

I like to think I'm smart. I feel good about my brainpower most of the time. Until I meet some of the deep thinkers who work behind the scenes of the golf course maintenance industry.

And then I feel ... well ... humbled.

Over the years, I've toured the research facilities of the industry's major chemical companies and watched white-coated scientists fiddle with formulations. I've also visited the testing labs at the top irrigation companies and witnessed engineers at work on water-saving gadgets. And I've seen production lines in operation at mower and utility vehicle manufacturing plants and have come away amazed at the level of detail involved with the making of these machines.

I enjoy visiting these places and taking in all the information that is tossed at me. But I leave feeling a lot less brainy than when I arrived.

Who thinks this stuff up, anyway? And where do these people come from? Some of them possess more patents than I do polo shirts.

Seriously, where would the golf course maintenance industry be without its researchers and developers? These unsung heroes don't get nearly the credit that they deserve.

I ask you to stop and think about who these people are and what they mean to the industry. Let's do it together.

They are the people who create amazing turf varieties, from bentgrass to bermudagrass, to withstand more abuse than a crummy contestant on "American Idol."

They are the people who invent the greens mowers that can mow turf at one-eighth of an inch to help superintendents provide the closely cut greens demanded by their courses' clientele.

They are the people who create the fertilizers to help you green up turf faster than you can say "Peter Piper picked a peck of potassium."

They are the people who invent the pesticides that battle everything from dandelions to dollar spot on your greens, tees and fairways. And they continue to sustain these products so they can be applied at low and lasting rates.

They are the people who design sprinkler

The Einsteins of the Industry

BY LARRY AYLWARD



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heads to function as precisely as a souped-up Porsche.

They are the people who have brought biological products into being so superintendents can incorporate them into their turf maintenance programs.

They are the people who create intricate polypropylene-constructed contraptions to keep the sand in bunkers when Mother Nature gets mad.

They are the people who invent apparatuses such as aerifiers and verticutters so superintendents can give their turf extreme makeovers.

They are the people who invent the cool tools to help you probe your soil for content and moisture.

They are the people who devise utility vehicles that run so quietly that you can cruise up to a worker/slacker and catch him sleeping while he should be spot-spraying for weeds.

They are the people who invent specialty tools like hole cutters and bunker rakes that superintendents and their crews can't live without.

They are the people ... that superintendents and their crews can't live without.

No doubt you've heard the statistic that human beings only use 10 percent of their brains. That might be true for some of us, but it's a bunch of neuro nonsense as it applies to the creators that make the golf course maintenance world spin. These people are the Einsteins of the industry. A lot of us need them to do our jobs.

So the next time you encounter these behind-the-scenes stars of the industry — be it scientists, researchers or inventors — make sure to tell them how much you appreciate them for what they've given.

That would be a smart thing to do.

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