

Water a consuming issue

Continued from page 10

just a little over an inch of water per week. That, it seems to me, can make it pretty tough to grow grass. It is certain that, with those kinds of constraints, you don't want to waste any water.

According to Gordon, all maintained areas are trimmed with part-circle sprinklers. He tries to limit heads to no more than two per zone. This gives the superintendent the ability to eliminate small portions of the course if rationing is imposed.

You would expect, I guess, that Arizona would have laws regarding irrigation and that special consideration would be given to water waste. Arizona is, after all, a desert. Jim Barrett, a widely known irrigation consultant from Montclair, N.J., indicates that although there aren't any laws, yet, regarding golf course irrigation, the same concerns exist in the Northeast.

According to Barrett, designs are much different today than even 10 years ago. There is much more concern, he says, with uniformity and spacing. There is a great deal of concern with power consumption.

"Management is the buzz word in golf course irrigation today," Barrett indicates. "I can't remember the last design I did that didn't have computer controls. Our problems are not as severe as some other parts of the country. We don't have continuing water problems, but we are learning from the problems in California and Arizona."

"Better control is the name of the game," says Gordon.

The biggest advance in golf course irrigation management in recent years has been the acceptance of the computer, according to Scott Kuhn of Carl Kuhn Inc. in Seattle.

Scott emphasized that water conservation is not the only concern facing golf course irrigation designers today. "Energy costs have gone through the roof," he says. "With the computer and multi-stage, variable-speed pumps, we are able to save lots of kilowatt-hours as well."

"Some of the new sprinklers will perform very well at much lower pressures than was

the case in the past. This helps greatly to reduce pumping costs."

The use of treated effluent to irrigate golf courses has become widespread. System cost increases slightly due to the requirement of specially colored pipe and other equipment. As the demand for these products increases, costs will go down.

The use of weather stations, incorporated in the irrigation system, is becoming very common. The weather station drives the computer, Gordon explains. It measures wind speed, direction, evapo-transpiration, rainfall, temperature and anything else you can think of.

We have obviously come a long way in the past 20 years. Golf course superintendents have been in the forefront of this water-conserving technology. We, of course, have a long way to go. There are still a lot of courses out there with old, inefficient systems.

There are also some very sophisticated systems not being used to their fullest. This is an educational problem that must be addressed.

What is the next step? My guess would be soil-moisture sensing. This is a concept that has been around for almost a century. New technology will make soil-moisture sensing a practical tool in the management of an irrigation system. It will be a valuable weapon in the fight for water conservation.

I can honestly say that my father would be proud of the great strides his colleagues have made in managing their systems and their facilities. He would applaud the technological advances available today. He would certainly like the opportunity to manage a golf course with the tools available now, compared with what he had to work with a half-century ago. I guess that's called progress, isn't it?

The Irrigation Association is dedicated to the conservation and intelligent use of water and all our precious resources. We salute the efforts of the golf and turf management community for their success in this regard.

Charles S. 'Pepper' Putnam is the new executive director of the Irrigation Association.

An informative 'read'

To the editor:

I want to congratulate you and thank you for your Golf Course News publication. It is the most informative publication of its kind that I have seen in my 20 years in the golf industry. I read it cover to cover and I am always amazed at the wide variety of subject matter and the intelligent commentary that comprise each issue.

You have a great magazine and everyone I have talked to in our business has had nothing but praise for your publication. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,
Richard M. Kopplin
Director of Operations
Desert Mountain Properties
Scottsdale, Ariz.

Letters accepted

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	12 mo. avg.	Sept. Issue	Statement of ownership, management and circulation required by Title 39 United States Code, Section 3685 for Golf Course News ISSN 1054-0644 published 12 times a year by United Publications, Inc., 38 Lafayette St., Yarmouth, ME. 04096. Publisher: Charles E. von Brecht. Managing Editor: Mark Leslie. Associate Editor: Peter Blais. Mailing address is P. O. Box 995, Yarmouth, ME. 04096. The owners are Theodore E. Gordon, P. O. Box 995, Yarmouth, ME. 04096 and J. G. Taliaferro, Jr., P. O. Box 995, Yarmouth, ME. 04096. There are no bondholders, mortgages, or other security holders.
A Total # Copies	23,026	24,751	
B Paid and/or Request Circ			
1. Sales-dealer, carrier, vendor, counter	0	0	
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D Free Dist by Mail, Carrier or other means			
Samples, complimentary, other free	2,043	1,839	
E Total Distribution (sum of C + D)	22,306	23,964	
F Copies not Distributed			
1. Office, overs, spoiled copies	702	787	
2. Return from news agents	0	0	
G Total Issues (equals A) (sum of E + F1 + F2)	23,026	24,751	

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