



**MARK SMITH**

## Original Greensaire Invented In Minneapolis

The first Greensaire was built in a basement in Hopkins, Minnesota in 1937. It was built by Art Cohrs with some help from his brother, Herb. At that time Art was working as a machinist at Minneapolis Moline and Herb was working on the grounds crew at Minneapolis Golf Club. Herb later became superintendent at Minneapolis Golf Club and remained in that capacity for about twenty-five years.

The first machine was powered by a five horsepower Kohler engine and used sawed-off golf club shafts as tines. The machine had eight tines. It was first tested at Minneapolis Golf Club in the fall of 1937. The tines had a tendency to lift the turf from the soil which prompted the installation of "fingers" between the tines to hold the turf down.

Shortly after the invention of the first machine, a second machine was built in Art's basement in Hopkins. This machine had twelve tines instead of the original eight. Art used this machine to do custom aerifying at various clubs in the metro area in order to get some extra money to finance his newly founded operation. Care was taken to enclose the moving parts of the machine so that nobody would attempt to duplicate it.

In 1943 the machine was named the Greens Air Special and production of the third model began in Art's garage. By this time Lawrence Smieja, a master machinist at Minneapolis Moline, had become Art's partner and was helping him to build the machines. Although attempts to gain a patent had begun as early as 1938, the final patent was not granted until 1951. Later patents were also secured in England and Germany.

In 1952 production moved to a shop in Deephaven, Minnesota. About 100 machines were built at this site. In 1953 Art loaded up a Greens Air Special into the truck of his 1950 Mercury and drove to the G.C.S.A.A. show in Atlantic City, N.J. There he sold his first machine to Frank Svehla, a golf course superintendent from New Jersey, for \$595.00. About this time Idon Haugen joined Art and Lawrence as a salesman and bookkeeper. Haugen was also golf course superintendent at Minikahda. The company was named the C.S. & H. Co. (Cohrs, Smieja and Haugen). About 1956 Haugen dropped out of the picture and the name was changed to the Greens Aerification Co., Inc.

After producing machines for two years at their shop in Deephaven, Art and Lawrence were forced to move their operations to a four stall garage in Hopkins. The dentist with whom they shared a building in Deephaven could no longer tolerate the noise from Art's and Lawrence's shop. About 150 more machines were produced in the Hopkins shop until 1958. During all of this time, Art and Lawrence retained their full time jobs at Minneapolis Moline. They worked on the Greensaire nights and weekends.

At the 1957 G.C.S.A.A. show in Louisville, KY, a deal was struck with Gordy Killander and Earl Nystrom of K & N Machine Works whereby Art would sell the rights to his machine to them. K & N subsequently became affiliated with Ryan. When asked why he decided to sell out, Art said that he was tired of working the long hours that his regular job and production of the Greensaire demanded. In about 1960 Art invented the Meter-Matic topdresser which he sold to Sodmaster. It is interesting to note that neither of the two machines that Art invented has undergone significant changes in the last twenty years.

Art, who is now seventy-seven years old, will begin his thirteenth year of cutting fairways at Minneapolis Golf Club this spring.