

MR. TURF, U.S.A.

(O. J. NOER RESEARCH, INC.)

O.J. Noer was "Mr. Turf, U.S.A." This Title was designated in fact at the 1960 Golf Course Superintendents of America Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas. The entire conference and show was dedicated to O.J. for the agronomic service that he had given to golf and golf superintendents everywhere.

A couple of years prior to this great honor, a few of O.J.'s business friends, including C.C. Shaw, formed a non-profit corporation dedicated to the support of turfgrass research and the training of graduate students. The fund raising activities were concentrated mainly with O.J.'s Milorganite Distributors. They came through then and have been consistent yearly contributors ever since.

The fund corpus is around \$140,000. It is managed by the Oak Park Trust Company in Illinois. There is no remuneration or even travel and living expenses paid to members and directors. Thus, almost the total income and some contributions are expended each year for the benefit of turf research and training. Funded projects are in the range of \$15,000 to \$18,000 each year. To date, some \$130,000 has been spent on research.

The Noer group has been responsible for detailed studies on thatch in both warm and cool-season turfs. Spin off

studies from the earlier work now shows that most of herbicides and insecticides behave differently when applied to thatched vs. non-thatched turf. Yet another project of interest to South Floridians, is our support of work on low fertility bermudagrasses at New Mexico State University. Interestingly, Dr. Baltensperger got the idea while on a sabbatical leave study at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

In addition to direct research, the Noer group has also been responsible for the formation of two Memorial Libraries to collect and disseminate the information published throughout the years. Michigan State has a Noer Memorial Collection as does Texas A&M Universities. Many of the O.J.'s publications as well as rare books are located at both universities. Recently, we sent Michigan State a check for \$1,000 to use for rare book purchases and microfilming equipment to make the present collection of wider use to students and other universities.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of those who make a livelihood from turf-grasses. The public golfers in Wisconsin hold a Best Ball Tournament each year with proceeds for the Noer Foundation. Private Country Clubs there have also started a

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similar fund raising effort. Any proceeds derived above the amount needed to run the Wisconsin Turfgrass Symposium each year is donated to the Noer Foundation by the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association. Toro, Jacobson, Standard, Ganrud, Cleary and other manufacturers have been consistent contributors. Several superintendent groups match contributor funds with Milorganite distributors as the South Florida group has done in 1978 with Charlie Mascaro.

In addition to the above Floridians, Joe Yuzzi and Ben Reemelin serve as members. Charlie Mascaro has the further honor and duties associated with being a director of the foundation. I suppose we should also list Frank Shuman as a Floridian since he now lives about half of each year in the State. Frank is our Secretary-Treasurer, a director and recent recipient of our Distinguished Service Award.

O.J. Noer was a great and a good man. For forty years he traveled this land to help turf growers find solutions to their problems. He was the first to diagnose iron chlorosis as a nutrient rather than a disease problem. He started the first soil testing laboratory, exclusively for professional turf growers and early on preached the importance of proper depth in sampling and recommendations based on whether or not clippings were being removed.

O.J. will always be missed by those of us who knew him well. Fortunately, and thanks to the largesse of folks like you; his ideals, help and support will always be with us through the agency of the O.J. Noer Research Foundation, Inc.

Training Assistants Demands Skill

Developing an assistant is one of the challenging jobs an administrator can have. When the trainee takes over a top-level position he probably will adhere to the good business practices learned on the job.

Developing an assistant is hard work, requiring careful attention to details and explanations while yielding an enormous amount of confidence in and responsibility to the trainee. Here are a few items that may help in attempting to develop an assistant:

GIVE HIM THE FACTS: Only by being informed about his responsibilities and authorities can an assistant get a clear picture of what he is to do and how he should do it. A job description should be developed to give a trainee some guidelines. Personally introduce the assistant to those with whom he will be working.

SMOOTH HIS PATH: Request employees who work with your assistant to cooperate with him. Inform everyone of the duties he will be performing — then impress upon him the importance of earning the respect and confidence of these employees.

SHARE KNOWLEDGE: You must keep the assistant informed of your plans, your progress and your reasons for making each move. If you expect him to do a good job, you must share your knowledge with your assistant. Warm him of problem areas and see that he learns the ins and outs of working for you. Neglecting to provide background information keeps the assistant in the dark and prevents him from performing to the best of his ability as well as makes him look bad in the eyes of those with whom he must work.

ADD RESPONSIBILITY GRADUALLY: Let the assistant get a feel for his job. Then gradually give him additional small doses of responsibility. By working in this fashion he will gradually absorb additional knowledge and pick up those qualities that make a manager competent.

HOLD A LOOSE REIN: An assistant who is constantly being checked on gets the feeling he is not trusted and this retards his growth as a manager. Let loose and give your assistant a free rein — let him make decisions and learn by his mistakes. You don't want a trainee to lose his initiative; but keeping him under your finger can snuff out any spark or flame of initiative.

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