

# My Hat Collection

THE RIGHT HEADGEAR FOR THE RIGHT SITUATION

By Jim Black

It's interesting to me to see the kinds of things people collect over the course of their lives. My mom collects things pertaining to hummingbirds — such as figurines, wind chimes and stained glass. My mechanic Junior Brady has a collection of collections — everything from cigarette packs and logo golf balls to whiskey decanters and old tractors.

I enjoy collecting old books. The title or subject matter of the book doesn't matter to me. I just like the musty smell and the way the books look on the shelf.

I also have a collection that I'm sure I share with many a superintendent — a hat collection. Now, this isn't your ordinary, everyday collector's collection that is looked at but never touched. It's what I would call a "functioning" collection that's put to use on a daily basis.

At any given time of the day, I can be seen wearing a different hat from this collection. Although it's a bit of a pain to have to change them so often, I've accepted the fact that it comes with my position.

At 6 a.m., I can be seen wearing my "boss" hat. A crimson red 10-gallon Stetson, it sets me apart from the crew members in their baseball caps, and at the same time gets their attention while I'm giving out their assignments. I usually put this hat back on after lunch when it's time to reassign everyone to the afternoon tasks.

I make my morning spin around the course wearing the "boss" hat, scouting the course and crew. Usually, I will come upon one of my staff members who needs to talk to me in private about something important to them, be it business or personal. That's when I put the Stetson away and don my "counselor" hat — a soft, nonthreatening fedora that lets this person know I'm willing to listen to whatever it is they need to talk about.

Once this personal dilemma is taken care of, I head back to my office and change into my "worker" hat. This, of course, is a baseball cap with the club logo on it. It shows that I'm a company man who's always willing to pitch in and do whatever it takes to get a job done. I can be seen putting this hat on again in the early afternoon in an effort to help finish up anything that needs to be done before the day's end.

At mid-morning, it's time to put on my wide-rimmed felt "business" hat with the leather braid on it to meet with the course owner. I'm not really fond of wearing a hat for doing business — it somehow seems unprofessional. The problem is that by now I'm on my fourth hat of the day and my



hair is so messed up that I need to wear one.

When lunchtime rolls around, I can put on my "friend" hat and hang out with the guys for a while. This one is a bright-orange floppy hat with the Baltimore Orioles logo on one side and the Lite beer logo on the other.

In the early afternoon, I have to briefly put on my "lawn-care professional" derby and talk with one of the golfers about what could possibly be the problem with his lawn.

"Yes, I will try to answer as best I can without giving an all-out prescription," and "No, I will not have time to swing by your house and have a look-see. Sorry."

When the day's work is done, I get to change into my favorite hat of all — my "dad" hat. This, of course, is a collection unto itself depending on the day of the week and what we have going on together. Sometimes it's a coach's hat, and sometimes it's the beanie with the propeller on it when we get goofy. No matter which hat comes out of this subcollection, it reminds me of what matters most.

*Black is superintendent of Twin Shields GC in Dunkirk, Md.*

## Quotable

**"Superintendents will spend hours deciding on a mower, yet will hire people in 10 minutes. The machine might cost \$15,000 to \$20,000 and will last 15 years. You pay a person \$20,000 or \$25,000 a year. That's 10-to-one, the person over the machine. It's important to take a lot of care in choosing and training people."**

— Ray Davies, director of agronomy for CourseCo, on hiring.

**"It's my most memorable moment in golf."**

— Golfing fan John Yates, who received three stitches on his head after being hit square by a Tiger Woods' shot during the Buick Open.

**"Welcome to Royal St. George's, where agronomy goes to die."**

— The first paragraph of a British Open preview story, written by Brian Murphy of Scripps Howard News Service.

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