



**Workman® MD Series**  
**One great result.**

*Call 1-800-803-8676 or visit [www.toro.com](http://www.toro.com)*

**TORO**

**Count on it.**

## COVER STORY

### SPREADRITE, INC.

**CUSTOM SPREADING**  
 FERTILIZER • DOLOMITE • GYPSUM  
 ARAGONITE • HYCAL LIME  
**FAIRWAY TOP DRESSING**

**LAMAR SAPP  
 ART SAPP**

6001 S.W. 19th STREET  
 PLANTATION, FL 33317

MOBILE:  
 772-201-4000 (ID 158-81-10962)  
 954-444-0820

### TORO T.Map and RAIN BIRD MAP EXPERTS

- Map Creation and Maintenance
- Aerial & GPS Data Integration
- Programming & Training Professionals

www.ragantechnical.com  
 dave@ragantechnical.com

**RTS 561-776-9713**

Ragan Technical Solutions, Inc.

“And last – but not least – is the ongoing program to remove residual bermudagrass areas in the paspalum. We spray it, cut it out and resod as needed each summer.”

The mechanics and realities of turf maintenance are often dictated by the club’s physical setting and fiscal resources, but most of the time it is the attitude of the superintendent that is the deciding factor. That attitude is a product of formal education and life experiences. Jim Sprankle has had his share of both and he humbly summed up his career to date.

He said, “One of my greatest satisfactions comes from the nearly 15 assistants who I have worked with who are now successful superintendents around the world. I would like to feel I had a hand in their success. My younger brother Jason is a successful superintendent at the Turtle Creek Club in Tequesta, which makes me very proud.

And now Sprankle is home again working near the river I knew as a boy.

*A few who have influenced me and have trusted me with their vision are Jack Nicklaus, Pete Dye, Lee Schmidt, Brian Curley, Greg Letsche, Chris Cochran, John Cope and Troy Vincent. And the agronomists who have been there to assist me with situations and offer some much-needed conversation at some very remote locations are Ed Etchels, John Scott, Jay Spurl and Dave McIntosh.* ■

## KEEP YOUR COURSE IN OPTIMUM PLAYING CONDITION WITH:



Call today and ask about our innovative calcium products and wetting agents for salt flushing of greens, tees and fairways designed to meet your needs!

**Enviro-Green**

Quality Foliar Nutrients

**N-Control™**

28% Acidic Nitrogen

**PHAIRWAY**  
 RIGHT AS RAIN®

Water Treatment Amendment

Try K-Cal-Mag 7-0-7-4Ca-1Mg alone or with organics for unmatched quick stress recovery!

Liquid Ag/The Andersons has the equipment, service and expertise to keep your professional sports turf looking its best all year round!



www.liquidag.com

Looking Forward to a Successful Future as:

**The Andersons**

www.andersonsinc.com

Liquid Ag Systems  
 800 Trafalgar Court, Suite 320  
 Maitland, Florida 32751

PHONE 407-682-6100/FAX 407-682-6693  
 TOLL FREE 800-775-5593

# THE LOXAHATCHEE CLUB

## JUPITER, FLORIDA



## CONGRATULATIONS

to Jim Sprankle III, CGCS and his club for being selected by the Palm Beach GCSA as the featured cover for the Winter 2009 Florida Green.

From all of us who proudly supply and service The Loxahatchee Club:

**Aeration Technology, Inc.** • Steve Shea • 954-529-5548

**Golf Agronomics Supply & Handling** • John Swaner • 954-650-9584

**Golf Ventures** • Bill Lanthier • 772-486-1701

**Kilpatrick Turf** • Kent Turner • 561-436-4162

**Palmdale Oil Company** • Mallory Cheatham • 561-722-1892

**Pro Plus Golf Services** • Chris Miller • 561-719-5613

**ShowTurf** • Jerry Freeman • 561-732-8905

**Superior Golf Concepts** • John Copeland • 561-744-6536

**Upstart Products** • Ted Owen • 321-269-9370

PHOTO BY DANIEL ZELAZEK

# Communication is a BIG Part of My Job

By David Court, CGCS

Communication with members, staff and upper management is a big part of my role at Black Diamond. *Member News* and e-mail blasts are quite common. We let the membership know about aerification and overseeding schedules as well as the course closing schedules. With the frequent possibilities of frost – something we didn't have in South Florida – we will announce starting-time changes and the shift to shotgun starts a day ahead of time so the members can plan.

All department heads and assistants have e-mail addresses so they can be contacted by members. I often find myself answering questions by e-mail or if necessary, the old-fashioned way, telephone. If a topic requires more attention we will put the message out on *Member News*.

I make myself available several times during the week. If work schedules permit, I play in a Thursday Scramble with the men. My wife, Janet, and I are invited to dinner for Trivia night, Name that Tune night, and, yes, even Bingo. We love the fact that we are able to participate with the members at their functions and parties. If members have questions or comments, this gives me time to address their concerns one-on-one in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Communication with the crew is done as needed with safety meetings and during frost delays and rain events. We try to take advantage of these down times and present information to the staff and discuss any issues that have



David Court, CGCS

come up. Some of the issues are those that I hear about through the members. This is also a good time to present the Employee of the Month award for them to be recognized by their peers.

Communication with the senior staff is done at our Wednesday meetings. Upcoming events are discussed including tournaments, weddings and outside outings. A calendar of events is also published for members in the monthly newsletter to which all department heads contribute articles. This is my opportunity to get the word out about our Audubon Certification progress, effluent water updates and when we can expect the beginning or completion of any projects.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of our jobs. We do it all day long without even realizing it. Just stopping to talk with a member of the club or the crew can make a big difference with people on all levels.

I never consider my position as a golf course superintendent to be a job but more of an adventure, especially on a good day when you only have to work half days: 5:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. Did I mention that it helps to have support and communication on the home front as well?

## Effective Communication is Vital for Success

By Kevin Sunderman

Effective communication among a superintendent, senior management and the membership is vital to the success and survival of both superintendent and club.

The first step is to establish and maintain a healthy communication line among the superintendent, general manager and greens chairman. This



Kevin Sunderman

should be easy.

At the end of the day, relay any important information to your general manager and/or your greens chairman. Some days won't require any communication. Others might require 30 minutes or more depending on the situation.

Serious matters are often best discussed face-to-face, and don't wait until the end of the day. Make sure, however, always to send a follow-up e-mail on important matters to create some sort of documentation. Documentation can help you remember the specifics of previous issues. Also, documentation is insurance for those unfortunate CYA situations.

Anticipate situations. Relay answers/explanations to questions that haven't been asked. For example, if a mower has left a hydraulic leak all over No.14 fairway, let management know about it right away. When they are questioned, they have an answer. Managers and board members hate nothing more than being caught off guard.

Second, good communication between the golf professional and the superintendent is necessary for coordinating both golf and maintenance activities. After a series of "surprise shotguns," I finally coordinated weekly meetings with the head professional. These meetings only require 15-20 minutes to review the upcoming calendar. They ensure the greens aren't being verticut the morning of the ladies' invitational and they allow the golf shop to know when the golf course will be fertilized.

In fact, a meeting can make it easier to get time blocked for course work because the golf shop can plan ahead when making tee-times. It might be a good idea for the general manager to sit in on these meetings so he knows what has been scheduled.

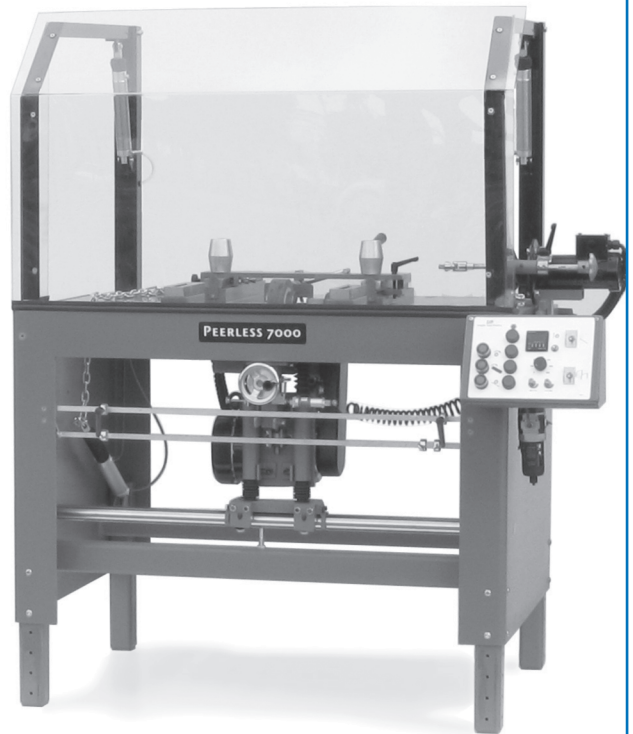
Finally, communication to the general membership leaves everyone feeling informed and confident that you know what's going on with the golf course. This can be done several ways. Face-to-face contact in the golf shop and on the golf course is not always fun but usually very effective.

# ***SIP Bedknife & Reel Grinders*** ***The World's Fastest and Most Precise*** ***Grinding Systems!***



### **The Ideal 6000 Bedknife Grinder:**

- Dual, fixed, grinding motors with single point infeeds grind both faces at the same time for fast, precise results!
- Grinds bedknife straight to within .001"
- Dual, built-in diamond dressers quickly dress grinding stones.



### **The Peerless 7000 Reel Grinder**

- Fixed grinding motor & single point infeed
- Grinds reels fast & straight to within .001"
- Grinds cylindrical & parallel to within .002"
- Removes cone shape from reels
- TorqueControl™ automatic relief grinding
- .001" precision tabletop lets you level rollers right on the grinder!
- Optional auto-infeed.

## ***SIP Corporation***

***Building Quality Grinding Systems for over 100 Years!***

**For a demo at your facilities, contact us at 1-800-888-6658, or contact your local dealer:**

### ***Southeast Florida***

**Southern Outfitters**  
Email: [sandtruck@comcast.net](mailto:sandtruck@comcast.net)  
Fax: 772-589-1537  
John Gowen, Technical Info  
Mobile: 561-722-6110

### ***Southwest, Northeast, Northwest Florida***

**Du Cor International**  
Email: [sales@ducor.com](mailto:sales@ducor.com)  
Toll Free: 1-800-382-6735  
Jeff Scott, Technical Info  
Mobile: 407-760-9035

Our club manager sends weekly e-mail blasts to the membership. I include a few sentences every week just to inform the members of whatever seems pertinent at the time. Contributing to the club newsletter is always important. Writing articles that educate on a basic level provides your members with the basis to understand what has happened or what is to come.

For example, writing about transition before it takes place prepares your members with the understanding of what will be happening. Then when they see it, they can say, "Yeah, it's just transition. It'll be better in a few weeks." Our newsletter is bimonthly so I often write updates to be posted on bulletin boards throughout the club on the off months.

The difficult economic times have made it even more important to have good communication with those around you. It is impossible to provide the same level of conditioning as a few

years ago without a significant increase in the budget. Without effectively communicating this with management and members, a superintendent's reputation could be damaged because he did not provide the expected conditions or went over budget to do so.

To keep my manager and board members better informed, I frequently pass along e-mails and articles describing things like the increasing fertilizer and chemical costs. I also try to show them specific examples in order to make the increases "real." If I can show them an invoice from last year and another one from this year, it tends to hit home more effectively.

I then make it a point to follow up with them to answer any questions they may have as well as discuss ideas for dealing with these increases. We have lengthened the time between fertilizer applications. This decision is a result of informed discussions with club management. Once the decision was

made, we then let the members know that we had to reduce the total amount of fertilizer and what would result.

Keeping the membership up to date is just as important as communicating with management. This year at Isla Del Sol we have decided not to overseed; we did so wall-to-wall in years past. While this makes agronomic sense, the real reason behind the decision is the financial saving the club will experience. As soon as the decision was made, I began informing the members through bulletin board postings, e-mails, and most importantly face-to-face communication.

I make sure to let them know of the consequences of the decision. If they know what to expect they are usually much more comfortable with the decision. It's also important to paint both sides of the picture. Not only am I preparing them for a less green golf course, but also I am letting them know that they will benefit with more roll.

**SMR Farms**  
*Cattle • Turf • Trees • Landscape • Citrus*  
**Growing Strong For**  
**Over 75 Years**  
*Your Florida Producers and Installers of Certified and Fumigated Turfgrasses, featuring ...*

**CELEBRATION**  
 HOME • COMMERCIAL • SPORTS  
 BERMUDAGRASS  
**Tifway 419**  
*Sod • Sprigs • Rolls*

**SEA ISLE SUPREME**  
 P ASPALUM  
**EMPIRE TURF**  
 The Proven Zoysia Grass™

Call for pricing and availability,  
 or better yet, visit our **Bradenton farms!**

We also grow 26+ varieties of trees --  
 from 2" caliper to 8+" caliper.  
 4715 Lorraine Road  
 Bradenton, Florida 34211  
 877-708-3322 Toll Free  
**www.smr farms.com**

**ALMAR™**  
*Power of Green*

**GREEN CaLITE™**      **BEAUTI-GREEN™**  
**GREEN MAGIC™**      **GREEN'S BROTHER™**

**(800) 340-3888**  
 AlmarTurf.com

Warn them about the bad news, but leave them feeling good. By keeping members informed, they tend to feel more involved. As I write this, I got a call from a member who suggested that every day we rope off a different hole to give it a break from the cart traffic.

Other issues that have been discussed because of the changing times include the increasing regulation of water, fertilizer and pesticide use and our efforts to be more environmentally proactive. In years past our members would have not been happy to see our lake banks allowed to grow, but this year, in attempt to create a buffer zone, we did just that. With plenty of notification, the members understood why and actually supported the decision to do so.

Communication is always an important tool for a successful superintendent no matter what issue needs discussing. The bottom line: it doesn't matter what methods you

use to inform your members as long as you do it effectively. The more you communicate with management and members, the better understanding they will have about your operation. Over time it will improve your credibility and make them more confident in your abilities.

## **SUPER TIP** for **Your Topdressing Program**

*By Sean Sullivan, CGCS*

As I was traveling the Far East (East Georgia) this past February, I came upon a new step in the topdressing program. The new step has been added only recently, because three years ago when I was working in Georgia, it was not being used. I was visiting the superintendent at Sea Island Seaside

Tom Burrows, Consulting  
Agronomist/Turfgrass Specialist  
Independent Consulting using  
"Brookside Laboratory"

### Greens Reconstruction

- ◆ Soil Physical Analysis
- ◆ USGA Approved Testing
- ◆ Analytical Service
- ◆ Recommendations
- ◆ Specifications for Contractor Bidding

### Soil Testing

- ◆ Greens, Tees, Fairways
- ◆ Analytical Report and Soil Fertility Recommendations

### Water Testing

- ◆ Report & Recommendations

*In the business 40 years*

Jensen Beach, Florida

772-692-1221 cell: 772-215-1819



**MERIDIAN**  
MANUFACTURING GROUP

# SANDSTOR™

- \*Keeps Dried Sand Dry
- \*No Waste or Contamination
- \*Delivered Fully Assembled
- \*2 Models - 30 or 50 Ton
- \*Cage Section & TopRail Optional

Rymatt Golf, Naples, FL

(239) 513-9238

Course, and he was showing me all the wonders that money can buy. He cuts greens at .100 inches every day of the year.

Because of the low height of cut, a PGR program, and topdressing every week, I asked what kind of problems he sees with the sand and mowers.

His response was that they don't have any problems because they started spraying a product called Speed.

After brushing in the topdressing sand, and two or three rotations of the irrigation heads, they sprayed Speed at 1oz. per 10 gallons of water in the spray tank. That was it! The next morning when they mowed greens there was a significant reduction in the sand that was picked, and the sand didn't ball up on the rollers. I confirmed this with several superintendents in Atlanta, who used the same program, and had the same results.

When I got back to Billings, I researched Speed on the Internet.

Speed is a product from Precision Labs and is a nonionic siloxane surfactant. There is no mention of Speed's ability to hold down sand on the product label. So, I called technical services for Precision Labs and they confirmed that although the product was not labeled for topdressing programs, it will "trick" the sand into thinking it is wet and hold it down. They also said that the residual is two to three weeks.

They shipped me a case, six one gallon containers, from the factory and billed me through a distributor in Salt Lake City. The cost is \$62.50 per gallon. Each application to my greens costs approximately \$15.

I experimented with Speed and it did everything that I was told. I was not concerned about the two-week residual because it would take only a couple of days before the grass was above the sand. Speed can also be used as an adjuvant for pesticides and fertilizers. I have not experimented with other

siloxane surfactants to see if the results would be the same, and there may be another product that is less expensive.

I don't topdress my greens in the winter, and I don't know if you guys roll your greens every couple of weeks to keep them smooth. But it seems like if they were treated, the sand wouldn't move around when rolled.

This isn't an ad for Speed; I am simply letting you know that there is a product that helps with the topdressing program. It keeps the sand where we put it, and we don't pick up half of it with the next mowing. The reels don't get trashed out and my equipment manager is happier. We also don't have to send out extra help to knock down the piles of sand that come off the rear rollers.

*EDITOR'S NOTE* This article was submitted by Todd Lowe, USGA Agronomist Credit: Peaks & Prairies GCSA magazine, The Perfect Lie, August 2009 issue.

**PLANT FOOD COMPANY, INC.**  
*The Liquid Fertilizer Experts*

We specialize in liquid fertilizers and sell many other types of fertilizers, biostimulants, lime and protection products. Everything in the green industry, including trees and shrubs, turf and flowers, grow stronger and more beautiful with our products. Contact us to learn more and request your free catalog.

**Steve Hritsko**  
 Territory Manager  
 352.428.9802  
 shritsko@aol.com  
 www.plantfoodco.com

*Grow with us as part of our expanding family of customers.*





For courses that roll,  
meet the mower that rocks.



**The new 2653B Trim and Surrounds Mower from John Deere.**

Meet the mower that is completely in tune with today's courses. The 2653B features a new traction system which enables it to climb and mow mounds like never before. Operators of any size will enjoy the increased legroom. And servicing the 2653B just became a lot easier thanks to more on-board diagnostics and parts commonality with other Deere machines.

Ask to see the machine that is sure to strike a chord with you and your crew. The new 2653B. Call your John Deere distributor for a demo today.

JOHN DEERE GOLF & TURF  
**ONE SOURCE**



[www.JohnDeere.com](http://www.JohnDeere.com)

**COASTAL EQUIPMENT SYSTEMS**

5287 NEW KINGS ROAD  
JACKSONVILLE, FL 32209  
Telephone: (904) 924-9624  
Fax: (904) 861-0037

BGTC0330

USGA GREEN SECTION WEB UPDATES

## A Great Resource For Communication

By Todd Lowe

Communication is a vital component of an effective golf course superintendent. Yet sometimes, golf course superintendents need additional backup when dealing with issues like the impacts of weather, seasonal differences on golf course conditions, the need for increased maintenance practices, and sensitive subjects like tree removal.

Some golfers cannot be reached through newsletters or even direct contact with the golf course superintendent; and it helps to have an outside opinion from an unbiased professional. USGA agronomists are often called upon to communicate important information to golfers through the Turfgrass Advisory Service, which are on-site agronomic consulting visits.

USGA agronomists occasionally hear phrases like, “We’re the only club that looks this brown,” or “No other courses have winter fairways as tight as ours,” or “Why are we the only club that aerates greens more than once yearly?”

The weather, seasonal playing conditions, and cultural management practices are all common issues discussed during TAS visits. USGA agronomists each visit more than 100 golf courses annually and they provide a wealth of information concerning topics that courses face. An important part of our job is explaining these common issues to golfers.

Superintendents and course officials can also glean the benefits of our travels by visiting the Green Section Web site and reading the Regional Updates published each month. Agronomists from each region write updates every three to four weeks on current playing conditions and factors affecting turf quality.

Updates are usually only a few paragraphs in length and are excellent resources to help golfers quickly understand important golf course



issues. Comments from unbiased professionals like USGA agronomists, are often easily received by golfers, since there is no motive for our remarks other than “for the good of the game.”

The USGA Green Section Web site ([www.usga.org/turf](http://www.usga.org/turf)) has valuable resources including Regional Updates, *Green Section Record* articles, golf course construction guidelines, course official information, environmental publications, and turfgrass research.

With the click of the mouse, golf course superintendents have access to all of this information and can get a feel for what’s going on in each region. The Regional Updates are archived on our Web site, so viewing past updates is easy.

Here are a few suggestions on how to access and utilize them:

- **Receive Regional Updates via e-mail.** To ensure you receive current updates, contact Kimberly Erusha at [kerusha@usga.org](mailto:kerusha@usga.org) and request to be added to the e-mail list. Regional Updates are sent out automatically, ensuring you won’t miss one.

- **E-mail Regional Updates** to officials like Green Committee members, the general manager or director of golf.

- **Add this link** on your club’s Web site so that golfers can easily access the information: [http://www.usga.org/turf/regional\\_updates/regional\\_updates.html](http://www.usga.org/turf/regional_updates/regional_updates.html)

- **Print Regional Updates** and place them in a visible area for golfers to read.

Improve your communication prowess by utilizing this free source of information. As always, never hesitate to contact me or John Foy if you need additional information or possibly some one-on-one consultation at your club.

## Communicating the Sustainable Use of Pesticides to Golfers

By Todd Burkdoll

Superintendents are faced with all kinds of job-related questions, particularly about the agronomics of using pesticides and other chemicals on their courses. Many are having a hard time clearly explaining the benefits of chemical use to curious golfers and community members, and as a result, sometimes avoid the topic.

However, communicating with the public is no longer optional; superintendents must address questions, ease concerns and take part in community education programs on a regular basis in order to continue building and sustaining community confidence. Many golf course superintendents now take a proactive approach to combat the general public’s misperceptions and fear of pesticides and convey their role as an environmental steward.

### INDUSTRY PEERS GET THE WORD OUT

Superintendent Jed Spencer, CGCS, for Chenal Country Club in Little Rock, Ark., participates in monthly Greens Committee meetings and now hosts annual open houses to give all members a behind-the-scenes look at how he maintains his course. In addition to addressing topics such as chemical and fertilizer use, maintenance and even golf etiquette, his crew operates equipment for participants, allowing them to get a firsthand look at what his crew does and how they do it. Spencer’s goal is to educate the community, and show members the purpose behind his crew’s actions.

“The response to our communication efforts has been extremely positive,” Spencer said. “Community members really appreciate the visual component. It reduces concerns about the possible effects our treatment plan could have on them and their surroundings.”