

# Moving Toward a Greener Future

BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

Individuals, organizations and businesses around the world are placing a tremendous emphasis on "going green." On a personal level, that might mean installing a low-flow toilet or cutting your daily shower down from 10 minutes to five. For organizations, going green may translate to sponsoring an electronics recycling drive or switching from a printed newsletter to an electronic version. Meanwhile, a business could be more environmentally conscious by recycling office paper or installing a more efficient heating and cooling system. However, for those who work in the golf course industry, going green can be a very complex process — one that involves a significant change in every aspect of their jobs, from purchasing decisions and course maintenance to marketing and sales.

Golf courses have always had the reputation for being beautiful, impeccably manicured escapes from our everyday lives. Now, as golf courses feel the pressure to use less water and become more environmentally sustainable, superintendents may feel as if they're being pulled in two different directions. Do they try to keep their courses in their expected states of emerald green to continue to offer the experience that golfers have come to expect? Or do they risk losing their courses' aesthetic edge by cutting back on water and fertilizer use?

The fact is, that with today's advances, superintendents can combine those two objectives. They don't have to sacrifice beauty for sustainability. With the latest developments in golf course irrigation technology,



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changing agronomic cultural practices and savvy water harvesting techniques, it's more possible than ever to maintain a course that not only looks good, but also embodies the spirit of environmental stewardship.

So, how can golf courses move toward a greener future? For some superintendents, it means completely rethinking the way they manage and maintain their courses. For others, it simply means adding to the number of sustainable activities they've already embraced, perhaps without even realizing it. There's no one single path that every superintendent should follow to achieve greater sustainability. Some might decide to switch out some turfgrass areas for native plants. Others may decide that now's the time to replace outdated irrigation system components with today's more efficient rotors and sophisticated control systems.

Regardless of how a course becomes "green," the fact is that the time to move toward sustainability is now. It's not just about using water wisely on the course. It's just the right thing to do — for our future and the future of our industry. Through hard work and dedication, everyone in the golf industry — from manufacturer to distributor to superintendent to patron — can make a huge difference. And that's

what The Intelligent Use of Water is all about — each of us making choices at home, at school or at work that can have a cumulative, positive impact on our environment. ■

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