

HOT TIP



Duncan McGilvray, course manager at Letchworth Golf Club:

The following points, which I have wanted to discuss with colleagues for some time, are, I believe, essential so that the perception of us and the work we do improves, as it certainly needs to.

POINT 1: If we manage a golf course we should be titled golf course managers. No employer will argue that point unless you do NOT manage a golf course.

POINT 2: We, as golf course managers, must hold seminars in the clubhouse so that all facets of our work can be presented and our golfing membership can question our actions and decisions. All golf course managers who do this (and there are a growing number) know that our work is made easier if we make the effort to communicate (a point expanded on elsewhere in this issue).

POINT 3: We present (as well as conduct) ourselves in a professional manner. This, in part, can be achieved by supplying our greenstaff with a uniform (not overalls) so that an image of professionalism can be projected.

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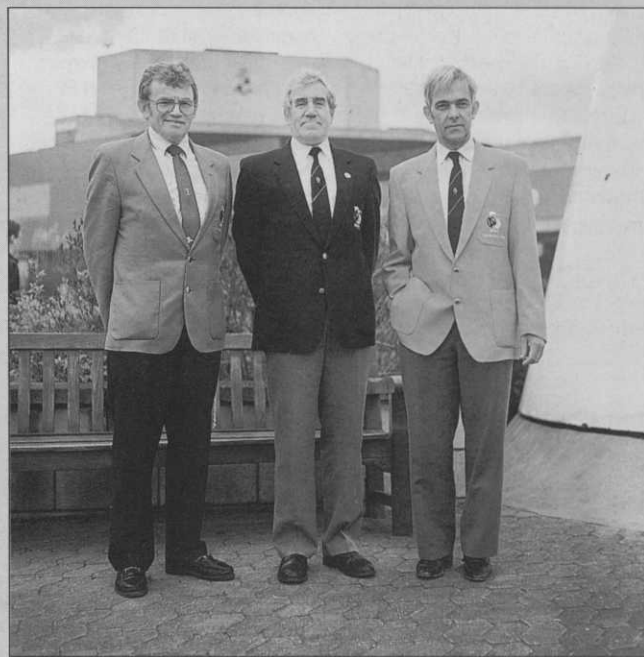


Joseph Baidy, president of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

While many of us have a self-image as a nature lover and a steward of the land, our public image doesn't quite measure up. A 1990 National Golf Foundation survey in the US found that golfers were evenly split on whether they thought that the fertilisers and chemicals used on golf courses pollute surface waters. But statistics from a National Golf Foundation survey one year later showed that golfers are almost twice as likely as non-golfers to describe the overall effect of golf on their community as "very positive" or "positive" – 67 per cent of golfers chose a positive description, compared to 35 per cent of non-golfers.

It's not that non-golfers feel that the game is a threat to the community – only 3 per cent said golf has a "negative" or "very negative" effect. Most non-golfers surveyed said that golf has no effect on their community (that's 32 per cent) or that they didn't know (that's 30 per cent). Altogether, that is 62 per cent of the non-golfing public that we might be able to reach with good news about golf and the environment.

As greenkeepers, we need to make sure, first and foremost, that we do a good job environmentally; and secondly, that we let everyone know about it. We must make sure we tell our good news, for there will always be someone else to share whatever bad news there may be. We must continue to sharpen our public relations and media relations skills.



BIGGA luminaries such as past chairman John Crawford, vice chairman Barry Heaney and new chairman John Millen (pictured) heard a rich variety of greenkeeping facts at the National Education Conference, at Warwick University. Greenkeeper International was there too and presents seven hot tips from the industry's hottest speakers.

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David Oatis, director, green section Northeastern Region, USA

The grass growing environment that a particular green or tee is located in has a big impact on water management and this is sometimes overlooked. Pocketed, shaded greens produce weaker, less stress-tolerant turf that is more prone to disease problems. This type of turf requires less water due to its reduced

vigour and because the lack of sunlight and air circulation reduce the amount of water lost through evaporation. The end result is that thinning and loss are common problems for turf located in a poor grass-growing environment.

We regularly recommend trying to improve poor grass-growing environments through tree removal and even through the installation of electric fans. This may sound like a peculiar suggestion, but properly used fans can improve the turf's

ability to cool itself. They can also help reduce disease pressure by reducing the level of free moisture. Obviously, they are not appropriate in every situation and removing trees and underbrush often improve a bad grass-growing environment to a sufficient degree. However, electric fans offer an effective alternative for especially difficult locations.

QUOTE OF THE CONFERENCE

'When everyone else was into the Sex Pistols and punk rock, I was into Jim Arthur' – Kevin Munt, course manager at The Buckinghamshire Golf Club.