

# Planning is the Key

## In-House Projects

As we emerge from the busy winter golf season, when Florida golf courses make hay at the cash register, superintendents go through the spring rituals of turf renovation and managing the transition

phase owners, superintendents and members need to consider all the pros and cons of doing the project to make sure they get the desired results. It may look good on paper to use people already on staff with the thought of an immediate cost savings, but while the staff is digging ditches, laying pipe or installing

rainy season. What effect will weather delays have in the project?

Another key consideration is the expertise of the staff to handle overly ambitious projects. Not everyone was born a civil engineer or golf course architect and that goes for the



*Removal of stumps and sodding the gaps left by storm-damaged oak trees became the Winter Pines G.C. unplanned, in-house project for 2004*

from overseed back to the bermudagrass base. But in a state with a 365-24-7 turf season, the impending warm summer months mean only that we will be making hay in the fairways and roughs. And while play slows down the grass growth speeds up. What better time to consider major projects for the golf course? I'm being a tad sarcastic, but in reality from a customer-service standpoint, it is probably the best time to take on major projects. The next question is how: In-house, outside contractor or a combination of the two?

The key to any major project on a golf course is the planning of course, and during this

drainage, coring out bunkers and hauling sand, striping and grading tees, laying truckloads of sod, cutting down trees, planting trees — you name it — the growing turfgrass still needs mowing, edging and fertilizing.

Then there is the question of closing the course or working in play. Both approaches have their pluses and minuses in course conditioning for the players and disruption of the progress of the work. The main thing is to make sure everyone is on the same page so the customer isn't surprised if things aren't up to usual expectations. And of course the summer is our

armchair experts in the clubhouse too. Hiring at least a consultant to oversee the more technical aspects of a major project is well worth the cost.

In general, superintendents are innovative and creative people, but they may not know all the intricacies of land planning and construction engineering. That's why people major in other fields besides turf management.

Taking on and successfully completing an in-house project can be an extremely rewarding and team building endeavor. Just make sure you do your due diligence before you break ground. Good luck.