

Idea file

Hiss! Inform golfers about poisonous snakes

Poisonous snakes can be a hazard to golfers, and course personnel in those Southwest states with the slithering creatures should let their customers know which ones are dangerous and how to treat a snake bite.

Some misconceptions exist about poisonous snakes, but Dr. James R. Dixon, herpetologist at Texas A & M University discounts them, saying rattlesnakes do not always rattle before striking (it may strike, then rattle), small poisonous snakes are dangerous and the coral snake's venom is not as deadly as many other snakes.

Using a heavy staff to make noise will scare away snakes, he says, so maybe your golfers can finally find a use for their 4-woods. Any bite should be packed with ice and the person taken to a doctor as quickly as possible, but running will only speed the spread of the poison, Dr. Dixon says.

Zero-base budgeting could help save money

Numerous large corporations and local and state governments say they have saved significant sums through "ZBB." The concept is simple: Take each spending area of your operation, such as a locker room facility, and justify everything that is done. Basic service and overhead are also included and then a brief outline of the reasons that each employee or pieces of equipment are used is compiled.

Alternative methods of achieving a job are also examined, and the manager of each area ranks his needs and priorities to the club manager, also suggesting possible changes.

Maybe your facility could use radiant heat

The rising cost of fuels is again bringing up talk about radiant heating as a primary source of warming buildings during winter. It has been disdained in the past since its panels, usually placed into ceilings, had to be powered with high-cost electricity. But an Albuquerque firm, Aztech International Ltd., has found that tiny sand crystals in the New Mexico desert transmit heat more efficiently than previous radiant systems. Some companies with large buildings are finding that the panels are good secondary heat sources without the inconveniences of portable electric heaters. "They're safer than the small portable space heater that sits in the aisle that people trip over or spill their coffee on," says one executive.

Beepers help employees communicate better

How many times is the golf course superintendent needed near the clubhouse while he's out on the course, somewhere, and no one knows when he'll return? If the answer is "too many," consider buying a beeper for him (or the pro) to carry.

The 4- to 7-ounce devices are essentially radio receivers that give off a high-pitched sound when someone telephones by dialing a specific paging number. Some even have what's called a dual address system, allowing a person to receive messages from more than one source.

Look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under "Paging and Signaling Service" to locate the businesses in your area that carry beepers.

Use some fresh fruits soon after delivery

Cherries, strawberries, blackberries, and figs will last 1 or 2 days; apricots, plums, blueberries, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, and watermelons are good from 3 to 5 days; and apples and cranberries for one week.

Unripe fruits should be kept at room temperature and out of any sunlight to ripen, according to Mrs. Gwendolyne Clyatt, consumer marketing information specialist with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service.

She also reminds food service personnel that damaged fruits should be discarded before others are stored.