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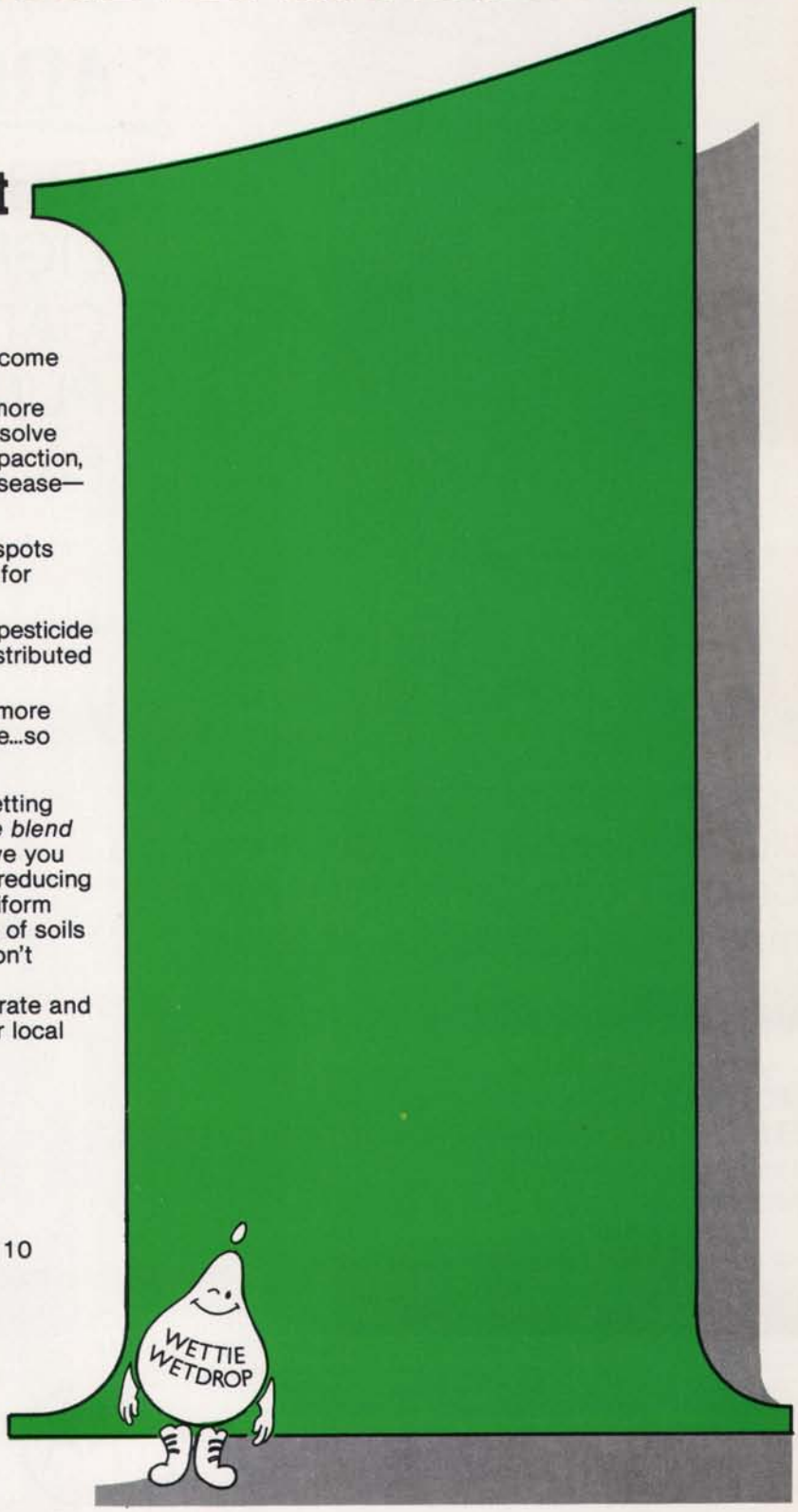

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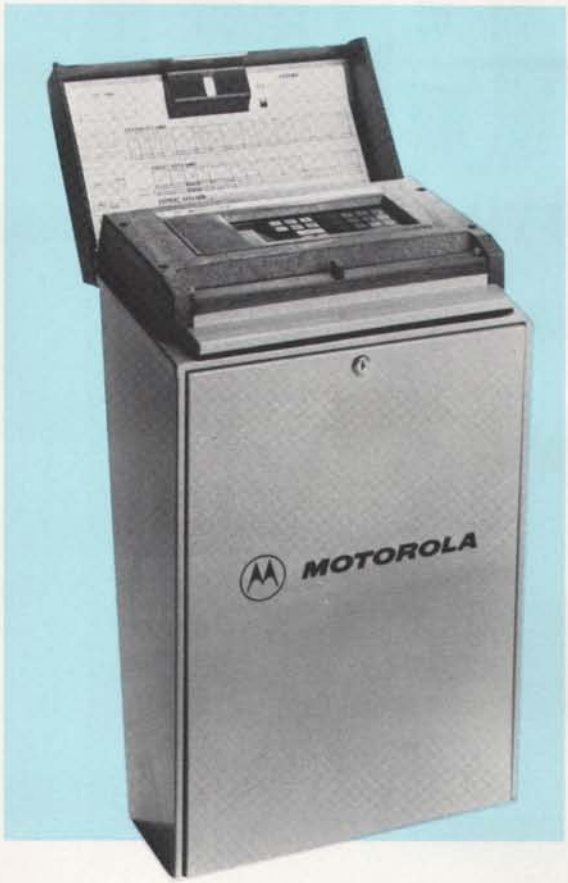

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CHALKBOARD

TIPS FROM THE PROS

Budget-Oriented Athletic Field Care

Dr. William Daniel, professor emeritus of soils and crops, Purdue University, IN, has developed a three-tiered athletic field care program designed to fit any budget. His hope is to get fields that aren't currently maintained onto an economy program. As the benefits of maintenance are realized, managers of these fields can move up to an improved care program or, the ultimate, best care program.

Daniel says for best performance athletic fields should meet three requirements: suface water must not accumulate; the surface should be smooth and stable; and turf should be in good condition for safety and appearance.

Timing of maintenance practices is the most significant element in any turf care program, according to Daniel. He says it's better to start early than to put athletic field maintenance off until the last moment. A fixed routine can help prevent problems with timing and maintenance frequency.

The **economy program** concentrates on the basics. Daniel recommends an application in mid-August of a minimum of 50 pounds of actual nitrogen per standard football field. If the entire area inside an oval track is fertilized, then 100 pounds are necessary. This amounts to 100-200 pounds of 45-0-0 fertilizer or 300-500 pounds of 16-4-8. A second application of fertilizer should be made in mid-season.

The field must be watered if at all possible. Daniel urges those managers without irrigation systems to consider a traveling type of irrigator with automatic cutoff. These sprinklers travel along a 400-foot cable. A one-inch hose, 200 feet long, is attached to a water source near the 50-yard-line on the side of the field. The hose can then reach the entire length of the spray pattern.

Mow as high as practical, says Daniel, rather than as low as possible. It is important to maintain as much leaf surface as practical to provide maximum protection against wear and cushion. The extra leaf surface also encourages deeper rooting and provides energy within the plants. Mowing height of two inches is considered average for Kentucky bluegrass or tall fescue. Raise the cutting height 1/2-inch during the summer.

Sharpen mower blades frequently. If at all possible, use a lightweight rotary or reel mower instead of a flail mower on athletic turf. Heavy tractors will cause compaction. If you must use a tractor mower, make sure it has turf type tires.

Overseed lightly before each home game. Spread five pounds of seed over thin areas with a cyclone spreader. Allow cleats to push the seed into the soil.

After the last home game, mulch thin areas with an organic topdressing or one ton of crushed corncobs. Fertilize again in late winter or early spring to force early grass growth.

Before June, kill broadleaf weeds and knotweed with an application of 2,4-D and dicamba.

As summer practice begins, protect key wear areas of the field from unnecessary traffic. Encourage the coaches and band director to use other areas whenever possible.

The **improved care program** utilizes turf fertilizers high in nitrogen, low in phosphorus and medium in potassium. Daniel suggests a portion of the nitrogen be in slow-release form. He says apply two to three pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet as a 16-4-8 fertilizer in mid-August.

Until August 15, water only when wilt starts to show. If in doubt, says Daniel, don't water. After August 15, water more frequently as needed to keep the field healthy.

Mow the field in the summer at two inches and lower it to 1½ inches at the beginning of the season. Overseed before every home game with improved, more disease-resistant Kentucky bluegrasses and perennial ryegrasses. Fertilize in mid-fall to help the turf recover from game damage. Immediately after the playing season ends, mulch worn areas with organic material.

In early spring fertilize with a soluble nitrogen source. Apply one of the preemergence herbicides in April to prevent crabgrass from germinating. Mow the turf before application since these materials must enter the soil to be effective. Water them in soon after application.

In June or late May kill broadleaf weeds as mentioned in the economy program.

The **best care program** includes a closer look at soil. Take samples for testing. Correct pH and nutrient deficiencies indicated by the test results. Use lime and gypsum only if needed.

Install an automatic irrigation system after consulting with a reliable irrigation supplier. Many football fields have irrigation systems spaced in a triangular pattern in three rows of full-circle heads or four rows with part-circle heads on the edges. Resist the temptation to overwater. Use the system only as needed.

Repair any divots following each game. Overseed before wet games with ten pounds of improved seed varieties. If large areas of turf are damaged, consider resodding to improved varieties of Kentucky bluegrass. Sod should be grown on mineral soil.

In addition to following the improved program, mow frequently and spray for leafspot disease four times per year as wet, humid weather dictates. Consult the Cooperative Extension Service for applicable fungicides. Deep power slice (verticut) with the slope from sideline to sideline once per year before or after the playing season.

The end of the season is a good time to correct problems with surface smoothness by spreading sandy topsoil on problem areas. Use a harrow to break up any dirt ridges, then overseeded repaired areas.

Selecting Field Colorants

There are times when colorants are needed to improve the appearance of sports fields. Sports turf managers should not be embarrassed when they need to use colorants, says Bill Rhymes of Mallinckrodt. The appearance of a field is often as important as its general condition.

Rhymes says there are several different types of colorants, including wettable powders, ready-to-apply liquids and concentrated flowables to be diluted with water before spraying. These products are classified into three groups, organic dyes, inorganic dyes and paints.

Generally, organic dyes are short-lived and are used primarily as spray indicators. Inorganic dyes last several days. Paints last several months.

Probably the widest use of colorants is on dormant grass. For years, superintendents of major sports stadiums have used colorants to touch up dormant or off-color turf. However, these materials also can be used on actively growing grass.

In addition to improving the overall appearance of an existing field, colorants help conceal some of the edges or soiled areas of newly installed sod. They can also be mixed with topdressing materials such as sand to make divot repairs blend in with the existing turf.

Rhymes says be sure to use only those colorants made specifically for turf. Seek products that, when dry, do not rub off or stain uniforms. Note any variations in color between products and select the colorant that matches your turf most closely. Ask your distributor if you can have samples to do test areas next to your field.

Surface damage was kept to a minimum while installing heads and valves since the field would be used by the Green Bay Packers in less than ten days.

Milwaukee Stadium
continued from page 18

The sand used at Milwaukee County Stadium was about 1/4 mm in diameter—a very uniform sand, pre-engineered to meet certain standards.

The narrow columns of sand that are used in sand-slit drainage act with a wicking action that actually pulls the water down with gravitational force. Because the columns are narrow, they eliminate any overdraining of the soil. If they were too wide, they would drain but would be too dry, and grass would not grow in them, says Heiss.

Like any baseball field manager, Gill is very picky about the infield and base paths. Gill says his job is made easier by a material called TerraGreen, a calcined clay from Oil-Dri Company, which he uses on the infield quite extensively. "It keeps the infield loose and playable at all times. It keeps it dryer during wet periods and moister during dry periods, because it holds water."

The only provision made for the yearly changeover to football is to take out the pitcher's mound and put sod over the skinned areas. All of the diamond lies within the perimeter of the football field, which barely fits into the stadium, according to Gary Vandenberg, assistant superintendent of grounds and maintenance for the Brewers. Nor is there any special watering schedule when the football season begins, the weather generally being foul and wintry by then.

During the baseball season, Vandenberg times irrigation dependent upon whether the team has a day game or a night game. If it's a day game, they don't irrigate at all. If it's a night game, they irrigate for about ten minutes.

"Basically we're still watering the skinned area mostly by hand when the team is here," Vandenberg reveals. "That's because each player wants it watered differently. So it's easier to do it by hand and not worry about whether it will puddle or not, and whether the wind's going to catch it."

Just what are the players' preferences as far as watering the skinned area? Vandenberg confides, "Some players like it a little harder than the others—but Jim Gantner, our second baseman, likes it real wet. Ernie Riles, the shortstop, likes to have moisture there, but not as much as Jim. Cecil Cooper, at first base, is not real fussy either way. He likes to have it pretty moist right in front of him, but otherwise he's not real particular."

There are no sensors on the field, because it is a closely watched field, and the conditions are always known to the people in charge. Despite this, Vandenberg reveals that sensors are being considered as a future possibility.

Gill reacts to his new irrigation system with all the zest and delight of a youngster with a new toy. "My track is completely watered," he points out. "If it's a dusty day, I can water the track individually. Around the infield I have five heads that water from

the edge of the infield to the outfield grass . . . and I have about five heads that will water the infield skinned area. I also have four of them that water the infield grass. So I can water the infield and outfield grass—all the grass areas—without touching the skinned, or I can turn around and just water the skinned."

The computer has a printer that enables Gill to print out whatever programs he's running, allowing him to keep an accurate record as the field is being watered. "So I know every day what I've done. I can also indicate weather, temperature, the condition of the field and what I'm doing to correct it. I keep the printed records."

Gabe Paul Jr., vice president of operations for the Milwaukee Brewers and Milwaukee Stadium, says appreciatively, "Harry Gill is the best groundskeeper in baseball." With his work earning that kind of praise, it's not surprising that Gill's influence has been spreading through the ranks of sports turf professionals all over the country.

One of his proudest achievements is his work with the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA). "I started STMA years ago," he recalls. "When I got into this business, only a few teams who were near each other had a dialogue going in which they transmitted ideas about sports turf. A lot of managers were individualists who thought their way was the only way. So I organized STMA by myself.

"I got a bit of dialogue going between many different clubs. Then Dr. Bill Daniels, the inventor of the PAT system, allowed me to have a room and speakers at Purdue University in conjunction with his spring turf seminar. He was professor of soils and crops there, but is retired now.

"We spent two years there," Gill continues. "Then we tied on with the parks and grounds maintenance department of Appleton, WI. They gave us an opportunity to test equipment and materials. They also provided us with a vehicle for the transmission of ideas in the form of a magazine. That enabled us to form an organization, and now we're becoming a rather large influence on the maintenance of athletic turf.

"From Appleton we moved to Ontario, CA, where we have our own office, I definitely believe that sports turf managers should organize," Gill says.

Joining the organization Gill founded provides a valuable benefit not afforded by other groups: access to the innovative ideas of the founder. These in turn are abundantly evident at Milwaukee County Stadium, which is still the focus of his day-to-day activities.

All of his thoughts are directed toward protecting and enhancing the field. Protection ranges from the standard tarpaulin that covers the entire infield when it rains to the net he spreads from foul line to foul line at pre-game time, when hitters practice by using the fungo—smashing the ball into the carefully landscaped ground.

Most importantly, he hasn't missed a detail in redesigning the field's irrigation and drainage systems. The fact that the field is mainly used by a baseball team is reflected in the drainage system's design. "We put the sand slits in with baseball in mind," Gill confirms. Rather than going cross-field, they laid all the slits in the direction the ball would play, so that the batters wouldn't be hitting the ball across them. That would have made it bounce erratically across the slits.

"We've got to get the ball to play as perfectly as possible," Gill reminds you.

His work at Milwaukee was rewarded this past spring when the Brewers management asked Gill to construct three new fields and a clubhouse at the team's new spring training facility in Chandler, AZ. Gill found himself dealing with warm-season turfgrasses for a change. "It was a thrilling and educational experience for me," says Gill. "We had to rush to get the fields in play before camp started. On top of that, a natural gas explosion gutted the clubhouse just days before the team was to arrive."

"I never stop learning," Gill states. "Managers, coaches, players and fans have taught me many of the things that make a sports turf manager valuable to the team. It's time for sports turf managers to get together and share their knowledge so everyone can benefit, including field maintenance people at colleges, parks and schools. We all can make ourselves more valuable and more professional by sharing our experiences."

Auxer's crew restores a sand trap to its original shape and size. Turf had overgrown some traps by more than three feet.

Heather Gardens
continued from page 30

When the system was installed, low cost controllers were used instead of commercial grade. When Auxer arrived, many of the 18 controllers on the course would malfunction when temperatures exceeded 80 degrees. It was not unusual to lose half of them each year to heat, line voltage surges and lightning.

In 1985, Auxer replaced eight of the old controllers with Irri-Trol MC-8s. The control boxes were painted light tan to reflect the heat and fitted with devices to protect them against voltage surges and lightning. "It was a case of being penny wise and pound foolish," states Auxer. "Eventually, we will replace all the controllers."

Auxer is experimenting with moisture sensors. "We have installed one Irrometer tensiometer and one Water Conservation Services Hydrovisor on the top of berms to help us water those areas separately. By spot irrigating we save water and have eliminated some of the wet spots. Some day I'd like to tie these into one central irrigation computer."

A Naiad injection system was installed to add wetting agent to the irrigation system. Auxer credits the wetting agent, renovation of the irrigation system and thatch reduction for big savings in water. Even though rainfall in Aurora in 1985 was two inches less than 1984 and the temperatures averaged two degrees higher, the golf course saved 40 percent on water. The golf course's main water source is a well, even though a major raw water pipeline crosses underneath the course. Auxer predicts this well will run dry within 15 years. Another possible source of water in the future is secondary effluent from the city or a water treatment facility that has been mentioned to the association board.

Fast from Turf Irrigation Supply points out, "The Denver area is on a continuous water rationing program. Some suburbs only allow homeowners to irrigate every third day. Golf course superintendents have to be very sensitive to water use."

Heather Gardens has two acres of lakes. These required regular treatment with copper sulphate to prevent algae blooms. This bothered Auxer because the grandchildren of the residents often play near the lakes and watch the ducks that make the lakes their home. Being the experimenter he is, he wanted to replace chemicals with weed-eating white amurs, a member of the carp

family. "We stocked the lake with amurs last fall and so far this summer have no trace of algae," says Auxer. "I'd like to install aerator fountains to oxygenate the water and provide another feature to the lakes."

Trees are another feature Auxer wants to increase on the course. A look at the original plans showed him that only 250 out of 1,200 trees on the plan had ever been planted. The cost of 800 specimen trees for the course was out of the question. He heard that the state provides seedlings for windbreaks at very low cost. For $325 he obtained 825 seedlings, including spruce, pines, ash, locust and Russian olive. These were planted on the perimeter of the course as a windbreak. "We may move them to other locations as they mature," Auxer revealed. In the meantime, $5,000 had to be spent to replace trees that died last year with larger trees. Auxer hopes that within five years the course will appear as the architect had planned.

In a recent survey, the residents said the golf course is the central amenity that distinguishes Heather Gardens from other condominium communities.

Auxer approached the planting of flowers on the course in the same creative way. Faced with limited labor, he wanted to reduce the amount of maintenance required by flower beds without losing the color. He decided to plant perennial flowers instead of annuals and has since replaced all annuals with perennials. "They cost the same or less than annuals, and don't require purchasing and replanting every year," he states.

A landscape architect helped Auxer select a mix of species that would bloom throughout the entire season. The beds are covered with shredded cedar bark mulch and fed with foliar fertilizers. Periodically, the dead flower heads are knocked off with weedeaters.

Auxer also discovered, while reviewing the old plans, that some sand traps were as much as six feet smaller than they were supposed to be. Over the last two years, his crew has rebuilt these bunkers to their proper dimensions. "We removed the sand, widened and reshaped the traps to fit the plan, installed new drainage and put in new, clean sand," outlines Auxer. The golfers noticed this change right away!"

It may sound like Heather Garden's budget has increased substantially and it has. By justifying each improvement to the board he has increased the course's budget from $90,000 to $150,000. "It may be the largest budget for a nine-hole course in the state," says Auxer. In the first five months of this year, rounds played have doubled. At this rate, the course will exceed 45,000 rounds for the first time.

"Eighty percent of the rounds are played by residents of Heather Gardens," points out general manager Myers. "In a recent survey, the residents said the golf course is the central amenity that distinguishes Heather Gardens from other condominium communities. Also, non-golfers are as concerned with the condition of the course as golfers since their condominiums overlook it. There is no question that the golf course makes this a more desirable place to live."

"There is no reason why nine-hole courses can't compete with bigger courses if they take course maintenance seriously," Auxer believes. "You have to watch expenditures closely and keep track of labor. It's when you let maintenance and repairs get backed up that you face problems. Keep on top of things and be frugal, and you can serve a large portion of the growing golf business."

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ROOKIES

PRODUCT UPDATE

HIGH-DUMPING SWEEPERS

Mr. Air Sweepers has recently added four new sweepers to its landscape maintenance vehicle line. Each model features separate storage lockers, a lockable cage, flat bed space and the ability to dump debris and trimmings into dumpsters and other receptacles.

The Model 1600 has a three cubic yard hopper. It offers easy access to the hopper through a back door for loading large debris and for checking the removeable screen for easy maintenance. The unit performs well with debris, bottles, rocks and litter.

Model 2000 is a truckster-type, parking lot sweeper. The two cubic yard hopper and entire sweeping unit is removable. It sweeps rocks, cans, bottles and debris.

The Trident 300 Sweeper is a parking lot and street sweeper with a two cubic yard capacity. It is also removable from the truck and sweeps rock, gravel, cans, bottles and debris. All units have been designed for high-dumping and ease of maintenance.

MR. AIR SWEEPERS

Circle **156** on Reader Service Card

SERVICE TIMER

A new timer for all kinds of equipment and vehicles reminds the operator that the period of time is up for servicing the unit. It is called Service Minder I.

The timer has been field-tested on industrial and farm equipment, earth-moving machines in coal-mining areas, and inboard motors, to mention but a few. It may be used on trucks, utility company vehicles and back hoes—wherever recording hours for servicing is important.

The Service Minder I attaches to the key switch and counts the hours of operation as a reminder to service the machine. When you start a piece of equipment, it starts the timer and the hours are clearly displayed.

The timer is resettable. After you have serviced the machine at the end of the desired interval—say, 75 hours—you push the reset button and the display goes back to 0 to track the next service interval.

SERVICE BRAINS, INC.

Circle **157** on Reader Service Card

HIGH SPEED AERATOR

Speed, fewer moving parts and quick field adjustment were the main goals set by GreenCare International for its Core Master 12 hollow-tine aerator system. Powered by a small tractor PTO system, the unit can be used for aeration and thatch control on greens, tees, fairways and all types of sports fields.

Core depth can be changed simply by the turn of a handle while the coring pattern can be changed with a 'stop and go' procedure. The 49-inch-wide Core Master 12 uses case-hardened steel tines from 1/4-inch to 1½-inch in diameter. Core depth is adjustable from one to four inches.

An optional core windrowing system is available. A core pickup system will be released soon says the manufacturer. Other attachments to provide a flexible tractor system are under development.

GREENCARE INT.

Circle **158** on Reader Service Card

VALVE BOXES

Irrigation valve boxes from the Harvard line of sprinkler/irrigation accessories are now available from the American Granby Company.

They feature moisture- and temperature-resistant thermoplastic construction. The valve-box lids are impregnated with color-fast dark-green pigment and the box itself is black.

Six-inch extensions are available when deeper bury depth is needed. The extension may be used alone in areas of lower bury depth.

AMERICAN GRANBY CO.

Circle **159** on Reader Service Card

ROOKIES

PRODUCT UPDATE

GREENS MOWER

The trend toward faster putting surfaces has been recognized by Jacobsen with the introduction of its ultra-fine-cutting greens mower. Nine-bladed reels are adjustable from 3/32 to 7/16-inch to enable superintendents to cut greens as low and as smoothly as possible. Adjustments are fixed to assure a consistent height of cut.

The mower features a more powerful and quieter engine than previous models. It cuts a 22-inch swath with a single five-inch diameter reel.

JACOBSEN DIVISION, TEXTRON

Circle **164** on Reader Service Card

BASEPATH CONDITIONER

Stade Rouge is a colored amendment to improve the condition and appearance of baseball basepaths and clay tennis courts. The red material is made from pulverized brick. It is capable of holding up to ten percent of its weight in water for better control of moisture in critical areas.

The rouge helps the infield dirt maintain a uniform amount of moisture to reduce dust and slick spots. The color does not fade and contrasts nicely with green turf. The texture of the material provides sound footing and resists compaction.

Only occasional topdressings are needed to keep the material effective. The material will not dry out or crack.

BIGHAMPTON BLOCK CORP.

Circle **166** on Reader Service Card

WALK-BEHIND SWEEPER

The Tennant Model 186 walk-behind sweeper can clean 18,000 square feet of indoor or outdoor surface an hour, nearly six times faster than hand methods. The unit sweeps a 34-inch path and can be converted to a scrubber in minutes, without tools.

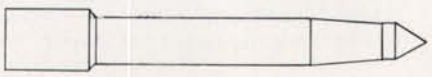
The walk-behind unit is a flexible and fast cleaning device that takes up limited storage space.

TENNANT COMPANY

Circle **165** on Reader Service Card

SOLID TINES

Solid tines can open up soil without the need to drag or pick up soil cores. Condesco says its solid tines will aerate more than 100 sand greens before they need to be replaced.

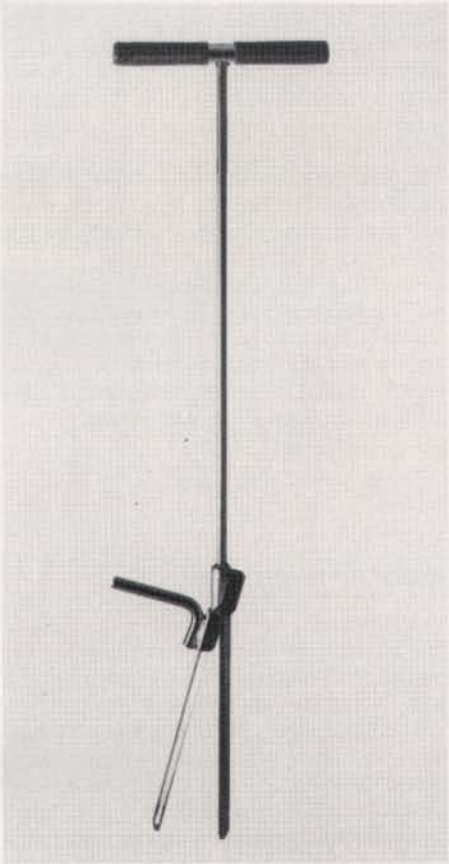


The company has an assortment of solid tines in sizes from 1/4-inch to 5/8-inch in diameter. The tines are carbide-tipped and come in a variety of shapes to do a variety of tasks, from preparing a seedbed to breaking up ice on greens.

CONDESCO INC.

Circle **167** on Reader Service Card

SOIL SAMPLER



The task of obtaining soil samples has been simplified by KHS with the introduction of its Soil Probe. The eleven-gauge stainless-steel probe will not rust and features a hinge design. The opening of the probe is adjustable and the enclosed receiving tube prevents mixing of soil levels.

The hinged design permits easy access and removal of the entire core. The probe has a one-inch diameter. Eight-inch and 12-inch core probes are available.

M&M SUPPLY CO.

Circle **168** on Reader Service Card