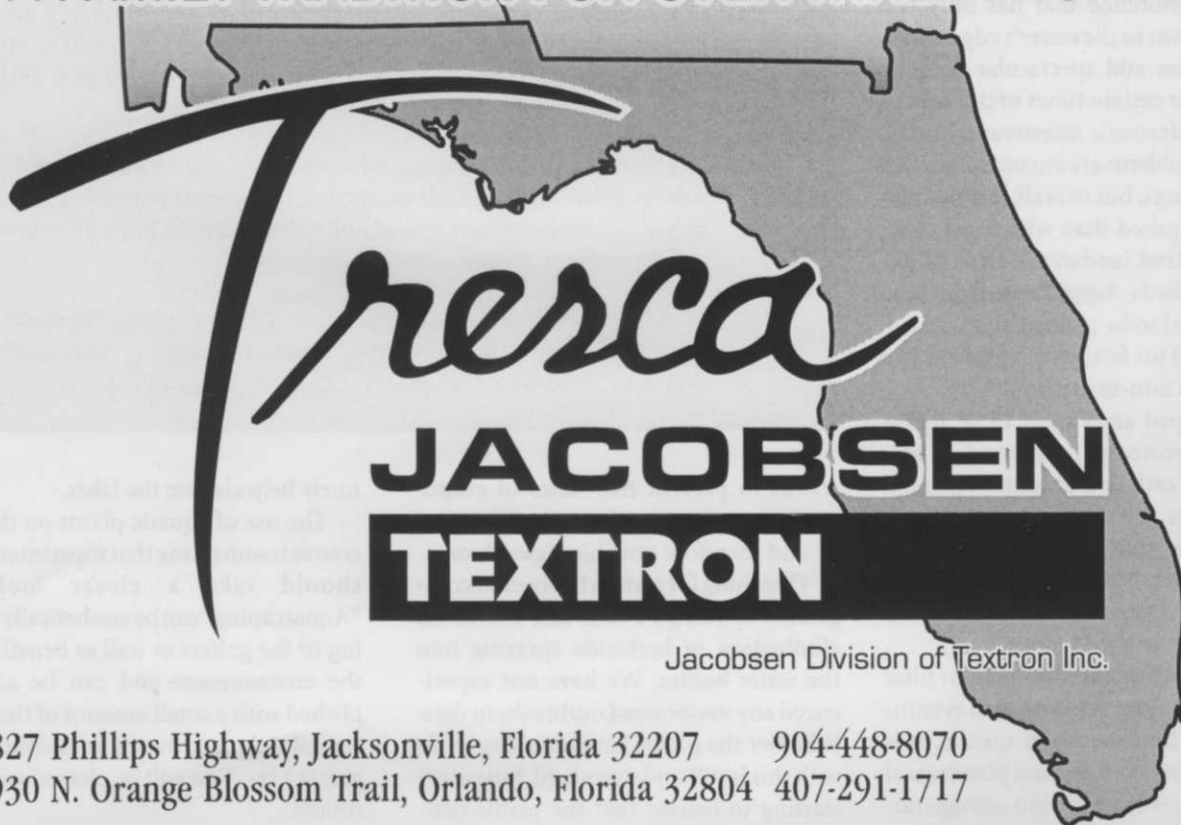




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# Aquascaping

*Do it for  
beauty,  
improved  
water  
quality*

BY GREG PLOTNER, CGCS

TAMPA PALMS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Aside from benefits to the ecological welfare of the aquatic environments on the golf course, the planting of the shorelines of lakes and ponds can be done for purely aesthetic reasons. Relatively small plantings of these aquatic plants (*see table below*) in shallow bays and key focal points can relieve the monotonous and sterile look of a shoreline that has only turf growing down to the water's edge. These plantings can add spectacular color to the course at certain times of the year, as well as add dramatic accents and beauty.

Some problems are encountered with these plantings, but overall, less maintenance is required than with most common terrestrial landscapes such as annual flower beds. Aquatics do, from time to time, need to be pruned and weeded, but the need for fertilizer, irrigation and pesticides is non-existent.

Aquascaped areas need to be maintained and protected from invading species such as cattails and torpedograss or the invaders can overrun the aquatic plants. Hand pulling of these invaders seems to work best because herbicides, when sprayed, can damage the beneficial plants as well as the invaders.

Aquatic plants can also help to filter out nutrients from the water and eventually help to improve water quality. It is still uncertain whether mass plantings of aquatic species can filter out enough nu-

trients to prevent high rates of evapotranspiration

and therefore possible algae blooms.

One thing for certain has been accomplished at Tampa Palms and that is the elimination of herbicide spraying into the water bodies. We have not experienced any major weed outbreaks to date. Whether the plants have anything to do with this is still undetermined, but we are starting to believe that the plants defi-

nately help cleanse the lakes.

The use of aquatic plants on the golf course is something that superintendents should take a closer look at. "Aquascaping" can be aesthetically pleasing to the golfers as well as beneficial to the environment and can be accomplished with a small amount of time and capital. Select an area on your course and give it a try. You will be pleased with the results.

## Aquatic Plants for Florida

**SOFT RUSH** (*Juncus effusus*) Seeds are eaten by various birds. Helps keep shoreline erosion in check. Reproduces by seeds and rhizomes. Can be found in wet meadows and along shorelines and provides good cover for wading birds.

**GIANT BULRUSH** (*Scirpus californicus*) Provides cover and nesting sites for ducks and various wading birds. Can be found along shorelines and in ditches.

**YELLOW CANNA** (*Canna flaccida*) Blooms in the spring and summer with showy yellow petals. Can be found in wet meadows and ditches.

**BLUE FLAG IRIS** (*Iris virginica*) Queen of Florida wetlands. Blooms in February and March and lets us know spring has arrived. Reproduces by seed or division.

**ARROWHEAD** (*Sagittaria lancifolia*) Produces tall white floral stalks in the spring and fall. Provides good cover for wading birds looking for small fish, insects or crustaceans near lake edges. Underground tubers are eaten by waterfowl, including ducks, swans, sandhill cranes and others.

**PICKERELWEED** (*Pontederia cordata*) Produces seeds which are eaten by some waterfowl. Also produces a showy purple floral stalk in the spring and fall. Can be found along lake shores and in wet meadows.

**SOFT STEM BULRUSH** (*Scirpus tabernaemontani*) Produces seeds which are a valuable food source for a wide variety of birds. Can control shoreline erosion and helps filter out nutrients and runoff. Provides a source of cover for birds.

**CORDGRASS** (*Spartina bakeri*) Provides good shoreline erosion control. Can be found in many locations ranging from sand dunes to fresh water lakes.





*Above, Soft stem bulrush hosts food for white heron while Yellow canna, right, is a showy bloomer in the spring and summer at Tampa Palms G&CC.*



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## Conclusion

The ACSP for golf courses is only a part of the Cooperative Sanctuary System. Businesses, schools and back yards can also be registered in this program. The concept is the same; programs are just geared to that particular property.

If your golf course is close to a school, why not consider helping them to become a cooperative sanctuary as well?

The back yard program can be a very effective educational tool for superintendents, as well as for homeowners. Ask the Audubon Society of New York to mail you some back yard brochures and place them in your clubhouse or proshop. Once your members become involved in this program, it won't be long before they will be saying, "Hey, why don't we implement more of these programs on the golf course!". It's a good opportunity for them to learn about the Audubon Society of New York and how the cooperative sanctuary system works.

The information presented in this article is not complete by any means, but hopefully will give you some idea of how to get started making your golf course a sanctuary for wildlife. By implementing these and other beneficial programs and by involving your golfers/members, you will be educating as well as gaining support. More tolerance and support for programs you are implementing and less complaints... you can't beat that!



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# Human Resources

*Maybe it's time you looked at your policies... after all, golf course employees are people, too*

To paraphrase an oft-used quotation from Walt Disney, "You can build the finest golf course in the world with all the latest features and equipment, but it still takes *people* to make it work and come alive for our guests."

People, those imperfect biological units, bring their hopes, dreams, ingenuity, strengths, morals, ethics, humor, and problems to the workplace



*The old ways can bomb in today's workplace*

doorstep every day. As the person in charge, it is your responsibility to coach your employees by maximizing their strengths, minimizing their weaknesses, and in some cases even changing their behavior patterns.

From father confessor, educator, counselor and mentor to drill sergeant, judge and jury, you will wear many hats as you manage the human resources at your command. The following contributions by your fellow superintendents share some of the policies, procedures and wisdom they employ in dealing with that most challenging resource - the human being.

## Some thoughts on attitude & evaluation from the Big Bend

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts, it is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness, or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home.

"The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing

we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude.... I am convinced that life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it. And so it is with you...we are in charge of our attitudes." -Anonymous

"There are only two stimulants to one's best efforts — the fear of punishment, and the hope of reward. When neither is present, one can hardly hope that people will want to do a good job. When disappointment is not expressed that one hasn't done a better job, or when credit is withheld when one has done a good job, there is absolutely no incentive to put forth the best effort." -John Wilson

I found a good illustration in a *Calvin and Hobbes* comic strip of the kind of thinking that some members of my crew have when they receive their annual per-

formance evaluations when areas are marked "Meets expectations". The ratings are:

- 1 - Unacceptable
- 2 - Below expectations
- 3 - Meets expectations
- 4 - Exceeds expectations
- 5 - Outstanding

The comic strip went like this:

**1st panel:** Miss Wormwood, I protest this "C" grade! That's saying I only did an average job!

**2nd panel:** I got 75% of the answers correct, and in today's society, doing something 75% right is outstanding! If government and industry were 75% competent we'd be ecstatic!

**3rd panel:** I won't stand for this artificial standard of performance! I demand an "A" for this kind of work!

**4th panel:** I think it's really gross how she drinks Maalox straight from the bottle!"

Have you had your Maalox today?

Mike Osley

Hilaman Park Municipal  
Big Bend Chapter

## Recreation helps keep up employee morale all year

At Boca Lago Country Club, several events occur throughout the year to keep up employees' morale as well as getting the employees' families involved. Employee golf tournaments with a barbecue featuring hamburgers and hot dogs are held in the early summer and fall of each year.

Every July, the club puts on a summer picnic for the employees and their families. The event is held on a Monday when the club is closed and includes softball, volleyball and other outdoor activities. After a barbecue lunch, children's races are held on the driving range. It's great to see the parents cheering on the kids.

Although the club is quite busy in December, the board of directors hosts the annual Employee's Christmas Party in the clubhouse. Entertainment is provided by a musical group or a disc jockey. Spouses or significant others are invited for this party and enjoy an open bar and buffet dinner and dancing. Outside help is hired so all employees can attend and enjoy the evening. I think the staff has a great time at these functions and looks forward to these events every year.

David Court, CGCS

Boca Lago C.C.

Palm Beach Chapter

## 'My mother forgot to set my alarm' ... and other sad tales

The list of excuses by employees for absenteeism and tardiness could fill sev-

eral volumes. Just when you think you've heard them all, another great line is recorded on the seemingly endless list of excuses.

At Windsor Parke Golf Club in Jacksonville we have adopted a pain-and-gain policy toward problems with absenteeism and tardiness.

At the beginning of each month, each employee "slate" is cleared. If an employee is late to work, he or she is given an oral warning.

The second and third tardies within the 30-day period draw mandatory days (*those days!*) off without pay.

A fourth day late during the period is grounds for termination (this extreme has only been tested and used once during the past two years).

It has been our experience that our employees respond to the effects of the non-paid day off and their wallets are the way to their hearts so to speak.

Termination is rarely necessary due to tardiness.

The gain side of this policy comes at the end of the monthly pay period. Each person having not been late or absent for a scheduled work day during the month receives a paid half-day off the last Friday of that month.

The money involved in the half day off is not nearly as sweet as the Friday afternoon off — there's just something about Fridays!

The last Friday of the month has become a challenge for our staff and there's always a "bet" on who will make the grade!

We usually have 80 to 90 percent of our staff qualify monthly with this program and have found it effective in managing tardiness and absenteeism without all the excuses!

Kim Shine, CGCS

Windsor Parke G.C.

North Florida Chapter

## Disney 'cast' gets OSHA orientation

All cast member new to the Walt Disney Company are given two days of

orientation called "Traditions". At that time they are given all OSHA requirements.

Upon entry into golf maintenance at Disney World, all cast members are shown the specific hazardous materials areas, MSDS locations, etc. They are required to read and sign the department Standard Operating Procedures Manual. The SOP covers the basic company objectives and outlines departmental policies from attendance to job descriptions for all the maintenance tasks.

New cast members are then given "hands on" training by Disney Trainers, foremen, or other experienced workers.

Attendance is probably the number-one shortcoming of employees. In our operation, there are five categories of attendance violations:

- 1) No call. No show.
- 2) Call in sick.
- 3) Call in absent (personal business).
- 4) Tardy.
- 5) Early release from shift.

Any combination of three of the above in a 30-day period, or five in 90 days can result in an oral reprimand entered into the employee's personnel file.

After three oral reprimands within six months, a written reprimand is in order. Additional incidents without significant improvement are grounds for review by Employee Relations and are possible grounds for termination.

Consistent documentation is a necessity.

While poor performance needs to be documented, good performance also needs to be recognized. We have a couple of awards for outstanding service:

1) **The Gold Dream Pin.** DREAM stands for Disney Resorts Experiences Are Magic. It is a monthly award nominated by hourly peers and voted on by former Gold Dream Pin winners. The winner receives a gift certificate and parking place of choice for a month.

2) **Greensmaster.** For golf maintenance staff. Nominated by management quarterly based on excellence of quality of work, quantity of work, efficiency, safety awareness, dependability, and attitude. The winner receives a plaque and



gift certificate presented by area manager/superintendent.

Pat Hennessey

Eagle Pines G.C.

Central Florida Chapter

## Assistants do the hiring at World Woods of Golf

At World Woods, the superintendents have delegated the interviewing and hiring of potential new employees to the assistant superintendents. The theory here is that since the assistant will be dealing with the new employee on sometimes an hourly basis, that he/she should have the choice in whom to hire.

Before we became comfortable with our assistants' interview techniques, both Steve Hritsko and I were responsible for the process. We had our assistants witness how we interviewed prospective employees and we devised a standard list of questions to be asked during the interview.

The next step was to let our assistants run the interview in our presence. After about four or five interviews, we became comfortable with the interview skills of each assistant.

Since that time, our assistants have interviewed and hired all employees, with the exception of spray technicians, mechanics, and irrigation specialists. We still feel more comfortable with interviewing these types of key personnel, as we may be able to ask more particularly detailed, technical questions.

The Americans with Disabilities Act has made us revamp our list of questions that we used to ask prospective employees. Gone are such questions such as "Do you have any outstanding Worker's Compensation cases?" or "Do you have any back problems?"

We also will accept applications from those who have obvious impairments that could hamper job performance. If a person who is blind were to come in to ask if we were accepting applications for a spray technician position, we would answer yes and would accept the application.

The ADA has also changed the way we keep medical records for our employees. In the good old days, personnel and medical records were kept in one file. This is no longer legal. They must be kept separate.

This would include Worker's Compensation, as well as a doctor's note provided by an employee to return to work.

A key point in the ADA is to return the employee who has been injured on the job to the workplace as quickly as possible, even if the restriction would include light duty. Getting the employee back on the job obviously would keep lost income claims down.

I've heard people claim that "I have no light duty jobs on the golf course available." However, I believe that you can always find some type of light duty work (even if it's sitting on a chair and watching the grass grow!) that would allow the employee to come back on the payroll and off of the Worker's Comp claim.

This could limit the rise in Worker's Comp premiums.

### World Woods Employment Interview Guidelines

• **Driver's license & social security card in hand?** Other forms of ID include: Voter's Registration Card, Birth Certificate, Florida-issued ID Card, Official Military ID, or Green Card. (Needed for I-9 form)

• **Worker's Compensation** — insurance carried by the workplace (required by law) that covers injuries incurred while on the clock. It is your responsibility (if you are hired) to report any injury regardless of how minor it may seem, to your supervisor immediately. He will start the paperwork trail to report the incident.

• **Transportation** — To & from work is a must for each employee.

• **Punctuality** — Never late, never miss a day!

• **Work Hours** — Monday through Friday, 7:00 to 3:30 or 4:00. Some weekend overtime, approximately 3-4 hours. Overtime is limited; however, some is available. Voluntary at first, then mandatory if enough don't volunteered. OT is anything over 40 hours and is calculated

at time and a half.

• **Type of Work** — Laborer position... Start at the bottom of the ladder. Walking greens mowing, weedeating, fly mowing, edging bunkers, fixing washouts. Basically, manual labor. Do you have any problems with this type of work?

• **If you show responsibility** (being here on time), doing the right job, quality and quantity, are not disruptive, etc... we will work you into more responsible jobs, such as triplex mowing, rough/trim, collar, possible fairway and rough mowing.

• **Pay** — Start at \$5.00/hour. After 90-day probationary period and a favorable evaluation, employee is entitled to up to \$.50/hour raise. Employee then will be evaluated on a yearly basis.

• **Pay Periods** — Approximately every 15 days — 24 pay periods per year, so two per month. More explained in orientation, including PTO (paid time off) system used at World Woods.

• **90-Day Probation** — Designed to protect the employer. Basically during the 90 day probation, the employer can terminate the worker with or without cause. Gives employer a chance legally, to evaluate you to see if you fit into our needs and plans.

After 90-day probationary period, employee will be evaluated on things such as attendance, work habits, skills, proficiency, safety record, attitude, etc... Possible raise awarded with status changed to permanent full-time worker. Employee would then be eligible for other benefits, i.e. paid life & health insurance, and accumulation of PTO time.

• **Check for references.** Are references up to date? Can we check those references stated on your employment application?

Bob Wagner

World Woods of Golf

Seven Rivers Chapter

## Safety - is it extra work or part of your normal routine?

During the early years of The Planta-



tion Club, we were extremely busy with the golf course construction and landscaping activities for the entire development. Even though I knew the importance of safety, it seemed to be something that was hard to get a grasp on with the demanding deadlines that seemed to occur in all phases of our early development.

However, with the rising costs of Worker's Compensation insurance and numerous accidents that seemed to have a way of occurring in spite of all the training that you can provide, it was absolutely necessary to make safety a priority.

The process began by establishing a safety statement and writing out a safety policy. In reality, the policy is nothing more than simple do's and don'ts in written form.

It also began by creating safety awareness, not only with myself but also with the other department heads; e.g. assistant golf course superintendent, irrigation specialist, landscape superintendent, head mechanic, and his shop foreman and the grounds maintenance manager.

After creating awareness and establishing a written safety statement and safety policy, we began to hold regular monthly safety meetings. We documented each meeting by having all parties present sign the attendance record which then went on file.

We also included safety regulations in our employment package which each new employee has to read and sign at the time of hire. Our safety program has not only made The Plantation Club a safer environment in which to work, but it also lowered our Worker's Compensation rates drastically.

Now that we have made safety a part of our work routine, it doesn't seem to be time consuming, an added job, or an inconvenience.

David Lowe

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra  
North Florida Chapter

*(Editor's Note: Dave included a copy of the Plantation Club's safety documents with his article. For those clubs that do not have a formal safety program, we are sharing them here to serve as possible*

guidelines in establishing your own program.)

### The Plantation At Ponte Vedra Grounds And Golf Maintenance Department Safety Statement

It is the policy of The Plantation Country Club to provide a safe and healthy work environment for the protection of our most vital resource — our employees. The safety program at The Plantation's Golf and Grounds Maintenance Departments contains the following components:

1. Appoint a Safety Director and post the Director's name in a visible location so that all employees shall have access.
2. Instruct supervisors/managers of their responsibilities in providing a safe workplace for all employees.
3. Provide new employees with a safety orientation which will consist of:
  - A) The OSHA Right-To-Know law.
  - B) Hazard Communication Standard
  - C) Location and understanding of MSDS.
  - D) Location of emergency eye wash and showers.
  - E) Location of the chemical room, gas pumps, fuel shed, first aid cabinet and irrigation pump station.
  - F) Instruction of use of radios and their location so that they can contact help in case of an emergency.
4. Hold regularly scheduled monthly safety meetings and document attendance.
5. Encourage open communication of all employees to provide a hazard free workplace.

### Safety Policy

TO: All Employees  
FROM: David Lowe, Department  
Head Golf and Grounds Maintenance  
SUBJECT: Safety Policy

It is the policy of the Company to provide a safe and healthy work environment for our most vital resource — our



## Environmental Waterway Management... "Preserving Your Liquid Assets"

Golf Courses have Lakes, Ponds, Canals and Water Everywhere! Many of these water bodies are used for irrigation, fishing swimming, drainage or simply as hazards to the navigating Golfer on your course. If you allow Algae, Grasses and other noxious weeds to grow unchecked, they will rapidly take over your precious waterways. Don't allow your waterway problems to get you in over your head. Just call the experts at Environmental Waterway Management.



employees. The safety of employees is of the greatest interest to all levels of management and supervision, ranking in importance above production, quality, costs and service. Therefore, effective immediately, The Plantation Grounds and Golf Course Departments will hold regular monthly safety meetings. The date for these meetings will be posted next to the time clock prior to each meeting. All employees are required to attend.

The Company's basic philosophy is that almost all personal injuries can be prevented. Responsibility and safety is shared throughout the organization. For example, Department Heads are responsible for their departments, Supervisors are accountable for the safety of their groups, and all individuals are accountable for their own safety.

All employees, at every level, are expected to fully accept responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of those with whom they work. There is no place in this organization for an unsafe employee.

We, at The Plantation are a team. Communication is the key to successful teamwork. Communicate all hazards in your workplace to your supervisor or Safety Director. The Safety Director at Plantation Maintenance is David Lowe. The Plantation will allocate the necessary resources to assure a safe and healthy work environment.

**The Plantation Country Club  
Golf And Grounds Maintenance  
Safety Regulations**

The Plantation at Ponte Vedra Country Club is committed to safety and has taken steps to protect you from injury on the job.

Your compliance is vital for our own protection. Please observe the following rules at all time:

1. No employees shall be under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the job.
2. Report all job accidents the same day the accident happens.
3. Obtain authorization form your supervisor for all non-emergency treatments for accidents.
4. Wear seat belts at all times in company vehicle.
5. Keep the area and equipment where

you work clean and neat at all times.

6. Do not remove or bypass any guard on any machinery at any time.
7. Ask your supervisor when you need additional equipment or instructions to get the job done safely.
8. Lift with your legs, not your back, and get assistance with loads over 50 pounds.
9. Advise your supervisor of any hazardous conditions in your workplace/equipment.

10. No smoking in any part of the maintenance facility, trailer, greenhouse, fuel shed or area around the fuel pumps.

11. Do not smoke while handling gasoline or fuel.

12. No one is allowed in the chemical room or irrigation pump station unless they are authorized or properly trained.

13. Excavation is to be done only under authority of a supervisor to avoid accidental contact with underground utilities.

14. You must not exceed the posted speed limits both on and off the property.

15. You must have a valid Florida drivers license before operating all company owned vehicles and this license must be with you at all times.

16. No headphones/radios will be allowed.

17. Follow all other written and spoken safety rules.

For any injuries that require emergency treatment, The Plantation country Club has the right to have the employee tested for the presence of drugs/alcohol.

Employees that do not obey safety rules will be reprimanded: the reprimand, verbal/written, will be recorded in the employee's file. Employees should know that reprimands can lead to termination of employment. The employee's safety record will be reviewed at the employee's annual evaluation and will be a consideration in the amount of compensation received.

*Where injury is caused by the knowing refusal of the employee to use safety equipment or obey safety rules, the workers' compensation benefits can be reduced by 25 percent . . . (Florida Statute 440.09 (04).*

I have read these regulations or have

had them read to me. I understand them and will obey them for my own benefit.

Employee Signature    Date  
Supervisor Signature    Date

**Safety Meeting Attendance Record**

This is a simple sheet of paper or make your own form to include:

1. Date.
2. Safety subject of discussion.
3. Safety Instructor's name.
4. List of people attending. Printed name and signature.

**Training is key to  
quality golf course  
maintenance**

After years of waiting, the day finally arrived. It was the first day of turfgrass school at Penn State University.

Dr. J.M. Duich, the professor whom I had heard so much about, stood in front of the class of eager "turfers" and began the first day of our formal education by drawing a large circle on the chalkboard. On this circle he drew in a small "slice of pie" (about 15% of the circle). On this small portion of the circle Dr. Duich wrote the word "turf." On the remainder of the circle (about 85% of the circle) he wrote the word "people."

The group of eager students looked around the room at each other confused about what they had just been told. It only took a short time after graduation for many of us to realize how accurate this statement was. I will probably never forget that day and the "Duich Pie" theory.

As turf managers, a major key to our success is the people who work for us.

The quality of a golf course frequently will reflect the ability of the turf manager to attract and hire quality employees and then provide them with training to perform their duties correctly and in a productive manner.

A method of training that I have found extremely valuable is the use of VHS videos in the training of all my employees. However, the videos do not take away the need to provide hands-on training, frequent supervision and the opera-