

What good is a golf course?

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As a recent attendee of the GCSAA seminar on *Environmental Considerations in Golf Management*, I would like to share some of the topics of discussion.

"What good is a golf course, anyway? Only the rich are able to use it."

This is part of the image problem we in the golf business face when dealing with the general public who do not play golf. Well, here is a list of some of the things that a golf course does for the community.

- Recharge the ground water
- Filter that water through turfgrass
- Rainwater runoff slowed in turf
- Provides a greenbelt
- Provides a wildlife habitat
- Enhances the oxygen-carbon dioxide exchange
- Provides a heatsink to moderate the temperature in the area
- Aids in soil conservation
- Uses less water than a subdivision
- Pays more taxes in relation to services used
- Raises property values
- Provides employment for a number of people

This is just a partial listing but it is important for those of us in this business

to think of all the good that a golf course does for the whole community, for non-golfers and golfers alike.

We must not fail to acknowledge that, yes, we do apply pesticides and fertilizers, but only as needed and in correct rates. Turfgrass is an excellent filter and biodegrader, thus the products that we use are confined to the surface and are consumed on site. They do not pose a leaching problem when applied properly.

Each of us in the golf business has an obligation to see that we do apply all of the materials that we use in the proper manner. One of the best ways to demonstrate our training is to become a certified applicator.

In the water-use area, we are responsible consumers. What water we use either aids the turf growth, cools the climate, or recharges the groundwater.

Do not forget that a golf course is an asset to the community.

-Lee A Webb, CGCS
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Victory for truth and reason

For the past couple of years, Daconil — a fungicide — has been under indictment for the death of a golfer from "licking his golf balls."

The case has been covered on several television talk shows, including ABC's "Good Morning America" and "20/20."

After more than five years of sensational reporting, Daconil finally had its day in court.

Daconil, a product of Diamond Shamrock Co. Inc., has been held out by environmental hysterics as proof that lawn chemicals pose a danger to the general public. As recently as May, 1989, *Newsweek* cited the fungicide as cause for concern about lawn pesticides.

The story began in 1982 when Navy Lt. George Prior died of toxic epidermal necrolysis (TEN) 14 days after playing golf on the Army-Navy CC golf course. Prior's widow alleged via Navy pathologist Dr. Jonathan Lord that Daconil was the cause of death.

It took only one day in court for Judge Paul Sheridan to rule in favor of Diamond Shamrock Co., dismissing the \$16 million in damages sought by the Prior estate. Testimony in the case showed that Prior had, in truth, died of TEN caused by the flu and the use of aspirin and tetracycline.

Unfortunately, what was crystal clear to the judge in this case somehow escaped the attention of the media. As usual, a reporter's search for the truth was overshadowed by his zest for a story and it will be years (if ever) before the chemical industry recovers from this all-too-common example of public misinformation.

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