

Overgrooming is Overspending

by Paul Voykin

During the last few recession years, North American golf courses, especially the private country clubs, have been in a serious financial situation because of skyrocketing operation costs. The overall economic picture is critical. Though I have always stated that a clubhouse without a golf course is nothing more than a roadside inn, with other gourmet restaurants in the area as good or better, the officials of our country clubs are also looking in our direction with a frugal eye. Though we have always tried to be conservative and have held tight reins on our expenditures for many years, we too have been caught up in this inflation and have had to increase our budgets annually in order to keep up with higher wages and accelerating maintenance costs. But all the time, without any letup in sight, the demand for agronomic perfection and achievement keeps hammering at us. And in spite of all these drawbacks, we have nobly succeeded with fantastic results. Our golf courses are meticulously groomed and maintained. The best among you are to blame for the situation we are in. The problem as I see it is overgrooming of our golf courses. We do too damn much of it. My contention is that if we did less grooming, the country clubs could save money and have a more challenging golf course with fewer headaches. Please also understand that I am not in any way talking about reducing the upkeep and management of our greens and fairways. I am talking only about reducing the cost of grooming in other areas that we so diligently maintain now. In my opinion we can let some of the areas grow a little shaggy, a little hippy so to speak, and still have a too damned expensive to maintain 160 acres like our own backyards. The machines are going constantly from morning to night. And now I want to correct, once and for all, the chronic complaint, by us superintendents, that the membership is playing too much golf and are interfering with our work. Not so! It's the other way around. We are the ones who are interfering with their play. We have spoiled the golfer rotten with expensive round-the-clock maintenance and grooming. Now we have the high cost monster looking over our shoulder with hungry fangs, and I say that we can't afford him for a pet any longer.

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Some Publications Available ...

Listed below are some National Publications available to you. There are others. If you want, you can keep up. What a contrast from not so many years ago.

1. *Golfdom*, P.O. Box 7591, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101.
2. *Grounds Maintenance*, P.O. Box 2514, Clinton, Iowa 52732.
3. *Irrigation Journal*, P.O. Box 1910, Clinton, Iowa 52732.
4. *Landscape Industry*, 850 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove, Wisc. 53122.
5. *Nursery Business*, 850 Elm Grove Road, Elm Grove, Wisc. 53122.
6. *Southern Golf Course Operations*, P.O. Box 5082, Lake City, Fla. 32005.
7. *The Golf Superintendent*, 1617 St. Andrews Drive, Laurence, Kan. 66040.
8. *Turfgrass Times*, P.O. Box 5082, Lake City, Fla. 32005.
9. *Weeds Today*, Rt. 3, Box 147, Arcola, Ill. 61910.
10. *Weeds, Trees and Turf*, P.O. Box 6049, Duluth, Minn. 55801.

Courtesy of Turf News of Texas.