

# Silver Bullet



---

## There's no such thing.

---

You can't control nature or the weather. Some years will be kind to you. Other years will hit you with problems you never dreamed of. And they'll hit hard. There is no "easy fix." We don't claim to be one.


Revolution won't make three inches of standing water on the 9th green disappear overnight, but it can keep excess water from hanging up in the thatch/mat layer. Revolution's patented molecular structure balances air to water ratios throughout the profile,

allowing excess moisture to drain away. It lets you give your turf the water it needs without sacrificing the firm surface you want for quality play.

Revolution can't replace the need to water, but when supplies are short it keeps whatever moisture *is* in the rootzone more accessible to your turf. By maintaining water availability Revolution increases your turf's ability to maintain antioxidant and chlorophyll levels under stress. Allowing these basic plant functions to continue makes

your turf more resilient to stress and increases the chances of turf survival when you're hit with nature's extremes.

Just 6 ounces of Revolution once a month can keep your soils, and consequently your turf, performing at the best levels possible. Revolution can pull your turf through the rough spots and help you maintain great playability, even when the weather is less than cooperative.

  
**Revolution<sup>®</sup>**  
An essential tool for  
protecting your turf against stress.



**F**ew things irritate an architect more than seeing his work poorly altered by golf course committees or owners. Runner-up in the annoying category might surprise you: Architects seeing their courses emasculated by ugly fencing, loud signage and other distracting course markings.

Think about it. After preserving an existing water hazard or creating a lovely one, it's difficult to see someone come along and tag the feature with red spray paint, then drop big red stakes every six feet. Or how about the lovely tree or vegetation-dotted hill that frames a hole, only to be accented by glowing white PVC pipes every 10 feet.

Yes, hazards and boundaries must be marked, but the way in which they are marked says a lot about your course. If handled poorly, over-marking a course can impact the "natural experience" that architects often hope to create.

We've all been to the facilities where lateral hazards are encircled with enough yellow to look like a crime scene. Or the out of bounds is so aggressively designated that it almost screams, "2-Stroke Penalty If You Slice It Here, Bubba!"

This enthusiastic designation of course features is usually the result of a well-meaning but overzealous golf pro marking the course. You know, just in case the PGA Tour decides to pop in for a surprise one-day visit.

But how many times during a televised tournament have you seen hazards marked excessively by rules fanatics? Not too often. The governing bodies tend to designate hazards as discreetly as possible.

Rae's Creek lined with red stakes? Nope.

The 16th at Cypress Point demarcated by a red paint line? No way.

To emphasize golf courses as natural arenas, all signage, course markings, fencing, benching and other guidance devices should be as subtle as possible.

Many of the best facilities in the world have homemade signs or tee markers, often created out of native materials. But even the natural material trend has gone too far, especially when you see pine branches used as tee markers, with only a small colored dot designating which tees you are looking at.

## On the Mark with Course Markings

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



GOLD-PLATED

SIGNAGE SHOULD

BE AVOIDED UNLESS

YOUR COURSE IS

OWNED BY

DONALD TRUMP

The classic blue, white and red tee marker balls still have their place in the game, as do the benches and flagsticks and signage sold by various companies. It's up to superintendents, pros and general managers to place them discreetly on your grounds to ensure proper function.

As for trying to hide some of these man-made objects — say, a drinking fountain — don't surround them with enough flowers to stock a Corleone family funeral. Paint them green and leave them undecorated.

Also, gold-plated signage should be avoided unless your course is owned by Donald Trump. And avoid bulky tee markers made of bronze, marble or items you might find in one of Saddam Hussein's old palaces.

Many of these attempts at "elegance" reek of desperation. Oh, some golfers will say they add class, but the best places in golf remind you that simplicity is often the classiest way to present a course.

As for golf car directional ropes and signs, again, green is your friend. And overuse almost encourages golfers to revolt.

Hole signs with course drawings aren't necessary with GPS monitors and yardage books, but if you must, use the ones that sit lower to the ground and avoid those featuring ads for the local massage parlor.

For OB and hazards, space the stakes out as much as possible. Use natural finishes with red, yellow or white tops. They'll blend in better while still marking your hazard.

As always, the goal is to minimize the hand of man while maximizing the feeling of a contest amidst a natural setting. Golfers might not notice, but the architect will.

---

*Geoff Shackelford's latest book is Lines of Charm: Brilliant and Irreverent Notes, Quotes and Anecdotes from Golf's Golden Age Architects. He can be reached at [geoffshac@aol.com](mailto:geoffshac@aol.com).*



# A Breakthrough in Dollar Spot Resistance!

From New York to Nebraska to Texas ...  
Benchmark DSR is leading the way.



## TURFGRASS QUALITY

RATINGS OF BENTGRASS CULTIVARS IN THE  
2003 NATIONAL BENTGRASS (GREENS) TEST  
AT **ITHACA, NY** - 2004 DATA - 1-9; 9=BEST

NAME	MEAN
<b>Benchmark DSR</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Penn A-1	6.8
Pennlinks II	6.8
Memorial (AO3-EDI)	6.4
007 (DSB)	6.3
Vesper	6.3
LSD Value	1.5

2003 NATIONAL BENTGRASS (GREENS) TEST AT  
**DALLAS, TX** - 2004 DATA - 1-9; 9=BEST

NAME	GENETIC COLOR	LEAF TEXTURE	DOLLAR SPOT
<b>Benchmark DSR</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>8.0</b>
T-1	7.3	6.3	7.3
Penn A-1	6.3	6.0	7.0
LS-44	6.3	6.7	6.3
Pennlinks II	6.3	4.3	7.3
Penncross	6.3	4.3	7.0
LSD	0.8	1.6	1.1

## TURFGRASS QUALITY

RATINGS OF BENTGRASS CULTIVARS IN  
THE 2003 NATIONAL BENTGRASS  
(GREENS) TEST AT **MEAD, NE**  
2004 DATA - 1-9; 9= BEST

NAME	MEAN
<b>Benchmark DSR</b>	<b>7.6</b>
Declaration	6.6
Penn A-1	6.3
Pennlinks II	6.3
LS-44	5.7
Vesper	3.4
LSD Value	0.6

This new selection promises to set the standard for years to come. The culmination of many outcrosses, Benchmark DSR™ was selected for its resistance to the Dollar Spot Disease, which is common to all bentgrasses **AND expensive to control**. Planting BenchmarkDSR™ can save you time and money by reducing or eliminating fungicide treatments.

In addition, Benchmark DSR™ is one of the darkest green Bentgrasses available, has a very fine leaf texture and less thatch.

Benchmark DSR™ is an excellent choice for golf course greens and fairways where environmental sensitivity is tantamount.



33390 Tangent Loop / Tangent, Oregon 97389  
Phone (541) 926-8649 / Fax (541) 926-4435  
800-421-1735 / [www.turfmerchants.com](http://www.turfmerchants.com)

*Perfecting Turfgrass Performance™*



Captain Neo™  
(Natural Engineered Organism)

**Captain Neo guarantees  
that no Biotechnology  
was used in advancing  
this variety!**

For complete trial data go to [www.ntep.org](http://www.ntep.org)



# Muchas



Ken Flisek (green shirt) poses with his maintenance crew. Many of the crew's members hail from Mexico.



# Gracias

Pittsburgh superintendent Ken Flisek praises the hard-working Mexicans on his maintenance crew who helped save his job

■ BY LARRY AYLWARD, EDITOR IN CHIEF

**N**ever mind the plateful of fajitas, which will surely turn cold from sitting untouched. Ken Flisek didn't come to Don Pablo's just to have lunch.

First on Flisek's agenda is not to satisfy a hankering for spicy food, it's to find Mexicans — specifically Mexicans who need jobs. That's the main reason Flisek came to the Pittsburgh-area ethnic restaurant on this winter day.

Flisek, the golf course superintendent at The Club at Nevillewood, has been searching for weeks for Mexicans to work on the golf course he manages. He knows that many of them migrate to the United States for such service-type jobs. He also knows that many of them have gained strong reputations for their solid work ethics.

Flisek hopes if he can recruit some Mexicans to work on his maintenance staff, everything will be fine again. The course's condition will improve, and the club's members will be happy once more.

And Flisek will be able to keep his job.

So when Flisek sees the two Mexican men

enter the restaurant, he jumps sprightly from his chair and approaches them, leaving his half-eaten lunch behind. Flisek introduces himself to the 30-something men and asks them if they're looking for work. When they reply "yes" in their broken English, Flisek tells them he might have jobs for them.

Flisek explains to the men that he's looking for laborers to work at Nevillewood, a private club in Presto, Pa., a suburb of Pittsburgh. Flisek gives the men his business card and asks them to phone him the next day.

Finally, a solid lead, Flisek says to himself after the chance meeting. On his way home from the restaurant, Flisek stops at his office. He sees the flashing red light blinking on his answering machine. The Mexicans have already called. Three times.

Flisek phones them back and invites them to his office for an interview. The two men arrive promptly the next day with a friend who's also looking for work.

Flisek explains to the three men what it's like to work as a greenkeeper. He tells them they could earn up to \$350 a week and work overtime. The men provide Flisek with the necessary documentation to ensure they are

*Continued on page 26*



*Continued from page 25*

legal aliens, and they report to work the following day.

Flash forward from that winter day in 1997 to a spring day this year. Eleven of the 25 members on Flisek's maintenance crew hail from Mexico. Nine of the men are seasonal workers participating in a government visa program.

Two of the men, Jeronimo Corral and Antonio Hernandez, are year-round full-time employees. They have homes in Pittsburgh with their wives and young families. Corral and Hernandez say they are living the American dream.

Sitting at a table on the outdoor deck of the Nevillewood clubhouse on this sun-drenched day, Flisek sips a cup of coffee. The 47-year-old superintendent appears relaxed and confident — and for good reason. Things have been

going well at the golf course since the Mexicans joined the maintenance crew. The course's condition has improved and the club's members are happy again.

And Flisek still has his job.

"Their hard work and dedication have made my life easier," Flisek says.

**F**lisek recalls the day in October 1996 when he was called into a meeting with his new co-grounds chairmen.

They stunned him with the news that they were not satisfied with the condition of the course.

"We basically said, 'Ken, you have to find a way to get us back to where we once were,'" recalls Dick Daniels, one of the co-grounds chairman at the time.

Although caught by surprise with the news, Flisek didn't deny their concerns. He knew the course looked rough around the edges — some areas were left untrimmed, and bunkers weren't edged and sometimes not even raked. Flisek also knew the way the course appeared was unacceptable at a place like Nevillewood.

"Tournament conditions are no longer just for tournaments," Flisek says. "In many places, tournament conditions are required for everyday play."

What caused the substandard conditions? The reason was simple: Flisek couldn't find enough quality help. He had some hard and reliable workers on his staff, but not enough of them. "We were working our butts off, but the results just didn't show," Flisek says.

He had been battling this problem for a few years. Fortunately, Flisek's co-grounds chairmen were aware it, and told him they would support any ideas he had to improve it. But as they walked out of their meeting with him on that autumn day, they made it clear to Flisek that they might have to change superintendents if the course's condition didn't improve.

Flisek joined the Jack Nicklaus-designed club in 1991 when the course was under construction. "It was obvious to me during the construction phase that this was going to be a very labor-intensive course," he says.

The course, set among the rolling hills of western Pennsylvania, requires much handwork, especially around the deep-faced

## Coming to America – Legally

### Superintendent prefers using H-2B visa program to recruit workers

They want to come here because they want a chance at the American dream.

According to a recent study by the Pew Hispanic Center, a non-partisan research group in Washington, 46 percent of Mexicans say they would move to the United States if they could to improve their economic status, among other things. Twenty-one percent said they would be willing to live in the United States illegally.

Ken Flisek, superintendent of the Club at Nevillewood in Presto, Pa., is all for Mexicans coming to America — but only if they're legal aliens. Flisek has employed Mexicans at his golf course since 1997. But he won't employ any Mexicans if they don't have legal documentation.

Hence, Flisek has utilized the U.S. government's H-2B visa program to be on the up and up when it comes to recruiting seasonal laborers from Mexico.

Congress initiated the H-2B visa program, which allows seasonal workers in the country for up to 10 months, in 1991. Many Hispanics on H-2B visas come to the United States each year from around the world to live and work, filling jobs where there is a shortage of American workers. The process for arranging H-2B visas for U.S. employers and international seasonal staff can take up to five months from the initial application to the arrival of the employee in the country. The H-2B program was wrapped into the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service in 2002.

The Club at Nevillewood typically hires a broker or immigration attorney to conduct the process and secure the paperwork of hiring Mexicans through the H-2B visa program. The fee is around \$4,000 to bring up to 20 workers to the course. Nevillewood usually brings about 10 workers. The club also helps employees pay for their transportation from Mexico to Pittsburgh and assists employees with finding housing.

"I like the H-2B program," Flisek says. "We need to do more to bring in documented workers — we know who they are, we have their fingerprints — and close the borders to others, especially in this era and for its security concerns."

— Larry Aylward

*Continued on page 28*





**DON'T COUNT ON THIS.**



*Continued from page 26*

bunkers. That means that Nevillewood requires a large maintenance crew during the playing season, 25 to 30 people, to keep it up to standard.

But Flisek had problems from the beginning finding good help. For one thing, the labor market had tightened in the Pittsburgh area, and there weren't a lot of young people willing to work on a golf course for \$8 an hour.

Flisek consulted with employment agencies, held job fairs at the club and took out

advertisements in the local newspaper's employment section to recruit potential workers. But nothing seemed to attract them.

Flisek surmised that some people were interested in working at the golf course until he told them they had to arrive at 6 a.m. daily and work on weekends. Then those potential employees' jaws dropped and their eyes bulged.

Flisek was able to recruit some college kids to the crew, but they couldn't start work until May and the golfers begin playing in April, meaning the crew was shorthanded in the early spring. When the crew was finally at full strength in mid-summer, the course was in good condition. But when the college students returned to school in mid-August, Flisek's crew was left shorthanded again.

Another problem within the problem was that some of the college kids weren't dedicated to their jobs. Every morning, it seemed, a college kid called off sick. "So I had a whole schedule that I'd made up the night before and then ... bam ... I had to change it at 6 in the morning," Flisek says.

It's not that Flisek never had hard-working college kids. They were just in the minority. Also, many college kids only worked one season. On average Flisek had to replace about 15 of his 20 seasonal workers every spring. He also had to train those workers, which took time and money. Spring is the time of year for superintendents and their crews to apply herbicides and insecticides — not to train a horde of new employees, Flisek says.

After meeting with the co-green chairmen, Flisek considered his hiring options. He had worked with Hispanics before at golf courses in New York, Illinois and Arizona. Many of the Hispanics impressed Flisek with their will to work, and several returned to the courses to work year after year.

But Flisek knew he would have a hard time finding Hispanic workers in Pittsburgh, which wasn't home to a large population of the group. However, after doing a little legwork, Flisek discovered that Pittsburgh had a small population of Mexicans who had migrated to the city.

So he launched his recruiting drive. Flisek placed a help wanted ad in a Spanish-speaking newspaper. He left his business cards and flyers describing the job at the city's only Mexican



## All in the Family: Mexicans Stay Together

Lunchtime is a time  
for togetherness.

Superintendent Ken Flisek is not only impressed with his Mexican employees' work ethic. He's wowed by their familial commitment to togetherness.

The Mexicans that Flisek employs at the Club at Nevillewood car-pool together, eat lunch together and live together. They even buy things together. And many of the seasonal workers save a good portion of their income and send it home to family members living in Mexico.

Two of Nevillewood's full-time employees, Jeronimo Corral and Antonio Hernandez, recruited their fathers and brothers to work at the course as seasonal labors. Corral's and Hernandez's families live together under the same roofs during the golf season. And everybody gets along well. Corral says Mexicans are people persons, especially when it comes to family members.

"We don't like to be alone," Corral says. "After dinner, we sit and have coffee together. We don't run off to do things on our own."

Flisek believes Mexicans are more loyal to each other, especially their family members.

"Their families stay together, and generations of their families will live in the same house," Flisek says. "They're much more communal than [Americans] are."

Brad Walker, irrigation tech at the Club of Nevillewood, says he's impressed with the Mexicans' family values.

"It's what America is missing," he adds.

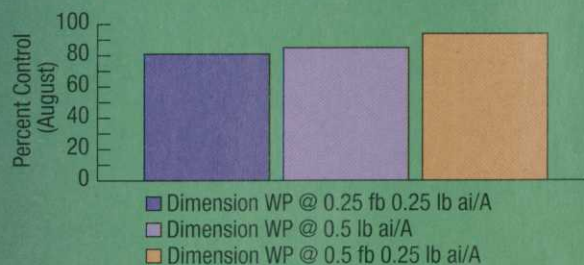
— Larry Aylward

*Continued on page 30*



# COUNT ON DIMENSION® FOR SEASON-LONG CONTROL.

**Preemergence Crabgrass Control: Warm-Season Turf**

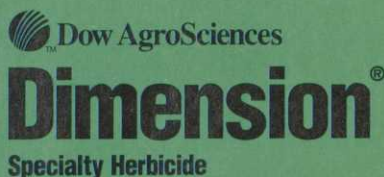


Summary of Dow AgroSciences field trials, 2002-2004, GA, SC, FL, TN, NC, AL, OK, TX. Repeat application occurs six to 10 weeks after initial application.

**Preemergence Crabgrass Control: Cool-Season Turf**



Summary of Dow AgroSciences field trials, 2001-2004, IL, MI, PA, IN, NJ, RI, MD, VA.



**WORKS ALL SEASON | CONTROLS NEWLY EMERGED CRABGRASS | NEVER STAINS**

Visit [www.DimensionHerbicide.com](http://www.DimensionHerbicide.com) for more university trials.



*Continued from page 28*

grocery store. He scouted Mexican restaurants for potential employees.

It was February, and Flisek hoped to hire new workers by mid-March. But his search wasn't going well. Part of the problem was that Flisek was shunned because some Mexicans thought he might be an undercover government agent looking to bust illegal immigrants.

But then there was the fortuitous meeting at Don Pablo's, and Flisek's recruiting effort found life. His new workers told Flisek they knew of other Mexicans who sought employment. By the summer, Flisek had six Mexicans working on the crew.

"My labor concerns were well on their way of being a thing of the past," Flisek says.

It didn't take long for members to notice an improvement in the course's looks.

"It turned out to be a stroke of genius," Daniels says of Flisek's choice to hire migrant workers. "Ken was able to raise the bar here."

Flisek knew he would have to integrate the migrants into his existing American crew, which posed both communicative and cultural challenges. Flisek took a refresher course in Spanish at a local community college. He also purchased an English-Spanish dictionary and a

book titled "Spanish for Gringos" for his American crew and him to peruse.

Flisek concentrated on obtaining training tapes, whether from the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America or equipment manufacturers, narrated in English and Spanish. He also began posting signage in the

maintenance facility in English and Spanish.

Shortly into the season, Flisek held a celebration for his entire crew — a Cinco de Mayo party. He figured it was a good way for his Mexican and American workers to get together in a nonwork environment. The Mexicans did the cooking, and Flisek supplied the beer.

"We had a great time," says Flisek, noting the Cinco de Mayo party has become an annual event. "It was a good way to meld the two cultures together."

The workers from the two cultures get along well. When he joined the Nevillewood maintenance staff five years ago, Brad Walker, the course's irrigation tech, says the Mexicans made him feel at ease.

"Ken puts a lot of trust in those guys, and we have a lot of trust in them," Walker says. "They care about this place."

Antonio Hernandez sips a Pepsi and nods his head in agreement as he listens to Jeronimo Corral speak on the virtues of hard work.

"We start at 6 in the morning, and we like to work late," says Corral. "And the more hours we work, the more money we make."

Hernandez says: "We're like ants. We never stop. We're always doing things."

An ugly stereotype, however, has plagued Mexicans for years. It maintains that they are lazy, unreliable and untrustworthy.

Corral and Hernandez are aware of the label, but it doesn't bother them. Flisek is also aware of the tag. He remembers watching old Western movies where Mexicans were depicted as irresponsible drunks.

Flisek is not sure where or why the stereotype originated, and he remains befuddled by it. He will tell you that many Mexicans are dedicated workers. Flisek tells many stories that depict their staunch work ethic. One day during the initial season in which he had employed them, a crew of five Mexicans was scheduled to mow the greens by hand in the morning and then trim the turf on the front nine holes. Usually, the tasks took a crew of six college kids about 10 hours to complete, but the five Mexicans finished the work in five hours.

Flisek didn't believe they could finish that much work in such a short time. So he took a

*Continued on page 32*

## Mexicans and America

### Living and Working in the U.S. — Legally

Would you participate in a program that would allow you to work in the United States and cross the border legally on the condition that you eventually return to Mexico?

Yes ..... 71 percent

No ..... 18 percent

Would you participate in a program that offered the prospect of permanent legalization for migrants if you lived here for five years, continued working and had no problems with legal authorities?

Yes ..... 72 percent

No ..... 17 percent

*Based on responses from about 5,000 Mexican migrants last summer.*

### Going to America

If you had the means and opportunity, would you migrate to the United States?

Yes ..... 46 percent

No ..... 52 percent

Would you work and live in the United States without authorization?

Yes ..... 21 percent

No ..... 76 percent

*Based on responses from about 1,200 Mexican adults last spring*

SOURCE: PEW HISPANIC CENTER