

A golf superintendent

In an age of specialized knowledge

The goal of producing and maintaining the best possible turf for golf has remained constant through the years, but the tools and techniques used in maintenance have constantly changed and continue to do so. We are well into the age of mechanization, automation, and specialization. As with almost all professions, the apprentice has been replaced by the student.

The apprentice often worked for a small income or none at all to learn a trade, and he was prone to learn pat answers from the master tradesman or craftsman for handling routine situations and only a few unusual problems. He learned from experience, which is a



harsh but usually lasting method which will never be totally replaced.

The student first gains a background in fundamental principles through formal education which applies to almost all situations. Upon completion of the formal phase of his education, the student is employed at a reasonable wage so that he may apply his technical knowledge to practical situations.

Briefly stated, the apprentice learns from experience and the student gains experience while learning.

The greenkeeper has given way to the golf course superintendent or turf manager, and the agronomist or turf specialist has arrived on the scene as a necessary part of our changing technology.

The greenkeeper was usually a successful apprentice. The golf course superintendent is a professional businessman. Turf management per se may be only a modest portion of the duties ascribed to today's successful golf course superintendent, since a large portion of his time is consumed with purchasing, personnel management, equipment maintenance and repair, bookkeeping, irrigation design, installation, maintenance and use, landscape architecture, and building maintenance — to name a few areas in which he

must have a working knowledge. He also is likely to have a respectable golf handicap.

Because of these divergent areas of responsibility, it is therefore improbable that the golf course superintendent will be able to maintain more than a good working knowledge of all of them and will need to rely on a specialist beyond that.

Research is vital to the continuing progress of turf management and to develop acceptable answers to new and more complex problems that arise as our technology improves.

Between basic research and the practical application of the information it yields, there usually must be a catalyst. This catalyst is usually called an agronomist, and he functions to collect, evaluate, and disseminate useful information concerning turfgrass management.

The agronomist may also specialize in physiology, pathology, entomology, taxonomy, or a seemingly endless list of related subjects; but in any event his efforts will be concentrated on a much smaller area of learning than that of the golf course superintendent.

A larger portion of today's superintendents have some formal education in the field of turf maintenance than ever before. However, no matter what level of formal education has been completed by the turf manager, there is a basic need for information which can most effectively be supplied by a specialist.

The cycle is complete only if there is a flow of turf management information from the research effort through the practical utilization phase and back again.

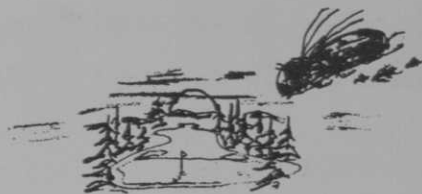
The individual who assumes that this cycle can be effectively short circuited simply has not been exposed to or has not realized the value of each state through which information must flow in both directions at all times.

A glimpse of the future might reveal some superior plant materials, synthetic soils, better diagnostic aids for turf diseases as well as problems in general, disposable and/or recyclable machinery and parts, totally computerized maintenance operations as well as golf course environments.

About the only thing that will probably remain intact is the goal of producing and maintaining the best possible turf for golf and the dedication of the individual coping with the challenge.

From a presentation by Holman Griffin, former NGF staff agronomist, now a turfgrass consultant.

IT'S WAR



The Ataenius Beetle attacks by night leaving golf courses battle scarred in their wake.

No turf or course is immune to assault and the right chemical to dispose of the Ataenius effectively and legally is still being researched.

The cost to a golf course chosen as an attack site can be phenomenal, the damage devastating. As in any declared war, emergency funds are urgently needed to destroy the threat once and for all.

"The situation is serious," says Dr. Fred V. Grau, president of the Musser Foundation, "and is bound to get worse."

With your help the battle can be won, hopefully before your turf becomes a victim of war.

Contributions to combat the Ataenius could save millions of dollars of unnecessary repair work.

To help in the fight, send your contributions to:

MUSSER INTERNATIONAL TURFGRASS FOUNDATION:

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