note: This first installment gives some insight into how manufacturers and distributors approach the parts replacement problem. It is clear that if a true emergency exists, it must be communicated down the line. It must start with the Superintendent stating that the emergency exists. We also find out that the manufacturer will do all he can to insure the part reaches the Superintendent in the shortest time possible. In spite of this the problem still exists. This first installment has by no means solved the problem, but does raise some interesting thoughts. I hope that you will take time to respond in writing to us with your thoughts. Keep in mind that the only reason there were only 18 people at this roundtable is that we couldn't get all of you together at one time. We hope to do that through these articles. Write us with your thoughts, we hope to answer them with the next installment. If we don't, then we will print the letters to keep the discussion going and see what answers our readers come up with.)

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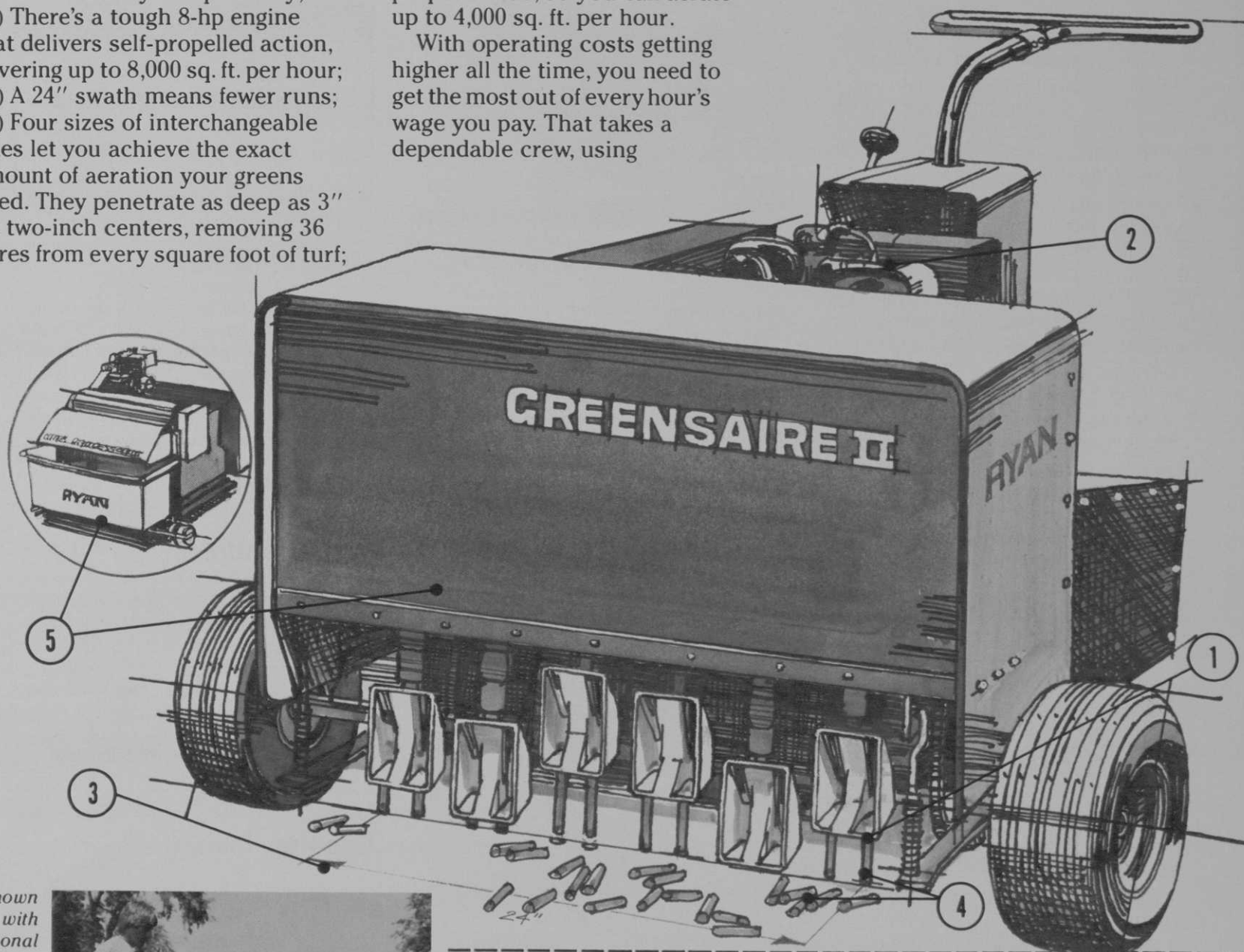
If you don't need the high capacity of the Greensaire II, the smaller Ryan Greensaire 16 is a dependable alternative. It also offers the same choice in tine sizes. It's self-propelled too, so you can aerate up to 4,000 sq. ft. per hour.

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## Reading...

By Dan McNamara, HHH Horticultural

**TREES OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE.** Roger Phillips. 1978 New York, Random House. 224pp. \$15.00, hardback; \$9.00, paper.

This color photographic guide to over 500 species and varieties of trees, primarily ornamentals, is the answer to many a prayer for help in identification.

Rather than a verbal key, the book is based on a 50-page "Leaf Index" where 512 leaves and foliage samples have been grouped according to shape. These include practically all of the most common and important trees found in the temperate climatic zones. Each leaf is labeled with its Latin botanical name, its common name(s), and the page number for its place in the main text.

Trees in the large main section are arranged alphabetically by botanical name. Each entry in this section illustrates three aspects of the tree: a photograph of the flowers; a photograph of the fruit; and a line drawing of the adult tree form. In the drawings, deciduous trees are shown leafless, semi-evergreens have a partial covering of leaves, and evergreens are shown in full canopy.

Concise descriptions give origins, mature heights, flowering times, and additional notes on flowers, leaves and bark to better assure accurate identification.

In addition to these two primary sections of the book there are two spreads of Autumn leaves (which landscape designers might well bear in mind) and three more of bark details. An index of common names tops off the volume.

While the **TREE IDENTIFICATION BOOK** by George W.D. Symonds has a similar "visual key" approach — even more complete than the current book in that it shows bud, twig, bark, berry and leaf details — it is limited to American natives and illustrated by black and white photos. The difference that color makes in identification is great.

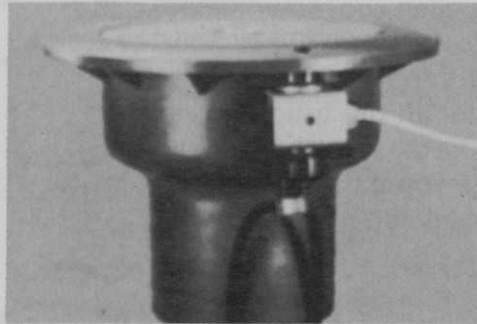
**TREES OF NORTH AMERICA AND EUROPE** is worthy of a permanent place on the reference shelf of every grounds manager. It has already had enthusiastic reception at many trade shows across the country, from golf course designers, course managers, extension personnel and nurserymen. If there is a fault to find, it can only be with the choices of common names; those used are not always the most popular in American usage. It's an excellent book, well produced, and priced right.

## Product literature

### Winter opportunity

Trak Incorporated has a nine-page brochure introducing their winter cross-country skiing method of increasing golf course revenues. In the brochure, Trak tells how to get started with their program through use of their consultant service and on-going assistance in establishing a touring center operation.

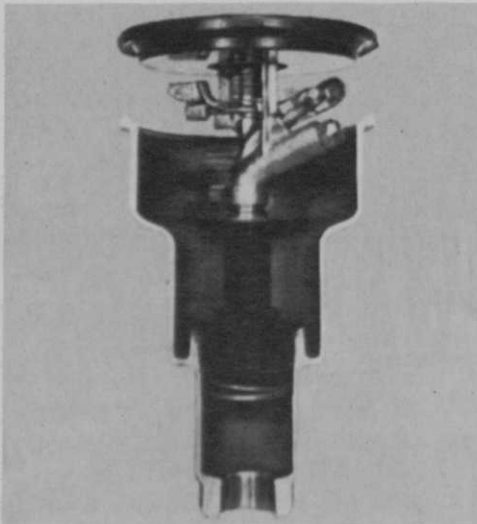
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### Valve-in-head sprinklers

Johns-Manville offers literature describing their electric, hydraulic, and Stop-Flo-Matic models of Buckner rotary pop-up, valve-in-head sprinklers. The information includes construction details, dimension drawings, and a description of available models. A flow characteristic chart details pressure at sprinkler base, flow rate, effective radius of coverage, maximum triangular spacing and precipitation per hour.

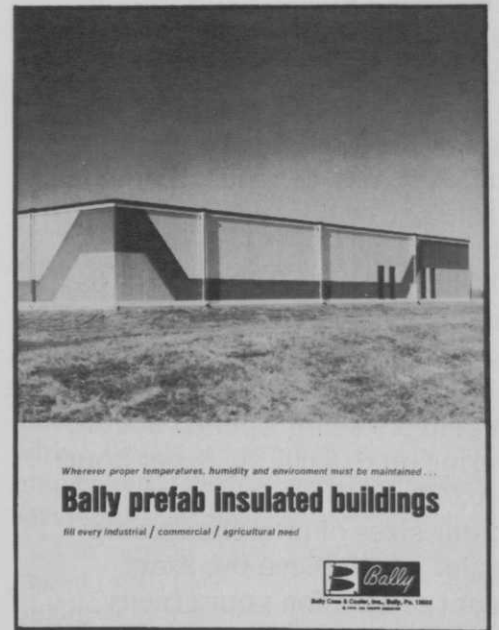
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### Impact sprinkler

A new data sheet from Johns-Manville details special design features of the 8200 series Buckner Impact Sprinkler. The sheet presents pressure at sprinkler base, flow rate, effective radius of coverage, maximum triangular spacing and precipitation per hour for each of six models.

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### Metal buildings

An eight-page color brochure available from Bally Case & Cooler outlines the design and construction features of prefabricated metal buildings. Accompanying the brochure is a description form designed to help prospects in planning their metal buildings utilizing Bally's free design and engineering service.

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### Soil amendment

A technical service bulletin from industrial Minerals Division of IMC Chemical Group describes Turface, a calcined mineral aggregate designed to provide a constantly friable soil. The bulletin describes how to use the soil amendment, and with photos, describes what it will do.

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Massey-Ferguson has a brochure available describing the performance features and operating capabilities of their new 68-hp backhoe loader, the MF60. The 24-page, illustrated brochure highlights to MF60's load-sensing, variable-pressure, variable-flow hydraulic system. Optional features covered in the booklet include a factory-installed extendable dipper to increase digging depth up to four feet, a ROPS mounted cab, an automatic return to dig, hydraulic boom lockout, and additional loader and backhoe buckets for special applications.

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# Advertisers index

A.G. Stafford.....	10	Lester Electrical, Inc. ....	24
Aquatrols Corp. of America .....	24	Long Mfg. Co. ....	11
Brouwer Turf Equip. Ltd. ....	23	Monsanto .....	4
Canadian GCSA .....	28	Ryan Turf .....	25
Cushman Turf .....	8, 9	Tee-2-Green .....	Cover 2
Hahn, Inc. ....	28	Toro Irrigation .....	14, 15
Harley-Davidson.....	3	Toro, Turf Division.....	18, 19
International Minerals & Chem. Corp. ....	17	Wisconsin Marine .....	7
International Seeds, Inc. ....	13, 20, 29	Yamaha.....	Cover 4
Jacobsen Mfg. ....	30, Cover 3		

## golf business

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## Viewpoint

I have received news of a couple of EPA actions that I think are worth mentioning. One is a mailer funded by the League of Women Voters. I believe its purpose is to make consumers aware of toxic compounds. However, it opens with a biased note, saying that a women thinks 2,4,5-T is responsible for her baby's cleft palate. Scientists are beginning to agree that exposure to this compound and dioxin, its poisonous byproduct, are not of proportions to cause any damage. However, the interest in this piece lies in the fact that postage was funded by EPA. I don't think it is up to EPA to fund in any way, any project by an outside group that is not directly and scientifically related to their function. That is to protect from truly dangerous compounds, not foster fear of those that may not be dangerous.

EPA has also financed a film entitled "Serpent Fruits". Although I have not seen the film, its title would suggest it is less than favorable to chemicals in general. The film is the subject of a Congressional inquiry and EPA has been accused of bribing TV stations to run the film. They are providing grants from an EPA fund to 55 of 110 stations which have, or plan to, run the film.

*Ron Morris*



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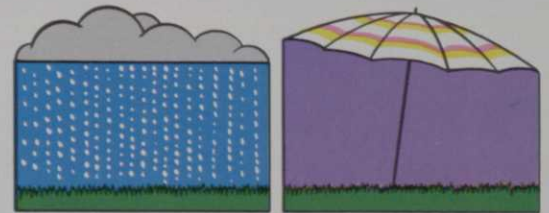
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