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Hole Notes (ISSN 108-27994) is digitally published monthly except bimonthly in November/December and January/February by the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendents’ Association, 10050 204th Street North, Forest Lake, MN 55025. Jack MacKenzie CGCS publisher. Please send any address changes, articles for publication, advertising and concerns to jack@mgcsa.org.
I recently had the opportunity to attend a gathering put on by an affiliate member of the MGCSA. A good portion of the program included discussion on challenges faced by the golf industry today, and at the top of the conversation were issues with water and dealing with an inadequate labor supply. Both superintendents and general managers voiced their concerns with water regulations and restrictions, something that everyone agreed was inevitable in our industry. Of course, the challenges associated with labor today did not take much of a back seat either.

From across the country, comments included the inability to find anyone ‘to do the work’, and then figuring out ways to retain employees, should you be able to find them. Unanimously, the group cited their frustration with good employees that leave the job for $0.25 at another venue. Having been able to participate in a group setting such as this, it was good to know that Minnesota is not alone when it comes to these challenges. I guess misery loves company!

Near the end of the meeting, a little over an hour of time was dedicated to a short seminar on leadership. The overall format of our time spent with the affiliate company was quite interesting, in that time was spent touring facilities, engaging in conversations regarding product performance, and then discussing challenges that
we face as an industry. Yet, it seemed very clever to me that the final hour of our time was spent on something that may or may not directly impact the bottom line of the affiliate company. In my mind, it was clever because this company chose to spend their time helping their clients personally, and closed with a topic that means so much more than simply a sale or retention of business. They chose to invest in people, because leadership will always choose a relationship or a person before anything else.

Leadership and the challenges associated with water restrictions were recently brought to the forefront when the MGCSA was invited to participate in a series of meetings, as the DNR works to develop a report to the Legislature on groundwater appropriations. The DNR included our association in these important discussions, as our input is becoming more and more valued due to the leadership role that golf has taken on regarding our use and conservation of water. As an attendee at the meeting, it was impressive to witness the recognition that golf was given as an authority on the water issue.

We were recognized a number of times for the technological improvements and conservation measures that our industry has embraced. Golf was also noted as a destination for groundwater recharge and storm water abatement, as a number of clubs utilize their facilities as a source for runoff from city storm sewers and impervious surfaces. And most importantly, golf was recognized for putting together Best Management Practices for
Irrigation, and was cited as a template for other industries to follow. Pretty impressive, especially considering the company that we were sitting in, as there was representation from numerous local watershed districts, the DNR and other state agencies.

Whether you agree with the water issue or not, one cannot argue with the fact that increased scrutiny and regulations are on the horizon. This is not just a local issue, rather a national challenge that affects everyone. While plenty of work still looms on the horizon, the MGCSA has a seat at the table when it comes to discussions regarding conservation of the resource.

Thankfully, strong leadership by our executive director, Jack MacKenzie, has put us in a position where we now have the opportunity to participate rather than being dictated to. Without Jack’s leadership and his ability to forge ahead, I’m quite certain golf would be on the menu as a major offender rather than a go-to entity.

As the season slowly heads toward the fall, I hope you have the opportunity to consider a leadership position within the MGCSA. Being involved with the association has been very rewarding, and it is quite exciting to see the in-roads that have been made with agencies that were once anti-golf. Should you encounter a request to participate on the board or sub-committee, I hope you will give it some thought before tossing out the ‘busy’ buzzword. Thank you for your time, and best of luck to you all as the season winds down.
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If you care about your water resource, you have got to read this.

Hopefully I caught your attention with the previous statement. As serious as a heart attack, your access to water has just gotten closer to being in jeopardy. No, not an impending drought or sudden decline in groundwater table, this threat is in response to a request from the Minnesota Legislature to the Department of Natural Resources to review Minnesota Statutes, section 103G.287, which states that “groundwater appropriations that will have negative impacts to surface waters are subject to applicable provisions in section 103G.285.”

Sound familiar? It should, as this was the topic of my August column. This month, however, I need to ramp up the message volume. This month you need to read and share the message with your golf professional, club manager or course owner. This month you need to take action beyond a brief read and then blow off because you don’t think the message is relevant…. “we live in the land of 10,000 lakes” you say!

Earlier this spring, Jake Schmitz, Roger Stewart and I had a meeting with our liaisons at the DNR to continue to discuss the Environmental Stewardship and BMP initiatives we were promoting along with our golf allied associations. At the time, the agency representatives softened our message as the state was not ‘reeling from a drought’ and we were assured that groundwater permits would likely never be in jeopardy of suspension. Furthermore, as there were already legitimate surface water regulations in place and a permit suspension program with precedence, the best course of action courses using rivers, streams and lakes to pursue was/is to drill a well or find other resources. The final message, “notify your surface water users to find alternative sources for
irrigation”.

Two weeks ago the message became tainted as your association began participation upon the stakeholders committee to, review “thresholds for negative impacts to various types of surface waters, including natural and altered natural watercourses, water basins, and trout streams”. Considering the impacts of surface water draw down, I interpret this language to mean that if a permitted groundwater user is negatively impacting a surface water through the action of legitimately using their allotted groundwater, their permit can be immediately modified or suspended until such time as the surface water returns to its previous state.

Please follow this train of thought: as a category six, non-essential water user, permitted to utilize a specific amount of groundwater, your irrigation causes a recordable impact upon a supply of surface water along with every other permit holder. Unlike just about every other permit holder however, golf has been defined as a non-essential water user and courses impacting the surface water could temporarily loose their permit. Suddenly, with this new verbiage, all permitted golf courses are in the crosshairs, both surface and ground water users.

Since the first stakeholder’s meeting the MGCSA has reached out to DNR Commissioner Landwehr, newly appointed DNR Director of Ecological and Water Resources, Luke Skinner and Jason Moeckel Section Manager of Inventory, Monitoring and Analysis within the Ecological and Water Resources Division in an attempt to get some clarification of the “end game” of groundwater/surface water negative impacts as well as continue to promote the BMP/Certification program.

From my perspective, the issue of water access revolves around equity. Sure, everyone can understand that water for consumption is far more important than water for a car wash. But is there really a difference between water used for a microbrewery, I
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don’t drink so this is non-essential to me, and a golf course? What about home lawn and business irrigation systems? Just because they are not supplied by an independent well, and thus not easily regulated, why should they be allowed to consume a quasi-regulated resource while other sectors suffer the fate of permit suspension. Should it not be equitable?

You have heard me preach the message before; allow the golf industry to implement an irrigation BMP, conservation and reduction plan, based upon DNR monitoring of available water supplies, in exchange for never loosing complete access to the water supply for critical areas of the golf course. This isn’t “rocket science” and we would be utilizing the UMN for management of the program. It would be voluntary and those who don’t participate would fall under the same threat level of the current surface water users who haven’t got alternative sources.

Stay tuned as we move ahead promoting our industry in an attempt to save and enhance our access to water supplies.
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As a time and productivity management speaker and author, I see it all the time. People just don’t use their inboxes properly. And these mistakes lead to significant distraction, lost time, and rework. Most people use their e-mail inbox in four specific ways and only one of those ways is correct:

1. (The Correct Use): To Receive and Process New Messages. The key reason you have an inbox is to receive new items in that inbox. Your goal is to quickly and efficiently figure out what those items are, and then properly process them. If you’ve ever attended one of my courses, you know that you handle the quick ones immediately, and you put the longer items on either your task list or your calendar, thus allowing you to plan and prioritize. After you either get them “done” or “tasked”, you can either delete those messages or file them for later reference. If you don’t have a good place to file them, you make one and put it there. This is really the only way to use an inbox.

2. As your de facto yet highly disorganized daily task list. So many people use their e-mail inbox as their default task list. It isn’t at all built for that. It is hard to prioritize individual items in an inbox, so you end up looking at the same items multiple times, trying to figure out which ones are important and/or urgent, and which ones aren’t. Most tasking programs, including tools like MS Outlook, Toodledo, and Google Tasks, allow you to see your tasks in priority order by either date or by project (I teach courses on this!) Very quickly, you can figure out what is either most urgent or important. (Even a properly-designed paper task list can do this!) Thus, you can understand why I’m trying to get people out of the habit of “inbox tasking,” and into the habit of building a smarter daily task list using an appropriate task tool each and every day.

3. As your de facto yet highly disorganized general file box. The other thing people are doing with their inbox is using it to store ev-
everything or nearly everything, with no consistent filing or organization strategy. Most people have made a few folders, but they rarely file everything they should in the folders they have already created. And they leave literally hundreds of e-mails, many that have already been attended to, just sitting in their inbox for no good reason. The two big problems with leaving read e-mails in your inbox: 1) you’ll likely read them again, even if you’ve already dealt with them – a pure waste of time; 2) as you continue to add more and more e-mails into this inbox, you will lose more and more efficiency. You will “slog” to a halt. How about this instead: Once that e-mail is done, put it away. If you can’t do it now, add it to your task list or calendar. Then, put it away or delete it, it isn’t rocket science.

4. Final mistake: checking that inbox far too often. A recent study I read found that somewhere between 20-25% of working professionals check their e-mail 20 or more times per day! (That’s every few minutes if you do the math!) How can you possibly maintain any productivity...
or focus when you are literally distracting yourself every few minutes? Studies have shown that incessantly checking your e-mail and other electronic inputs literally makes you stupid. You have to get off of these “crazy trains”, or you will literally lose YEARS of productivity through these abusive inbox activities.

Here’s how:

1. When checking e-mail, process them the very first time you look at them. If they are something you can handle quickly, do them now. If not, add them to your calendar or task list. Make decisions from your calendar and task list – NOT your inbox.

2. Once you have that e-mail either done or tasked, file it if you might need it for later reference, or delete it. And if there is no good place to file it, MAKE ONE and put it there.

3. And stop checking e-mail so often! Get on some form of a regiment that balances your needs to be responsive with your needs to get things done.

This isn’t rocket science, but it does require some discipline, some process management, and a few new habits. With these new habits, you can get off the e-mail “crazy train” and end your inbox abuse!

*****

Randy Dean, MBA, The “Totally Obsessed” Time Management Technology Guy has been one of the most popular expert speakers on the conference, corporate, and university training and speaking circuit for several years. The author of the recent Amazon e-mail bestseller, Taming the E-mail Beast, Randy is a very popular and engaging time, e-mail, and technology management speaker and trainer. He brings 22 years of speaking and training experience to his programs, and has been very popular with programs including Taming the E-mail Beast, Finding an Extra Hour Every Day, Optimizing Your Outlook, Time Management in “The Cloud” Using Google and Other Online Apps, and Smart Phone Success & Terrific Tablets. Learn more at http://www.randalldean.com.
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Winterkill In The Crosshairs: Cultural Considerations for Preparing Greens for Winter

By Sam Bauer, Brian Horgan, Ph.D. and Lindsey Hoffman, Ph.D. University of Minnesota

Editor’s note: This is the second of two articles by the authors on turf survival during winter. It originally ran in the Golfdom issue published July of 2014.

Winter damage can be caused by a number of different factors; however, some of the most damaging effects are associated with crown hydration and freezing of the crown tissue. Ultimately, this type of injury results in death of the turfgrass plant and can result in costly reestablishment on a yearly basis. In comparing annual bluegrass to creeping bentgrass, research has shown that annual bluegrass (Poa annua L.) is more susceptible to crown hydration and freezing compared to creeping bentgrass (Agrostis stolonifera L.) (Hoffman et al., 2014; Tompkins et al., 2000).

Along with these two stresses, desiccation may also result in death of turfgrass plants associated with severe cellular dehydration. Protecting cool-season putting greens from these winter stresses can be a challenging task especially when managing greens composed of both annual bluegrass and creeping bentgrass. In addition, methods of protection may not yield the same results from year to year. This is partially attributed to the fact that no two winters are ever the same; therefore, determining a protection
strategy to employ often requires some history of what methods have consistently produced the best results at your property. Researchers are continually investigating the use of these various protection strategies, but the overall decision of how to protect your putting greens during the winter requires experience, constant evaluation, and confidence in your approach.

In locations receiving adequate annual snow cover, snow can be one of the best insulators and may reduce winter injury associated with both desiccation and freezing stress. On wind swept putting greens, snow fencing is beneficial for retaining snow and therefore improving the amount of insulation that the snow can provide. Along with snow, manufactured covers are also valuable tools that can be utilized to protect greens. Covers vary in style based on the intended use. Selection of one particular cover over another requires a thorough understanding of the type(s) of winter injury greens are exposed to and this can vary not only from course to course but from one green to another. Impermeable
covers, which do not allow for wa-
ter or air exchange, can be useful
for preventing winter injury due to
crown hydration by keeping surface
moisture isolated from the crown
(Photo 1). These covers can be es-
pecially important for annual blue-
grass, which has been shown to have
a higher crown moisture content
than creeping bentgrass (Tompkins
et al., 2000). However, the lack of
air exchange under these covers can
lead to the buildup of gases at toxic
levels and a depletion of oxygen;
the rate of this is greatly increased
in root zones built on native soils or
with high organic matter due to the
elevated microbial activity (Rochette
et al., 2006). Permeable covers allow
for water and gas exchange at the
turf surface, which can be important
for root zones with high microbial
activity or northern locations where
covers are left in place for four to
five months or more. A majority of
the insulating type covers are perme-
able.

The Canadian Turfgrass Research
Foundation has provided funding for
several complex research projects
focusing on winter injury and pro-
tection of putting greens in northern
climates (Dionne et al., 1999; Ro-
chette et al., 2006; Bertrand et al.,
2009). These projects evaluated
winter temperatures and gas levels
under various winter protection pro-
grams, including both permeable and
impermeable covers with varying
levels of insulation, as well as geno-
typic differences in winter tolerance
of annual bluegrass. Dionne et al.
(1999) found insulating covers to be
beneficial in moderating soil temper-
atures through the winter and con-
sequently improving winter survival
of creeping bentgrass and annual
bluegrass. These insulating covers
can be made of wood fiber shavings,
straw mulch, foam, and bubble wrap,
among other materials. It can be im-
portant to install impermeable covers
on top of the insulation material to
prevent moisture from accumulating
on the putting surface. More re-
cently, ventilation systems have been
used for improving gas exchange
under impermeable covers.

Timing is everything with covers. In
Part 1 of this article, we discussed
the processes of cold acclimation
and de-acclimation and their im-
portance on overall turfgrass win-
ter survival. By covering putting
greens, you are artificially creating
an environment around the turf that
can drastically alter the temperatures between the turf surface and surrounding air. Consequently, this influences both the cold acclimation and deacclimation processes. While research on the effects of covers on these processes is limited, the consensus is that three important factors must be considered for timing of cover installation. First, the soil should be frozen prior to placement of covers. This enables the plants to acclimate and harden-off, increasing the overall winter tolerance of the turf. Installing covers too early in late-fall, when soils are unfrozen, will inhibit the acclimation process by trapping heat at the putting surface. Second, removing covers too early in the spring can subject the turf to a rapid reduction in temperature; this can be particularly devas-

PHOTO 1
Impermeable covers are useful for preventing winter injury due to crown hydration. Photo credit, Mike Manthey.
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tating if the turf has already come out of dormancy under the covers. This type of injury typically occurs if covers are removed during a brief warming period (typically late winter early spring), which is then followed by temperatures at or below freezing (photo 2). Some golf course superintendents have been very effective at reducing damage during the deacclimation process by removing covers during the day and replacing them when nighttime temperatures are low. This is a labor-intensive process, but can mean the difference between survival and not. Finally, leaving covers on too long in the spring can create an unhealthy atmosphere for turfgrass growth. Under warming temperatures, turfgrass plants can become succulent and more susceptible to infection from pathogens such as snow mold fungi. Ultimately, knowing when to install or remove covers is just as important as knowing which type of cover to choose. Monitoring the weather and soil temperatures is the best method for estimating when these processes should occur.

Cultural practices conducted prior to covering are just as critical for promoting winter survival as would be with uncovered greens. With impermeable covers, moisture will not be replenished in the root zone for the duration of time that the covers are in place. As a result of this, maintaining moisture percentages at or around field capacity prior to cover installation can be important. Soil moisture sensors are useful in determining volumetric water content of root zones. Mowing heights and fertility must be taken into account for the turf species present. Excessive nitrogen fertilization prior to covering may promote unnecessary growth, causing an increase in gas buildup from respiration.

Although covers have many positive attributes, they may not be the solution for everyone. For example, research investigating various covers at the University of Minnesota has yielded inconsistent results from year to year. This may be associated with timing of installation and removal, which can be difficult to pinpoint. Another factor associated with the use of covers is cost. Not only is it expensive to purchase both covers and insulation, the process of installing and removing covers is both time and labor intensive. This can be a major obstacle for courses
that have a limited budget and a small number of crew members in the late-fall. One option for this type of establishment would be to select the greens that suffer from the most severe winter injury every year. Covering these greens may help to minimize the amount of repair necessary in the spring.

An alternative for using manufactured covers, is a strategy that has been termed the “poor man’s cover”. This involves heavily topdressing greens with sand in late-fall prior to the onset of winter. Generally, this practice is recommended for golf courses that choose not to cover greens. Sand topdressing with depths between 1/8th and 3/8th inches provides a buffer on the turf surface, protecting crowns from freeze and moisture damage. In a survey sent to members of the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendent’s Association, 85% of the respondents that

PHOTO 2
Timing of cover removal is crucial to the success of a cover program. Here cool air temperatures following removal were enough to shock the turf, causing a setback in turfgrass quality. Photo credit, Sam Bauer
didn’t cover greens applied topdressing sand prior to winter (Larson, 2010), and we expect this trend to continue.

Protecting putting greens during the winter months also requires some consideration of fungicide applications for snow mold prevention. A large database from seven years of snow mold fungicide trials throughout Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan is available on the University of Wisconsin-Madison Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab website (http://labs.russell.wisc.edu/tdl/). This is a particularly useful resource for determining efficacy of various fungicide mixtures in preventing occurrence of gray snow mold (Typhula incarnata), speckled snow mold (Typhula ishikariensis), and pink snow mold (Microdochium nivale).

Overall, protecting greens may help to minimize damage associated with winter stresses such as desiccation, crown hydration, and freezing injury. The decision to cover greens is difficult and depends on a number of different factors including topography and turfgrass composition. In addition to those factors, the selection of cover type, installation/removal timing, and cultural practices before and during winter are crucial to promote health turfgrass stands.

Sam Bauer, Brian Horgan, Ph.D., and Lindsey Hoffman, Ph.D., are at the University of Minnesota where Sam Bauer is a turfgrass extension specialist, Brian Horgan is an associate professor of turfgrass science and Lindsey Hoffman is a postdoctoral turfgrass research scientist. Sam Bauer can be contacted at sjbauer@umn.edu for more information.
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Name: ____________________________ Course/Company ____________________________

REGISTER: ___GOLFERS @ $125 per Player / $500 per Team (Golf, prizes, refreshments, lunch, hors d’oeuvres) Dinner only $ 75
TOTAL ENCLOSED: $__________

PAYMENT METHOD: ____Check ____Credit Card: ___ VISA ___ MASTERCARD ___DISCOVER

Name as it appears on credit card: ____________________________
Credit Card Number: ____________________________ Security Code: ___________ Expiration Date: ___________

Authorized Signature: ____________________________
Make check payable to MGCSA and mail to: MGCSA, 10050 204th Street N., Forest Lake, MN 55025

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 30, 2014
Great efforts have been spent addressing the dynamics between employer and employees in an effort to improve this relationship. The desired goal is to make for a better work environment between the “coach” and the “players”. This important dynamic is no different in our business.

The golf course superintendent is a “middleman” having to answer to a general manager, greens chairman or other authoritative figure while also being required to provide direction to assistants, spray techs, irrigation specialists, laborers, etc. When the roles are well defined and implemented, the work gets done, most everyone is happy and moral is high. It’s all good.

There’s another relationship in most every industry, certainly in ours, which oftentimes gets overlooked. This relationship is the one between the golf course superintendent and the distributor sales rep. There have been articles, columns and books written on the basics of the typical customer/vendor dynamic. It exists in daily life at your local fast food place, the dentist’s office, department store or auto repair shop. This relationship exists in our industry too. If you grow grass for a living, you can’t do it alone. Not only do...
you have co-workers, boards, committees and bosses, you also work with government agencies, public relations groups, patrons and suppliers.

Ah yes, suppliers . . .

What sort of relationship do you have with your suppliers? What sort of relationship do your suppliers have with you? What does a good relationship with a supplier look like to you? What do you suppose a good relationship with a customer looks like to your supplier? Do you align yourself with vendors who have similar values as yours?

Full disclosure here-- I make a living consulting and selling turf care products for an independent turf distributor. For 35 years, I have worked for either a manufacturer or a turf distributor. I have never
grown grass for a living. Having come clean on that, I will also tell you this— I have studied “the dance” between professional turf managers and their suppliers during these 3-plus decades. It has given me an intimate understanding of the different types of relationships that exist between the two.

Professional turf managers have their own needs, their own style of doing business and their own understanding and priorities of what is important to them when choosing a supplier. Similarly, supplier reps each have their own style, selling methods and values.

If you are married or in a relationship, you know things don’t work well between you unless you and your significant other are willing to give a little. It’s the old “for better, for worse” and “in sickness and in health” fine print we all know about. If you need a brush up on how to sustain a wonderful relationship, read the book written by Gary Chapman entitled The 5 Love Languages, The Secret to Love That Lasts. I know that most of us burly men don’t engage in all this touchy, feely stuff, so check your macho ways and ego at the door for a minute and take a few minutes to read on.

Chapman claims that people, regardless of gender, are wired to need different things. It’s just the way we are. Without diving deep into the book, I will share Chapman’s 5 Love Languages:
1. Words of Affirmation
2. Quality Time
3. Receiving Gifts
4. Acts of Service
5. Physical Touch

In a nutshell, the message is simple. When we do nice things for our significant other, we most often come from a place of good intentions. We offer them the sort of love we would like to receive ourselves. The problem with this mindset is your loved one’s Love Language may not be the same as yours. To sustain a healthy relationship, you must determine what your partner’s Love Languages are and then act upon them.

And here’s the kicker— they may be totally different than yours!
To simplify the message: You may like chocolate ice cream and she may like strawberry. If you buy her a chocolate ice cream cone (because that’s what you like), she will appreciate your kind act, but deep down inside, she would have rather had strawberry! Put in another way, you’re speaking English and she’s speaking Chinese. You both love each other, yet the love would be so much more enriched if you could speak each other’s language.

That’s all interesting you may think, but what the heck does that have to do with growing grass?

Let’s frame Gary Chapman’s message a bit differently. Do you think maybe you, as a professional turf manager, might have specific ways in which you like to buy things? I bet you could give me three criteria that are most important to you when it comes to buying something or deciding from whom to buy it. Is it the brand? Is it the price? Is it the sales rep? Is it speed of delivery? Is it the supplier’s location and convenience?

Do you think maybe your suppliers have their own Love Languages? Do they value and respect the customer relationship? Are they
more comfortable selling on price? Do they place value on research & product knowledge? How important is it to them that they believe in the product or service they sell? Do they prefer face-to-face visits or would they rather reach out via texting or social media?

Both the customer and the supplier need to know what language each other speaks. If you’re on the same wavelength, you can expect to strike a chord with each other. If you don’t seem to be getting along, you’re probably not communicating in a way that will satisfy either of your needs. You’re not being heard. Frustration sets in and the buy/sell process fails.

So what sort of buyer are you? What sort of sellers are your suppliers? Can you find yourself and your product/service providers in the lists below?

CUSTOMER TYPES

Lone Wolf: Introvert or reclusive; wants to “go it alone”; doesn’t look for help or see the need for it; been doing it this way forever and it works just fine for me; limited or no trade association involvement.

Transactional: Their only need is for a reliable product source; researches product and service features/benefits on their own; knows what they want and just needs a place to buy; first cousin to the Lone Wolf.

Mad Scientist: Likes to try new methods and new products; always reads up on latest technology and trends; embraces the cause/effect
concept; wants to know why things happen; likes to ask lots of technical questions and review university data.

Ben & Jerry: Carefully builds a relationship with someone that is like-minded; looks for someone who will be their partner in growing turf; understands that a successful relationship works for both parties; is inquisitive and open to new ideas from their supplier partner; neighbor to the Mad Scientist.

Penny Pincher: Thinks lowest price is highest value; spends money like it is their own; no interest in product features/benefits; embraces “what’s my price” philosophy; friends with the Lone Wolf

SUPPLIER TYPES

Schmoozer: Likes to stop by and talk about the weather or last night’s ball game; may get around to asking you if you need anything; seldom comes prepared to talk about your needs or challenges; approaches a sales call as if you’re simply a name on a list.

Mr. Know-It-All: Fancies himself as an expert; has an ego the size of Texas; my way is the right way; questions customer’s skills or ability via innuendo and ill-thought questions; doesn’t bother to ask what your needs or challenges are.

Bargain Bob: Will beat anyone’s price; sees his value as being the lowest price in the market; doesn’t bother to ask what your needs or challenges are; places limited value on product quality or performance;
plays golf with the Schmoozer.

Mad Scientist: Thrives by the science behind the product; makes everything a science experiment; overthinks every turf challenge; creates a lot of extra steps when attempting to fill a customer need; have you met his best friend, Mr. Know-It-All?

Mr. Q & A: Asks probing questions to determine customer’s needs; determines quickly what is important to his customer and responds accordingly; looks at his role as a problem solver and service provider; uses his expertise and product knowledge to create a professional partnership with his customer; provides relationship value.

Like the beginning of any good relationship, both sides need to get to know each other. You have your needs, know what is important to you and have a unique way of doing your job. Your suppliers have the same. No one type of buyer or seller is right or wrong. The key to a successful relationship is to learn each other’s Love Languages. If they mesh, you’re in for a long, beautiful relationship. If they don’t, you’ll be ducking out the back door and hopping on your utility vehicle when you see Peter Peddler come driving in (you know who you are!). Keep searching for Mr. Right! He or she is out there!
Fighting desiccation: Should we water turf in the winter? More University Insight

By Bill Kreuser, Assistant Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist, wkreuser2@unl.edu and Zac Reicher, Professor, Turfgrass Science, zreicher2@unl.edu

The dramatic temperature swings, lack precipitation or snow cover, and relentless winds felt across the North Central US this winter have increased the chance of turfgrass winterkill. While winter-kill can occur for a variety of reasons (see http://turf.unl.edu/pdffctarticles/march%20winterkill.pdf), the dry and unseasonably warm weather this January has increased the concern for desiccation injury. Desiccation can occur whenever water loss (evapotranspiration) exceeds water absorption and causes plant cells to dry out.

It can happen any time of the year and, over a period of time,
constant desiccation injury can turn lethal. Winter desiccation often occurs when the soil is frozen and water is unavailable to plant roots. It is especially problematic on sunny, dry, and windy days when the air temperature is above freezing but the soil is dry or frozen. This causes turfgrass leaves and, more importantly, crowns to become dehydrated and die. Exposed and elevated sites or turf grown on soils with low water holding capacity are most susceptible to winter desiccation injury.

Over the decades, turfgrass managers have experimented with a variety of products and practices to combat winter desiccation injury. Heavy application of sand topdressing, turfgrass covers, snow fences or wind-breaks, and anti-desiccants have been used to help prevent desiccation injury. Most sources suggest topdressing sand be applied after the final mowing of the year at a depth of 1/8 to 1/4 inch. The theory is that sand topdressing protects the crowns from the wind and limits rapid changes in crown temperature.

Bigelow et al. (2005) found that application of 300 lbs of sand per 1000 ft² (roughly 0.04 inch depth) or more increased spring green-up of a creeping bentgrass putting green compared to the non-treated control and sand color wasn’t important. Sand application rate and color did not drastically increase canopy temperature. It is possible that sand topdressing helped prevent desiccation injury; however the amount of snow cover during the study was not reported.
An obvious drawback of heavy late season sand topdressing is removal of the sand in spring which can quickly dull freshly sharpened reels.

Covers are sometimes used to prevent winterkill. Early research found that various turfgrass covers made from viscose-rayon-polyester and excelsior mat provided both temperature insulation and desiccation protection (Beard, 1969). Polyester blankets and polypropylene covers also sustained leaf moisture and improved spring green-up (Roberts, 1986). The heavy covers also reduced light transmission and caused yellow turf leaves in early spring.

More recently, Dr. Minner at Iowa State University found that both permeable Evergreen and impermeable Green Jacket covers helped prevent winterkill and enhanced spring green-up but conceded that desiccation injury can still occur with covers (Minner et al., 2006; Valverde and Minner, 2007). Canadian researchers demonstrated that thin, commercially, available covers provided little insulation except when placed over several inches of insulating material such as stray, haw, or wood fibers (Dionne et al., 1999).

Desiccation injury is more uncommon in eastern Canada because of prevalent snow cover. While these covers may be useful to protect against the bitter cold in eastern Canada, they may be problematic in the Great Plains region where air temperatures can be well above freezing during periods of winter.

Anti-desiccants or anti-transpirants are products that reduce water loss and may limit winter desiccation injury. They either form a protective coating around foliage or close plant stomata. A few golf course superintendents in the northern Great Plains routinely use anti-desiccant products such as Transfilm (PBI-Gordon) to reduce winter desiccation injury (Aylard, 2000). Beard (1969) found that a common anti-desiccant derived from pine tar, Wiltpruf, did not prevent desiccation compared to the control.

Additionally, the anti-desiccant Leaf Shield did not reduce desiccation injury, however soil moisture wasn’t limiting during that study with 72 days of continuous snow cover (Valverde and Minner, 2007). Applications of anti-desiccants were also found to reduce spring green-up
after 90 consecutive days of snow cover (Minner and Valverde, 2002). This may be favorable for winter tolerance and help prevent premature spring green-up during mid-winter thaws. For the same reason, turfgrass paints and colorants may actually reduce winter hardiness because they typically increase spring green-up (Valverde and Minner, 2007). More research is required to understand how anti-desiccants and pigments affect desiccation injury when season long snow cover is absent and also to understand if forcing spring green-up with pigments is good or bad.

All the methods described above focus on preventing water from leaving the plant. That brings us to the question that’s commonly brought up during this time of year. Should we be irrigating turfgrass in the winter to prevent desiccation injury? Unfortunately there hasn’t been research focused on winter irrigation, yet many superintendents in the western Great Planes have secondary frost resistant irrigation systems to water during warm dry
periods of winter (Latham, 1991). Watering during the winter can be a challenge. Irrigation systems aren’t easily turned on and off, crew resources can be limited during the off-season, and equipment to carry and deliver large quantities of water may cause traffic damage if it’s even available. It also bring up several other questions such as, how much water needs to be applied and how frequently, is there the potential to deacclimate the turf with irrigation during warm weather in the middle of winter, should water be applied when the soil is frozen, and is it even beneficial? Clearly more research needs to be conducted.

Despite a lack of research data, the current UNL recommendation is to lightly irrigate high value turf on dry sunny days when the air temperature is well above freezing where feasible. The goal is to rehydrate plant crowns (and lower leaves) back to a survivable level and restore soil moisture at the surface. Avoid excessive quantities of water which may fill soil pores or runoff and present an icing hazard when cold temperatures return. Also avoid traffick- ing high value turf area as winter drought, like summer drought, increases the risk of traffic injury. These recommendations may be refined in the future as we conduct more research on the topic.

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The MGCSA gratefully acknowledges the support from Bill Kreuser and Zac Reicher. Permission was granted to reproduce this article that originally appeared in the publication Turf iNfo for the North Central US, 01/28/2014
WHO IS BIOVERSE?

Bioverse, Inc. is a Minnesota Limited Liability Corporation located in Worthington Minnesota. Bioverse has been solving water problems for over 15 years. Bioverse manufactures the patented AquaSpherePro and Natural Blast products used in pond water treatments. In today's world, in order to be eco-friendly, people are discovering that Bioverse provides an all-natural “green option” for pond treatment and maintenance. One of our primary customer groups is the golf course industry. Bioverse is a member the MGCSA, SDGCA, and the GCSAA. Not only is Bioverse a member of these important golf associations, we are also an active participant in the association’s ongoing events.

Our Mission:
The Bioverse team is committed to providing ecologically responsible products to manage water easily, safely and effectively. This is accomplished through the use of naturally occurring bacteria and enzymes with a patented time release process.

A message from Golf Course Account Representative Mark Koepsell

“Hello everyone Mark here from Healthy Ponds by Bioverse! I grew up in Worthington, Minnesota where I still reside with my family. During my youth I played golf at the Worthington Country Club with my dad and grandfather. Through them I learned how to play and love golf. A few years ago I was given the opportunity to work with Healthy Ponds by Bioverse. This was a life changer for me. I like working with my customers to help them get the most enjoyment out of their ponds as possible. I am a licensed aquatic pesticide applicator and I have worked with hundreds of golf course superintendents across our great country. It is my guess that you have heard from me via phone,
email, or mailing. If you are having any issues with your pond water, give me a call or email. I would be happy to set an appointment to meet with you and inspect your ponds. Thank you.”

How Healthy Ponds Products Work
Healthy Ponds products are a natural, microbial-based pond cleaning and maintenance system that improves water clarity and quality, and reduces odors. The Healthy Ponds unique, patented 30-day time-release system delivers a proprietary blend of naturally occurring bacteria and enzymes that consumes excess nutrients in the water. The key to improved water quality and managing unwanted organic growth is the monthly application of products. Correcting water problems naturally occurs over time with continued use. Using Healthy Ponds products offers an easy, safe and effective way to manage and balance the pond’s natural ecosystem. When water conditions are extremely poor, increasing treatment may be necessary. Adjust treatment as pond begins to improve.

What Healthy Ponds Products Offer
- Time released beneficial bacteria
- Consistent delivery system
- Easily applied products
- Extended effectiveness
- Treats water problem at the source, from the sludge layer through the water column
- All-natural formulas that are safe for pets, people and the environment.

When to Use Healthy Ponds Products

Treating Water is a process!
Follow the Healthy Ponds 3-step process for a clean, clear and healthy pond...naturally!

First determine the number of gallons being treated:
Length x Width x Depth x 7.5 = Total Gallons

1- Treat with a Healthy Ponds, time released, beneficial bacteria dispenser (once every 30 days)

2- Treat highly problematic ponds with a Healthy Ponds Supplement such as Blast, Vista or Rush and to address seasonal spikes in temperature and large rainfall events.

3- Now that your water is clear, apply a Healthy Ponds Colorant to reflect sunlight and minimize aquatic vegetation growth
Healthy Ponds by Bioverse Products:

AquaSpherePro®

The AquaSpherePRO is an all natural biodegradable time release sphere that continually produces bacteria and enzymes for a 30 day period. The bacteria and enzymes consume the excess nutrients in the pond that algae feed off of to survive. The AquaSpherePRO cleans up the water columns and also reduces the “sludge” layer on the bottom of the pond.

Natural Blast™

Natural Blast is our strongest formulation of bacteria and enzymes. It comes in a water soluble bag that is designed to “shock” the water. This product is not time released and will work for 7-10 days. The bacteria and enzymes in Blast are formulated to work in the water columns and sludge layer from the bottom of the pond up. Blast is designed to be used in conjunction with the AquaSpherePRO.

Rush®

Rush is a granular oxidizer that works to break down filamentous algae. This product is spread on the surface of algae that has already broken loose from the bottom of the pond and is floating on top. When using this product you will notice that it bubbles up upon being applied to the algae. Within a week’s time the filamentous algae should change color and sink to the bottom of the pond where the AquaSpherePRO will go to work on breaking it down.

Thank you Bioverse for your support
Lakes Area Exposure
Hosted by Donnacha O’Conner and
Alexandria Golf Club
Within the Leather
by David Kazmierczak, CGCS

Ask any golf course superintendent what he/she says when they are praised for having the golf course in terrific shape and I bet you will hear this response 99 times out of 100:

“Thanks, I sure appreciate it. I owe it all to my crew though.”

I alluded to the fact in a previous column that we as superintendents need to take a step back and accept praise for a job well done, but never would I encourage that without mention of the hard working men and women who help accomplish that task. Golf course management has, and always will be, a total team effort.

So with that thought in mind, I am in a quandary. Here is why.

If you have been reading the columns from the President and our Executive Director, not just this issue, but the last few years, you know that government is, and is looking to further potentially flex its’ regulatory muscle potentially to the detriment of our occupation. You also realize on a consistent basis just in the day-to-day operations of your facility the same long governmental shadow. Well, there is another potentially debilitating, or at least highly inconvenient piece of legislation that could impact you and your facility in the works, and it concerns labor. Specifically, your management team.

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FSLA) was enacted some time ago. It was put in place so that employers could not take advantage of workers by
putting them at a low salary commanding enormous hours of work. Even though I am card-carrying Republican I can surely see that this is good legislation and there has to be a minimum standard for salaried employees. Presently the threshold is around $23,000 annually, with some provisions about exempt and non-exempt status. The current administration isn’t satisfied with this number, and wants it to be higher. Much higher.

The recent proposal is for any salaried employee with a degree in a science or technical field with some supervisory duties be paid a minimum of $50,000 a year, or fall under the terms of overtime rules. Got anybody like that on your staff? I bet you do.

Now I am not going to sit here and tell you I know all the ins and outs of this proposal, the FSLA, or really just about anything when it comes to HR stuff, but this change could really affect things. As I understand it, the comment period is over on the proposal and it likely will not be decided until next year, possibly not until spring. Not having read all the fine print, this is what I took from what I read:

If you have assistants or even your mechanic on salary currently, and they are not making $50,000 or $52,000 whatever the minimum is they are trying to set, any hours over 40 in a week would be subject to overtime pay at whatever rate they are at. Otherwise you take them off salary and treat them hourly, and still pay overtime. This is where I am at a quandary.

On one hand, I am the manager of this operation. I have a budget to consider, and hold to. We here at Prestwick have what I consider the very best way to operate at a golf course maintenance facility. We live by one rule: get the job done. We
do not have mandated vacation days or sick days. I do not keep rigid hour logs. If you need a day off- take it. Some days are shorter, some longer. We work more hours in the summer than winter. In the end, the flexibility of this system for salaried employees works wonderfully, and I haven’t had one employee that doesn’t like it. It only works if the boss isn’t a slave driver, and in our case, it works. On the other hand, I have worked at a facility, and God knows I have heard about other places where assistants, interns, mechanics on salary are taken advantage of due to the salary structure and worked until they are fried.

The quandry is I feel our mechanics and assistants don’t get paid enough. Not even close. So, on one hand, this bill is trying to rectify that which I agree with, but as a manager I am not too thrilled with the prospect of dealing with it. I remember when I was an assistant and wondering how I was going to pay the bills and 20 years later nothing has changed for that group of people.

What irks me the most though, as with just about any piece of legislation these days, is how government is continuing to mandate an agenda that simply impairs business’ ability to grow and be profitable. Where do they think that money is going to come from? In our business, at least on the public side, the raising of rates just can’t happen. Golfers are cheap people. Everybody is looking for a “deal”. We can’t simply pass it on to the consumers like an average business.

So keep your eyes open for information on this issue, and maybe mention it to the people you have at your facility and work for, for it could significantly impact your budget structure in the future.