



## USGA Green Section Southwest Regional

### Autumn in the Southwest

Patrick J. Gross, Director

Everyone has been watching the calendar waiting for the first part of October to roll around. Many superintendents heave a huge sigh of relief knowing that cooler temperatures and shorter days are ahead. Here are a few observations and ideas based on our travels throughout the Southwest region to assist superintendents through the autumn growing season:

**Temperature** - Temperatures may be cooling off in many areas of the Southwest, but don't be fooled! Many regions experience hot, dry Santa Ana winds that can desiccate turf and cause stress to putting greens. Monitor the weather closely and fine-tune your irrigation system to stay ahead of any potential problems with the Santa Ana winds.

**Monitor salinity** - This is a frequent admonition in the Southwest region due to typically high levels of salts in soils and irrigation water. Superintendents should continue to monitor salinity on putting greens until the first rainfall. If core aeration is scheduled for putting greens, you may wish to consider leaching the greens prior to aeration to avoid any problems with turf stress and slow recovery. The threshold for salinity on *Poa annua* putting greens is 2.7 dS/m.

**Overseeding** - The desert regions in the Southwest are completing overseeding activities to provide lush, green turf for their winter visitors. Keep in mind that renovation intensity prior to overseeding has a major impact on the spring recovery of bermudagrass.

There has been a steady trend during the past five years to reduce the intensity of renovation and leave more bermudagrass stubble in order to reduce transition troubles. Pay close attention to the travel patterns of vertical mowing and renovation equipment to reduce excessive scalping in turning areas at the beginning and end of fairways. After the seedlings have emerged, it is recommended to keep cart traffic off

the overseeded areas for six weeks. Some courses allow cart traffic immediately after seeding, however, this causes a corresponding decrease in the quality of overseeding.

**Tune-up drainage systems** - Autumn is a great time to tune-up the drainage systems through the course by trimming around surface inlets, replacing drain grates, installing additional drain pipe, and clearing existing drains.

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### Boost Morale By Listening

Motivate employees by listening to them. Suppress your urge to talk, especially to tell them what to do or think. *Some tips.*

- **Questions to learn**, not to interrogate. Most employees resent bosses who lecture or play know-it-all. Avoid closed-ended questions that call for only one correct answer. *Example:* Replace "Do you know how we tell if a client is profitable?" with "What types of clients do you think we should attract?"
- **Follow up.** When an employee expresses an opinion or concern, don't not and change the subject. Urge the speaker to elaborate. Say "Tell me more" or "That's interesting" to signal you want to hear more.
- **Provide a "chat table"** where employees can talk calmly with you. Instead of listening on the fly when you're rushing down the hall or heading out of a meeting. Invite employees to sit down at a round table in a pleasant corner of your office. Don't have them sit across your desk, where they might feel intimidated.

### In Memoriam

The GCSANC has lost one of its most dignified members. **Gilbert "Pete" Bibber**, of Del Monte GC passed away in mid-October due to complications from heart surgery. Pete was a Past President of the GCSANC and winner of the Association's George Santana Distinguished Service Award.

Family requests memoriam contributions in Pete's name to be directed to the Stanford Hospital.

**Joyce Whittaker**, wife of Lesco Representative Bob Whittaker suddenly fell ill and passed away last month. A bacterial infection that entered the bloodstream was the culprit.

Our deepest sympathies and condolences go out to both families.