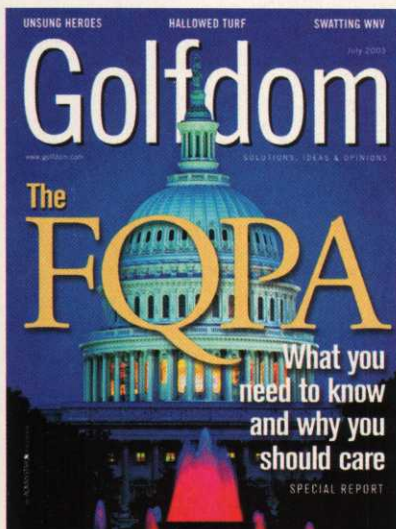
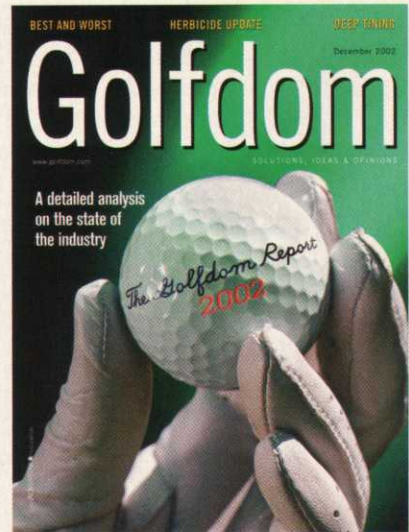
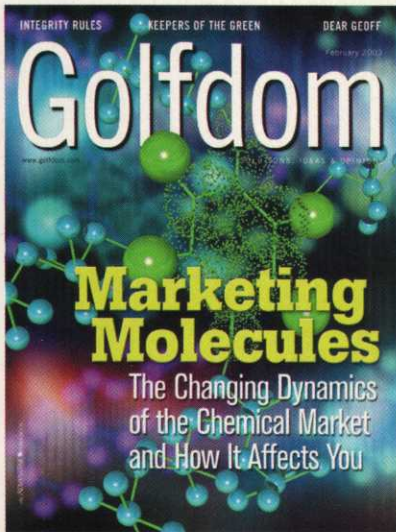
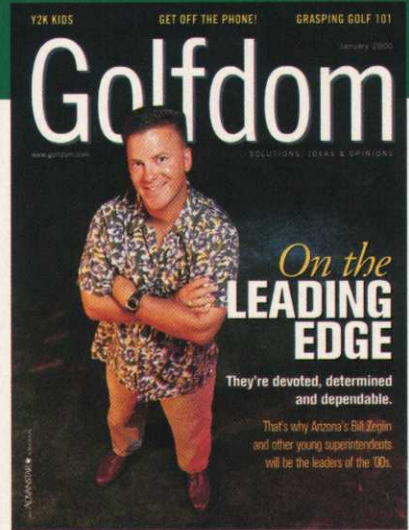
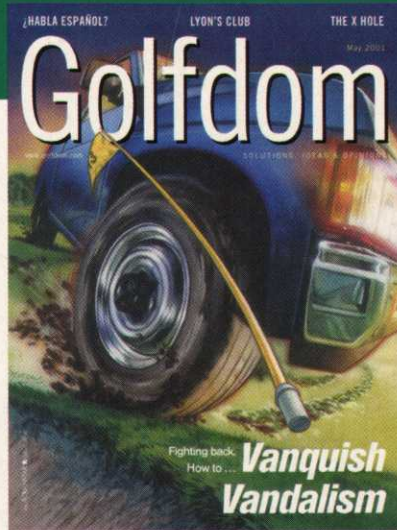
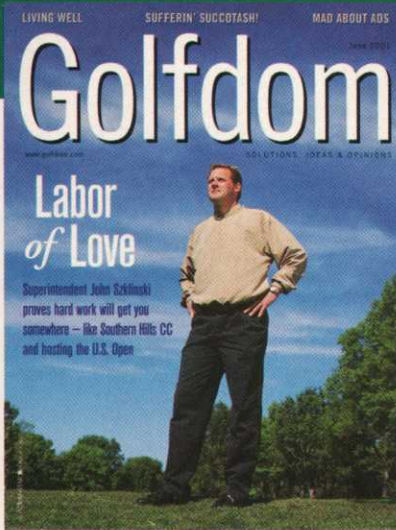


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# Golfdom

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# Made to Order

Custom solutions for utility vehicles pick up speed among manufacturers

BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR

**Y**ou thought you could only customize the cars you drive to get to work. But now you can dress up the vehicles you drive on the golf course.

Utility vehicle manufacturers offer superintendents the chance to spiffy up their riding machines with extras. OK, we're not talking chrome wheels or fuel injection. We are talking cargo boxes, hose reels, sprayers and other useful additions to help superintendents perform their jobs more easily.

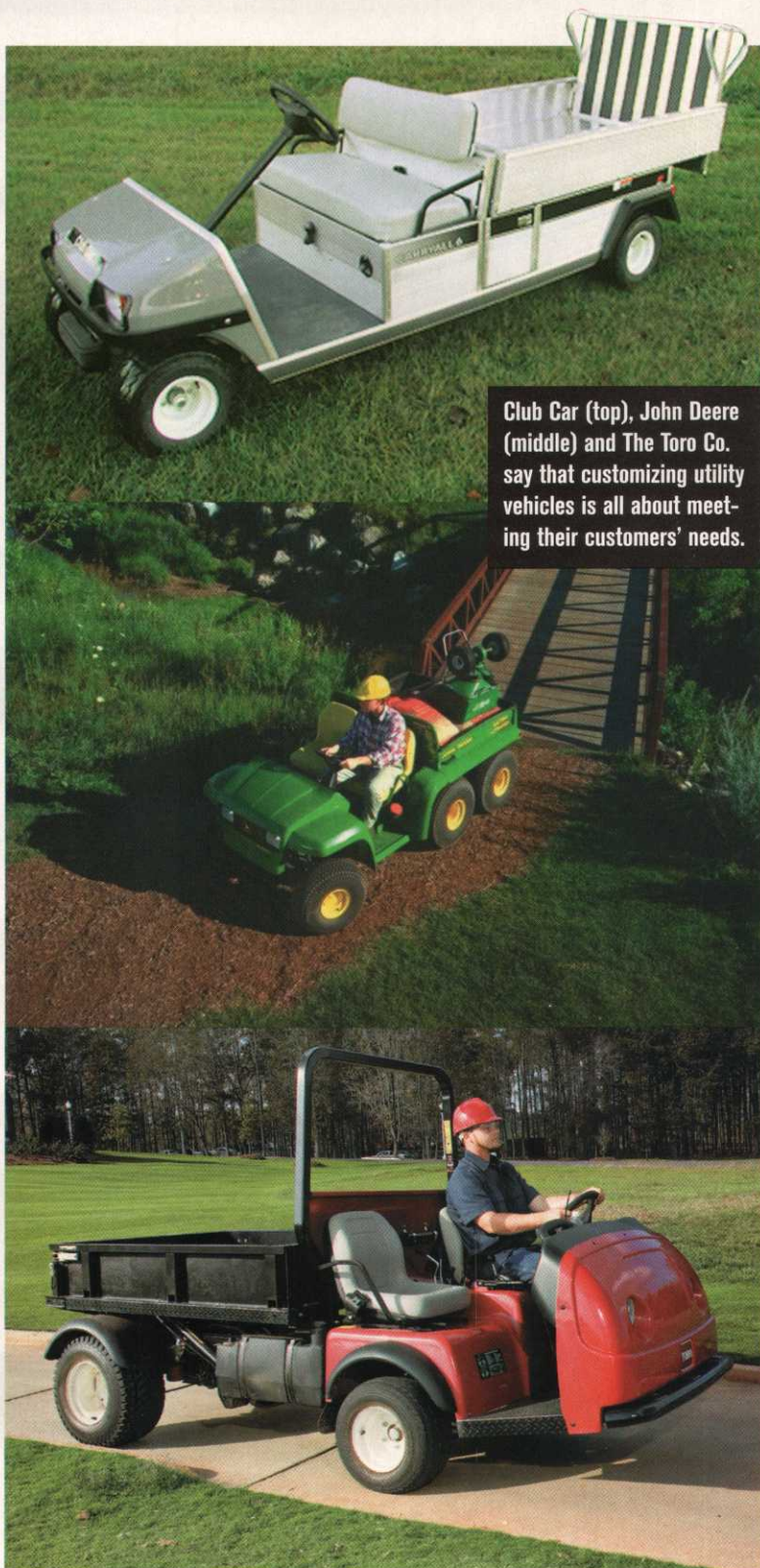
Augusta, Ga.-based Club Car began its custom solutions business in the mid-1990s, but not in the golf industry. Club Car's customization business began with ... would you believe ... cartoon characters. In 1994, Club Car was requested by a major U.S. theme park to drum up something so its popular cartoon characters could fit their large, cumbersome feet on the vehicles' floorboards. Club Car met the park's needs with a few revamped vehicles.

"We made a conscious business decision to put together a small team to meet [the theme park's] needs," says Randal Crook, Club Car's manager of custom solutions.

But that small team kept busy and customized about 100 vehicles for the park in a year. That's when Club Car's decision makers got to thinking about creating a division dedicated to custom projects.

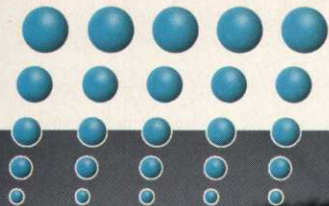
"It has taken off leaps and bounds, and grown far bigger and broader than we had ex-

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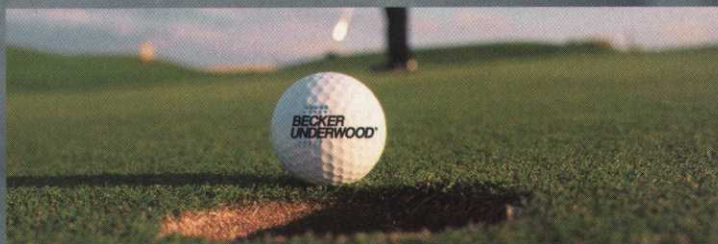




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[www.beckerunderwood.com](http://www.beckerunderwood.com)

**Guoping Yang, Ph.D.**  
Research & Development





*Continued from page 112*

pected it to," Crook says. "I guess you could say meeting a customer's needs turned into a business opportunity."

Club Car is also extending its customizing services to the golf course maintenance industry, Crook says. The company realizes superintendents desire multipurpose vehicles.

"We want them to know that we're capable of doing most anything they need us to do," Crook says. "We have the engineering resources on hand and can turn around these things quickly."



This Club Car vehicle (above) was customized with a ramp. The vehicle below features a fold-down cargo box.



Jon Bammann, marketing manager for Newnan, Ga.-based Yamaha Golf Car, says the company doesn't get many requests from superintendents about customizing utility vehicles. However, it's something he says Yamaha would like to do more of. Bammann knows there are superintendents who want such items as retractable hose reels and generators mounted on their utility vehicles.

In fact, Bammann says he's been working personally with a local superintendent to customize his utility vehicle. The superintendent wanted to know if he could have a sprayer mounted on the vehicle as well as a few racks to hang tools.

Ron Skenes, manager of communications and media relations for Augusta, Ga.-based E-Z-GO, says the Textron company does customization on a limited basis.

"Most of it is done for us at the local level by our dealers and distributors," he adds. "It's difficult for us to do a lot of customization the way our manufacturing is structured."

E-Z-GO does offer several options and accessories to make it easy to customize utility vehicles, however. Skenes says a vehicle has recessed threaded inserts in the walls of the cargo bed. "So if you want to mount racks or carriers or tiedowns, the inserts are already there," he adds.

Neil Borenstein, senior marketing manager for utility vehicles, sprayers and debris products at The Toro Co., says he gets customizing requests frequently from superintendents. But most of the requests are handled at the distributor level.

"Certainly, if they want one of our accessories installed and it's not a standard accessory, and they're ordering a number of units, we will try to install them on our line when the units are going through production," Borenstein says. "It's the least-expensive method of doing it, and the best way to guarantee quality."

Aaron Wetzel, group product marketing manager for John Deere & Co., says customizing requests from superintendents have been on the rise the past five years.

"We've found that a lot of [superintendents] really want their products customized to their needs," says Wetzel, noting that most projects are handled by John Deere's dealers.

### Kept it quiet

While their requests for customized projects are on the rise, many superintendents may not realize that utility vehicle manufacturers offer the service outright. But some of the companies, such as Club Car, haven't marketed the service much in the golf course maintenance industry.

But Club Car is stepping it up. At the GCSAA show in February, the company displayed a customized utility vehicle for all superintendents to see.

Here's how the process works at Club Car. A request is called in and analyzed by professionals who decide if it's feasible. Safety is a huge issue in regard to the request. If it's anything that jeopardizes the safety of the vehicle, it will not be accepted. If it is accepted, a de-

*Continued on page 116*



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*Continued from page 114*

sign of the request will be sketched up within a week or less and forwarded to the customer. The project could be completed in a week or it might take two months. "We try to work within a four-week window," Crook says.

The cost of the customizing project depends on its nature and complexity. Of course, the cost is passed on to the customer, but there's no additional markup on the price, Crook says.

Club Car has had to say "no" to requests before. One superintendent asked Club Car to raise the height of a vehicle's body and speed it up so it could run 25 miles per hour.

"He wanted to be able to go anywhere on the course, and he wanted to be able to get to and from places quickly," Crook says. "But those are two things we felt he couldn't have."

### Going mainstream

It makes perfect business sense that utility vehicle manufacturers are interested in the possibility that a superintendent's customizing idea could lead to mainstream production. It's sensible because it's a low-cost venture from a research-and-development standpoint.

"We don't have to go through a labor-intensive process to find out if something is a good idea," Crook says. "It's a launch pad for new-product development at a very low risk."

For instance, Crook says superintendents will soon see increased functionality on the platform of its Carryall Turf 6 utility vehicle. The platform will feature drop-down sides so the vehicle's cargo box can be converted into a flat bed. This custom solution originated with a Club Car customer.



Yamaha has developed a new line of utility vehicles "with the superintendent in mind." The line is called UMAX.

Bammann says Yamaha would consider a superintendent's customizing idea if there was an audience for it. "That's what we're all about," he adds.

Along the theme, but not exactly customizing, Bammann says Yamaha has developed a new line of utility vehicles "with the superintendent in mind." It's called the UMAX

**"We've found that a lot of superintendents really want their products customized to their needs."**

AARON WETZEL, JOHN DEERE

line, and its vehicles contain cargo boxes, headlights and larger tires, among other things.

Skenes says E-Z-GO also introduced a line of utility vehicles — the Multipurpose Truck line — that are targeted specifically to superintendents. The vehicles feature cargo beds with heavy-duty bedliners.

### The customer

In the end, it's all about customer service — and in this case, satisfying superintendents' needs.

Borenstein says Toro representatives are constantly seeking feedback from customers by talking to them and observing their operations. They also listen to superintendents' unsolicited opinions about particular products. Borenstein says Toro's new Heavy-Duty Workman has many features on it that customers requested, such as a place to plug in their cell phones, a larger glove box area and a new location for the parking brake.

Wetzel says the group's associates talk to customers on a regular basis about utility-vehicle attachments.

"We look at how they're using utility vehicles, and we talk to them about what they would like to see on them," he says. "We ask them what they need to make the vehicles more versatile."

Adds Skenes, "We're constantly listening to the voices of our customers about the things we can do to make the vehicles more useful to them in their day-to-day operations." ■





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# The Company Line

■ PRODUCTS & SERVICES



## ▲ Core-removal system

CH Manufacturing offers the Core Hog, an attachment that converts walking greens mowers into an inexpensive aerator core-removal system.

Developed by a superintendent, the Core Hog can quickly clear greens of aerator cores and vertical mowing debris, saving labor and time.

The core hog is constructed of stainless steel and teflon for strength and durability.

For more information, contact [www.corehog.com](http://www.corehog.com).

## Tank mix approved

A tank mix of **Proxy Plant Growth Regulator** and **Primo MAXX** plant growth regulator recently received registration from the EPA.

Registered for many years for use on cool-season golf course turf, Bayer Environmental Science's Proxy slows turf growth, reducing frequency of mowing and volume of clippings. In addition, Proxy suppresses *Poa annua* and white clover seedhead development.

Primo MAXX, a plant growth regulator from Syngenta Professional Products, also slows growth of cool-season golf course turf, such as bentgrass, perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass.

For more information, contact [www.bayerprocentral.com](http://www.bayerprocentral.com) or [www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com/](http://www.syngentaprofessionalproducts.com/)

## Liquid fungicide

Eagle fungicide is now available

in a liquid formulation for superintendents to use to treat dollar spot, anthracnose, summer patch and brown patch. **Dow AgroSciences** said the fungicide now comes in 2.5-gallon jugs and pint containers as well.

"We've enhanced the packaging and pricing of Eagle with our customers in mind," says Chris Wooley, marketing manager at Dow AgroSciences LLC, makers of Eagle. "Superintendents will find the newly registered formulation and new container sizes to be what they will prefer — a liquid that's available in the amounts they need."

For more information, contact [www.dowagro.com](http://www.dowagro.com).

## Energy bar

The **Colorado Baking Co.** offers the all-natural energy bar, Peakbar.

The company says the Peakbar is low in fat, contains 24 essential vitamins and minerals and is fructose-based. Peakbar is available in five different flavors: Fruit Mania, Oatmeal Raisin, Chocolate Chip, Super-Lean Chocolate Malt and Bodacious Peanut Chocolate Chunk.

For more information, contact 719-578-5000 or [www.coloradobaking.com](http://www.coloradobaking.com).

## De-scaler

**Clearwater Enviro Technologies**

offers the ScaleBlaster SB-300, an electronic descaler that eliminates scale formation in water lines, misters, sprinkler system nozzles and other equipment.

The integrated circuitry system produces a complex modulating frequency waveform to an induction coil that is wrapped around the outside of an incoming water line. This hits the resonant frequency of the calcium carbonated molecules causing them to lose their adhesive properties.

For more information, contact 727-562-5186 or [www.scaleblaster.com](http://www.scaleblaster.com).

## Blower

**Husqvarna's** says its new 125BT blower is lightweight and more compact in size. With a convenient trigger throttle control, operators can easily adjust the blower from low noise and light air volume for controlled blowing in small areas to high-powered blowing for larger jobs and heavier materials.

The 125BT has padded shoulder straps and anti-vibrated engine mounts, resulting in comfort and less fatigue for the operator. With an air purge carburetor, the blower is easy to start.

For more information, contact 800 HUSKY 62 or [www.usa.husqvarna.com](http://www.usa.husqvarna.com).

## Bio pesticide

TerraCyte Broad Spectrum Algaecide/Fungicide from **BioSafe Systems** is an environmentally friendly granular that can be added directly on to growing plants and turf for the prevention and control of moss, algae, slime, molds, liverwort and their spores. TerraCyte's peroxygen chemistry allows for the oxidation and prevention of disease organisms and offers benefits in comparison to metal-based algaecides and fungicides.

For more information, contact 860-657-2211.

## Edger

The **Echo** PE-260 Perfect Edge Power Edger provides a powerful, lightweight, operator-friendly design. It features Echo's commercial-grade Power Boost Tornado engine with a durable hard-chromed cylinder, fully caged needle bearings and forged connecting rod. Designed for demanding and frequent commercial use, the PE-260 Power Edger is equipped with a heavy-duty wheel height adjustment.

For more information, contact [www.echo-usa.com](http://www.echo-usa.com).

## Turf program

**Profile Products** announced the creation of Profile Golf, a new program that it says will help promote turf health, speed establishment and control sediment erosion.

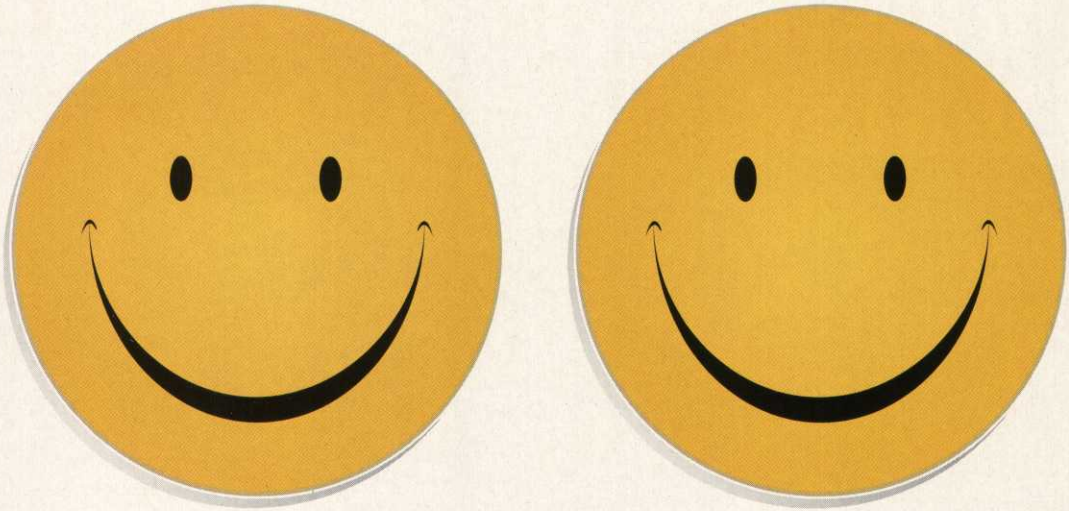
The program consists of two components: incorporating amendments into the soil to promote fast root establishment and applying materials on the surface to promote rapid germination.

Company agronomists and certified professionals in erosion and sediment control will work with superintendents individually to create customized plans for their golf courses.

"Profile Golf is focused exclusively at the core of what makes a golf course successful," says John Schoch, president of Profile Products.

For information, contact [www.profileproducts.com](http://www.profileproducts.com).





## We've got a reason to smile, again.

We are proud to announce that *Golfdom* magazine was named a winner in the 2003 Folio: Editorial Excellence Awards.

The Folio: Award, one of the highest national honors in publishing, is awarded to magazines that are judged outstanding in achievement of their editorial missions. *Golfdom* was named the top national business-to-business magazine in our category for the second time in three years!

Please join us in congratulating our entire editorial and design team.

# Golfdom



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### LEAVE FROM THE CCSAA CONFERENCE & SHOW

GEORGIA-PACIFIC LAUNCHES NITAMIN FERTILIZER

The company says its new NITAMIN fertilizer technology is a

specific needs of different plants, including turf. [MORE](#)

### UNDERSTANDING AND VALUING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Connell HR expert says superintendents can learn to use it for

management success. [MORE](#)

### DECISIONS, DECISIONS

When should a superintendent decide the time is right for a

new project? [MORE](#)

### FIVE STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Bruce Williams, director of golf operations at the Los Angeles

golf course, shares his five-step process. [MORE](#)

### YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT THEY'LL SAY NEXT

Superintendents say the dumbest things. Check out what's

been said. [MORE](#)

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## The Company Line

PRODUCTS & SERVICES



### ▲ Mini-track loader ▶

**Bobcat Co.** introduces the MT52 mini track loader for projects too big for shovels and wheel barrows, but are in areas too small for a full-size skid-steer loader. The Bobcat MT52 is the only mini-track loader on the market with a ride-on platform option that can be installed or removed within a couple of minutes, the company says. This feature offers both ride-on and walk-behind capabilities.

The MT52 mini loader is outfitted with a new user-friendly control system. The direction and speed are now controlled by one multi-function handle, instead of two independent hand levers. Additionally, the loader's lift and tilt functions are controlled by one lever. This mini track loader has a 520-pound rated operating capacity. Its compact size (3 feet wide, 6 feet long) enables it to go where many skid-steer loaders cannot. The MT52 also features a turf-friendly lug track that distributes the



2,506-pound loader over a larger area, minimizing damage to turf. The rubber-track undercarriage provides improved traction and better flotation, even in soft, wet or muddy conditions with minimal ground disturbance.

For more information, contact 866-823-7898.

### New fertilizer company

A new company, **Plant Science**, offers plant nutrition technology for the golf course and related industries. Plant Science offers Nature's Time and Tru-prill fertilizer products in various formulations. Made from food-grade materials, Nature's Time is a plant-based, 100 percent organic fertilizer that contains no animal by-products or sludge. Tru-prill fertilizer combines Nature's Time plant-based organic material with ISO-B (isobutylidenediurea) to produce a line of homogeneous products. Plant Science is based in Barrie, Ontario.

Precision Laboratories, based in Waukegan, Ill., is the exclusive marketer of the Plant Science fertilizer product line in the United States.

For more information, contact 800-323-6280 or [www.precisionlab.com](http://www.precisionlab.com).

### Soil penetrant

**JADA Corp.** introduce FloThru 2403 Soil Penetrant. It helps provide healthier turf and more consistent playing conditions, and helps reduce water loss from runoff and evaporation. It also helps speed up greens and dries out courses faster after heavier rainfall.

For more information, contact 973-762-8002.

### Rain Bird adds distributors

Azusa, Calif.-based **Rain Bird's** Golf Division has announced new distributorships in key areas. Boston Irrigation Supply Co. (BISCO) will be the authorized Rain Bird Golf Distributor in New England, which includes New Hampshire, Maine, eastern Massachusetts (Boston area and Cape Cod), Rhode Island and Connecticut (except Fairfield county).

HYDROlogic is Rain Bird's distributor in the northern and central Illinois areas, covering the Chicago and eastern Iowa markets. HYDROlogic has been an Authorized Rain Bird distributor for a number of years in the Great Plains region.

For more information, contact [www.rainbird.com](http://www.rainbird.com).

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