

## Superintendent of the Year

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During Al's membership in the Mid-Atlantic he has served on the Board of Directors and is Past President of the Association. On a national scale, Al has served us as our representative to many committees including the advisory committee of GCSAA.

"Al", we salute you!

Your MAAGCS Friends

## Improve Your Image - Paint

This is the time of year that we try to get our equipment in shape for the coming season. At the Hamlets we are doing this by repainting our tractor, trailers and other grounds maintenance equipment. We believe that our level of professionalism is judged not only by the quality of work we do, but also on how we present ourselves to those who see us. We feel that if we perform our duties with equipment that appears well maintained, we give a better impression than if we perform with rusted, oil-dripping machinery.

The procedure we use is to first thoroughly steam clean the machine to be painted. This unit is then placed back into normal operation for about a week. This gives us time to locate various oil leaks, bad seals and other defective parts, and to get these parts from the suppliers to initiate repairs. After this observation period the machine is taken out of service and the repairs are made. A thorough check is made to insure that everything is in good working order. Rust removal and needed body repairs are also made at this time. Then a final steam cleaning is done just prior to actual painting.

For the painting operation itself we utilize an open shed which we have temporarily enclosed with polyethylene plastic. The shed we use has no heat and a dirt floor. We use extension cords and air hoses to provide power for lights and air for the spray gun. The floor is covered with plywood to reduce dust. Heat is provided by a portable kerosene forced-air heater. As you can see this job can be accomplished under rather primitive conditions.

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## Improve Your Image

(continued from page 2)

The machine to be painted, in this case a front end loader, is placed in the shed. The wheels removed and the tractor placed up on blocks, cowlings and other removable body parts taken off and instruments covered with paper and tape. Finally, we wipe down the tractor with laquer thinner solvent to remove any oil film and condensation which could prevent the paint from sticking. We are now ready to paint.

Using a compressed air type spray rig we apply two coats of grey primer mixed according to label directions, allowing a short drying time between coats. Those body parts removed earlier are also painted at this time. We like to let the last coat of primer dry overnight before beginning the color coat.

For the color coat we found Ouron Synthetic Gloss Enamel to be a good quality paint. We mix it according to manufacturer's recommendations using naphtha to thin it to the desired viscosity according to the ambient temperature. The colder it is, the thinner we mix the paint. Again a short time is allowed between coats to allow the previous coat to become tacky. After the final coat is applied we leave it to dry. We like to paint on Friday because the unit has all weekend to dry, then on Monday we put the wheels and body parts back on, uncover the instruments, and we have a new-looking tractor.

The toughest part about painting is getting the needed manpower and equipment together. Most everyone has an air compressor or can rent one. Spraying is easier, faster and more professional looking than using a brush. You can paint almost anywhere, even outdoors as long as the weather cooperates. For my part finding someone who could do the job was a problem. I solved the problem by finding out who on my staff had sufficient interest in the project to follow it through. After this it was just a matter of mastering the operation of the equipment, improvising when the right resources were not available and learning from our mistakes. The results have been gratifying.

The only drawback I've found so far is that it is hard to convince management of the need for replacement equipment when the present unit looks so new.

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