

Extend Poinsettia Life With Proper Care

The holidays are here and our gardening thoughts turn to flowering gift plants.

There is no flower more closely associated with a particular day than the poinsettia.

Your holiday poinsettia plant, with proper care, can bring pleasure for weeks or even months after the holiday season ends. House temperatures, as well as light and humidity levels, affect the length of time the plant will remain attractive.

The poinsettia, first brought to this country from Mexico in 1825, has long been the traditional Christmas pot plant. Red-flowered forms are most popular, but white, pink and variegated pink and white varieties are also grown.

Most of the newer poinsettia varieties retain their leaves and bracts remarkably well and may stay in good shape for several months. Yet, poinsettias are somewhat sensitive to drafts, too cool or too warm temperatures, sudden temperature changes, dry atmosphere, improper watering, and dim light.

These adverse conditions can cause loss of leaves and withering of bracts — the showy colored structures commonly called "flowers". The true flowers are actually the yellow parts tucked down in the center of each whorl of bracts.

Keep a uniform room temperature for poinsettias between 60 and 68 degrees F. plus some humidity, if possible. Temperatures above 75 degrees F. are detrimental, particularly in a dry atmosphere. Put your plant near a bright window, just out of direct sunlight. But remove it from the window at night if there is danger of chilling.

It's been said that more plants are killed or damaged by "drowning" than anything else. Plant roots need air as well as water, so avoid over-watering.

Learn to gauge the moisture content of soil by its color and feel. As the surface dries, it gets light colored. When soil is too dry, it becomes firm and sometimes cracked; when saturated, it feels slimy and sticky.

Try to maintain the soil moisture at moderate and uniform levels, neither soggy-wet nor bone-dry. And, never let the pot stand in water for any extended period of time. If the plant came wrapped in foil or other water-tight material, be sure to punch holes in the bottom or remove the wrap entirely — so water won't be trapped inside. Try to prevent your plant from wilting. Wilting causes premature deterioration.

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What goes on in Nature during Winter's sleep?

We well know there is a Tee Time to keep.

A magic We in each New Season with Nature share,

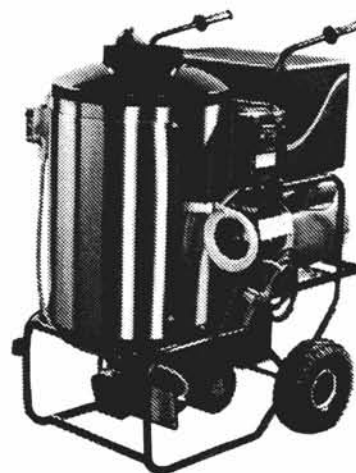
As Seasonal Procrastination fills the air.

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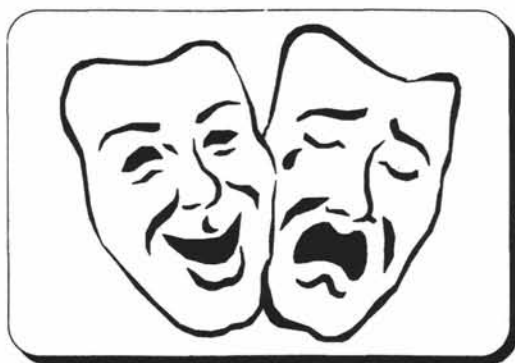
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Is the USGA "Two Faced" When It Comes to Course Maintenance?



For those of you who do not frequent Turfbyte (an electronic bulletin board for golf course superintendents lucky enough to have PC's equipped with modems), there has been a fair amount of lively discussion lately concerning the condition of Pebble Beach's greens during the U.S. Open Championship. Since Turfbyte regulars are predominantly superintendents, the discussion centered around the turf conditions and the obvious stress on the greens during the last few days of the Championship. The USGA was the target of some pretty stinging criticism, the most serious of which in my mind was the feeling that we (the USGA) are "two-faced" in our recommendations to clubs across the country. The argument was basically, how can the Green Section agronomists visit clubs and emphasize the need to avoid excessively low mowing to produce extremely fast greens, and then hold the Open Championship on television with exactly those conditions on display for the whole world to see.

Having been a superintendent at one time and having worked at a club where green speed was a frequent issue, I fully understand the argument these guys are making. It is a pain when a championship the caliber of an Open is on TV and the low handicappers in your club all decide they ought to putt on greens just as fast. (Actually, The Masters was always my biggest headache since it took place at a time of the year my course was trying to recover from whatever winter damage had been suffered. I didn't even know the superintendent at Augusta National but I sure hated the guy who prepared a course that was "perfect" and on TV while the greenest thing on my course was the *Poa annua* that I missed with the spray rig that winter). It is a difficult situation when players at a local club think they ought to be playing on the same conditions they see on TV.

Generally, the superintendents on Turfbyte agreed that efforts should be made to let non-superintendents know more about what goes on behind the scenes and why, what is seen on TV, is not "the real world." I happen to agree with them and feel at least **three major issues** deserve discussion in this regard.

Issue #1

"Why does the USGA make the course so hard, the greens so fast, the rough so high? Why are they trying to embarrass the players?" Chances are you've heard these questions although they were probably expressed more as accusations.

I can't say I have been around a lot of championships in my eight years in the USGA. However, I have been to a few and know many of the people responsible for conducting the events. My observations are that **the single most important goal of a USGA championship has in every case been to identify the best player. Do people really believe there are secret meetings behind USGA doors where staffers decide to embarrass somebody? I think it is possible that the USGA feels more strongly than others that par is still a great round of golf.**

One of the best analogies (I love analogies) I have heard concerning the Open setup is comparing this national golf championship to the country's auto racing championship — the Indianapolis 500. Can you imagine a 500 where there was a speed limit of 55 mph? Would you be able to find out who the best driver was under such limitations?

Issue #2

Non-championship golfers think they want championship conditions.

It is understandable that players want the same condition they see on TV. After all, they emulate every other aspect of the best players including their clubs, shoes, swing, and style of shirt. However, there are some very large assumptions made when this emulation is carried on to course setup. Average and even above average players simply do not have the skills of those they see on TV.

Again, analogies are useful in this discussion. These players might point out that when they play tennis, or football, or bowl, or even shoot pool, they are playing on the same conditions as the professionals in those sports so why not golf? My rationale is that these are what I like to call "linear" sports. The playing fields are based on rigid, angular lines that remain constant throughout the game, from day to day, from place to place. These are two dimensional sports — one being physical skill and the other mental. The playing "fields" have only a limited influence on the player's success or failure.

In my eyes golf is a "non-linear", three dimensional game. Rigid, angular lines have no place in golf. Contoured fairways, flowing bunkers, and undulated greens are viewed by virtually all golfers as more attractive and desirable than fairways that look like runways or hotdogs, perfectly round bunkers, and flat greens. Most importantly, in addition to the mental and physical aspects of the game, golf adds a third dimension — the course itself. **And in the case of golf, the playing "field" is equally as influential on the outcome as the other two aspects.**

All this leads to an obvious conclusion. A course should be set up commensurate with the skills of those who are to play it. In a USGA championship, the players are all exceptionally skilled and the course can and should be set up appropriately. However, daily play on courses will involve players from one end of the talent spectrum to the other. A middle ground must be established so that everyone can find something they enjoy. Let's all face facts here. Few if any players at the club level play as well as the folks they see on TV. They may think they want the same conditions, but they would quickly find they are not up to the challenge. You know those flatbellies that sit in the 19th hole and watch the pros putt on greens with speeds over 10 feet, and then think the greens at their course should be the same? I often wonder how they drive home after watching the Indy 500 on TV.

(cont'd. page 24)

Mechanic's Survey 92 Results

Average # of years at present job — 7.5 yrs. High — 18.5 yrs., Low — .2 yrs.

Average # of years in related work — 10.8 yrs. High — 24 yrs., Low — .2 yrs.

Education for position — High School, 17.5%; On the job, 22.5%; Service schools, 27.5%; Community college, 32.5%.

Are you presently happy with your job? Yes-79%; No-21%.

Do you have an assistant? No-71%; Yes-29%. Full time-85%, part time-15%.

Do you receive help in the winter? 87.5% yes; summer-29%.

Do you think you need help in the winter? 87.5% yes; summer-54%.

Do you perform supervisory tasks? 75% yes; 25% no.

Do you run your shop the way the mechanic wants it to be run? 54%; joint effort-21%; the superintendent-25%.

How is work delegated? mechanic decides-78; joint effort-14%; superintendent-8%.

Type of grinding used? 37.5% spin; 37.5% relief; 21.0% both; 4.0% unknown.

Do you work weekends? 54% No; 33% yes; 13% on call.

Do you operate equipment? 59% yes; 41% no.

Do you get a gas allowance? 13% yes; 87% no.

Average yearly salary for a Full time Golf Course Mechanic? \$28,190 average; \$38,000 high; \$17,000 low.


Do you have Health Insurance? 95% yes; 5% no.

Of those with insurance, 43% paid in full

Of the remaining 57% the average contribution is 33%.

Do you have a retirement plan? 54% yes; 46% no.

Of those with retirement, 61% paid in full; 39% contribute.



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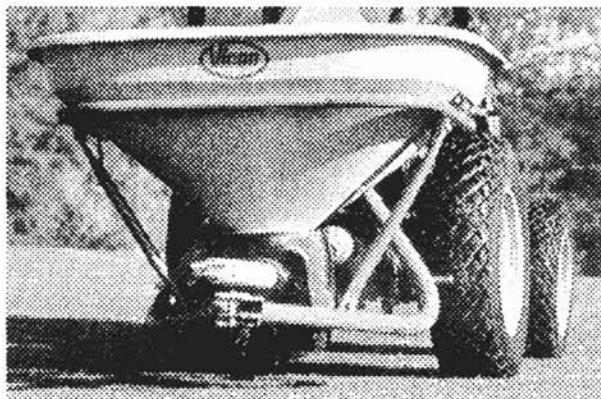
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(Two Faces cont'd.)

Issue #3

"Can we have championship conditions even if we want them?"

The next issue is one that I feel is perhaps the most crucial. Most superintendents realize that the conditions seen on TV during a major championship simply cannot be maintained for an extended period of time. Unfortunately, many players have virtually no knowledge of steps necessary to produce such conditions. Starved greens, microscopic cutting heights, unlimited labor and equipment, and the course dried to the bone are not conditions that can be maintained for more than a few days at a time in most climates. This is truly "Management On The Edge". (Refer to the **Green Section Record** article of July, 1987 by the same name). It takes months and in some cases years to prepare a course for a major championship. Often, the complete reconstruction of greens and tees, reshaping of fairways, and yes, even the removal of trees that have been allowed to ruin the architecture of a classic design, must be accomplished prior to the event. Attempting to maintain championship conditions on a daily basis would destroy most courses.

As the Green Section staff travels the country, we often find ourselves explaining these facts to those present on the tour of the course. We also frequently visit clubs that are "pushing" the course way too hard in an effort to provide championship conditions. As a result, we often make recommendations to raise cutting heights, fertilize more, and accept slower greens. These recommendations are in direct contrast to preparation for an Open. Is this "two-faced"? No, it's just common sense.

Credit: Mid-Continent News, Vol. 5, 9/29/92

Answers to "Who...What...?"

1. Harold Frederickson
2. Rick Hahn
3. Tim Kelly & Fred Opperman, 1022 & 1023 Shady Lane, Glen Ellyn
4. I counted 25 combinations and no doubt missed a couple. Here is the list of last names and you can put together the relationships: Benson, Braunsky, Breen, Byrne, Dinelli, Fuchs, Gerber, Gruening, Hopphan, Johns, Kensinger, Kiraly, Kronn, Mach, McNair, Meyer, Michaels, Miles, Mirkes, Pieper, Potthoff, Voykin, Williams & Wollenberg.
5. Peter Leuzinger
6. Ray & Donald Gerber, and Bob & Bruce Williams
7. Tony Meyer — 2 sons are veterinarians & Bill is the agronomist.
8. Dave Ward
9. Fred Opperman
10. I don't know, will someone please fill me in on the history.
11. 1926
12. Dan Dinelli
13. Dudley Smith
14. John Ebel
15. Peter Voykin has won it 6 times and Bob Kronn 10 times since 1962.



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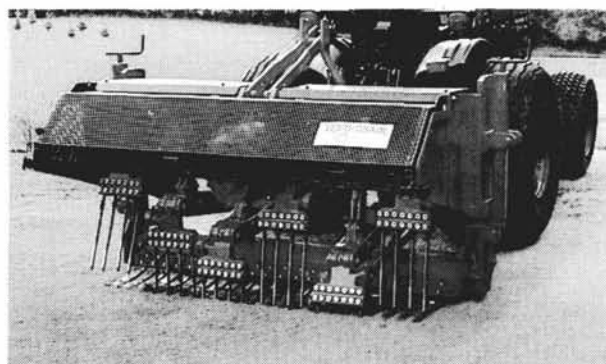
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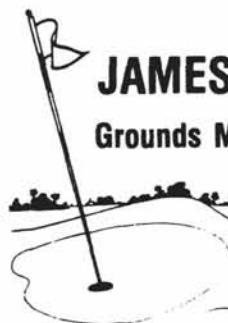
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On the Waterfront

by Jim Reed

I want to thank all of you who have told me that you have enjoyed reading these articles on irrigation piping systems. Hopefully, those of you who have understood some of the concepts stressed by this article will realize the benefits when you operate your irrigation systems next year.

This month's article from the Keller-Bleisner Engineering study on "Designing, Operating, and Maintaining Piping Systems Using PVC Fittings" is on "The Dangers of Entrapped Air". Air entrapment in pressure pipelines is a much studied and discussed topic. Most designers are concerned about it, or should be, but many do not understand the full implications of the problem or the processes used to reduce the dangers associated with entrapped air. The problem of entrapped air is a complex issue. The behavior of air in a piping system is not easy to analyze, but the effects can be devastating.

There are many potential sources for air in pipelines and the sources are usually multiple in any given system. The most likely source is entrapment of air during filling, either initially or when refilled after drainage. In some systems, air re-enters each time the pumps are shut off as the pipelines drain through low lying sprinklers or open valves.

Air is often introduced at the point where water enters the system. This is an especially common problem with gravity fed pipelines, but may occur with pumped systems as well. Even water pumped from deep wells may be subject to air entrance from cascading water in the well.

A less obvious source of air comes from the release of dissolved air in the water, due to changes in temperature and/or pressure. The quantities may be small in this case, but accumulations over time can create problems.

It is also common for air to enter through air release valves or vacuum breakers when the pressure drops below atmospheric pressure. This can occur during pump shut-down or during negative surges.

Air in a piping system tends to accumulate at high points during low flow or static conditions. As the flowrate increases, the air can be forced along the pipeline by the moving water and may become lodged at the more extreme high points where it reduces the area available for flow. Thus, these pockets of air cause flow restrictions which reduce the efficiency and performance of the system.

As an air pocket grows, the velocity past that point increases until eventually the air is swept on toward an outlet. While line restrictions are problems, a more serious situation can occur when air is rapidly vented from the system under pressure. Water is about 5 times more dense than air at 100 psi, so when a pocket of compressed air reaches an outlet, such as a sprinkler head, it escapes very rapidly. As it escapes, water rushes in to replace the void. When water reaches the opening, the velocity suddenly decreases, since air escapes about 5 times faster than water at 100 psi. The result is similar to instantaneous valve closure, except that the velocity change can far exceed the normal flow velocity in the pipeline. During tests at Colorado State University, pressure surges up to 15 times the operating pressure have been recorded when entrapped air was rapidly vented under pressure. Such pressure surges can easily exceed the strength of the system components and even at lower magnitudes, repeated surges will weaken the system with time.

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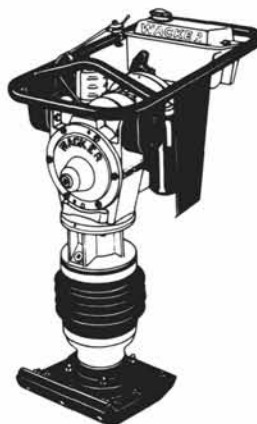
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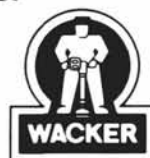
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Assistant Superintendent/ Superintendent Interactions

by Vincent G. Dodge, Asst. Supt.
Naperville Country Club

This article may have a familiar ring to it because it is really little more than a transcript of the speech I gave at the Medinah Clinic on November 18, 1992. At the request of several of my peers I am now making the information contained in that speech available for anybody who is interested.

...In my two years working as an assistant and even in my years working at Aurora Country Club, I have noticed both strengths and flaws in the Assistant Superintendent/Superintendent relationship.

I am going to organize this article in terms of personal qualities which I feel are essential to a healthy and professional relationship. I will first name the quality and then I will describe how it applies to us as assistants and as superintendents.

The first characteristic is responsibility and how it should be delegated. This is something that varies greatly at different courses. Some superintendents like to maintain an "Iron Grip" on just about every operation that goes on at the golf course. In these situations the assistant is more like a foreman and often begins to stagnate in his position. He becomes bored with his job and does not receive the experience he needs to one day become a superintendent. A situation like this one might be satisfactory for an assistant who is content in his position and wishes to stay for years to come, but in many instances it leads to friction.

Conversely, there is the superintendent who delegates a great deal of his responsibilities to his assistant. This is a relationship which allows both the superintendent and the assistant to grow. Because he needs to spend less time with the more mundane details that go with running the golf course, the superintendent can expend his energies with other things, such as research, communication with the membership, writing articles, fishing, making a budget, really the list goes on and on. At the same time the assistant is gaining much needed experience and begins to develop the skill and confidence needed to be a successful superintendent. This situation is more suited for operations in which the assistant is planning on moving to a superintendent's position in the not-too-distant future.

If a superintendent plans to delegate this responsibility he must show at least some patience, which is the next characteristic I would like to discuss.

For the superintendent, this means not losing your cool when your assistant decides to zig when you specifically told him to zag. The assistant may have felt that conditions in the field warranted a change in procedure. Even if the assistant is wrong, this kind of free-thinking should not be discouraged. **Everybody** learns from mistakes, we just hope the price we pay to learn is not too high.

For the assistant, being patient means not getting angry or discouraged when the superintendent corrects you. Put yourself in the superintendent's shoes and understand that in the end he is trying to help you, the assistant, become a better turf manager.

Fairness is the next trait which comes to mind when thinking about a successful superintendent/assistant superintendent relationship. Of all the qualities in this article, this one is the most vague to me. Being fair means showing concern for a person's life outside the work place. While we all know that overtime

is essential at times, we must all make the effort to spend quality time on our personal lives. Superintendents should be careful not to overwork their assistants but at the same time assistants should be aware of their boss's situation and not be afraid to offer help. We, as assistants and as superintendents, must try to shoulder the burden as evenly as possible.

Being fair also means being compensated adequately for the job being done. According to most experts, assistants should be granted a 10% pay raise annually. I am sure every assistant reading this article would agree. Seriously, do not pinch pennies when it comes to your people. They are the ones who make you stand or make you fall.

Communication, communication, communication! It seems as though this subject always comes up when discussing the assistant/superintendent relationship. To be honest with you, I think that I will be ill if I hear that word much more. Let us just say that it is essential that the assistant and the superintendent are on the same page. Have frequent conversations and practice good listening skills.

At this time I would like to stress the importance of good listening skills. Instances of poor listening skills occur frequently and have plagued me before. There were times when I was being instructed as to how to perform a certain task and after hearing what the job was I would in effect stop listening. Oh, sure, I would acknowledge what was being said but in my mind I would be thinking about how I would get the job done in my own way. I feel that this is a problem that can be solved by making a conscious effort to really listen. Remember that listening is not merely hearing the words being said but additionally it involves thinking about what the words really mean. If any doubt remains, ask questions.

The final quality, and perhaps the most important one, is consistency. Always let those around you know what they can expect from you. I know that it is easier said than done, but try not to let your moods and personal dilemmas affect the way in which you treat those around you.

For the superintendent, this means adopting a management style suited to your psyche and then adhering to that style. If you are the stern and strict type of person, then manage those under you that way and do it consistently. People may chafe under this kind of treatment at first, but as long as you are consistent and fair in your actions, the people under you usually will learn how to perform effectively for you. Human beings are great at adapting as long as they know what it is they are adapting to. Do not be the "happy go lucky" superintendent one day and the next day be the "Neo-Nazi superintendent from hell!" It causes those around you, namely your assistant, but others as well, to never really know what to expect from you.

For the assistant, being consistent means being somebody that your boss can count on day after day. If you decide to be the assertive type of assistant, then perform in that fashion every day. The superintendent will then find a way to put that aggressiveness to good use. If you as an assistant are assertive one day and submissive the next, then every day you are presenting your boss with the question, "Just who is going to show up today?" I am sure that gets old after awhile.

Well, that about wraps it up for this article. I hope that some of the items I mentioned today hit close to home for many of you. I felt that it was a topic that just about all of us could relate to and hopefully, I was able to shine some light on a few of the problems we face as Superintendents and as Assistants.