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Turfgrass is better able to fight off dollar spot and other diseases on its own, so less fungicide is better utilized.

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restrictions remain contentious in Florida as summer rains and Tropical Storm Gabrielle failed to raise aquifer and reservoir levels enough to lift the ridiculous day-of-the-week watering schedules set by many counties.

Politicians and bureaucrats fail to grasp that managing living organisms isn't a matter of calendars but of proper soil moisture. Superintendents can accept water-use restrictions, but they need more flexibility in watering times than most politicians will allow.

As we approached overseeding season, Florida GCSA President Geoff Coggan called his local water management district to find out how much flexibility the district might allow golf courses under its “new sprigging and seeding” allowances. He was told by a clerk that the district wouldn't make broad accommodations, but that each course could file for a variance at $50 a pop.

Then the clerk made a big mistake. He told Geoff, “You know some people don’t even think golf courses should exist!” It’s not that he told Geoff anything he didn’t know, but I wouldn’t want to hear that attitude expressed by someone who gets paid with my tax dollars.

The clerk’s attitude is not, I fear, isolated. A recent exchange between a county water department, a water management district and our association made that clear.

The county commissioners instructed their local water service to impose an additional 5-percent reduction in irrigation allowances for 22 golf courses in the unincorporated area in the county. The county water department said the commissioners were responding to the public outcry over the “apparent” (the quotes are from the county staff) continued overuse of water by golf courses.

There are no facts supporting the charges forthcoming. No violations by golf courses were reported to the district. No inspections or flow-meter checks revealed golf courses hogging the water. You know what the most damning evidence was? People complained that the golf courses were green while their yards were brown, “so the golf courses must be breaking the regulations.” The water management district didn’t fall for these false charges and asked the county for proof of overuse.

The county staff readily admits that superintendents are some of the most capable water resource managers, but they admit it to the district and to the superintendents. They don’t say it to the commissioners or to the press. As a result, the old stereotypes and perceptions live on in the narrow minds of a vocal few.

We know the public sector is where the most water is consumed and wasted than any other group. They are voters, however, and they seem to be immune from tough regulations. We know homeowners, weekly lawn-care services and municipalities tend to set their irrigation systems to regular schedules no matter what conditions exist. At the same time, superintendents manage water resources daily to maintain good playing conditions.

A simple check of the water management district’s Web site indicates that recreational water use is only 3 percent to 5 percent of the total water consumed in the district. Golf courses are a subset in that category, so it’s clear golf courses aren’t using much water.

All this ranting by residents about golf courses wasting water really focuses on a small slice of the pie. Politicians can try and squeeze more water out of golf courses so consumers don’t have to pay the price for their waste. But the real-world numbers show they are not going to get very many gallons for all their politically expedient but totally misdirected efforts.

Of course, the truth is, they’re not looking to save water. They’re just trying to save face by cooling off the squeaky wheels with phony water restrictions.

Superintendents can accept water-use restrictions, but they need more flexibility than most politicians will allow.

Joel Jackson, CGCS, retired from Disney's golf division in 1997 and is director of communications for the Florida GCSA.
It can be summed up in two words: amino acids. These are the building blocks of protein, the natural way to health, life, and vigor.

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How to Achieve the Natural Look

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD

IT STARTS WITH NATIVE GRASSES AND ENDS WITH SAVING WATER THROUGH PROPER MANAGEMENT

through when they overwater natives. This also doesn't address the money wasted in unnecessary water because someone wants lush meadows, not natural-looking prairies.

Besides managing how meadow grasses are watered, the proper selection of grass is key to making such a transition work from maintenance and aesthetic points of view. There are native grass nurseries throughout the country with specialists who have some perspective on which grasses are working (ask your USGA Green Section representative whom they would consult).

John Greenlee (grnleensr@aol.com) wrote the definitive book on ornamental grass and owns one of the nation's finest nurseries for such grass. An excellent series of paperbacks published by the Brooklyn Botanical Garden (www.bbg.org/gardenemporium) covers all aspects of natives, and many of the new drought-tolerant grasses that could come in handy for those out-of-play areas where irrigation and manpower are wasted.

If you find you're having trouble selling the concept of a prairie look, try to find photographs of famous courses where the natives appear beneficial and look like they receive minimal water and management. Show those pictures to your client or owner, who may claim the look is tacky.

The first step in saving water through the use of prairie grass is through management. Don't bother to develop the areas if you don't have the time, resources or golfer support to manage them with as little water as necessary. Otherwise, these meadows will become swamps and defeat their purpose — to add natural beauty to your courses while preserving precious resources.

Geoff Shackelford spent his summer transplanting on-site native grasses to improve the look and maintainability of waste areas at Rustic Canyon GC in Moorpark, Calif. He can be reached at geoffshackelford@aol.com.
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Hole of the

No. 11
Mauna Kea Resort GC
Kamuela, Hawaii
Accurate golfers are happy golfers, particularly when they’re playing the 245-yard par-3 No. 11 at Mauna Kea Resort GC in Kamuela, Hawaii. Golfers battle not only winds on the hole, which juts into the Pacific Ocean, but also a tight fairway that hides severe drops on both sides with trees and flowering shrubs. Superintendent Bob Itamoto says golfers better hit their balls straight if they want to find them.

"It’s by far the hardest hole on the course," Itamoto says. "During our professional tournaments, the average score is 3.5 strokes. You have to hit it straight or you don’t stand a chance."

Itamoto says the hole poses the same maintenance difficulties as the other holes on the Robert Trent Jones-designed course. His crew members face an undulating green that makes mowing more difficult and the four bunkers that surround the hole must be maintained by hand.

"Jones was an architect who made life difficult for those who maintain his courses," Itamoto says. "What results from his work, however, are some of the most challenging courses in the world."
Here's what you need to know before you lay pipe

BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR., MANAGING EDITOR

BUILD A Better
Irrigation System

Pat Gradoville, superintendent at Palos Verdes GC in Los Alamitos, Calif., refuses to call himself an irrigation expert, despite his extensive experience in both renovating and constructing systems during his 15-year career. He has supervised installations on new courses and overseen renovations on systems that outlived their usefulness.

Gradoville says building an ideal irrigation system is as much art as science.

"To call myself an irrigation expert would be a misnomer," Gradoville says. "It takes time and research before you can install a system to serve your course's needs effectively." No matter how much experience you have, it's always good to review the steps you should take to avoid creating irrigation headaches for yourself in the future, he says.

Hire an irrigation consultant

Bob Wren, superintendent of Chantilly National Golf & CC in Centreville, Va., says most superintendents have a difficult time designing irrigation systems on their own.

"Spend the money and hire an outside consultant," Wren says. "They're the experts. They'll be able to look at projects and point out potential problems you never considered." Wren says irrigation consultants possess experience with a variety of systems, so they can recommend a system to fit your budget. (For more on the advantages of hiring a consultant, see "Smart Design Pays Dividends," page 31.)

Insist on the largest pipe you can afford

Pipe size, particularly on the main line, can define the success or failure of an irrigation system. (Continued on page 30)
Continued from page 29

system, says Steve Kurta, superintendent at Tuscarora GC in Macellus, N.Y. He suggests installing pipe large enough to handle water speeds of 3 feet per second.

Gradoville recommends using nothing less than 4-inch pipe for the mainline and preferably nothing less than 6 inches. At his course, the mainline consists of 10-inch pipe, with successive branches getting smaller by 2 inches. The pipe at the smallest branches is 4 inches.

"Sizing your pipe should be the first item on your agenda when you're talking to your consultant about design," Gradoville says. "If you pick the wrong-sized pipe, you're setting yourself up for major problems."

Plan for further expansion from the start

Whether you're doing a renovation or installing a new system, you should know your club's 10-year construction plan, Wren says.

"A common mistake is building a system that serves your course now without accounting for future expansion," Wren says. "If the course wants to add another nine holes, you need to plan for it. You need to be thinking 10 or 15 years down the road."

Pull enough controller wire throughout the course to accommodate future system additions,