

# Tips

## Sprayers & Nozzles



### Proper equipment ensures appropriate chemical applications

**A**s many of you gear up for your application of spring chemicals, it's time to examine the sprayers and nozzles you're using. Oscar Miles, superintendent at The Merit Club in Libertyville, Ill., and Emil Miller, southern sales representative for Wayne, Pa.-based Smithco, shared their thoughts on what superintendents should demand:

■ **Look for multipurpose sprayers.**

Miles says you should find sprayers light enough for tees and greens, but with the capacity to spray fairways.

"If you're going to spend the money, you want to spend it as wisely as possible," Miles says. "There are plenty of good systems out there, but you want them to perform multiple tasks."

Sprayers that can be used on greens and tees should exert no more than 25 psi in pressure on the turf, Miles says.

■ **Check tip sizes to ensure they match the tasks you're doing.**

"No one discusses this issue with potential customers, but it's the No. 1 mistake I see," Miller says. "If you don't match the nozzle size to the job, you're going to get an uneven application."

Miller says the right nozzle will avoid over-application of chemicals, a must in today's environmentally conscious atmosphere.

"You have to weigh the cost of getting the right nozzle against the cost of liability should some of the chemicals be sprayed where they shouldn't," Miller says. "It's a no-brainer."

■ **Calibrate your nozzles every two months.**

Miles says he uses two tests to make sure his sprayers and nozzles are performing their best. First, he takes his sprayers out

to the course's parking lot when there are no cars. He fills his sprayer with water and blankets the parking lot. If it dries evenly, he knows he's getting even coverage. "If some parts dry faster than others, I check my nozzles for blockage," he says.

The second test involves putting a bucket under each nozzle to measure how much liquid comes through each. That way, you can make sure you're getting the proper pumping capacity for your sprayers, Miles adds.

■ **Ensure adequate agitation in the tank to mix your chemicals properly.**

"If you don't know how to check your agitation rates, learn how," Miller says. "Your sales representative should be able to teach you."

Miller says poor mixing could lead to uneven chemical applications.

■ **Install the right screens on your sprayer to prevent particulate matter getting into the tanks.**

Ill-fitting screens will allow dirt, sand and other contaminants to get into tanks, Miles says. Eventually, they will clog nozzles, which will need to be replaced.

"It doesn't take that long to make sure you're properly outfitted before you head out on the course," Miles says. "It will save you money in the long run because you won't have to replace your nozzles after every job."

■ **Leave nothing in the tank at the end of a spraying session.**

Miles says you can't be too cautious when it comes to making sure the tanks are clean. He even suggests designating specific tanks for more caustic chemicals.

"It's hard to remember what you

### Experts suggest you should train your employees to spray the course properly.

put in the tanks," Miles says. "If you leave anything in there, you could be in for a nasty surprise when you do your next job."

Miller says a superintendent should buy a boom that comes with a freshwater attachment so he or she can rinse the tank on the way back to the maintenance facility. "Then there's no doubt that the tank is clean," he says. ■

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