

Director's Column



Professional Development

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Well, its February and the national conference is over as are the regional ones and most seminars in our area. With each passing year, I am impressed by the wide variety of opportunities available to expand my knowledge and experiences within our field. We are lucky to be in an area of the country where we have a few months in the winter to reflect on the previous season and make plans for the upcoming year. It also enables us to get our shop, equipment and crew re-organized and ready for the upcoming season. I hope all of you are progressing in these projects.

Last summer was a relatively trouble free one and I think most people enjoyed our profession. However, as I write this article, we have had a November with regular rain and cool temperatures. December then came with cold temperatures, snow, warming, cold temperatures, snow, warming, freezing rain, ice and snow. In other words, it seemed as if there was leaf spot followed by snow mold followed by ice covered turf. Of course with the weather, it was a challenge to get proper fungicide protection down during that period. Hopefully, we will get a break in this pattern and the turfgrass will come out of the winter in a better state than it looks now. If not, now is the time when our public relations skills will be put to good use in educating our membership and management at our facilities.

To tie these concepts together, consider the following: When things are going well, it is easy to neglect the many educational and professional improvement programs available to us as unneeded or not beneficial. However when problems arise, the more information and experiences you have at your availability, the easier and more fulfilling your job is going to be. Attend as many seminars, conferences and local meetings as possible. Perhaps the educational program provided will not be to your liking but if you get one new idea or concept from a function, it is a worthwhile function. I find that talking to friends and discussing what they are doing will give me many ideas and concepts that perhaps I had not considered. We're in a great profession and you owe it to yourself to stay current and informed. Interact with your fellow professionals; expand your experience and knowledge. Good luck this season and I hope by the time you read this, the ice is gone and there is a blanket of snow covering some dry, dormant turfgrass.

Turfgrass Information Center

Dear Turf Manager:

I am coming to you for your help in what is a matter of urgency. This urgency is the continuation of the Turfgrass Information Center.

The purpose of the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) is to provide efficient and effective access to all publications and processed material reporting the results of research affecting turfgrass and its maintenance. The access will be provided for the research community, for practitioners, such as golf course superintendents, for extension type services and for commercial concerns.

The goal of the Turfgrass Information Center is for all interested individuals throughout the world to have access to all published information that is available concerning turfgrass.

This goal began 30 years ago when the O.J. Noer Research Foundation established the O.J. Noer Memorial Turfgrass Library at Michigan State University with the support and guidance of Dr. Richard E. Chapin, Director of Libraries at Michigan State University, and Dr. James Beard. The U.S.G.A. saw the necessity of making this information accessible to everyone and with a commitment towards this goal established an electronic retrieval system, a data base that today contains 25,000 entries and abstracts to accompany them.

The Turfgrass Information Center has a staff, under the guidance of Project Manager Peter Cookingham that is ready to serve its users.

The United States Golf Association has supported the Turfgrass Information Center with more than \$625,000 over a 10 year period. The U.S.G.A. is ending its funding this March with the thought that the Turfgrass Industry can and should sustain this service.

An independent Advisory Council has been established to oversee the affairs of the Turfgrass Information Center.

An individual membership application is supplied. The cost is \$75.00 per year. The individual subscriber receives:

1. An 1-800 number to make information requests by phone.
2. The Turfgrass Index (a quarterly update of TGIF entries)
3. The SWARD (a quarterly update newsletter about IGIF)
4. 10 free hours computer connect time: \$20.00 per hr. charge over 10 hrs.
5. Free software updates.

Please remember if you do not have a computer, this service can be used by calling 1-800 number and have the information faxed or mailed to you directly.

Not only do I need your support by being a subscriber, I need your support in contacting others about the service. The Turfgrass Information Center has sent out letters to all Turf Foundations, Turf Organizations, Golf Course Superintendent local chapters, and Manufacturers. If you feel this information source is worthwhile as I think you do, voicing your support both to your respective Association and Foundation will be doing a great service both to the Turfgrass Information Center and the local organizations of which you are an important member.

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