

## An Improved Equipment Wash Area

Stonebridge Country Club  
Robert Jacks, superintendent

Boca Raton, Fla. 33498

### Issue

Turf clippings are a byproduct of all golf course maintenance operations. Most clippings are recycled back into the turf canopy during mowing or collected in baskets attached to mowers. However, some clippings remain on the mowers and must be washed off before the equipment is stored. Clippings contain trace amounts of nitrogen and other nutrients that can be beneficial to turf health if recycled, but potentially harmful to waterways if wash water is not filtered before it enters local sewers or drain fields. A well-designed equipment washing area helps ensure that downstream water quality is not negatively affected by turf clippings.

The equipment washing area at Stonebridge Country Club presented several issues. It was not sufficiently sloped to carry clippings and sand away from the wash area. This meant that staff used excessive amounts of water to wash equipment and rinse the wash pad. Wash water then flowed into a small drain field where sand and excess clippings collected



*Clippings and sand carried by wash water are deposited in the white collection basins, gathered by the maintenance staff and recycled onto the golf course.*

and sat for long periods of time. Clippings accumulated faster than microbes could break them down, which led to unsightly conditions and unpleasant odors. Stonebridge Country Club wanted to improve their equipment washing facilities to address these issues and ensure that clippings were disposed of properly.

### **Action**

There are several commercial equipment washing units that can collect, filter and recycle wash water. However, installation costs and monthly service fees with some these units can be quite expensive. Stonebridge Country Club decided to install an Eco Wash Pad unit, which was less costly and didn't have monthly service fees.

The Eco Wash Pad consists of a concrete pad that drains into two collection basins where sand and clippings are collected. Wash water then passes through a filter that removes any petroleum products before it flows into a drain field where any remaining organic matter and chemicals are broken down by plants and microbes. Clippings and sand filtered from the wash water are gathered by the staff and recycled back onto the golf course.

### **Results**

Using the Eco Wash Pad to collect and recycle clippings returns valuable nutrients to the golf course and eliminates the unpleasant odor of rotting clippings around the wash area. The Eco Wash Pad is also easier to keep clean because the new surface is sloped to carry water and debris away quickly. This saves water by reducing the amount required to rinse the wash area. Superintendent Robert Jacks estimates that 50 percent less water is being used at the new equipment wash area because rinsing it is so much easier.

For the Eco Wash Pad system to be successful, Mr. Jacks emphasizes the importance of having a wash pad that is large enough for your maintenance operation and adequately sloped towards the debris collection basins. He plans to further improve the equipment washing area at Stonebridge by adding an adjacent blow-off area, where compressed air will be used to blow most of the dry clippings off the equipment before it is washed.