

BY TONY LITTRELL, PRES., KGCSA

Did you ever look into a cookbook and see all of the different recipes that there are for cakes? There are all kinds of cakes from chocolate to angel food to strawberry, with hundreds of others in between. A person desiring to bake a cake, can for all practical purposes simply read the directions and if they are coordinated to a certain extent, combine the ingredients as specified in the recipe, slip the total accumulation into one or more cake pans and then into the oven and in a certain amount of time have a cake or a resemblance thereof. I have tried to bake a cake on certain occasions, probably two that I can remember, and despite the fact that I followed the directions to the letter of the book, the results were far less than desirable. On the other hand, there are people who can bake and do an amazingly superb job of it and almost never have to resort to a cookbook for any part of a recipe.

Not too long ago I overheard a golfer rambling about the ease of maintaining a golf course and how easy it had become with all of the modern chemicals, machinery and irrigation. I laughed to myself, as I usually do when someone begins to downplay the significance of our profession. He then made one more comment about the turfgrass profession and said something along the line of, "hell, anybody can do it now, the directions are right on the bag." I thought about making him an offer of taking my job for a couple of weeks while I went on vacation, and even considered throwing in a couple of textbooks to go along with the different directions that are on the back of the bag.

I had to let this person's words sink in for a little while before I started to realize just what it really requires of an individual to be in this profession. Sure the directions are on the bag, just as they are in a cookbook, but that is all that they are. Among the many demands and facets to this business of being a golf course superintendent is a certain feeling or touch that is required that can't be taught in any school or textbook. It is that certain knack that all of us in this profession has, which enables us to perceive the attitude of nature and how it is best to blend the various ingredients that are at our disposal for success. Another thing that occurred to me is that none of us use the exact same recipe. Oh sure, a lot of the ingredients are the same, but the amount and how we do it differs in all cases. Yet, in the end we each have our own cake, so to speak. Sometimes we trade recipes and even though they work for one, doesn't mean that they will work for someone else. We all have our own number of variables that will affect the success. In a way it makes us all entities unto ourselves, and when I stop to think about it, even the recipes are different, and in the end all that we are looking for and sometimes get, is that perfect cake.

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by Tony Littrell, Pres., KGCSA**

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