

"Off the Wall" HELPFUL HINTS

By: Rosalie J. Wyatt

In the profession of golf course superintendence, the ongoing exchange between one another of *HELPFUL HINTS* is in fact 'par for the course'! Above and beyond formal textbook education, on the job practical training, and on hand technical information readily available in the industry, superintendents continue to gain insight into their responsibilities, and gather useful advice from first hand experience (or second hand for this matter) of others also active in the field. To elaborate, it happens occasionally that a particular strategy, technique, system, or application mode will manifest itself in the form of the unusual, if not sometimes uncanny, or indeed unheard of approach to maintenance of a golf course. Thus the phrase; "Off The Wall" *HELPFUL HINTS* has been deemed appropriate for purposes of this article. At best, should any one superintendent in said profession, from rookie to veteran, gain as much as an iota of knowledge, or benefit to any extent from the information gathered from and herein disseminated to those of your in the field, the intention of this article is well lived. Understandably, to consider adopting one of the following *HELPFUL HINTS* as advice to follow, one must determine whether or not the hint is firstly applicable to one's set of circumstances, before a positive outcome may be pursued or before positive results may be achieved.

HELPFUL HINT #1

A fast, proven effective method in pinpointing the smallest tubing leak on the irrigation hydraulic line system is that of liquid detergent soap injection. Soapy bubbles will appear directly over the broken tubing, thus identifying the leak. (David Bailey, CGCS/High Ridge CC). A different approach to the same problem is the injection of methyl bromide. As the gas takes the path of least resistance to the location of the cut, the area where the grass is killed will identify just that; the location of the cut. (Mike Bailey, Supt./Boca Greens CC)

HELPFUL HINT #2

For ease in spot treatment of worms, incorporate *Sevin* (straight dust) into the fertilizer, apply, and finally for five to ten minutes water it in. This method is an option when going to the extent of mixing a full spray tank of liquid pesticide is not necessary. (Craig Foley, Supt./Boca Woods CC)

HELPFUL HINT #3

In an effort to economize, counteract spring algae problems by spraying clorox, rather than a fungicide which is traditionally more expensive. Note that long term results have yet to be studied. (John Cicale, Supt./Boca Golf & Tennis)

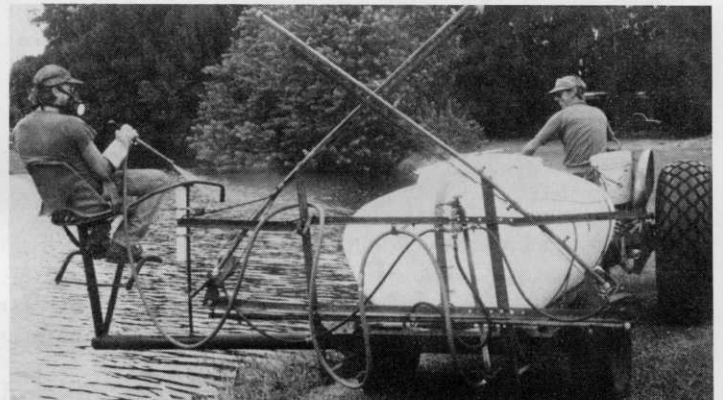
HELPFUL HINT #4

EARLY MORNING SYRINGING

A number of years ago when I was an assistant superin-

tendent at Doral Country Club we experienced a severe outbreak of brown patch on one of our courses. After getting involved with an extensive fungicide program and raising mower heights the greens began to recover, but the most dramatic recovery was gained after our course supervisor routinely started removing the morning dew by syringing the greens with irrigation water. Mr. Tom Mascaro had published an article that explained "Exudated Water" which contained a form of sugar called glutamine which when present can induce fungal activity. The U.S.G.A. had made recommendations back in the early 1950's that syringing greens could provide better putting surfaces and this example at Doral helped me understand a unique situation when combating intense fungus conditions.

(Kevin Downing, CGCS, Golf Manager/Mariner Sands CC)



HELPFUL HINT #5 (See Photo)

Bill McKee & Howard Turner running spray equipment

As controlling weeds along canal banks and other aquatics is part of the superintendent's aesthetic responsibility to a well maintained golf course, and due to the typically excessive expense incurred by contracting outside aquatic weed control labor, an extremely ingenious device has been crafted for the purpose of providing an alternative approach; a do it yourself custom home remedy. Because of the contraption's operational success, a patent could be in the offing for the inventive able team of one certain maintenance department in southern Florida! Imagine a removable device; attachable on either side as needed of the frame of a sprayer, two pipes welded together at a perpendicular, to which a seat equipped with built-in seatbelt is attached. From this extended seat, a spray person can effectively hand spray along canal banks, as these areas are normally open, permitting ease in accessibility of this innovation along the water's edge. And remember, it is essential to note that the seated spray person is at the mercy of the person driving the mower! (Bill McKee, Supt./Plantation GC)

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HELPFUL HINT #6

To reduce the amount of damage from an oil leak, charcoal is typically applied; however this may not be the best medicine. Charcoal does in fact neutralize the oil, but does not aid in getting the oil out of the ground. A good approach to cleaning up the area is to apply granular detergent soap. By soaking the area with water to create sudsing, the oil will then allow itself to be squeezed off into the rough as it has suspended itself in the granular detergent. (John Cicale, Supt./Boca Golf & Tennis)

HELPFUL HINT #7

"Necessity is the motor of invention", quotes Boots Berckemeyer, Supt., of Century Village in Broward County. In light of this statement, night mowing and night spraying are suggested as alternatives to the daytime norms. Night mowing makes sense for reasons twofold; the amount of play throughout the day preventing the opportunity to mow at this time, and also the lack of sufficient equipment available in the daytime when the job demands. To perform this task, floodlights may be attached to the tractor. As for night spraying, there are three primary reasons to support doing so. The first being that insects are nocturnal, and secondly the members are not about the course at this time to be leery of such activity, and lastly the evaporation rate of the spray is not as great as it would be in the daytime. Disadvantages to both night mowing and night spraying are that firstly supervision and guidance in some cases is necessary when labor is undependable, and secondly the cost of labor is increased due to overtime wages paid out under the circumstances. Please note that the irrigation and work assignments must be coordinated all things considered.

HELPFUL HINT #8

One thought on the construction of new greens, is that by aerifying three to four times before play is opened, the green will hold a better shot. The intent is to soften the putting surface, as the green is firm and hard when initially constructed. (John Cicale, Supt./Boca Golf & Tennis)

HELPFUL HINT #9

There are more ways than one to approach the infamous ever-present pest; the mole cricket: For better "kill" results, apply straight *Orthene* late in the evening, preferably just prior to darkness; three pounds preventative per acre or four pounds curative per acre, and do not irrigate. (Peter Kohler, Supt./Island Dunes CC)

HELPFUL HINT #10

For occasional spot coverage on a green versus the conventionally more expensive blanket applications of insecticides, use six ounces of *Joy* per gallon water! Mix this dishwashing liquid, in particular, with water in a hand tank, insert probe in each mole cricket hole, and shoot! Seconds later the pest will surface and expire, as the *Joy* has successfully clogged the mole cricket's breathing apparatus! (Chuck Pincket, Supt./Miles Grant CC)

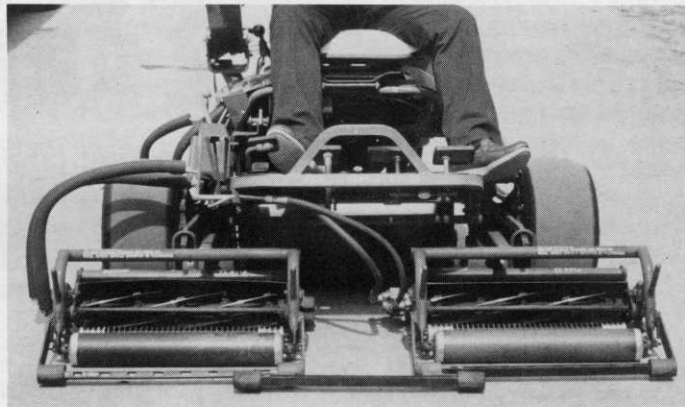
HELPFUL HINT #11

Experiment with preemergent herbicides on a small

scale with spot applications to determine which herbicides effectively kill grass contamination mutations that one would want to eliminate on putting surfaces especially. (Barry Carter, Supt./Boca Raton Hotell Club)

HELPFUL HINT #12

On an interpersonal note, it is recommended in jest, that to stay out of the member mingling situations which one inevitably faces in either the locker room or the pro shop, is (one way) to stay out of trouble. Professionally speaking, this rule of thumb favors only essential contact with members as opposed to intimate association. (Otto Schmeisser, Supt./Everglades Club)



HELPFUL HINT #13 (See Photo) View of Magnetic Attachment

Another maintenance department devised a way in which to attach a magnet to a mower. The sole purpose of the magnet as it performs 1/2 inch from the surface of the tee, is to pick up spikes and irrigation flags. This in turn saves the reels from unnecessary damage, and in so doing, guards the turf from streaks. In order to duplicate this innovation, custom weld a bracket in front of the roller of the reel unit. It is important to note that a PVC sleeve must be inserted into the bracket that holds the magnetic bar in place, as to prevent the entire bracket assembly from being magnetized. Not only does this adaptation cut down on normal wear and tear of reels, and unnecessary replacement and purchases thereof; it cuts down on the time in labor that mechanics normally spend repairing and sharpening reels, and replacing bed knives. (A Jacaranda CC innovation as explained by Art Kurtz, Asst. Supt.)

The workplace, indeed, provides for the everyday opportunity to exchange "Off The Wall" **HELPFUL HINTS**. However, if each chapter of the Golf Course Superintendents Association were to approve of maintaining a 'suggestion box' per se at the meeting sites, perhaps members would then be encouraged to exchange helpful hints on a regular and hopefully more frequent basis. Ideally, responses collected by the suggestion box would further enrich the worklife, as those hints determined to be significant or of a contributory nature to the responsibilities of golf course maintenance, would be reported at the chapter meetings to follow, under the subject of new business. A functioning system would then exist whereby all colleagues would be enabled to effectively and continually update each other on personal innovations and uncommon practices in golf course maintenance; which might (or might not!) be helpful to others active in the industry. ■