

THRU THE GREEN

From The President

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THRU THE GREEN

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Environmental friendly golf courses are great. But what if you're not an Honor's Course, Spanish Bay, Collier's Reserve, or Squaw Creek? What if you're just Pleasant Golfer Country Club or Small City Municipal Golf Course? What if your members or owners just want a nice golf course, without making a stand on the environment? As a superintendent, what can you do?

Let me share a couple of stories with you. When I first started my current position a few years back, I had a visitor call on me my very first week on the job. He was a neighbor of ours, in fact, he was the president of the local homeowner's association. "Welcome to Peacock Gap," he said. "When are you going to spray our lagoon?" (We share a sixteen-acre lagoon. Actually the course has one par three hole; about 300 feet of shoreline, the homeowners have about fifty homes bordering the other quarter mile or so of shoreline.) Being totally ignorant, I inquired further. I sat back and got a fifteen minute lesson on the history of the lagoon, and his idea of preventive maintenance. It seems, that they had a serious weed and algae problem many years ago. I assured him that I was well qualified to deal with this issue, and that I would go out and survey the lagoon to determine if spraying was indeed necessary.

Shortly thereafter, I took our little motorboat out to check out the situation. Whatever they had done in the past must have worked. The lagoon was dead. Through the sunlight filtered water I could see the dead remains of a few submerged weeds, with a small amount of algae clinging on for dear life. Not a weed was visible, except a few clumps of tules along the shoreline. We spoke every few weeks. "Spray the lagoon," he said, "or we'll have a hell of a problem later this summer." Did he want to hear about IPM? Did he want to hear about tolerance levels? Did he want to hear about a different climate toward chemicals than existed a few years ago? **NO WAY.** I sensed that the homeowners expected their lagoon to look like the finest filtered waterways in Disneyland.

This whole incident was a real eye opener. Everything I've heard, read, and practiced until now has been geared toward running an environmentally sensitive operation. Did these people care about this? The *not in my back yard* syndrome was alive and well at Peacock Gap. These same people are probably writing letters to the editor about Cal Trans spraying median strips, but

in their lagoon, keep the weeds down at all costs.

We have one small oak-covered hillside adjacent to our second fairway. Each springtime, the questions start coming, when are you going to cut down the tall grass? Uncut perimeter rough might be fine at Sonoma Golf Club or Chardonney, but it doesn't play well at Peacock Gap. It seems that the golfers can't find their ball and it slows play. Am I missing something here? Should I be playing my ball off this hillside as many of them are apparently doing?

I've tried leaving dead branches in out of play areas. It seems that we don't have any out of play areas. How about wildlife on the golf course? Wildlife is fine so long as it's not Canadian Geese. Our golfers are not willing to put up with the mess from geese.

So where does that leave those of us who would like to do our part for the environment? What can we do if our members or owners don't buy into the environmental movement? Check out your own shop. Is everything behind the scene in order? Do you practice IPM? Do you have records to show where your used oil and other fluids go? Can you say that your fertilizer and pesticides stay on the turf and out of the waterways? What do you do with the rinsate from your chemical sprayer and equipment wash area? What do you do with your solid waste? Do you recycle? Do you collect clippings for the dump or do you scatter them on the course?

So you see, even if you won't be competing in any national environmental award competition, there is still much that you can do on your course. Clean up your environment, before you begin to clean up the environment.

Have a great September!
Richard Lavine, CGCS
President

Office Notes

By Barbara Mikel

The California Golf Course Superintendents Association (the state association) has a jobs "hotline" (619-497-5170) for use of members. All of Northern California members are also members of the state association so feel free to use this phone number in addition to our job notices if you are job seeking.

I received a letter from Ken Sakai, CGCS, former President of GCSANC, and former recipient of the Ayrshire Friendship Trophy, for the

(Continued on Page 3)

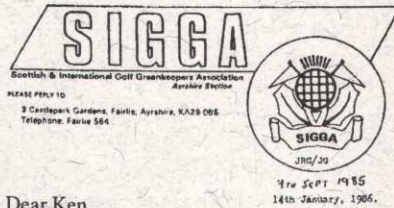
Office Notes (Cont'd)

Superintendent Pro, Low Gross Superintendent. In his letter, Ken relates the history behind the club itself. It seems the club was given to Ken by Harry Diamond (Superintendent of Belle Isle Golf Course, Ayr, Scotland). It was Mr. Diamond's suggestion that the club would make an excellent "trophy" for an association competition.

Ken also sent a copy of a letter from "SIGGA" (Scottish & International Golf Greenkeepers Association), Ayrshire Section (See next column). It seems Superintendents Associations are and have been a worldwide venture.

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Dear Ken,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the committee of the Ayrshire section of S.I.G.G.A., to make the twinning of our two regions official. There is an excellent rapport between American and Scottish Greenkeepers at present, and we feel that the joining of the two regions will enhance this further. The committee feel, that this would benefit us from a greenkeeping view, with the exchanging of greenkeeping ideas and practice, and also to encourage the social side. This could be expanded further, especially as we both have our respective Golf Open Championships in our regions in 1986.

We raise our glasses in a toast to a long and happy association with our American Colleagues, and hope to meet some of you in the near future.

Should any of your members be planning holidays in Scotland, please do not hesitate to contact either Harry Diamond or myself.
Yours Sincerely,

James R. Grainger
Secretary

Naumann's Norcal News

Brad Langley has accepted the superintendent position at San Juan Oaks G.C. in Hollister. San Juan Oaks is a new course that is still under construction. Brad was the assistant at California Golf Club under John Martin prior to his move . . . Jeff Shafer has left Hiddenbrooke CC in Vallejo and will be working in the consulting and landscape fields. Replacing Jeff is David Saly. David was the assistant there prior to his promotion . . . Dave Rosenstraugh, superintendent at Orinda CC has been extremely busy as of late. He recently rebuilt three tees and is presently in the process of rebuilding and reshaping all of the bunkers. . . Arnold Palmer Golf has been awarded the lease at the Presidio of San Francisco Golf Course. Supt. Terry McGuire reports an extensive renovation will soon be taking place. The present superintendent, John Buckley will retire soon after the changeover.

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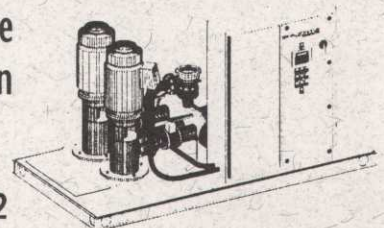
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A Superintendent in Disguise

By Bob Costa

It was late one Saturday afternoon when I decided to play a relaxing nine holes at the golf club where I'm employed. I'm the golf course superintendent and I try to play the course as frequently as possible, so I can get a feel of the conditions from a golfer's perspective. As I settled in on the first tee a group of golfers asked if they could join me. We exchanged the normal greetings and when asked what I did, I told them I was a horticulturist. The response was one I was used to; "a horti-what?"

A few minutes later we were all off the tee. As we putted out on the first hole one of the golfers in our group commented: "I was talking to the pro before we teed off. He said their aerifying greens next week. I'll never understand it. Every year in the spring and fall, when the greens are in the best shape, the maintenance staff has to punch and sand the greens. Why can't they just leave things alone?"

I replied, "From what I know, punching holes and sanding, referred to as aerifying and topdressing is scheduled to improve the condition of the root system. Healthy roots need oxygen, nutrients and water for growth. When soils become compacted, water and air movement are restricted, resulting in unhealthy, weak roots. Soil compaction, is the result of soil particles becoming squished in the soil, and occurs primarily because of excessive traffic. To help illustrate the effects of soil compaction, imagine a room filled with nerf balls. When weight is applied to the balls, the spaces between

each ball is eliminated. The spaces (pores) are the openings in the soil which allow water and air to move freely, providing oxygen, water and nutrients to the roots of plants. Without these pore spaces soils become waterlogged and movement of air into and out of the soil becomes difficult."

"Aerifying, which is the process of punching holes in the soil, and topdressing, provide temporary channels for air and water to enter a compacted soil. On a golf course green, the soil becomes compacted due to maintenance equipment and foot traffic. After the wet conditions associated with winter and the steady traffic of summer, the soil is sufficiently compacted, and aerification becomes necessary. Because weather conditions are ideal for rapid recovery, aerification is usually scheduled in the spring and fall."

"You sure seem to know a lot about aerification. What did you say you do again?"

"I read a lot," I responded.

Several holes later one of the golfers in our group sunk a thirty footer for a skin. As he threw his arms up in the air in jubilation, he yelled, "These greens are in great shape. The ball is rolling fast and true. I don't know why they can't always be like this."

I couldn't help it, I had to tell them. "Green speed and ball roll are directly related to the condition of the grass plant. Greens that are slow and bumpy are usually, grainy, lush, moist, spiked, thatchy, thin or mowed above 5/32 of an inch. Conversely, fast true greens are generally firm, dry, lean and mowed at 5/32 or below. The maintenance practices required to produce fast greens also create

significant stress on the plant, and therefore, cannot be implemented continuously, day after day. Factor in conditions that the superintendent has no control over, such as rainfall, foot traffic, heat, and cold and it becomes impossible to have perfect playing conditions year around. Generally, larger greens, constructed on a sand base are less prone to compaction and allow the superintendent to be more aggressive in his or her management practices. At least that's what I heard," I nervously said.

As we stood on the eighth tee, overlooking the front nine, one of the players commented, "This place is so green, it must be because of all the fertilizer and water they use."

"Not necessarily so," I said. "Golf course irrigation systems are some of the most sophisticated systems in the world and many are designed to replace only the water that has been used that day. This is accomplished with the aid of a weather station and computerized scheduling. Unless there is a malfunction of the system, water is applied evenly and uniformly with no runoff. New fertilizer technology, and organic products have provided superintendents with fertilizers that slowly release nutrients over an extended period of time, thereby minimizing the potential for nutrient leaching into off target areas. This approach to fertility, also results in more uniform growth, color and better playing conditions."

"You seem to know quite a bit about maintaining a golf course," they said. "Did you work on one before you

became a horti... I'm sorry, what are you again?"

"A horticulturist," I replied. "Yeah, I've spent some time around golf courses."

As we neared the ninth green, an errant shot placed one of the golfers in the extreme rough. Good sports that we are, we gathered in the area to help look for his ball. As we began our search, he shouted, in frustration I assume, "Why don't they mow this stuff. I'll never find my ball in this jungle."

"That's a native grass planting," I commented. "It serves several purposes. Native species use less water, require little if any fertilizer, no pesticides, rarely need mowing and provide great cover and habitat for wildlife. Natural plantings are part of the golf course setting and enhance the courses relationship with the surrounding environment."

"Golf courses good for the environment?" he said. "You know, I never really thought of it that way."

As we reached the clubhouse, I told the group I was through for the day. I thanked them for the round, the conversation, and paid my debt. As I turned to make my way to the parking lot one of them said, "You're a pretty sharp guy for a horticulturist, maybe you should consider being a golf course superintendent."

"I don't know," I said. "I hear its a pretty tough job."

"It's certainly more complicated than I thought," he said as he turned and walked away.



USGA — Tips

“Squirting, Squashing and Stabbing”

By Pat Gross, Western Region Agronomist

No, this is not a review of the latest action adventure movie, but rather a discussion about spiking. During our travels, Mike and I have seen many courses using these tools and practices to their advantage, however, many superintendents still express concern on the possibility of turf damage. This month, I would like to pass along information about these practices that we have gathered from other superintendents and research reports.

Putting green rollers — Putting green rollers have become a popular tool for superintendents to improve surface smoothness and slightly increase speed without the need to reduce mowing heights on the greens. In my opinion, increasing the mowing height and using the rollers has helped cut down on the occurrence and severity of stress related diseases such as summer patch and anthracnose. Several

superintendents are still hesitant to use the rollers due to the concern over soil compaction. Interestingly, research at North Carolina State University by Chris Hartwiger showed that increased soil compaction was not detectable on USGA sand greens or native soil greens at a rolling frequency of four times per week for ten weeks. The study did show turf injury from wear and abrasion at the higher rolling frequencies. The bottom line is to use the rollers with moderation and common sense. Most courses have had good success by rolling two to three times per week, and no adverse effects have been reported with the rollers are used three days in a row for special tournaments. If you see wear symptoms, especially on the edges of greens, you should back off the rolling program and allow the turf to recover.

Water injection aeration — This has become a popular program to relieve soil

compaction during the summer without disrupting the putting surface or causing stress to the grass plant. Many superintendents are using this tool as a supplement to their core aeration program, and to relieve any soil compaction caused by putting green rollers. Some people have expressed a concern over the possible migration of fine soil particles in the root zone, however, I am not familiar with any research or observations to support that theory. Also, some people report that the water jets don't penetrate more than three to four inches on their greens. In this case, you may wish to have the pressure accumulator checked by the distributor and also look for worn nozzles and proper functioning of the air relief valves. According to Dr. Chip Howard, these parts may need to be serviced more frequently depending on the amount of use and the quality of your water source.

(Continued on page 7)



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GCSAA NEWS

Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program

GCSAA has announced it will participate in the federal government's new Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program. Under the program, GCSAA will work in partnership with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to develop a strategy that further reduces risks from the use of the pesticides on golf courses.

"We are absolutely committed to using the responsible management practices that pose little, if any, environmental risk," said GCSAA President Gary Grigg, CGCS. "Through this partnership,

we'll be able to work with the leading federal authorities to find new and innovative ways to use pesticides effectively and safely and to minimize any potential harm to people, wildlife and the environment." The stewardship

"We are absolutely committed to using responsible management practices that pose little, if any, environmental risk."

program is the first under a commitment made by the three agencies before the U.S. House of Representatives in September, 1993. The program commits the agencies to work jointly with pesticide user groups.

The EPA's Anne Leslie, who will coordinate GCSAA's strategy development said, "We

are very pleased that GCSAA has joined our Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program, and I look forward to working with this professional organization in developing their strategy."

The framework for the

strategy emphasizes education, training, research and continued development, and careful use of pest control products that pose risks. According to Leslie, superintendents are already doing many things very well. "GCSAA has already demonstrated a commitment to educate their members in less risky pest control methods by initiating an

IPM curriculum as a part of their certification program. GCSAA has also established its own Environmental Stewardship Awards program, which highlights the efforts of individual superintendents to reduce the risk of pesticides to the environment. A large number of superintendents have enthusiastically

adopted the New York Audubon Society's Cooperative Sanctuary Program, which is an important part of this," she said.

Plans call for the strategy to be developed in 1995 and announced during the Environmental General Session of the GCSAA International Golf Course Conference and Show next February in Orlando, Fla.

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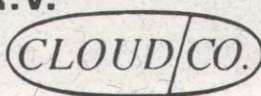
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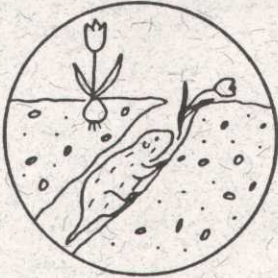
Aeration and Water Movement: *Mr. Pat Simmsgeiger, Diversified Waterscapes*

USGA Tips (Cont'd)

Spiking — Now that the water injection aerifier and other forms of small tine aerification are available, it seems that many superintendents have moved away from the practice of spiking greens. Spiking continues to be a good method to relieve surface compaction and open up the turf canopy for air and water penetration without causing significant surface disruption. It is also useful as a pretreatment for bentgrass seeding operations. Although the compaction relief is not as long-lived as other forms of aeration, spiking cuts stolons and helps to initiate new root growth. Many superintendents continue to use this tried and true management practice every one to two weeks during the summer with good results.

Modern technology has given us a variety of tools and products to produce the best possible putting green turf. While many of these products and practices have merit, it is important to evaluate your own conditions and implement these programs in moderation and with good common sense. ↙

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