Giving turf painting a good name!

By Kyle D. Sweet, CGCS

Today's golf course superintendent has many talents and wears many hats. Striving to provide great course conditioning is the number-one goal day after day, and often there isn't much time left after that. But if you can find a little time and want to have a whole lot of fun, here's an idea to give your golfers a little extra flair out there.

Whether watching football, baseball or the races, you will see incredible displays of turf painting each and every weekend. Bringing that attraction to your course is not difficult and, with a few easy steps, you can do it with excellent results.

First, you will need the desired design electronically produced on your computer. Use an LED projector to project that image onto a material on which you can easily create a stencil. 1/8-inch white hardboard works well

A putting green slope is an excellent location for a turf painting. Photo by Kyle Sweet.

for the stencil and is much easier to work with than plywood.

Fasten the board to the wall or to a stepladder to get it up to a good working height. Once projected on the board, carefully trace the design with a pencil or crayon. Fastening the board tightly will be very important to this process so your tracing is as accurate as possible.

Once the entire desired design is traced, the design must be cut out. This is the most tedious part of the entire process and a good cutting tool is a must. A small pneumatic hacksaw will do an excellent job of cutting through the hardboard with great detail. Once the design is cut out and removed from the wall or easel, it must be stored flat on the floor or secure against a wall.

Once the hard work is done, you can get out and do the painting. Picking a good, visible site where everyone can enjoy and appreciate your work is a must. Putting green walkups are a great spot as well as the first tee. The shorter the turf the better for getting good detail when painting turf. The stencil must be placed on a flat surface or an even slope so the design can be properly lined up. To get the best results, press

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Kyle Sweet, CGCS cuts out the stencil for the Sanctuary Logo. Photo by Fred Fulford.

the stencil tightly to the ground and begin painting the desired design area.

Turf paints come in many colors, but if you can't find the color you need in a turf paint, you can paint the desired area with a turf paint first and then go over it with an over-the-counter spray paint without injury to the grass. Practicing the painting process will pay off when it comes to the final project and will help you determine the best processes to get your desired results.

Store the stencil and paints in a safe place. Hopefully you will be able to use them again and again for events at your club and provide that something extra that everyone appreciates.

Good luck and have fun!

Give fundraising tournaments some extra flair with turf painting. Photo by Kyle Sweet.