

Director's Column



"Keeping Track"

by Alan T. Fierst

We are almost finished with another winter season of seminars, conferences, forums, clinics, and other educational gatherings sponsored by any number of golf-turf related organizations. These are wonderful opportunities to exchange ideas and information relative to the golf-turf business and the gatherings are usually very well supported by the sponsoring organizations membership. In addition to the accompanying trade shows, exhibits, and educational opportunities, each exposition usually includes at least one, if not several, presentation of donated monies for turf related research. The research grants are often of quite substantial amounts when compared to the financial resources of the donating organization and are not to be taken lightly.

As we are coming to realize, there are far too many areas of potential research at far too many institutions in need of funding. The state supported universities, the private foundations, the USGA, the GCSAA, and even the junior colleges are all seeking research dollars at every juncture. Each, in their own way, are deserving of every research dollar they seek and procure. But, as is nearly always the case, there is never sufficient funding to adequately supply the need.

As the need and demand for turf research funding increases, so should the accountability for the donated funding. This does not necessarily mean to "target or specify" where each dollar goes beforehand, but rather to be made aware of the benefit those donated research dollars bring. We as golf turf managers need to be cognizant of where and to where these dollars bring a return benefit.

Our clubs and club members also must be made aware of the necessitude of these research funding dollars. It doesn't hurt to mention the need and the benefit of club supported research funding to the Grounds Committee, the Golf Committee, and the Board of Directors at an individual club. Where these source dollars ultimately go (university, USGA, GCSAA, etc.) is not nearly so important as the fact that research dollars are being donated from a source that is so directly coupled to the game of golf. But funding sources such as these are normally accustomed to at least some rationalization for expenditures. A close, descriptive accounting of donated funding from such a source would figure to be imperative.

There is nothing wrong with asking the research funding recipients about research projects (current or otherwise), nor is there any need for reluctance in seeking project results. So long as the research institutions are seeking grants for continued project work, we as the potential funding source should monitor where the funding goes and how far. The research funding dollars are not "wanting for a home", it is our responsibility to monitor which "home" those research funds find.

Getting Started with Perennials

by Terri Tappen Zandi

Head Gardener, Ravisloe Country Club

Herbaceous perennials, plants which grow back from their own roots for several years, were very popular during the Victorian age both at large estates and in small cottage gardens. Although the popularity of Perennials has waned from this time, renewed interest in these plants has been shown in gardens and landscapes.

Most people are familiar with Peonies, Bearded Irises, Poppies, and Chrysanthemums. These perennials have remained popular, however, there are many other species in this category of plants that deserve a place in the garden. Because perennials come back year after year, they are not only cost efficient, but require less maintenance than annuals. Instead of buying new flowers every year, a perennial bed is already established and through division and other means of propagation, the stock of plants can be increased without any further cost.

With the renewed popularity of perennials, it has become much easier to obtain varieties of plants which perform well under many environmental conditions. In the midwest, it is not always advisable to use the same plants that are used on the east coast. (Most perennial gardening books are geared to eastern gardens). Many native and hybrid plants, which will flourish under our environmental conditions, are available. (See list of Low Maintenance, Easy to Grow Perennials).

The first concern, when establishing a perennial garden, is site selection. An area with full sun and good drainage is preferable, although there are many plants which thrive in partial shade and wet conditions. A source of irrigation is desirable, but avoid areas where sprinklers from tees or greens might overlap. Unless an island bed is desired, choose a good background for the garden such as shrub borders, buildings, or fences. Perennials can also be used in small groups as part of a woody landscape to add summer color when few shrubs are blooming.

After a site is chosen, consider the type of garden desired. On a golf course, a garden which blooms primarily from June through September is preferable. Choose plants with color and period of bloom that complement each other. In gardens viewed from afar, choose warm colors such as yellows and oranges. For gardens viewed up close, pastel colors might be preferable.

Another consideration is the amount of time available to maintain the garden. Some plants need to be divided yearly. Others are invasive. The use of low maintenance perennials, plants which are cold and heat hardy, disease resistant, bloom for long time periods, do not need staking, have low fertility requirements, and need infrequent division, reduce time and labor requirements.

Investigate and understand the plants selected for the garden before purchasing. **All About Perennials** by Ortho Books and **Perennials** by Pamela Harper and Fredrich McGourty are two good inexpensive references.

Soil preparation for perennial gardens is crucial. Unlike annual beds which can be reworked yearly, the perennial bed must be prepared to last for several years. At Ravisloe, six inches of leaf compost is worked into the bed the fall before planting. A mix of nutrients similar to those used in our annual beds is worked in the following spring. After the ground is raked

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smooth, the soil is covered with a two inch layer of cedar bark mulch. The mulch adds to the tilth of the soil through decomposition, holds moisture, discourages weeds, and adds a pleasant look while the garden is established. The perennials selected for the garden are planted through the mulch with care taken to keep the mulch from direct contact with the stems.

Before planting, place the plants in the intended locations to ensure proper spacing. Care must be taken with bare root plants. After planting, water thoroughly. Allow plenty of space between the plants and the edge of the bed or the background.

Maintenance consists of watering, weeding, deadheading, fertilizing, and monitoring disease and insects. Weeding should be done by someone familiar with perennials because many common weeds resemble perennials when small. Blooming can be lengthened for most perennials by deadheading. Any rearranging of plants in the garden should be done in early fall. In the late fall, plants should be cut back to ground level and a light application of a loose mulch is beneficial. Frost heaving is a possibility the first year. Check the plants periodically through the winter, pushing any exposed roots back into the soil.

The loose mulch, and any debris left from the winter should be removed in the early spring. This practice helps limit harmful diseases and insects. Fertilize the perennial garden in the early spring after growth starts and then again in the early summer with a 5-10-5 fertilizer. Spring is a good time to divide perennials if needed.

A perennial garden is evolutionary in nature. Some plants thrive, some do not. The fantastic design from last year may not look as good this year. Through trial and error, yearly rearranging and experimentation, the perennial gardens at Ravisloe have been enjoyed by the membership, as well as a source of personal satisfaction and pride.

LOW MAINTENANCE, EASY TO GROW PERENNIALS
FULL SUN

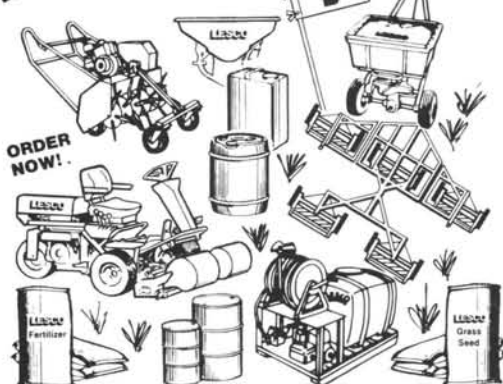
Anaphalis triplinervis
Asclepias tuberosa
Baptisia australis
Campanula persicifolia
Chrysanthemum coccineum
Coreopsis verticillata
Echinacea purpurea
Geranium endressii
Heleopsis heliathoides
Hemerocallis ssp.
Iris sibirica
Liatrix pycnostrachya
Lychnis chalcedonica
Lythrum
Platycodon grandiflorus
Rudbeckia fulgida 'Goldsturm'
Salvia x superba
Sedum 'Autumn Joy'

Anaphalis
Butterfly Bush
Baptisia
Bellflower
Painted Daisy
Threadleaf Coreopsis
Purple Coneflower
Cranesbill
False Sunflower
Daylily (Stella de Oro)
Siberian Iris
Gayfeather
Maltese Cross
Purple Loosestrife
Balloon Flower
Blackeyed Susan
Perennial Blue Salvia
Stonecrop

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Alchemilla mollis
Astilbe x arendsii
Cimicifuga racemosa
Dicentra 'Luxuriant'
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Cerastium

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Epimedium x rufibrum

Galium odoratum

Lamium maculatum

Dwarf Chinese Astilbe

Red Alpine Epimedium

Sweet Woodruff

Silver Beacon

PERENNIAL SOURCES

Bluestone Perennials Inc.

7211 Middle Ridge Road

Madison, OH 44057 (216) 428-7535

Iverson's Perennial Gardens

Box 2787 RFD

Hicks Road (Old Route 53) at Lake-Cook Road

Long Grove, IL 60047

Milaeger's Gardens

4838 Douglas Avenue

Racine, WI 53402

(414) 639-2371

Spring Hill Nurseries

110 West Elm Street

Tipp City, OH 45371

T and Z Nursery, Inc. (The Planter's Palette)

28 West 521 Roosevelt Road

Winfield, IL 60190

(312) 293-1040

K. Van Bourgondien and Sons Inc.

245 Farmingdale Road

Babylon, NY 11702

(800) 832-5860

Wayside Gardens

Hodges, SC 29695

(800) 845-1124

The Natural Garden

38W443 Highway 64

St. Charles, IL 60174

(312) 584-0150

Flowerbed Preparation and Maintenance

by David Ward

Ravisloe Country Club

Most Golf Course Superintendents are hired because of their knowledge and ability to grow grass and provide excellent playing conditions. Today, however, flowers on the golf course and in the clubhouse landscape have become an important criterion for judging a Superintendents abilities. Unfortunately, most of our training and experience does not prepare us to deal effectively with flowers. The selection and combination of flowers used is a matter of taste but the success of the flowers selected depends on the preparation and maintenance of the flowerbed. The following procedures have evolved through several years of trial and error and failures and successes here at Ravisloe and might serve as a guide to make your flowerbeds easier to maintain.

The crucial aspect of any flower program is soil preparation. The most important component of the soil for growing flowers is organic matter. Any type of horticultural organic matter, mushroom compost, leaf mold, rotted manure, peat moss, etc., should be added yearly to improve the soil in flowerbeds.

At Ravisloe Country Club, the source of organic matter is leaf compost. All organic material including grass clippings, leaves, last years flowers, and residue from aerification is collection and composted. The collection site is an area large enough to allow for monthly turning of the pile with a front-end loader. The material is composted for a year before use so that a new pile is building while an old pile is used. The compost is ready for use when it no longer heats up after turning and it has the consistency of loose soil. The process can be

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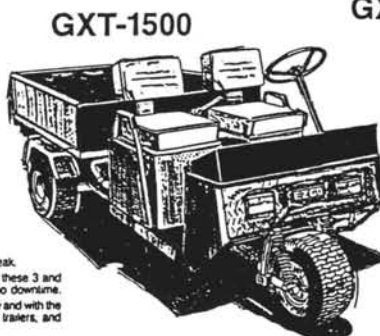
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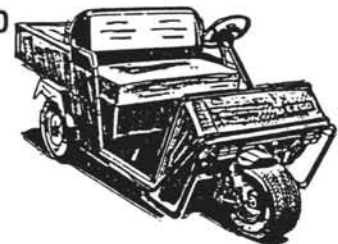
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