

A golf superintendent

A purchasing agent, too?

A golf course superintendent gets called various names, especially after closing the course on Saturday afternoon; however, seldom is he referred to as a "purchasing agent." Nevertheless — along with titles such as agronomist, pathologist, plumber, and electrician — "purchasing agent" is apropos.

A young superintendent soon learns that the role of purchasing agent is another arduous task that college courses somehow never even mentioned. Consequently, he often tries to take buying decisions without proper criteria. Every course has different needs, but all superintendents face the same questions: When do I purchase? How much do I purchase? What is a fair price?

The answer to each question is bound to vary — the reasoning behind each answer is similar. How much to purchase is relevant to the size of your budget and the course. However, the proportion is similar for all courses. No office buys a yearly supply of stamps, envelopes, and stationery at the beginning of the year; and no factory purchases all the steel, tires, and raw goods it will need at the beginning of the year, simply because needs change and cash flow will not allow it.

As manager of a golf course, your job is

similar to a purchasing agent in a factory. You know you will need certain fungicides, herbicides, and fertilizer; however, you never know what the weather will bring. Keeping this in mind, it may be helpful to use a "benchmark" method. Pick a time in the season and purchase up to that time, for instance June 15. You know what new machinery you need to begin the year, your preemergent and spring fertilizer programs are underway, and fungicides are usually standard up to that time. Then when June rolls around, you can start purchasing on a monthly basis. This allows you to always have needed products on hand, but if the situation calls for pythium control, you won't have your budget wrapped up in Daconil. This method also has advantages for the club. They don't have to invest money in March for products that won't be used until August. (Sure, the question of early-order discounts plays a small part here, but if you look at it closely, it's a very small part.)

If you have chosen which products you feel will perform the best, then look up the rates and have at it on your J.C. Penney calculator. But you may want to back up one step. I have noticed three mistakes being made when figuring how much. First of all, the areas to be treated are not known exactly. Or perhaps you are using figures from Fred who used to be the

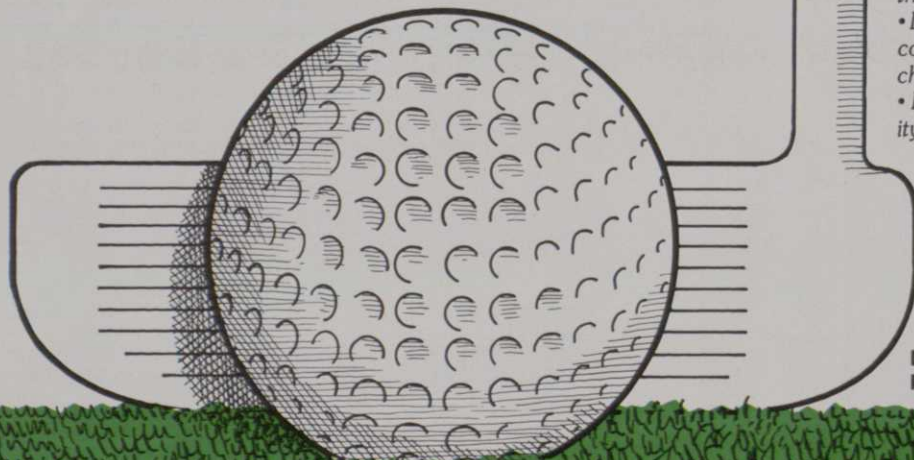
super, and Fred got them from Bill before him, who got them from the "green chairman." Then there is the question of budgeting to treat the greens and tees for a given program, but forgetting that the collars and aprons are usually treated the same.

I'll close with one final thought: I have yet to observe any industry that has managed to extract more service from its suppliers than has the golf course superintendents. As purchasing agents, you have, as a whole, performed way above par. With knowledge gained through efforts such as this magazine, you have managed to keep well informed about products and gain full cooperation from suppliers. In no other business that I know of can you get free delivery across the state, and many times, the next day. You can't buy a car downtown and ever have the salesman stop by the house to see how its running; but you can buy a \$2,000 mower and have the turf distributor salesman stop by and adjust it a year after you bought it, and at no charge!

Keep these things in mind. The next time a board member asks you to shop around or you hear discussions about having a general manager do all the purchasing, point out what a good job you are doing as purchasing agent.

This column was written by Steve Derrick, president of Professional Turf Specialties in Normal, Ill. It originally appeared in the Central Illinois GCSA newsletter.

IN BENTGRASS, IT'S THE ERA OF EMERALD!



In days past Golf Superintendents selected Seaside...Astoria...or Highland because —when it came to bentgrass—that's all that was available.

Then came Penncross. This truly modern variety is a great turf grass. Its only serious challenger is proving to be Emerald (Smaragd variety), the entry developed by Sweden's W. Weibull from a single, superior progeny of Congressional (C-19).

Emerald deserves a second look. Some say it equals, or is better than Penncross in actual use. They have their reasons. Here are just a few:

- *Exceptional uniformity — no objectionable grain or patchiness*
- *Excellent vigor—more vigorous than Seaside and slightly less vigorous than Penncross, thus thatch build-up is minimized.*
- *Disease resistant—no marked susceptibility to common turf diseases or customarily used chemicals.*
- *Highly competitive pricing—superior in quality and yet it won't destroy a budget.*

**YOU OWE IT TO YOURSELF
TO INVESTIGATE EMERALD**

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