

# A Little Knowledge is Dangerous

by Dave Behrman  
Riverside Golf Club

In this time of increased environmental awareness we continue to echo the cry for environmental stewardship as a means of policing our own industry before activist groups force legislation that will restrict our ability to maintain greenspace.

With this in mind there establishes a need to define what environmental stewardship entails. The first thought in mind is the proper handling and application of fertilizers and pesticides.

But what constitutes proper handling?

1. Storage of materials in a self contained structure that is properly ventilated, has sump capacity for spill containment, is properly labeled, and has restricted access.
2. Wearing of protective clothing and respirators as specified by the manufacturer when mixing or applying chemicals.
3. Measuring and mixing materials in containers marked and specified for such use.
4. Filling and cleaning spray equipment on a rinsate collection pad.
5. Rinsing and disposing of used containers according to label directions.

What is proper application?

1. Properly identify a target pest in the case of fungicides and insecticides, or proper assessment of soil and plant needs in fertilizer application.
2. Applying material only to specific affected areas as opposed to the shotgun effect of treating large areas unnecessarily.
3. Calibration of equipment to insure materials are applied at the recommended label rates.
4. Making applications under proper field conditions, i.e. soil moisture, wind speed, temperature.
5. Monitoring of application sites concerning non-target chemical contact whether that be plant or animal.
6. Keep accurate records of all pesticide and fungicide applications.

The lists above are a short overview of what is entailed in being effective in our concern for the environment. So, now you ask, "How does this lend itself to the title 'A Little Knowledge is Dangerous?'" It occurs to me that in our everyday activities as turf managers we encounter countless members of the public that solicit free advise from us concerning all aspects of plant care. In this instance our transfer of knowledge can be beneficial or a danger to ourselves and the environment. Through our recommendations these individuals will embark on activities that require the same concerns that I outlined earlier. However, these individuals most likely are unaware of the impact their actions may have on the environment. So as environmental stewards in the 90's we must handle the transfer of information with more care.

As a golf course superintendent it is a great public relations tool to provide assistance to individuals concerning lawn care.

(cont'd. page 9)



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(Knowledge cont'd.)

In order to do this properly I follow these guidelines:

1. Base your recommendations only on the information you deem reliable. Often this requires a site visit.
2. Put your recommendations along with any safety concerns in writing. Don't rely on someone else's memory.
- 3: If an application of some type is involved recommend that they hire a professional.
4. If the individual is a do-it-yourselfer, take the time to explain to them the concerns listed earlier.
5. Never put the tools of your trade (specialized chemicals) in the hands of an amateur.

Now you may think this is taking things to extremes but in reality we have already reached the extreme. Chemicals use is an area that is greatly misunderstood by the general public. People's perception of how professionals handle chemicals in the work place and beyond will ultimately determine the future in how or if the chemicals are used.

**Credit: Illinois Turfgrass Update May/June '92**

## Students: Give Them a Chance



by Tony Rzadzki  
Cantigny Golf Club

For the past five seasons at the Cantigny Golf Club, I have had the opportunity to work with five turf students. At first I thought what a millstone. It's hard enough to manage a Hispanic crew besides throwing in one or two (book smart) Americans.

I was absolutely wrong. Over the years these students have given me more reward than anxiety. They are here to work and they are here to learn. Each one that has been here was going to school and needed on the job training to fulfill their college requirements, so they had to perform, and perform well.

What is nice about working with them, and why I do it, is that they keep you sharp. They have an unquenchable inquisitiveness. They are aggressive because they know that their time is short and they need to learn as much as possible. What is really interesting is that you can learn from them as they learn from you. They all have different personalities, as we all do, and it challenges your management strategies and helps you to develop within yourself.

What I have done over the years is to try to fuel their fire. I expose them to all the facets of golf course operation. I teach them to safely operate every machine we have. I currently have a student that is a foreman for one of our nine hole courses. I am letting him manage his course to let him know what is expected now, and what will personally be expected of him in the future when he has his own course to maintain. They can't learn it if they don't do it.

I am proud to say that two former students of mine are currently assistant superintendents. I am sure that soon they will be vying for superintendent jobs.

To me sharing knowledge is a small act that we can all perform. The benefits to others is enormous.

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