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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S DESK

Spring Has Sprung, Or Has It?



Spring has sprung, or has it? The day of the monthly meeting at Southern Hills G.C. encapsulated this Spring's anticipation and anguish for both superintendents and golfers. Even though yet another late snow cancelled the golf portion of the meeting (last 3 out of 5 years), some great camaraderie and knowledge was exchanged.

A special thanks goes out to superintendent Wade Wiebold and his staff at Southern Hills who had the golf course primed and ready to go. Mother Nature had other plans. I hope we get another chance to play at Southern Hills...without snow.

Susie Fobes, with Environmental Re-Creations, gave a presentation on the Do's and Don'ts and basic rules on golf course landscaping.

* * * *

On the MGCSA front, 1996 Rosters have been mailed out with respective classification changes to coincide with December's by-law changes. Thanks to the Associate members who advertise in the roster and help defray some of its costs.

* * * *

The MGCSA Group Health Insurance proposal will be presented at the May meeting in Benson with more details to follow.

* * * *

The MGCSA Legacy Scholarship program applications and information on who's eligible are available through the MGCSA office. This scholarship is for children of qualifying MGCSA members. Don't forget to tell your members and friends about the June Research Turf Tourney!

See you in Benson.

— James D. Gardner, CGCS
MGCSA President



MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE MTGF EXPO AUGUST 7-8, 1996

HOLE NOTES (ISSN 108-27994) is published monthly except bimonthly December/January, February/March for \$2 an issue or \$20 per year by the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents Association, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, Wayzata, MN 55391-1617. Scott Turtinen, Publisher. Second-class postage paid at Wayzata, MN. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to HOLE NOTES, 240 Minnetonka Avenue South, Wayzata, MN 55391-1617.

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Butterflies are Free...

But Buying Flowers Will Help You Lure Them To The Course

By Lois Berg Stack

*Ornamental Horticulture Specialist
University of Maine Cooperative Extension*

Your efforts to encourage wildlife on the golf course have no doubt helped you appreciate the importance of diversity — diversity of plantings, design and approaches to management. You've enrolled in the Audubon program, planted shrubs that produce fruit for birds throughout the year, hung up bird feeders and erected bird houses. You've posted "no trespassing" signs in areas which threatened bird's nest, altered waterways to encourage shoreline feeders and left snags in wild areas as nesting sites.

There's another thing you can do: plant a butterfly garden. Butterflies are beautiful to watch, and they provide excellent food for birds. Since you will plant some annual flower gardens around the course this summer anyway, why not select species that attract butterflies? Butterfly gardens have become very popular in the past few years. And even the most serious golfers enjoy pausing for a moment to watch a swallowtail flit by, or a bird stalk a caterpillar.

Butterflies have few needs: water, sunlight, protection from wind and food. Trees and shrubs provide significant sources of food for birds, but butterflies prefer herbaceous plants because of their more continuous supply of flowers. Free-flowering annuals are excellent butterfly attractants, because they produce nectar throughout the summer. Here are fifteen great annuals that do the following:

1. They are good food sources for butterflies. Some of them, like parsley, provide excellent leaf tissue for caterpillars (after all, if you don't have caterpillars, you won't have butterflies). Most of these annuals also have flat or open flowers that butterflies can access with their short mouthparts. These plants also flower most of the summer, providing nectar for butterflies for many weeks.

2. These plants are uniform, predictable, relatively disease-free, and easy to manage. Most of them require very little deadheading (removal of old flowers) in order to produce more flowers. They all perform best in the conditions where you are most likely to plant annuals on the golf course — full sun, and well-drained fertile soil with good water-holding capacity.

3. These annuals are high-quality landscape plants, that will put on a good show of color from mid-June through frost.

4. Nearly all of these annuals are readily available in the marketplace. Of course for large plantings you should work with a greenhouse grower to custom-grow for your needs. But even for a last-minute planting in June, you should be able to find many of these plants through a local

grower.

Butterfly weed, (*Asclepias curassavica*) is an outstanding and underused plant. In past years it was less common, but more growers produce it now because of the popularity of butterfly gardens. Butterflyweed is a close relative of the common milkweed, so it has milky sap, strong straight stems and flat-topped clusters of small flowers. In fall, it produces pods filled with wind-dispersed seeds. Butterflyweed, which reaches 30" in height, is sometimes called "Bloodflower" because of its mid-to-late summer orange-red flowers, but some gold-colored cultivars, like 'Silky Gold,' have recently been introduced. I've trialed 'Silky Gold' as a cut flower, and found it to be reliable, uniform, high-yielding and a great host for monarch caterpillars and butterflies. Actually, I've cheated a bit by including this plant on the list. It does attract great numbers of monarchs, but they won't attract birds. You may be aware that monarchs are distasteful to birds because of the glycosides they accumulate in their bodies by feeding on butterflyweed. Still, monarchs are such beautiful insects that it's worth including this plant in any garden.

Butterflybush, (*Buddleia x davidii*) is actually a woody plant that reaches a height and width of about 4' each summer. In all but the most protected sites in Minnesota it dies back to the ground in fall, and resprouts new shoots each year, thereby functioning much like an herbaceous perennial. But in open, cold locations and in northern Minnesota, it dies in the winter and should be treated as an annual, grown from cuttings. Even where it functions as an annual, it is cost-effective because of the garden space it fills. Butterflybush flowers at the end of the season, producing slender 4-8" long clusters of small lilac-like flowers. The color range includes white and a wide range of violets from pale lilac to intense purple. Flower scent is very sweet, and the fragrance wafts through the air on still evenings (plant a few near the clubhouse). Many butterflies feed on butterflybush, and hummingbirds constantly hover over it in late summer.

Pink Cosmos, (*Comos bipinnatus*) is an old-fashioned favorite that can be direct-seeded or transplanted as a seedling. The bushy plants have very fine-textured, fern-like foliage and 3" pink, lavender or white daisy-like flowers. Pink cosmos is a great plant for the background of a border, but it does perform better when deadheaded periodically throughout the summer. The 4-5' height of most cultivars would limit their use on the golf course, but there are a few lower growing types available.

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Butterflies—

(Continued from Page 5)

Annual Blanketflower, (*Gaillardia pulchella*) is an interesting annual. It is a daisy, but its flowers are tubular instead of flat, and they are arranged so that the flower heads form 2" globes of red, yellow or red-and-yellow. Perennial gardeners are familiar with the perennial species of blanketflower, but this annual type was not grown much until 1991, when the cultivar "Red Plume" received an All-America Selections (AAS) award. This cultivar is excellent, forms a loose 12" mound of foliage, with flowers rising to 24" on wiry stems. They make great cut flowers, and add an element of movement as they sway in the breeze. Occasional deadheading helps keep them in color. Annual blanketflower performs best in perfectly drained soil, and it tolerates droughty summer conditions well.

Globe Amaranth, (*Gomphrena globosa* and *Gomphrena haageana*) is a popular dried flower, valued for its clover-like flower clusters that are available in magenta, pink, red and orange. There are white types, but they are a little muddy in color; there are better white flowers for the annual flower garden. Globe amaranth is upright and bushy, reaching a height of 24" with minimal maintenance. It tolerates great drought during the summer.

Most cultivars of **Lavender** (*Lavandula angustifolia*) are tender perennials, but one cultivar called 'Lady' can be grown as an annual. 'Lady' lavender won a much-deserved AAS award in 1994. It is small, reaching a height of 10-12", and it is not reliable as a perennial. Still, as an annual it is delightful. It produces its flowers in August, at a time when there are not many blue-lavender flowers in the garden. During the heat of August, blue is a welcome cool color. The fragrance of the flowers is pleasant not only to us, but to many species of butterflies as well. Even when the plant is not in flower, its narrow gray-green foliage makes a high-quality edging plant for a garden.

Sweet Alyssum, (*Lobularia maritima*) is a popular edging plant. Pinks and lavender cultivars are available, but the white ones are still the best. This fragrant little plant is a member of the mustard family; like most of its relatives, it performs best in cool weather. That means that it flowers in spring and fall, but less during a hot summer. Here in Maine, especially along the coast, it flowers relentlessly from late May through mid-October. In the hot summers of the Upper Midwest, it generally stops flowering in summer. In those locations it can be sheared back to 2-3" in height, and allowed to produce another crop of flowers in fall. Sweet alyssum is an important source of nectar in early spring and late fall, when many other plants produce few flowers.

Flowering Tobacco, (*Nicotiana glauca*) has been much improved by plant breeders. Years ago, it was a leggy plant that needed deadheading to perform well throughout the summer. Newer types flower much more freely, are more compact (14-18"), and include an expanded color range of reds, pinks, white and pale green. Many are fragrant. Newer types tolerate heat and a fair amount of drought, but all perform better in a slightly more protected spot, and

most tolerate partial shade. This plant is frequented by butterflies and hummingbirds.

Parsley, (*Petroselinum crispum*) is primarily known as a cooking herb, but it also makes an excellent edging plant in an annual garden. It is a biennial, so it doesn't produce flowers until its second year. Of course we grow it as an annual, for its foliage. Swallowtail butterflies' caterpillars feed voraciously on the foliage of parsley. Since the plants produce abundant foliage, this feeding rarely causes significant cosmetic damage to the plant. As a crisp edging for a garden, parsley is a high performance plant.

Petunia, (*Petunia x hybrida*) is a plant that people either love or hate. It requires fairly high levels of fertilizer, it must be deadheaded frequently, and it usually needs to be cut back once or twice during the season to prevent leggy growth. But when managed well, petunia produces unequalled color in the garden. It has one of the widest color ranges of all annuals: reds, white, blues, purples, pinks, yellow and many bicolors. If you are choosing among the standard petunias, select a multiflora type over a grandiflora. Multifloras produce smaller flowers, but there are more of them and they recover better after rain. There are two new types of petunia on the market. One type is the "milliflora," represented by a 1996 AAS winner: 'Fantasy Pink Morn.' This petunia has even smaller flowers than the multifloras types, and even more of them. It forms a neat mound about 18" across and 10" tall, and requires less deadheading than most petunias. And of course, you would have to have been absent from the outdoors last year to have missed the "new" petunias that everyone is raving about: depending on the specific group, you may know them by various names like Surfina,[®] Wonder Falls,[®] Supertunia[®] or Cascadia.[®] These are all propagated from cuttings, but there is one more similar type called 'Purple Wave,' a 1995 AAS winner, that is propagated by seed. All of these "new petunias" have a very low growth habit (3-5"), and very strong lateral branching habits, with plants reaching 3-4" diameter by the end of the season. And perhaps the best part of all is that they flower freely, remaining in full color all summer without deadheading. (No, I am not joking.) These plants are generally available in 4" pots rather than in packs, and some greenhouse growers only grow them in hanging baskets. The "new petunias" require full sun, well-drained soil and high fertilizer rates. But they produce excellent color in return for this small investment. And like other petunias, they attract a wide range of insects, including bumblebees and several butterflies.

Blue Salvia, (*Salvia farinacea*) is a popular plant for the midground and background of annual gardens. It does well in hot, fairly dry locations, and also lasts long after the marginal frosts of the fall. One excellent cultivar is 'Victoria,' which reaches 18" in height and flowers quite freely. A newer type that is a bit more unusual and very desirable is 'Strata,' an AAS winner for 1996. This cultivar produces silver sepal tubes and blue petals, giving it a pale blue appearance from a distance, and a bicolor appearance at closer viewing. It is 16" tall, very uniform and very floriferous. All of the salvias attract many butterflies,

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Butterflies—

(Continued from Page 6)

but the blue salvias are less maintenance than the others.

French Marigold, (*Tagetes patula*) is an old standby for annual flower gardens, and new types are introduced each year. Generally, the plants are 8-16" tall, with single or double flowers available in yellows, golds, oranges and red. Although deadheading throughout the summer is essential to keep them in color, the results are worth the work. Few plants can equal the bright spectacle of these annuals.

Scotch Marigold, (*Tagetes tenuifolia*) is less known than French or African marigolds, but it is unique. It forms a highly branched mound of fine-leaved foliage, 16" across and 12" high. The single flowers are small (less than one inch diameter) and either yellow, gold or orange. What this plant lacks in diversity, it more than makes up for in lack of maintenance. It is the one marigold that does not require deadheading to produce all season. A line of these plants at the edge of a garden is attractive all season. There is one caution, however; the plants are not as uniform as the other marigolds, and you must select uniform seedling at planting time in order to achieve a high-quality planting.

The verbeneas have long been popular landscape annuals, known for their intense colors. A rather new and unique one is *Verbena speciosa* 'Imagination.' This plant won an AAS award in 1993, for its very fine-textured foliage, its low spreading habit (it easily spreads to 24" diameter by midsummer, with a height of 6") and its intense purple flowers. This is an interesting annual for some locations, and it attracts good numbers of butterflies and other insects, but there are two cautions. First, it tends to produce an intense array of flowers that peak in color in mid-August, and then diminish in color for the rest of the season; every stem seems to root vigorously.

Zinnias are wonderful annuals for the cutting garden, but they pose some serious challenges on the golf course: powdery mildew and fungal leaf spots can devastate the plants in a humid season. But one species of zinnia, the "Narrow-leaved Zinnia" (*Zinnia angustifolia*), is highly resistant to the fungal problems. It produces 1.2" yellow or white flowers all season, regardless of deadheading. The plants are upright and bushy, 24" tall and very free-flowering. Like most members of the daisy family, it attracts many insects including butterflies.

Putting Annuals Together In a Butterfly Garden

Generally, annual gardens look best when many plants each of just a few different types are used. For example, a garden with 15 spider flowers in the middle, 30 geraniums around them and an edging of sweet alyssum around them would be more effective than a garden of 5 each of 20 different types of annuals. In other words: keep it simple!

Here are just a few ideas for annual gardens, using the plants in the list above:

1. You could achieve a large, rather tall and imposing garden by planting several deep blue or violet buddleias in the middle, surrounded by pale pink glove amaranths, and edged with parsley. In this garden, gomphrena would flower most of the season, parsley would provide caterpillar food all season, and the buddleia would produce great color and attract many species of butterflies from mid-August until hard frost.

2. A simple but very effective "cool color" garden could be created with a central area of Strata' blue salvia, surrounded by 'Lady' lavenders, with an edging of white sweet alyssum. The sweet alyssum would produce color and fragrance for golfers, and nectar for butterflies, in the cooler parts of the year. The blue salvia would be effective from late June until hard frost, and the lavender would provide elegance in August.

3. You could plant a brightly colored garden that would attract a wide range of butterflies with a central area of 'Silky Gold' butterflyweed interplanted with 'Red Plume' blanketflowers. Around that, plant lower growing yellow Scotch marigolds. And as an edging, try some dwarf red French marigolds.

4. On a south-facing slope, try a mass planting of either 'Imagination' verbena or 'Purple Wave' petunia. Either would be quite stunning and would require little maintenance during the summer.

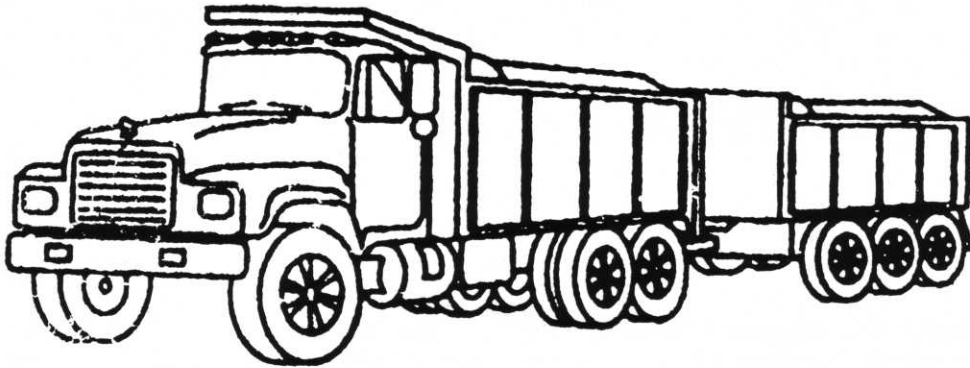
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SOFTSPIKES

Yuks and Grins

By Rod Johnson
The Grass Roots

It hardly seems possible that two years have passed since I first met you. It was love at first sight. My life was to be changed forever. To be honest, I had heard of you and had even seen a picture of you in magazines. How could something so different from tradition, so plastic, catch my conservative eye begging for more Oh, "Softspikes."

The greatest thing to happen to the game of golf since surlyn. The elimination of the SPIKEMARK.

Spikemarks have been part of golf since at least 1914 when Walter Hagen wore a pair of "hob-nailed" shoes on his way to winning the 1914 U.S. Open. I guess the imitation of professional golfers by wannabes was as common then as it is now. Shoe cobblers were probably overrun with a rash of orders unequalled until Michael Jordan and "just do it" came along.

Golf and golf courses have changed a lot since 1914, but here we are 80-plus years later still walking around with nails in our shoes. Spiked shoes are part of the great tradition of golf. Aren't they as much a part of the uniform as neckties, knickers and plaid polyester slacks? Are they just another fad like metal woods and lob wedges?

I'll never forget my first pair of golf spikes — a pair of well-used hushpuppies purchased for a buck and a half from my buddy Jake. I had arrived as a "player!" No longer was I just another kid pedaling his bike, Kryodens in tow, to the local links to slap around U.S. Tigers. I had spikes and each grinding step across the asphalt parking lot provided proof. My score that day, in the mid-60s, for nine holes was the same as B.S. (before spikes). I didn't really care. I had arrived on the golf scene and had the blisters to show for it.

Two years have flown by since the January 1994 issue of *Golf Course Management* and that first advertisement for *Softspikes*. A plastic replacement spike claiming to be a superior alternative to metal golf spikes. The claims. . . "Finally a product that lowers scores and maintenance costs." I had my doubts. Remember, I'd already been burned once when metal spikes provided no relief from double figures. As for lower maintenance costs, we've all heard those wild claims before.

The new era A.S.S. (after softspikes) has already provided enough yuks and grins to write a book. But who needs another trendy golf book? Besides, how would you title the book? A Good Walk Spoiled By Spiked Shoes? Or how about, And Then Arnie said to Jack. . . "Please don't step in my line"?

The term spikemark is actually a euphemism for the tearing, ripping and shredding of an otherwise flawless green surface. Jim Latham, retired USGA Green Section Agronomist, described spikemarks as "snags" of the surface runners of the tuf that have not yet rooted to the soil. By rule, the USGA continues to prohibit the repair of spike marks before putting. This is despite the well-known fact that spikemarks are the cause of 99% of missed putts. Metal spikes also leave their marks on tee and fairway areas but to date there have been no reports of their actually causing any golfer to lose a match.

It would only seem natural that an alternative which would eliminate spike marks from the earth, or more importantly from golf greens, would enjoy immediate and unanimous use. Not so. Golf is a game of hard dying traditions.

An alternative to metal spikes and the inherent damage is not a new concept. The early eighties saw the introduction of golf shoes with "nubbies." It was a bad name for a bad that did more damage to green surfaces than metal. Perhaps there lies the roots of caution and cynicism.

Softspikes were actually developed as a gentler alternative to metal spikes for wacky winter golfers wishing to play on frozen greens in a state better known for potatoes than for golf. To date Idaho's biggest contribution to golf had been an island green that could be maneuvered into different positions by a series of underwater cables.

Softspikes, the company, has in a relatively short period of time seen ownership changes and product upgrades. The company is presently owned by Wisconsin's very own Rob O'Loughlin. The story goes that Mr. O'Loughlin, after playing golf at Muirfield Village, Jack's place in Ohio, a course that has banned metal spikes, was so impressed by the quality of spikefree greens that he set out to buy a few sets of replacement spikes to give to golfing friends. A call to *Softspike* later and he owned the company.

I've had some amusing and some confusing phone conversations with the *Softspike* people but I must admit the subject of buying the company is one thing that never came up. I am amused though that the *Softspike* people are never at a loss for an answer. Who's banning metal? "Why just about everyone, listen to this impressive list. Not one club that has banned metal has ever gone back to allowing metal." Any lawsuits? "None that we know of." What about the

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Softspikes—

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negative University research that's recently surfaced? "Flawed. In one study it wasn't even our spike. In another case we're getting bad ink from someone who requested funds for a study and we turned him down."

A *Softspike* beef. A phone call to *Softspike* can be an adventure. Blame it on growing pains. I have three different toll free numbers in two different cities, Indianapolis and Rockville, MD, to call to place orders. The list of scratched-off names on the business card in my file reads Dan, David, Tim and John. The *Softspike* people must be just as confused with me. How else could you explain that my best buddy on the phone, who seems to know that "I'm the man," would turn around and call the locker room guy and sell him 5,000 spikes that we just didn't need going into winter.

It's a shame that golf's touring professionals don't share in the enthusiasm. All of golf follows their lead. If, one Sunday, tour players showed up wearing red hats, come Monday the red hats would be flying off golf shop racks.

Touring pros continue to resist, refusing to use softspikes. While readily admitting to have never tried them, pros competing in this past year's Greater Milwaukee Open were adamant against their use on the tour. According to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, tour regular Jim Gallagher, Jr. doesn't think you'll ever see them on tour. Gallagher was quoted as saying "I've never tried them. I think they need to do a little more technology on them." Gallagher claims tour players have swings that require more traction. Gallagher did agree with a ban on metal spikes for the amateurs during Wednesday Pro-Ams to ensure smoother greens for tournament play.

The prevailing attitude toward softspikes on the PGA Tour is probably best exemplified by Tom Watson, the 1992 recipient of GCSAA's Old Tom Morris Award (This award was given before the previously mentioned A.S.S. era). Mr. Watson recently told a reporter of softspikes, "I think they're dangerous and people shouldn't wear them." One would think that "Yippee Tom" with all of his putting problems would welcome any help he could get on those short ones.

Two-time U.S. Open winner Andy North wears softspikes but that is discredited in that he is friends with Rob O'Loughlin, the previously mentioned owner of the company. Ed Terasa, unquestionably the best player among Wisconsin Club Pros, won the 1995 Wisconsin State Open wearing them.

Most golf is not played as part of a PGA Tour Event. Clubs around the country have recognized the benefits and have taken to banning metal. As mentioned, a most impressive list is just a phone call away. Just be sure to hang up before you own the company! The list of Wisconsin clubs banning metal is equally as impressive. It includes Green Bay C.C., The Bog and Bishops Bay. Count Blackwolf Run and Sentry World into the group for 1996.

Many clubs have taken a wait and see attitude, strongly endorsing the voluntary use of softspikes. Numerous courses have already tried, or have scheduled for 1996, spike-

less events or weekends. I personally did a spikeless 260 player member/guest last summer. The results were outstanding with only one player asking for his metal spikes back. Opponents became proponents.

Gene Haas, executive director of the Wisconsin Golf Association, sees golfers as having a pair of both spiked and spikeless shoes in their arsenal. Haas said, "Absolutely without a doubt green surfaces are better without metal spikes." He questioned the present technology, citing his recent attendance at a conference of golf administrators where other exciting alternatives entering the market were shown.

Last year's State Amateur Championship held at Milwaukee Country Club, a course which has banned metal spikes, was competed with metal spikes allowed. This was after discussions between the WSGA and the Milwaukee C.C. Board of Directors concluded that the State Amateur was essentially a closed tournament and it was heretofore a WSGA decision. WSGA wisely declined the banning of metal spikes and at any of their future events the banning of metal spikes will be dictated by the host club.

Where does GCSAA stand on softspikes? Switzerland. Politically correct and neutral. GCSAA, plain and simple, does not endorse products or their use.

The 1996 GCSAA Golf Championship, presented in partnership with The Toro Company, is offering a sensational tee prize package that includes a pair of Foot-Joys. The golf shoes will be equipped with the standard metal spikes. According to GCSAA staff member, Pam Owens, alternative spikes will be made available, free of charge, and assistance will be given by GCSAA staff. GCSAA Director and Tournament Vice Chairman Tommy Witt said, "It is the logical thing to have softspikes available."

GCSAA President Gary Grigg gave me a turf lesson when I discussed softspikes with him. "Spike marks are a bentgrass issue; Bermuda greens don't spike up," according to Grigg. Witt agreed with Grigg, adding "Bermuda grass is not as low cut and is not as succulent."

Where are we headed? Golfers are an odd bunch, willing to lay down \$300 plus for the latest in golf club technology, a super kryptonite graphite bubble-shafted driver that might improve driving distance by 3 or 4 yards on the 12 holes per round one might use a driver. They cringe at the thought of replacing their beloved metal spikes when there is no doubt they improve green surfaces, where 75% of the game is played. It's not a cost issue. Propose purchasing a brand new piece of maintenance equipment that will eliminate spike marks and see how fast you get approval.

Metal spikes are doomed to be part of golf's history. Clear a spot for them in Far Hills, New Jersey.

Softspikes will be pressured by a competitive market to continue to improve its product and the way it does business. They do have a leg-up in that their product has a name product identity not unlike a bandage is a "Bandaide" and a disposable tissue is a "Kleenex."

There will be numerous others to enter the market and shoe companies will develop green user friendly shoe styles. Any way you look at it, golf greens will be better for it!