

# Survey Says

## More Superintendents Aim to Irrigate More Efficiently



**POLL ON WATER USE ALSO REVEALS THAT ONE-THIRD OF GOLFERS DON'T CARE ABOUT WATER CONSERVATION ON GOLF COURSES**

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EDITOR IN CHIEF**

**GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS** are much wiser when it comes to watering these days.

A whopping 97 percent of superintendents say they're taking measures to manage water more efficiently on their golf courses, according to a recent irrigation survey by *Golfdom*. The survey, conducted in mid-October, garnered nearly 500 responses from superintendents across the country.

The answers to the first question of the survey — “Are you doing all you can to manage water as efficiently as possible?” — reveals superintendents are more serious about reducing their water use than they were in past years. Fifty percent of superintendents said they're finding ways to reduce overall water use, even if it causes occasional stress on the turf. Forty-seven percent of respondents said, “Somewhat, we're trying to find the right balance.” Only 3 percent of superintendents said they were “watering away to attain as green and lush turf as possible.”

We conducted a similar survey in 2006, and the difference in answers between now and then is significant. Back then, only 25 percent of superintendents said they were managing water use as efficiently as possible, and 65 percent said they were try-

ing to find a balance. Almost 10 percent said they were watering away for the lush, green look.

Our survey also found that most superintendents — 66 percent — say it’s “very important” to have a sound water-management program at their golf courses.

But superintendents might have a long way to go in convincing golfers about the importance of water conservation. When asked, “How do your golfers feel about water conservation on the golf course?” only 16 percent of the 465 respondents said, “They think it’s very important.” Thirty-one percent of respondents said, “Golfers don’t care.”

Obviously, superintendents, as well as others in high-profile positions at golf courses including general managers and green committee members, must get on the education front to get more golfers to care.

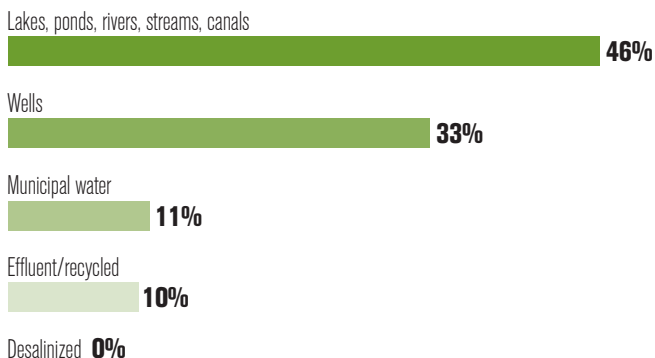
Surprisingly — or maybe not — most superintendents aren’t concerned about increased water costs or decreased water quality when it comes to their biggest concerns about their water use. Most superintendents are mainly concerned about increased scrutiny of their water use, obviously by non-golfers.

Our survey also found that only 26 percent of superintendents said they’ve conducted an irrigation audit to discover how they can be more responsible water users. Why haven’t the remaining 74 percent conducted an audit? It’s easy to assume, especially in a cost-cutting economy, that those superintendents think an audit costs too much. But 77 percent of superintendents said they haven’t done irrigation audits because they’re not sure what’s involved or how to go about it.

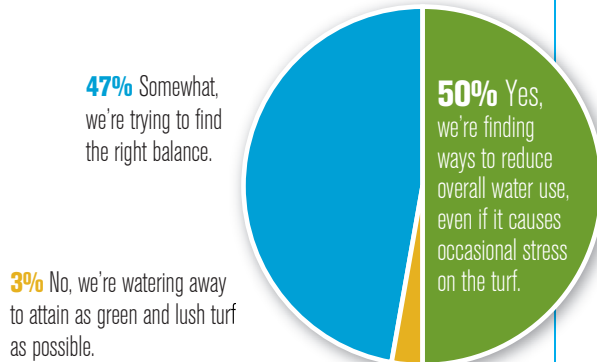
Sounds like an opportunity for irrigation consultants. ■

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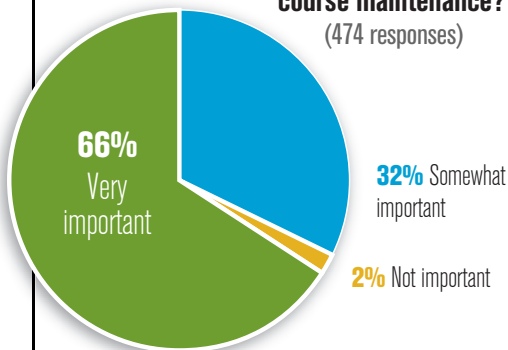
### What is your primary water source? (465 responses)



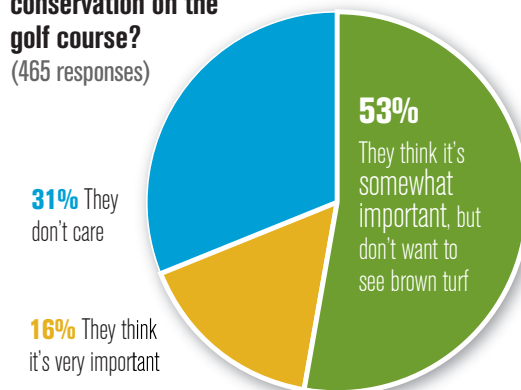
### Are you doing all you can to manage water as efficiently as possible? (474 responses)



### Where does a sound water management program, including an effort to conserve water, rank on your priority list when it comes to golf course maintenance? (474 responses)

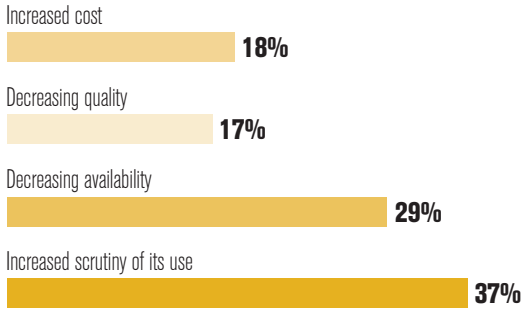


### How do your golfers feel about water conservation on the golf course? (465 responses)

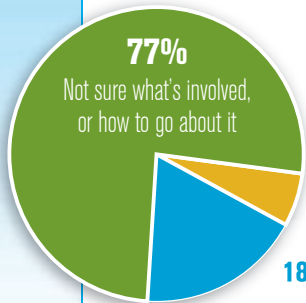
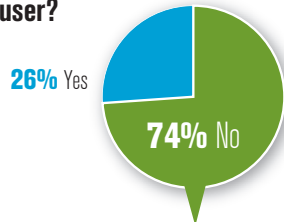


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**What is your biggest concern regarding the water you use for golf course irrigation?**  
(462 responses)



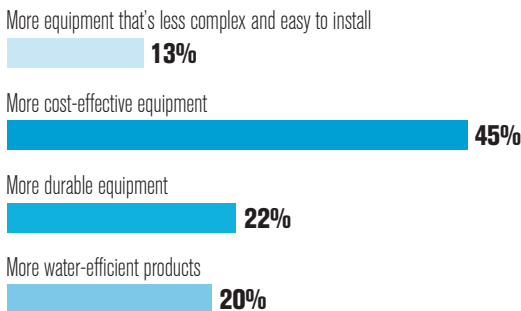
**Have you done an irrigation audit on your course to discover how you can be a more responsible water user?**  
(465 responses)



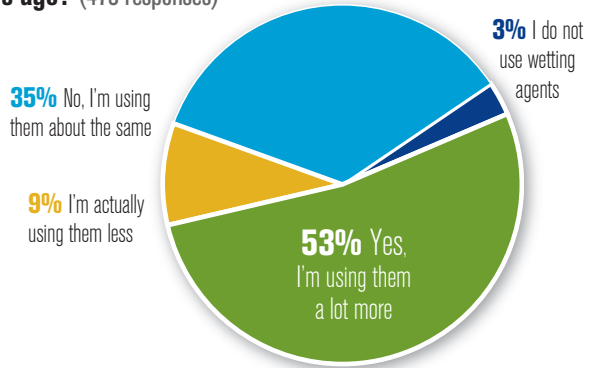
**What is the primary reason for not doing an irrigation audit?** (345 responses)

18% It's too costly  
5% It takes too much time

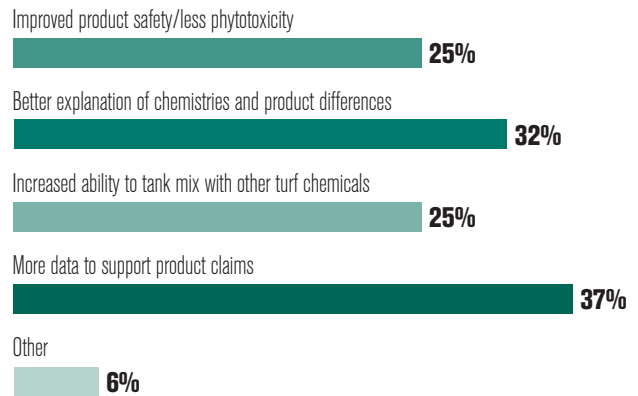
**What improvements would you most like to see from irrigation equipment companies?**  
(472 responses)



**According to a recent GCSAA study, 92 percent of superintendents use soil wetting agents to conserve water. Are you using soil wetting agents differently than you did five years ago?** (473 responses)



**What improvement would you most like to see from soil surfactant companies with regard to their products?**  
(473 responses)



**What area would you most like to see irrigation equipment companies improve on?** (470 responses)

