

Educating a Crew and Sharing Information are Superintendent's Job

If the golf course superintendent is to do a quick and efficient job, he must be able to educate his crew regularly and in depth. It isn't easy to find time in a hectic day during the golf season to tend to the basics that don't affect the golfers directly, but it is essential to do it anyway. Following are some ideas to help the superintendent see to the effective education of his crew:

First, share information with them first thing in the morning, when they are fresh and not yet busy all over the course. Tell them in as few words as possible what you need them to know. Don't let your thoughts stray or the conversation wander from the subject.

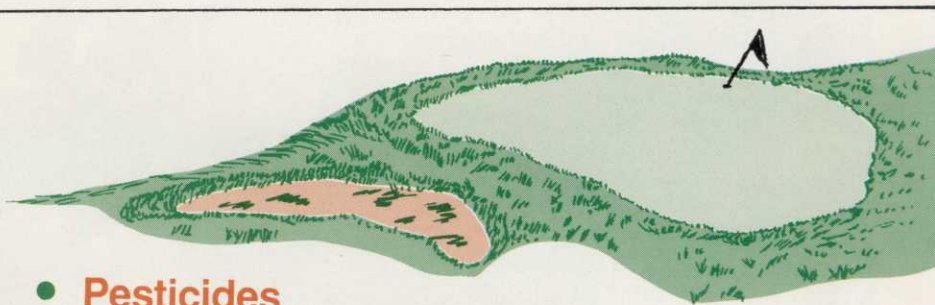
Share praise promptly with all crew members. It doesn't always have to be in group meetings, but when you see a good job being done, stop and say so. Occasionally mention some especially well done work in your group meetings — it builds morale. But be very careful to criticize discreetly and in private. Always try to work in a little encouragement or helpful suggestion with the criticism so it isn't just negative words. This will help build trust and confidence that will spill over into all areas of your crew's work.

Focus whenever possible on what a topic means personally to the crew. A well-kept green can be a reflection of their personal pride and abilities. "What's in it for me?" is a key point of view that's guaranteed to get their attention.

Keep your presentations short — don't kill the subject with words. Break it into segments you can handle in short sessions several running if it takes more than 15 or 20 minutes. Try to allow as much time for questions as you do for your own talking.

Follow up your teaching sessions with on-the-job information. You might explain how a new nine-gang mower works in the shop and then have the operator run it in your presence for a while, for instance.

Communication is part of the turfgrass manager's job, both with the crew and also with golfers. Remember, you'll also have to communicate with the green committee and club officials, so get in practice and learn to relay information efficiently and comfortably. It will pay off. ■



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