

On Feb. 1, the first Kikuyu-grass Excellence Summit was held at Mission Viejo Country Club in Mission Viejo, Calif. More than 25 golf course superintendents attended the conference, led by Mission Viejo superintendent Kevin Hutchins, to discuss how to manage kikuyugrass in Southern California.

Kikuyugrass is a warm-season turfgrass species that's limited for the most part to Southern California. However, in parts of Latin America, Africa, South America and Australia, kikuyugrass is the predominant turfgrass species on golf courses. Given its limited use in the United States, information on how to manage it is sparse.

The superintendents shared their successes, failures and ideas on how to manage kikuyugrass turf at the summit. Pat Gross, director of the Southwest Region for the United States Golf Association's Green Section, served as the recorder at the event and logged many ideas and suggestions.

The point of this column isn't to talk about kikuyugrass management (even though it would be a lively topic), but how we've progressed as a profession. For more than 100 years, golf course superintendents have met either at monthly chapter meetings, conferences, lunch, happy hour or by phone to discuss problems or ideas for managing turf. This camaraderie is unique, given that some of the superintendents who share helpful information with each other are in direct competition.

But over the last few years, I've heard some superintendents mention that the personal exchange of suggestions and ideas has slowed — or in other words, superintendents aren't sharing as much information as they used to. I'm not sure if this is true or if the mechanism of communication has just changed.

As in the past, the unwillingness to share information often involves one's own insecurities or there's an employer/corporation restriction on information flow. But I think the reason is more likely that the means of communication is changing. A plethora of information is now available at one's fingertips

Using Every Means of Communication

BY KARL DANNEBERGER



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through Google and data bases such as the Turfgrass Information File (TGIF). However, not all turfgrass cures can be found online.

This past March, many of the golf courses in the Detroit area suffered severe winter injury. Several Detroit superintendents are experimenting with various practices to minimize winter injury that can't be found in a book or online, but only through personal interaction.

Increasingly, more interactive exchanges between superintendents online occur through e-mail list servers. For example, several central Ohio superintendents interacted online through an e-mail list server recently to discuss issues such as rainfall totals, and when and how much plant growth regulators to use for *Poa annua* seedhead control.

Social networks such as Facebook and Twitter will continue to grow in importance and relevance for superintendents to help them stay in touch with colleagues and get up-to-date information. Electronic communication provides an outlet to share immediate information when time is at a premium.

I'm not ready to throw personal interaction into the Dumpster. Voice reflection and body language provide a better feel or reliability of an answer to a question or in a discussion than a written answer.

So this summer, when growing turf becomes stressful, use every means of communication you can with your peers, including attending chapter meetings to help you through the period.

Nobody can maintain turf in a vacuum.

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