

The Richly Colored Night

How a new adjuvant is shining a light on course maintenance.

By William Olmstead

In 2011, GCI's Bruce Williams wrote about the benefits of alternative scheduling for course maintenance and the resourcefulness of some forward-thinking superintendents. The principle behind this nighttime grounds-work is simple: superintendents maximize their operational efficiency while minimizing crew interference with players on the course.

"The number of days and hours in which one can golf are limited," said Williams. "People pay a lot of money to either play public golf or belong to private clubs. They have an expectation that they can go out and play without being interrupted."

The daylight hours in which superintendents and their crews can accomplish their maintenance goals are also limited. Being natural problem solvers, industry professionals turned to the night for a solution.

Working under cover of darkness presents some obvious difficulties, from employee safety to low visibility. While equipment lamp mounts and light banks provide some relief, they are often not enough. Mowing fairways and roughs in the dark, for example, is extraordinarily problematic. Floratine Products Group recently released an adjuvant that seeks to solve this dilemma. The new product, called Night-Ops, is revolutionizing the way that superintendents will look at low-light maintenance work. I spoke with Kevin Cavanaugh, executive president at Floratine, about the new release and how superintendents are responding.



How exactly does Night Ops work?

"Night-Ops is a patent-pending, non-toxic adjuvant designed to be safely applied to turf. It has the unique ability to phosphoresce so that when activated with black light it becomes visible to the eye. Under regular daylight conditions or without the use of a black light, it cannot be seen by the naked eye. It works great as an adjuvant in a tank mix. At night, the applicator can work under black light and dial in spray patterns easier than in daytime operations. It literally looks like a million tiny points of light.

How have superintendents responded

to the Night Ops?

There was quite a bit of discussion about it at the GIS in Orlando. Some superintendents were initially adverse to the idea saying things like, "I don't need to work anymore than I already do!" However, a lot of superintendents like the idea of using Night-Ops in their spray mixes to be able to track where their sprays (herbicide, pesticide, fungicide or nutritional) actually went down. Remember, the adjuvant doesn't always have to be used at night. As an example, it can be mixed into a pre-emerge herbicide spray and applied during the day, if desired, and the superintendent (or his assistant) can come back to

the course in the evening and see exactly where that spray application went down and map where the sprayer may have missed and target that area for corrective measures sooner rather than seeing a flush of weeds later. Of course, if used at night it can be seen immediately by the spray applicator and a very tight spray pattern can be had.

Are there specific turf types that respond best to this product?

No, all turf types work very well with Night-Ops. If it can be sprayed, Night-Ops will show up under the black-light and will be invisible all other times without the lights. The

adjuvant will last as long as it remains on the leaf. Dew, irrigation or rain will wash it from the leaf and render it inactive.

Are there any limitations to who can use this product?

No, anyone can utilize Night-Ops. It's safe, easy, effective... and we think it's pretty cool.

William Olmstead is GCI's assistant editor.

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+ For the full version of the Q&A with Kevin Cavanaugh, executive president at Floratine, check out the app version of Whiteboard, or check out the digital edition of this story at golfcourseindustry.com