

(East vs. West continued)

The problem is convincing the Japanese greenskeepers to stop thinking they are growing agriculture products and start thinking of fertilizing turfgrass. Their experience is very inadequate to produce quality turfgrass health.

Japan, as a country, has available to them some very good pest-control materials. Many chemicals used are the same as in the United States. There is a serious problem in their dilution rates. The Japanese greenskeepers are requested to spray materials at ten times the rate of water applied to the surface of the turfgrass than in the United States. This reduces the effectiveness of the pesticides used in most cases. I am having to retrain their thought process on spray application rates to achieve the best results for the pesticides.

Dealing with suppliers is very interesting in Japan. The traditional method of picking our suppliers is by whom you like to deal with. Most suppliers carry all products necessary for golf course maintenance. The same supplier will carry Toro, Jacobsen, Cushman and other brand equipment. They also may carry various golf course supplies from different companies. The problem with this method is there is no competitive bidding with other suppliers. Also, service needs are not considered as part of a good supplier. I am encouraged to see this way of thinking is changing because of economic restraints. The "money is no object" philosophy is definitely diminished in Japan.

Golf courses in Japan are coming of age. With the increased popularity of American management practices, Japanese courses can move quickly to a higher level of excellence. I hope I can help just a little in the movement in that direction. I look forward to a new year of growth with the Japanese greenskeepers. For now, West is on top. But with Japanese determination, East could soon equal or overcome the West's dominance.

Credit: Hole Notes 7/95

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For additional information, please contact Nada Cenanovic, Communications Coordinator for the Florida Sports Foundation at (904) 488-8347, or Virginia Chaves, Director of Sales & Marketing for Golf Reservations of America, Inc. at (818) 981-0285.



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