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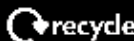
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Environmental Care is not an Optional Extra

The latest issue of Golf Monthly has just dropped onto my desk – an excellent, often thought provoking, publication and one which is particularly close to my heart as it was as Assistant Editor back in May 1986 that I started out in the golf business. I still read it every month and this time one element in particular caught my attention.

The Golf Forum asks readers questions, and these are always keen golfers and generally club members, and this month it posed the following:

“Do golfers have duty to encourage environmentally friendly course management?”

It elicited the following from among the responses.:

“Eco-friendly options are often too expensive to implement and ultimately it is us that have to pay for it.”; “I don’t expect to go to my own club, which I already pay a sizeable sum to every year and start helping them with their environmental responsibility too.”, and “In these hard times I don’t see it being too high on any club agenda...”

A few things struck me about the answers. The first one was the belief that to be eco-friendly is a costly business and is almost a bit of an extravagance for a golf club. Well, we all know that there are many sound environmental policies and practices that don’t cost a fortune and can even bring revenue into a club – making and selling your own compost or fire wood for example, while harvesting grey water may have an initial cost but will undoubtedly make savings for the club in the longer term.

Secondly, if the guys who replied to the Golf Monthly question are at members’

clubs there is no real understanding that the environmental responsibility for the golf club is as much down to them as it is down to the people they employ at the club to carry out the work.

Basically it reaffirms the belief that golfers are interested in playing golf - period. Anything else is merely a sideshow or, worse, a damned inconvenience. How often do you get grief when you do some mid-week aeration work? Everyone knows it is for the long term benefit of the golf course, but they still complain if it happens just before their Wednesday morning bounce game.

In fairness to the club golfer, the game is a hobby, a recreational pursuit, and adding “responsibilities” on top of those they carry Monday to Friday is perhaps unfair. However the very nature of a members’ club is that each member does have a share in the club and that carries with it some responsibility.

The bottom line is that members has a duty as responsible landowners, or tenants, to carry out environmentally friendly course management and can’t run away from that just because they are only really interested in the speed of the greens, the height of the rough and the quality of the sand in the bunkers.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all Greenkeeper International readers.

Scott MacCallum
Editor