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WHAT'S NEW IN COURSE MAINTENANCE

Divot repair goes North

■ Frank Dobie at The Sharon Golf Club, Sharon Center, Ohio, has a new approach to repairing divots, outlined in the August, 1992 issue of "Northern Ohio Turf."

"In 1990, we initiated divot repair of tees and fairways with divot mix containers mounted on each golf car," claims Dobie. "Although filling divots from car-mounted containers is standard procedure on southern courses, not much has been done in the North."

Even though he was directed by the club president to start the program, Dobie did not like the idea at first. Among its problems:

- 1) messiness on the part of golfers using the scoops;
- 2) lost scoops;
- 3) open buckets, allowing mix to get wet and difficult dispense;
- 4) players overfilling divot holes;
- 5) players missing the divot hole with the mix; and
- 6) possibility of seeding bentgrass into divots in the rough.

Dobie went ahead anyway and purchased some convenient plastic bottle dispensers made by Club Car, which were easily mounted and had small pouring spouts to keep wetness out. In trials with members, he got "very positive" results.

The first step was to inform and educate members via the monthly newsletter; the next was to install dispensers on each side of the golf cars.

The divot mix is prepared by first spreading 30 gal. of topdressing mix on asphalt to dry in the sun. 10 lbs. Isolite, 2 cups Penneagle bentgrass seed and 3 lbs. of 12-24-14 slow-release fertilizer are then mixed in with a rake. A closed container of the mix is kept outside the pro



Dobie: new divot treatment is successful

shot where clubs are unloaded. Bag boys fill the dispensers when golf cars come in from play.

"We ask players to discard the turf divot in the nearby rough or place it on the floor of the golf car," notes Dobie. "We will be experimenting with a small container mounted on each car for old divots and other debris."

"We see a higher percentage of divots repaired now than ever before. Staff man-hours are much less with this method. Most of all, it heightens the players' awareness of golf etiquette and gives them an active role in maintaining a finer course."

Is 'big bang' affecting courses?

■ The technological boom in golf equipment may soon make many of today's golf courses obsolete, says Paul Fullmer, executive secretary of the American Society of Golf Course Architects.

"The next generation of John Daly wanna-be's could render many courses too short to challenge skilled players," says Fullmer. "The increased carry from high-tech balls and clubs makes it impossible for great old courses to host tournaments. In fact, every recent U.S. Open has undergone extensive lengthening

prior to hosting the event."

"Can anyone argue that Fred Couples, Davis Love and Daly are challenged by the length of any of today's holes?" he asks. "Lightning-fast greens with steep slopes, small target greens, long grass roughs or narrow fairways can't completely compensate for par-5s that are easily reachable in two shots."

Bunkering is also a concern for superintendents. "The bunkering at landing areas often has to be revised so that it comes into play as the architect originally intended," says Fullmer.

These changes make the courses more difficult for the average player, Fullmer contends.

"I think it would be good for golf course architects to join with others in the industry to consider limiting the levels of technology being introduced. Certainly, technology helps players post lower scores, but we have to make sure that advances do not push existing courses to the brink of extinction."

GCSAA international—in big way

■ The growing worldwide demand for the education and training of golf course greenkeepers and superintendents is a driving force in increasing the scope of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

The GCSAA has begun international operations with the following programs:

● The GCSAA sent a fact-finding contingent to the Pacific Rim last year, which led to opening a Pacific Rim office and the first-ever Pacific Rim Golf Course Conference this month.

● It also sent a contingent to visit the South Africa Golf Course Managers and Greenkeepers Association last September. The GCSAA representatives then went to Malaga, Spain to visit with the Asociacion Espanola de Tecnicos en Mantenimiento de Campos de Golf.

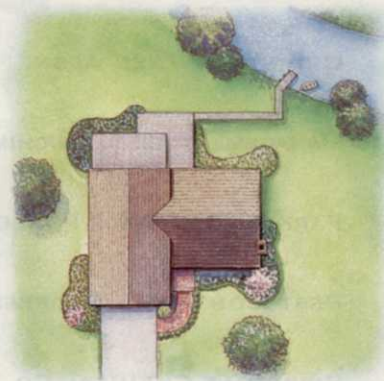
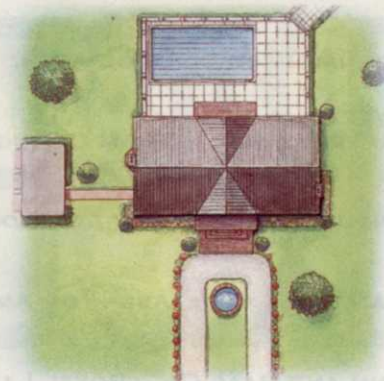
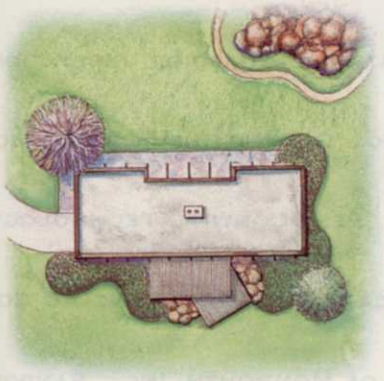
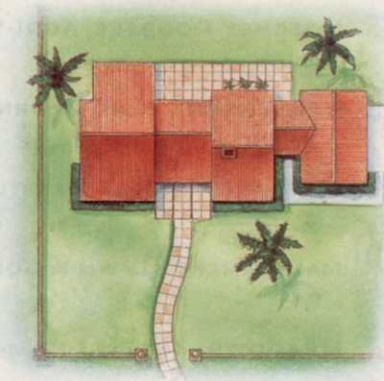
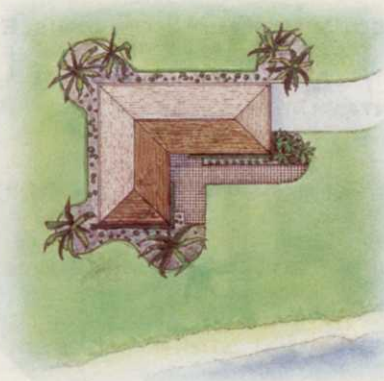
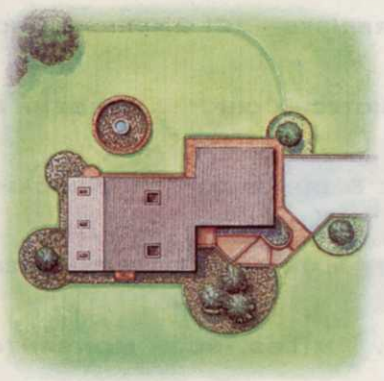
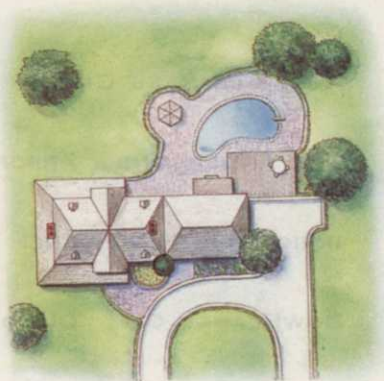
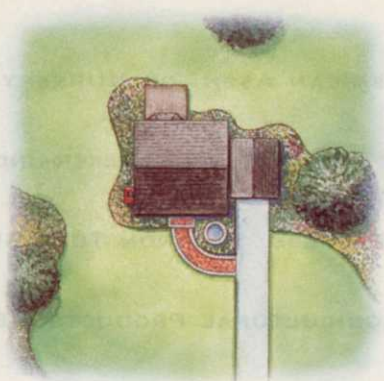
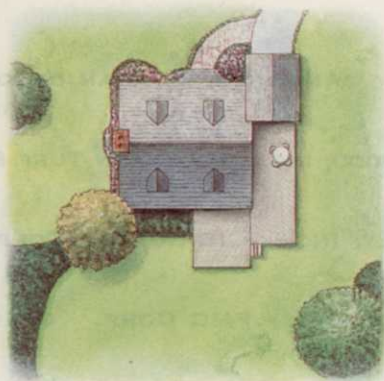
● In late November, 1992, GCSAA director of education David Bishop taught a course on bentgrass to the Japan Turf Superintendents Association.

The GCSAA opened its Pacific Rim office in Singapore. Address is GCSAA (Singapore) Pte. Ltd., 2 Jurong East Street 121, #04-21C, IMM Building, Singapore 2260. Telephone there is 65 568 2224 and fax is 65 568 2473.

The countries served by the GCSAA/Pacific Rim are Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Republic of China (Taiwan) and Thailand.

"In areas where local superintendent/greenkeeper organizations exist, GCSAA is responding to their invitations to provide educational programming," says Bishop. "In other areas, such as much of the Pacific Rim, GCSAA is committed to providing direct delivery of technical and educational assistance when and where it's needed."

Others making the foreign trips were general counsel Robert Ochs, Pacific Rim manager Don Bretthauer, past president William Roberts, CEO John Schilling and senior director of operations Diana Green, along with Dr. Nick Christians of Iowa State University.



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Treated seed for overseeding minimizes diseases

Superintendents who overseed cool-season grass mixtures into existing warm-season combinations also raise disease potential for infections caused by *Pythium* and other fungi, according to Dr. Terry Vassey of Horry-Georgetown Technical College in Conway, S.C.

To reduce the risk of damaging seed and seedling diseases, especially where intensive turf management is necessary for

year-round play, superintendents should always use a fungicide. They may overseed with fungicide-treated seed or apply foliar fungicide spray as diseases appear, says Dr. Vassey.

"*Pythium* can wipe out large sections of overseeded golf courses. When course quality and playing ability goes down, it can be devastating," he says.

"During establishment of overseeded

stands, when more water and fertilizer is used to sustain growth—combined with temperatures still reaching 85 to 90 degrees—you have the perfect conditions for disease."

One of the most prevalent and destructive turf diseases is the soilborne fungus *Pythium*, which thrives in warm, moist soils and causes damping off. *Rhizoctonia* and thatchborne *Fusarium* fungi can also cause seed rots, seedling blights and damping off.

Many superintendents spend an estimated \$35,000 to \$50,000 for annual overseeding, Dr. Vassey points out. While this cost is budgeted, he adds, supers don't want to pay it twice, which can happen if *Pythium* or other fungal epidemics arise, causing a need for another seeding.

Good drainage and carefully managed irrigation can help reduce the incidence of diseases, but since the host—turf—can't be eliminated, most turf professionals recommend a systemic fungicide treatment that provides extended seedling protection against pathogens.

Dr. Vassey's comments appeared in Vol. 2, Issue 2 of "Turfgrass Tillers," a newsletter from Gustafson, Inc., Plano, Texas.

For more information on warm-season disease control, consult the May, 1992 issue of *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT*.

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Do you have an observation on the art/science/profession of being a golf course superintendent?

We are soliciting the opinions/observations of golf course superintendents. Topics can range from employee relations to greensmower selection to treating turf diseases. If you have such an idea you wish to express, type it, double-spaced, on plain white paper, 750 words or less. Send it, along with your Social Security number and a recent photo, to:

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HOT TOPICS

Foreclosed properties: a new profit opportunity?

GRANITE SPRINGS, N.Y.—Amid the cycle of fluctuating economic conditions, the maintenance of foreclosures/relocations offers a significant opportunity for landscapers.

Personal bankruptcies and corporate downsizing has led to a dramatic increase in residential home foreclosures and relocations. Banks and institutional owners of such foreclosed properties contract out their resale and management to large, regional real estate brokers, which have emerged because of the tough economy. These brokers prefer to find one reliable and reputable landscape maintenance company to service all their accounts in a given area.

Maintenance of these properties is a necessity, predicated by local town zoning laws and aesthetic concerns. That translates into abundant work and profits. There is opportunity, for those inclined, to

expand well beyond the normal foundation of their clientele.

Real estate agencies and banks have no practical experience in the landscape management sector. The product is simple: that properties be kept in a presentable condition year-round with clear access (clear of snow and organic debris).

By offering a broad flat price rate in which all work performed in a given geographical area is the same, real estate brokers know what to expect and do not have to be concerned with contracted out properties on an individual basis. And the recommendation of your landscape services to the new property owner is what truly makes this an area any eager, aggressive landscape manager cannot overlook.

—The author, Christian Zenk, is chief operating officer of Zenk Country Landscapes, Granite Springs, N.Y.



Foreclosed homes require minimum maintenance and attention, but can be big money-makers if contracted correctly, says Chris Zenk.

Maintaining foreclosures...

Keys to success

- Know the primary sources of work (real estate agencies, banks)
- Incorporate into existing business (serviced any time)
- Minimum maintenance means maximum profit
- All money guaranteed at closing
- Document all work
- Insist your company's name be mentioned at closing (provide business cards)
- Network your services
- Separate crew for foreclosures/relocations

Requirements

- Contractual agreement with prices and/or workrate
- Flexibility to respond to request for estimate
- Authorization to begin work on each property
- Willingness to expand your service area significantly
- Certification as a vendor (\$1 million liability insurance minimum)
- Camera required for before/after photos (for confirmation and documentation of completed work)
- Facsimile machine, copier, computer, and answering service or secretary

—C. Zenk

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