

Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents NEWSLETTER

Published by this Association to aid the advancement of the Golf Course Superintendent through education and merit.

George Renault, C.G.C.S.
Editor

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Belle Haven (Continued from page 1)

Remember to RSVP to the MAAGCS hotline: (301) 381-0030.

Directions: From Richmond & West: Follow I-95 North. Exit at Route #1 South (Fort Belvoir). While exiting stay in right lane (Fort Hunt Road sign) which bears right and at first light make a left onto Fort Hunt Road. Proceed through next light and Belle Haven is on the left. (You will see the tennis bubble.)

Directions: From Baltimore: Follow I-95 South over the Woodrow Wilson Bridge. Exit at Route #1 South (Fort Belvoir). Proceed over the beltway overpass, staying in the right lane for the Fort Hunt Road exit from Route #1. Follow Fort Hunt Road exit. Once on Fort Hunt Road, proceed through first light and you will find Belle Haven on the left.

Permanent Solution to Drainage Problems

by John Strickland

Puddles of standing water are guaranteed indicators there's too much surface water for that type of soil to absorb and get rid of. This water is expensive to purchase, and in excess, live with. So lets get rid of it permanently!

By combining common sense and new technologies, we can rid ourselves of water that has to wait in line to get into our soil or the "good old sun" to dry up. The problem with "waiting" is that turf and ornamental plants get into trouble just about as fast as the man who is trying to maintain them for his employer. The time has arrived for turf professionals everywhere to get as tough with drainage problems as they are with disease, weeds insects and fertility problems.

All you need to know and remember are a few basic rules about soil and you are ready to begin your plan of attack.

Soils — All soil is made up of particles of rock and organic matter in various stages of decomposition. The more particles per cubic foot, the longer it takes for water to move through that soil.

Thatch — Thatch is that layer of mostly dead plant material that accumulates on the surface of soil and that slows water down dramatically before it ever gets to the soil. Make an honest effort to get rid of it!

Equipment — The job of cutting trenches into the soil, and getting rid of the soil dug out of the trench, can be the most expensive part of doing a drainage project. Unless you really need a very deep and very wide trench, fine turf areas are not the place for tractor-loader back-hoes. Chain trenchers "out dig" back-hoes dramatically, pulverize the soil for easy removal, and come in sizes perfect to fit the job. (Lord knows we don't need 4 ton digging monsters on our oversaturated turf.) New technology has recently brought us wheel trenchers that cut very narrow trenches so fast and efficiently that the expense of digging the trench and getting rid of the spoil is cut by huge amounts. Here again the soil dug out is pulverized.

Materials — The other "major expense" of a drainage project to the material you are putting back into the soil to give those lazy water molecules an easier path to follow . . . to get away from our fine turf or ornamental growing area.

Crushed Aggregate . . . The sharp points and corners of crushed stone keeps the stone at "arms length" away from each other. And as I stated earlier the bigger the particle size, the faster water can flow through and around the particles.

Perforated Pipe . . . Provides the "big space" in the trench for water to flow away from our drainage problem, provided we can get the water into it, and keep it from filling up the soil. (For reasons too lengthy to discuss in this article we do not recommend wrapping the perforated pipe with geotextiles. Don't use them!)

Geotextiles . . . Filter fabrics are the "saviors" of drainage systems. Skeptics, and the uninformed, content they will clog up and fill with soil. (In some cases they might, but all geotextiles are not created equal!) You must select one that is soft, pliable, strong and "fluffy". Just picture in your mind what a cross sectional profile of a fiberglass air filter looks like. That's exactly what a proper Geotextile looks like under a magnifying glass! They can't be stiff or "slick" to the touch. The best geotextiles for drainage are engineered to permit tiny soil particles to pass right through themselves. Muddy water must pass through one side and exit the other side still carrying those tiny particles of soil with them. By using a geotextile, we insure that our crushed aggregate, and perforated pipe, will stay clean and flow excess water away fast and permanent!

When selecting a proper geotextile, ask your supplier what the A.O.S. (Apparent Opening Size) or E.O.S. (Equivalent Opening Size) of his fabric is in standard U.S. sieve. Select the geotextile that has a range of 70-100. This assures you that you will be purchasing a proper drainage geotextile. (If your supplier can't supply a fabric with the 70-100 A.O.S. (or E.O.S.), don't buy it! — regardless of how cheap it is!

Some geotextiles are made from polyester, other polypropylene. Polyester "wets" easier than polypropylene, and is more desirable in drainage. It is hydrophylic. That's a fancy word for loving water! Polyester blended into cotton makes clothing easy to launder! Polyester in drainage encourages water entry into our drainage system. Polypropylene repels water!

Space Age Solutions to Ancient Problems — In the past year you have been seeing more and more information on "Pre-Fabricated" or "Self-Contained" composite drainage systems. They are truly state-of-the-art solutions to turf and ornamental drainage problems. All employ the usage of geotextile wrapping a waffle-like core. They are comparatively thin, require trenches only 2" wide, need no connecting fittings, eliminate the displacement of huge amounts of soil and replacement gravel and the expense of perforated pipe and fittings. On a running foot basis they are up to 60% cheaper to install than conventional drainage systems! 60%! They can solve drainage problems anywhere conventional systems do, and you don't have to destroy your turf area (or take it out of play) while you are installing it. They offer drainage solutions to "reconstruction" problems.

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Proposed By-Laws Changes

The Board of Directors has proposed the following changes to the M.A.A.G.C.S. By-Laws. In accordance with Article XII, By-Law Amendments, the following changes are hereby posted. Review them carefully as membership will vote on these recommended changes at our December 8th meeting at Army Navy Country Club.

Article I, Section B

Current language: "The office and mailing address of the Association shall be located at the home of the duly elected secretary."

Proposed language: "The office and mailing address of the Association shall be located at the Mid-Atlantic PGA Office."

Article V, Section C

Current language: "A member who becomes eligible for another classification by change of position or meeting the requirements of another classification, may apply for reclassification to the board of directors."

Proposed addendum to current language: "The Board of Directors may automatically upgrade the classification of

any member who meets the higher requirements."

Article V, Section H *(A)

Current language: "Class D - Asst. Golf Course Superintendent. To qualify for a Class D membership an applicant must be actively employed as an assistant golf course superintendent. Class D members shall have all the privileges of the Association except that such member may not vote or hold office."

Proposed language: "Class D - Asst. Golf Course Superintendent. To qualify for a Class D membership an applicant must be actively employed as a golf course superintendent or an assistant golf course superintendent. Class D members shall have all the privileges of the Association except that such member may not vote or hold office." (Note that we currently have at least 6 superintendents in Class D.)

"Section A - Classes" would be amended as follows to reflect the above change:

"Class D - Golf Course Superintendent or Asst. Golf Course Superintendent"

On The Tee . . .

Gerry Gerard, CGCS, Chairman of the Nominating Committee is accepting nominations for the Board. His Committeemen are Ben Stagg and Grant Pensinger, CGCS. Your nomination is a way of guiding the direction of the MAAGCS. The only bad idea is the one not vocalized! So sound off and GET INVOLVED!

Speaking of getting involved, a hearty thank you to all members who have taken the time and the effort (and I recognize this can be considerable) to submit articles for your newsletter. Keep them coming and remember Article of the Year receives a \$100 bond.

Tip of the Month is having a bit of rough going and needs some major domestic aid, however. Come on people, we know that superintendents are the most advice giving individuals in the world next to mothers-in-law! Let loose with a few of yours and win a \$25 bond if your tip gets published. As they say, nothing ventured, nothing gained — and our odds are certainly better than Ed McMahons!

Note the proposed By-Law changes and take some time to read them over and understand them. While the changes may not be of monumental significance, these are your by-laws and as a member you have an obligation to know what your voting for or against.

Lately the Board has gotten vocal by writing various letters to the PGA and John Deere. The PGA for their commercials depicting our lack of existence, and surely implied that we work for a golf director and John Deere for their total disregard in scheduling a tournament for club officials. President, General Manager, Golf Professional and Golf Superintendent. Somehow we were overlooked. Possibly, from arranging percentages of the entry fees being donated back to PGA funds, simultaneously playing a pro sweep event, making the fun day into one of competition for the pro only, since he will be playing his ball out regardless of the other three workers. Rumors have it the tournament winner is based only on how the pro plays. Hopefully those who played September 30, will not be stuck only carrying the golf bags but enjoy a good event, the original format was good anyway.

Please take a moment to introduce yourself to Carol Offenbacher and congratulate her on being this year's recipient of the MAAGCS scholarship. \$500 has been deposited into her student account. The decision was a difficult one, because all the applicants were truly outstanding. Carol presently works at Eisenhower Golf Course studying under the capable hands of Lou Rudinski. A formal presentation will take place during the Maryland Turfgrass Conference.

A Look Ahead . . .

The November meeting will be hosted by John Tutich and Herndon the 10th. This date should be the final round of the match play tournament. December 8th meeting will be hosted by Dave Fairbank, CGCS and Army Navy Country Club, for our election of Directors.

A three gang Blitzer unit is for sale. Units are five bladed, 4 x 20 semi-pneumatic tires with complete frames. Like new, please call for appointment. Originally \$6,080, take it away for \$3,500. Mr. Gillis, Sherwood Forest G.C.

Permanent Solution to Drainage Problems (Continued from page 2)

But beware! Just like any other product you buy to achieve a desired solution, cheaper is not always better. There are big differences in these systems! One key is the geotextile (there goes that word again). Does it have the correct properties for drainage which we learned earlier? Can you interlock the waffle-like core easily to make permanent locked together butt joints? Have you taken a rule and actually measured that core to see its true height and width? (In this instance, bigger is better.) Does the product have university testing to back up the claims of the supplier? Can you purchase this product from a supplier you depend on for service or quality products? Answer yes to the above questions and you have found the "best for your money" prefabricated drainage system.

Drainage Design — Federal laws protect our fragile environment from draining excess surface water loaded with pesticides and fertilizers directly into our natural watershed. These laws state that excess water must pass through the soil, or drainage aggregate prior to watershed entry. Exercise caution when considering catch basins, or drainage channels.

Properly designed sub-surface drainage, using the materials discussed above collects water after it percolates through soil and/or aggregates. It helps us fight the environmental battle to keep our natural resources clean longer. Identify your excess water sources. (If one happens to be the guy running the irrigation system — get him fired!) Then map your plan; and, if necessary, contact your turf supply dealer of quality drainage supplies. Please keep this last thought in mind gentle reader. The only creatures on this fragile green earth that don't get fired because of excess water problems are fish!

Puddles of standing surface water are the enemy of healthy turf, trees and shrubs. The time to declare war has arrived!