

Nesting Structures Very Successful On Golf Courses

By MICHAEL BROWER

Hillcrest Country Club

A recent project funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ducks Unlimited and other conservation groups has found that artificial waterfowl nesting structures can dramatically increase hen mallard nesting success. The four-year study showed that the nest structures were readily accepted by hen mallards and that 77% of nests produced ducklings.

This past golf season, we placed two floating nest platforms in ponds on our golf course, at Hillcrest Country Club in St. Paul. Our success was dramatic, and clearly demonstrated to us what the study results showed. Mallards were quick to use the floating structures, and the production of ducklings was outstanding. The mallards stayed close to the nest, the pond and the shoreline, and were never a nuisance to golfers. It was actually the opposite, the golfers enjoyed watching the activities of the ducks. There's nothing cuter than a hen mallard moving along the water with six or eight itty-bitty ducklings close behind.

There are several sources that manufacture the floating nest structures, as well as many other songbird and waterfowl houses. My recent purchase was from Jim Savre, of Fridley, who calls his company *Nesters*. He typically makes them for the DNR, with goose nests over the top of the mallard tubes, but is open to making them right for you. We opted to have two additional mallard tubes on each of our structures rather than the goose nest. The platforms are made of cedar, with PVC floats underneath, and feature double-hay covered metal fencing cylinders on top. Geese,

by the way, showed no interest in our structures, but the turtles absolutely loved sunning on them almost daily.

Jim Backes of Sauk Centre manufactures 15 various structures including a floating duck nest. His floating nest structure weighs just 15 pounds and is made of maintenance-free, hand-woven fiberglass. He also makes snowshoes made of woven fiberglass at his rural Sauk Centre home and they have been a big hit with many outdoor enthusiasts because of their strength and durability.

David and Laurie Silewski of Valley City, N.D., also produce a floating nesting structure and would welcome a call from a golf course superintendent. In speaking with them over the telephone, it's easy to tell that they take great pride in their work and how well their products benefit wildlife. They have a wide variety of products, and utilize molded polyethylene in building their structures. Their products are used extensively throughout the Upper Midwest and Canada. In addition to their floating structure, they currently build what is called the *Duck Den*, the popular *Delta Hen House*, which can be mounted on poles.

* * *

To purchase nesting structures, contact:

Jim Savre, 144 Satellite Lane NE, Fridley, MN 55432.
Phone (612) 574-0771.

Jim Backes, Rt. 2, Box 55B, Sauk Centre, MN 56378.
Phone (320) 352-6457.

Dave & Laurie Silewski, 3471 Woodland Park, Valley City, ND 58072. Phone (701) 845-5457.



John Queensland wins drawing for impressive Wood Carving of the MGCSA logo by retired member Ray Hall.

MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE MARCH MINI-SEMINAR

MONDAY, MARCH 8, 1999 • 8:00 A.M.—4:00 P.M.
DOUBLETREE PARK PLACE HOTEL—MINNEAPOLIS

SPEAKERS:

MICHAEL BAVIER, CGCS, PAST PRESIDENT, INVERNESS GOLF CLUB
GORDON WHITEVEEN, CGCS, TORONTO BOARD OF TRADE GOLF CLUB

TOPIC:

THE MAGIC OF GREENSKEEPING — A PRACTICAL AND
INFORMATIVE SEMINAR ON GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT

2 ONE-DAY GCSAA REGIONAL SEMINARS

MARCH 9 & 10, 1999
DOUBLETREE PARK PLACE HOTEL—MINNEAPOLIS

MARCH 9

TURFGRASS ECOLOGY — DR. KARL DANNEBERGER
OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

MARCH 10

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT — DR. RAYMOND S. SCHMIDGALL
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

CONTACT GCSAA AT 1-800-472-7878 FOR MORE INFORMATION