

CHICAGO AREA SUPERINTENDENTS GENERATE PR

It was billed as the "world's largest floral spectacular". "It" was the 1978 Chicago Flower and Garden Show, sponsored by the Chicago Horticultural Society. The show covered the entire 300,000 square feet of Don Maxwell Hall in Chicago's McCormick Place. Attendance at the show this year was expected to surpass 200,000 during the show's nine day run.

200,000 people is an outstanding opportunity to generate a lot of good publicity for the Golf Course Superintendent, and that's where the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents comes into the picture.

Again this year, as in the past several years, the MAGCS operated a booth at the Flower and Garden Show. The purpose of the booth was to disseminate turf related information and advice to the thousands of Chicago area homeowners who attended the show.

The men responsible for the organization and operation of the MAGCS booth at the Flower Show were: Mr. Fred Opperman, CGCS of the Glen Oak Country Club in Glen Ellyn, IL and Mr. Carl Hopphan, Superintendent at the Aurora Country Club, Aurora, IL. Fred and Carl are the MAGCS "publicity people". It was their responsibility to schedule the 40 plus Chicago area Superintendents and other related people into shifts to man the booth over the nine days that the show was open. In addition, they obtained and provided the visual aids materials used at the booth. These included actual weed samples that were collected last fall and overwintered in Mr. Opperman's office window, and other samples provided by area Superintendents and nursery people. They also arranged for color pictures of weeds, diseases, insects, etc. and printed information from a wide variety of sources.

The reasons given for the MAGCS participation in the Chicago Flower and Garden Show were quite simple, "It does a lot of good for the lawnowners and lots of people benefited; people are 'grass minded' and real interested". It also was a good public relations tool for the Chicago area Superintendents. 200,000 people attended the show, most saw the booth and were reminded that there is a person who is responsible for the beauty of the golf courses that they see. WBBM radio, a large Chicago station, really plugged the MAGCS booth and the job the MAGCS was doing at the show. The most important benefit, however, came when the thousands of people actually stopped at the booth to inquire what to do to control "Creeping Charlie", "Tall Fescue" and what grass to plant in the shade. They were given the answers to their questions, but before they left, they would begin to admire the putting green sample cut at 3/16" and would ask, "How do you keep the greens grass like it is?" After a short discussion of what was involved in Bent management on a golf green, John Q. Public left with a great deal of new found respect for the job the Superintendent does, the depth of the subject and the expertise that the Superintendent has.

Many good pointers were given free of charge. There can be no question that the PR was tremendous.

One of the most rewarding situations was when a lawnowner specifically looked up the MAGCS booth to follow up on last year's lawn suggestions and update for '78. These people knew where to find the "Pros".

Lee Overpeck
ProTurf Technical Rep. - Chicago

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