

HOW TO TURN COMPLAINTS TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

How do you handle complaints from golfers? Nobody finds it easy to take criticism, especially when the gripes come from someone whose only turfgrass experience is his dandelion-free lawn. Unfortunately, golf courses were built and superintendents hired for the benefit of golfers, a situation which often necessitates a kid-glove approach to complaints.

Even if complaints are supposed to go to your green chairman, chances are you'll still have to field a few questions and comments from golfers who catch you on the course. Generally, they will be friendly, but there are always a few who aren't.

The first rule is keep your temper. Some people actually enjoy harassing an employee, and others have to find someone to blame for a bad round. However, if you stay cool, he will soon realize he is out of line.

Hear him out. Many people who have honest complaints only reveal portions of their grievances because they are afraid you don't have time to listen to them. When you've heard the whole thing, try to give a thorough explanation. Above all, don't cut him off abruptly, even if you are in a hurry. Try to set up a time when you can go into the problem in detail if you think it necessary.

Don't try a cover up. Even if it's your fault, he'll be more impressed with your forthrightness than with a slick, superficial explanation which blames everything from the weather to last month's ladies tournament.

There are some positive steps you can take to head off complaints. You can keep members informed of construction, maintenance operations and other problem areas on the course by posting signs in the pro shop. If your club has a monthly newsletter, you can use it to keep members informed of upcoming operations and explain why they are necessary. Some superintendents have found it helpful to compile regular reports of their operations so that everyone, including club employees, knows not only what and when but also why an operation is taking place.

You also can train your crew to successfully deal with problems on the course. Make sure they have enough information to handle the problem and that they realize they are representing you and the club when they handle a complaint or answer a question.

Credit - Fore Front

PROMPT TREATMENT CAN SAVE STORM DAMAGED TREES

The recent storms have caused extensive damage to trees throughout Chicagoland. Some trees have been so severely damaged that removal is the only solution.

According to James A. Fizzell, University of Illinois Horticulturist in Cook County, trees which have repairable injuries should be treated immediately so that disease organisms and insects do not gain entrance to the tree.

Remove all broken branches and limbs. Clean away all splintered bark and wood leaving a smooth clean wound and paint thoroughly with tree paint. Fizzell cautions against using tar or roof coat which may contain chemicals harmful to the tree.

Partly split trunks, crotches or limbs of small trees can often be mended by restoring them to their original position and fastening them there.

Trunks can be pulled together with through bolts. First clean out splintered bark and wood. Drill holes through the trunk at right angles to the split. Insert bolts with large washers at each end and tighten to pull

the split together. Cover the wound with antiseptic tree paint.

Split crotches and limbs require use of long toggle bolts or cables and turnbuckles. This can be a complicated procedure and should be done by a licensed arborist trained in these methods.

If the damage is such that you are considering the work yourself, the U.S. Department of Agriculture can send you an excellent bulletin on the subject entitled "Pruning Shade Trees and Repairing Their Injuries". Price is 10 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington. Limited supplies are available from county offices of the University of Illinois Extension Service.

Keep in mind, says Fizzell, tree work can be dangerous. Aside from the obvious hazard of falling from a tree, tree limbs are extremely heavy. If you keep in mind how much a little 4" fence post weighs, you can imagine how heavy a 10" limb 20 feet long may be. Do not try to remove large limbs unless they are properly roped and tied.

Do not attempt to use a chain saw up in a tree unless you have been properly trained to do so.

Before working on a damaged tree, make sure no limbs are lying across power lines. If branches are in contact with lines, call your power company. They have crews trained to correct such situations.

Finally, do not attempt large scale repair work yourself. If you are in doubt as to whether you can handle the job, contact a local licensed commercial arborist. These people use proven repair methods so that the tree will have the best chance of survival, and they have the equipment to do the job properly and quickly.

Don't you become a casualty along with your tree.



WARNING

Stay away from trees during a storm when it is lightning, we do not want to lose you. This picture was taken at Glen Oak C.C. It is unbelievable what lightning can do.