

Director's Column

Cup Changing

by Dennis Wilson

Sunset Ridge Country Club, Northbrook, IL

Most golf course superintendents treat cup changing as a foreign disease or punishment for a lazy crew member, but in fact cup changing can be an art.

After changing his own cups for 40 years, Dom Grotti, former superintendent of Sunset Ridge Country Club, handed me his hole cutter and said "This is the most important job on the golf course". At first I did not realize what he meant but now, after changing pins for 11 years, I know he was right.

In the short time it takes each morning to change cups and move markers, you can check every green and tee for signs of fungi, insects, fertilization level, thatch, moisture level, how your irrigation system is working, what kind of cut your mowers are giving you, and traffic control. Important? You bet if you're trying to maintain consistent greens.

I always carry a putter with me and putt around a new cup just to see the breaks or grain, if any. This too is very helpful in setting up the course for that special day.

Because of the demand of our jobs, I'm not able to change 18 cups a day so my assistant, Jerry Cooper, and I alternate 9 holes a day, six days a week. At first Jerry did not understand why he had to do such a "low-life" job, but after several years of changing cups he now knows this can be the most important job on the golf course.

Bryn Mawr and Evanston to Co-Host Northern ITF Golf Day

September 15th will be a fun filled golf day for ITF fund raisers. We are very fortunate to have Superintendents, Mike Nass and Carl Hoppman hosting their fine golf courses this year. This cooperative effort, of two courses in close proximity, will not only attract more golfers, but will make a popular event even more enjoyable as the field can be split to 80-100 golfers per course. As many of you already know, last year's event at Glen Oak Country Club attracted almost 170 people. Although we had a perfect day, it was six hour round of golf. This year's event has been designed to make the golf go more quickly with plenty of time to socialize at the end of the day.

Here is the run down of the day's event.

— Tickets can be purchased from ITF headquarters in advance for \$75. This includes: lunch, golf, cart, 12:30 shotgun start and a special hors d'oeuvres party on the lawn at Evanston that evening.

— Prizes and raffles for golf clubs are part of the event, so bring along some cash for ITF research.

— This is the inaugural Dom Grotti trophy event for Superintendents and their Assistants; so get your handicaps registered for a partners best ball. A fine traveling trophy will go to the winner, donated by Sunset Ridge Country Club.

— Guests are welcome, but tickets must be ordered and paid in advance. Sorry, no refunds.

Reservations and billing can be handled through Russell Schneider, ITF Headquarters, Phone 644-0828.

How to Determine the Actual Products Being Applied in Your Fertilizer Program

by Tom Skinner

Par Ex Territory Manager

In determining a fertility program, there are as we know, many factors to consider. Some of which are: How much N.P.K. will be the most beneficial in our management program? What nutrient sources do we want to use? How long do we want the nutrients to be available? What ratio of N. to P. to K. do we want? Do we need minors? The list of decisions can go on and on. As we all know the fertility program is only a part of the overall management practices used in promoting quality turfgrass, however fertilizer used properly can enhance desired results and aid in the overall success of our programs. Everyone has their own criterion used to monitor the success of their fertility program. It may be turf color, density, growth rate, root depth, tolerance to stress, or the ability to recover after stress. All of these are good, but the criterion used can only be made by the turfgrass manager in their particular circumstance.

It becomes apparent that with all the decisions to be made, a thorough knowledge of the plant nutrients you are applying to the turf and what you can expect by them is most important. You must decide what nutrients you want to apply and then purchase product based on anticipated results, and cost according to what your budget provides. It is not uncommon to determine the cost of a fertilizer program based on the number of weeks the nutrients are available. Also the amounts of each nutrient is important. Example: Should a nitrogen source release over a period of twelve weeks, you could base the cost factor by taking the cost per acre and divide by 12 the number of weeks of feeding. This would determine a weekly cost per acre. In the case of a three week material divide the cost per acre by 3 to determine a weekly cost. The question then has to be, in a fertilizer analysis with a ratio of 20% slow release nitrogen that feeds for twelve weeks and 80% of the nitrogen that feeds for three weeks considered a three week or a twelve week material? The answer is that it is neither a three week or twelve week material. A product or a portion of a product has to be judged and cost accounted for by the results delivered to the individual. The reason this is mentioned is because with the literally hundreds of fertilizer analysis available, the purchaser must have the ability to look at a product breakdown and compute the percentages of the nutrients they will receive based on the label or the literature description. Purchases have been made based on cost with the intent of purchasing a slow release type material that in reality has a very low percentage of slow release.

In a future article I have been invited to discuss plant nutrients and their use in turfgrass management, in particular slow release nitrogens. In this article my objective is not to compare one source of plant food to another or to compare one product line to another or to suggest one particular analysis over another. My objective is to provide some information and math formulas that can be used to breakdown a fertilizer analysis. Product information is provided by all fertilizer companies on their analysis and can be found on the bags, on the specification sheets and on the literature. With this information we can determine exactly what's being applied to the turf areas. That coupled with knowledge of what to expect from each plant food will allow