

The summer of 2001, with the usual manic activity of the season, has made me realize there are things vital to make my life and the lives of other turfheads easier. I'm a nonlist person, but I had to assemble this list of can't-do-without-items for you. The items are in no particular order, and brand names are not being changed to protect the brilliant.

An e-mail address – While communication is critical, it's also time consuming. Nothing can take away more time and yield nothing than using the phone. E-mail gives one the ability to communicate more effectively. It's really great for superintendents, who are known to work strange hours.

Write messages, return messages, keep in touch, speak clearly and effectively, have the ability to edit your thoughts before the temperature of the day gets to your head — all of this is improved with e-mail.

A digital camera – This item goes along nicely with the item above. I can't tell you the number of times people have called me to describe their problems with their best intentions, but they fail to create accurate pictures in my mind. Later, if I do get to see the problem, it is almost never what I expected.

Imagine being able to e-mail a picture just taken. Then all the parties involved have the true scene of the crime in their heads. A quick shot of the new bunker project sent to your architect could keep you from being in the crosshairs on his next visit to the facility. A good printer and some easy-to-use software lets you edit the photo you took and show green committee members just how bad that new planter they want on the tee will look.

A large area spreader – If anything has ever made me want to return to growing grass, these babies are it. The Ty-Crop and the Dakota spreaders have made material-handling issues a thing of the past. Spread sand, fill bunkers, spread soil amendments — and be cooler than the fire engines at the local parade with one of these units.

Don't forget about saving more than the machine's cost in labor and contractual services because it does the work.

A dedicated verticut unit – For years, I've been

The Things We Can't Live Without

BY DAVE WILBER



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saying that the standard triplex-mounted verticut heads are great grooming tools, but they are not good thatch-removal tools. But along came the Graden Verticutter, and now we have a powered surgical thatch-control device. Fill up three or four utility vehicles with 12 percent to 15 percent of the thatch from a 5,000-square-foot green, keep from freaking out and joining the circus for four days while things heal, and understand how you can't live without one.

A Turfnet subscription – It doesn't matter to me that a competing magazine owns Turfnet (www.turfnet.com). Peter McCormick is the brains behind this amazing subscription service which includes a monthly print newsletter. The Web site provides access to the best Internet discussion forum in golf, as well as many amazing extras. McCormick takes no prisoners with his tell-it-like-it-is writing and hosting style. If you're selling something, stay away and let the turfheads talk. They'll invite you if they need you.

Fine-mesh calciums – They're expensive, but worth it. Now that new technology exists to handle materials smaller than 500 mesh, we gain calciums with increased solubility, quicker mass flow, the ability to be blended with other minerals, and have the pelletized ease of handling that lime and gypsum need.

The Smart Level – If you don't know and have to ask, then you need to just go buy one of these laser-guided wonders, which for under \$300 will have you never doing anything that won't drain again. Hold it right, roll the ball and it will even double as a Stimpmeter.

I probably missed a few things to put on the list. If I did, drop me a line with your ideas. But when you're all about cool stuff, the stuff above is freezingly good.

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