

athletic fields.

The surge in golf course growth in the 1960's—and the challenges that grew out of that expansion—led to some of The Toro Co.'s most important developments in turf maintenance tools in the past 20 years.

Since the 1960's, turf facility managers have confronted challenges that they found could be met through the use of increasingly sophisticated machinery. Throughout the period, Toro kept an ear attuned to golf course superintendents—and, in many cases, took its design cue from them.

Dr. Jim Watson, Toro vice president of customer relations and

agronomist who has been with the company since 1952, remembers the 1960's as history's most dramatic period of golf course construction. "In the early part of decade, 350 to 400 new courses were being built each year," he said.

As the '60's passed, two needs began to emerge, Watson pointed out. For one, it had become apparent to everyone in the turf management business that labor costs represented the largest segment of the budget, and therefore, the greatest opportunity for improved efficiency. "People began to see that for the wages they were paying, they needed to groom more acres per man hour," explained Watson.

At the same time, he said, the trend in golf course maintenance was toward a more manicured, tightly-clipped appearance.

Both of these needs presented equipment manufacturers with an interesting pair of challenges: build more labor efficient equipment that did a better job of grooming than earlier models.

When Toro introduced its Greensmaster 3 triplex greensmower in 1970, the company introduced labor saving hydraulics on its first reel mower. The Greensmaster 3 allowed one man operating one unit to do the cutting that it had previously required three or

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LOFTS

It all started with Selmer Loft, who in 1923, was the sole proprietor of a local seed company marketing for a Danish concern. In the late 50's a move from Manhattan, NY to larger quarters was dictated by an expanding business, changing the address to Jersey City, NJ.

From these rather humble beginnings, Lofts Seed has grown—as any viable seed should—to a nationwide marketing organization, with many varieties now being sold worldwide.

In the early 60's, another move,

this time to Bound Brook, New Jersey—its current headquarters—was required to obtain the additional facilities now demanded by Lofts' growth. By this time, Lofts had become a major domestic and international enterprise, responsible for a large percentage of the proprietary turf market in this country.

During the past two decades, Lofts developed divisions throughout the country to keep production and marketing facilities in line with its broadened market coverage. Today Lofts employs 97 persons at six locations.

In 1963, Great Western Seed

Company in Oregon was started to broaden the western market and oversee Loft's complete seed production located primarily in the Willamette Valley. Today much of Lofts' international sales are handled there as well. This operation is directed by Steve Tubbs.

The purchase of the Kellogg Seed Company in 1973 was a major step to broaden the company's Midwestern markets. It was through the Lofts/Kellogg operation that the company became involved in some diversified product marketing. Only recently however, a decision was made to sell off this portion of the Loft organization in order to better concentrate on the turf industry.

Servicing the many retail outlets in the New England area with Lofts' consumer line of seed and turf care products is Lofts/New England at Arlington, MA, which also functions as a distribution point for the entire Northeastern area. Jerry Zuccala is branch manager for this division.

Ray Bentley and son, Lance, at the Lofts/New York location handle all Lofts' mail-order lines, including all packing and shipping of Pinto Wildflower Mixes and Lofts' extensive packet seed line of flowers, herbs and vegetables.

Lofts/Maryland at Beltsville, managed by Strick Newsom, provides the turf-related business of the Washington/Virginia area with needed service. Among the better

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Lofts brothers, Jon (left) and Peter manage the Bound Brook, NJ-based firm.

known clientele of Lofts/Maryland are the White House, Arlington National Cemetery, and the Robert F. Kennedy Stadium, home of the Washington Redskins.

A more recent venture of Lofts and Southern Turf Nurseries is Sunbelt Seeds, Inc. at Tucker, Ga., formed specifically to better serve the Southern recreational turf overseeding market. Overseeding is an expanding portion of the turf industry, extending the winter golf and recreational season throughout the South.

Today, the Bound Brook office serves as corporate headquarters, from which the second generation of the Lofts family, Peter and Jon, manage the far-flung operations of the company. Although large inventories of seed are maintained at strategic locations throughout the country, the New Jersey location alone includes 100,000 sq. ft. of storage space and blending facilities. A fleet of company owned trucks guarantees rapid delivery to customers. A unique delivery sys-

tem in this industry.

As a most fortuitous circumstance, Lofts Seed is located in the proximity of the world-famous New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at New Brunswick and works in close conjunction with Rutgers University. It is here that the most intensive search for new varieties is led by Dr. C. Reed Funk. According to John Morrissey, Lofts' Vice President with this company over 30 years, Dr. Funk "can almost develop varieties on demand".

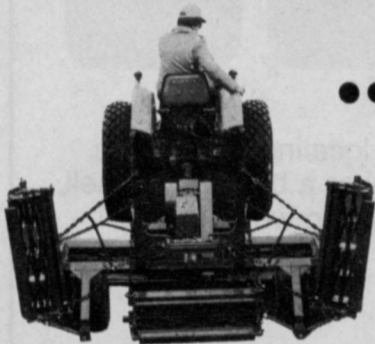
Special sod-mixing facilities are also located at Bound Brook. As an ardent supporter of the Interagency Certification procedure, all Lofts sod blends are packed under the direct supervision of the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's Division of Plant Industry. Lofts' proprietary varieties are carefully blended in separate, isolated areas to assure all seed is free from contamination.

Sod production is an expanding business, and the certification pro-

cess is a cooperative one, including the seed companies, the Extension Service and the Department of Agriculture. Lofts has been one of the pioneers in the efforts to improve the sod business.

At Lofts' Martinsville, New Jersey Research Facilities, Rich Hurley, Vice President and Director of Agronomy and Research oversees an extensive, continuous research program. As the only commercial research facilities in this part of the country, it is where experimental varieties are evaluated for performance. Over 2,000 test plots enable Lofts' agronomists to conduct in-depth test programs for color, disease resistance, density, uniformity, heat and drought tolerance, effects of fertilization and shade performance. Greenhouses and shadehouses permit testing under a wide variety of controlled conditions. Varieties passing stringent tests at the New Jersey location are then evaluated under university supervision for climatic variations

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Brouwer Hydraulic Lift mowers let you raise mowers with a touch of a lever—saves time in tight corners and when transporting. (Also available with standard lift).

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...It also cuts time,
costs and covers
its tracks.



Tractor Track Remover brushes up grass behind tractor wheels.

less expensive and easier to repair than brass heads.

Toro's superiority in irrigation equipment over other brands is now proven out by the sheer number of top golf courses throughout the United States and the world that use it. Today, Toro irrigates 62 of the top-ranked 100 U.S. courses.

The large expansion of golf courses was reduced dramatically during the late 1970's with the oil embargo and subsequently rising energy prices, according to Watson.

Since that time, the challenge of energy conservation has been on the minds of turf managers as well as equipment manufacturers, he said. Toro's diesel GM-72 and its new GM-62, in addition to its diesel power Parkmaster and HTM-175, are aimed at helping improve fuel efficiency. Toro irrigation systems, because of their flexibility, are also helping meet the energy challenge.

And, Toro has already begun studying what could emerge as the biggest challenge to date: water conservation. A fresh water shortage, which could be crucial to hundreds of turf managers, could result in dramatic changes in the way turf is managed. Toro, as it has in the past will continue listening to the needs of turf managers—and take their research and design cues from what they hear.

WTT



Selmer Loft (left) and Dr. C. Reed Funk, turfgrass breeder for the New Jersey Agriculture Research Station.

and sensitivities. Promising varieties are then subjected to yield evaluations. These trials, conducted at research facilities on the West Coast, are required to determine a variety's ability to produce seed in sufficient quantities to warrant commercial release.

As a result of extensive research programs the turf industry has realized tremendous growth, particularly in the introduction of improved, proprietary varieties. For instance, during the mid 60's, Manhattan was the household word when it came to ryegrasses. Since that time Lofts alone has introduced Yorktown, Yorktown II and Diplomat fine-leaved perennial ryegrasses. Soon two "new generation" perennial ryegrasses will be introduced—Palmer and Prelude.

In the area of tall fescues, only recently have the new fine-leaved varieties become available with the introduction of Rebel and Clemfine.

Lofts market can be broken into two distinct segments:

1. the retail market such as mass merchandisers, garden centers, hardware stores where they sell not only seed, but a complete line of turf care products to the homeowner.

2. the professional or trade market which includes the landscape architect, nurseryman, grounds maintenance person, automated lawn care specialist, sod producer and golf course superintendent.

Golf courses alone represent a large portion of Lofts business and the company principals boast of the use of Lofts varieties on many prestigious courses where major tournaments are played, such as Pinehurst Country Club, Augusta National, and two of Arnold Palmer's courses—Bay Hill in Florida and LaTrobe in Pennsylvania.

Despite the growth and change in the turf industry which has taken place over the last 20 years, Lofts continues to be one of the few remaining family-owned and operated enterprises. A visit to Lofts' Bound Brook location would find employees who have been with the company over 30 years. And, a customer can call and speak directly to either of the principals, Peter or Jon. In these complex days of multinationals, conglomerates, wholly-owned subsidiaries and the like, it is comforting to know that personal contact and pride in quality products are still alive and well at Lofts Seed.

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