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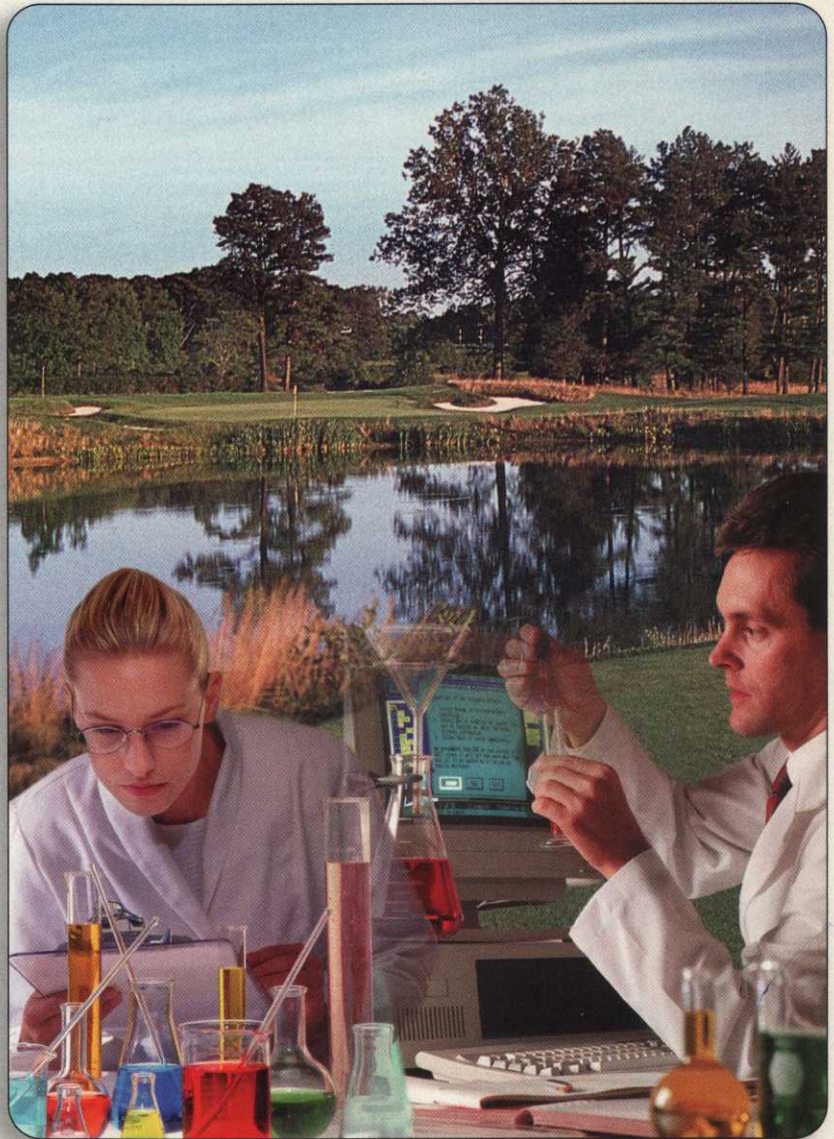
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## Spring Fertility

*Continued from page 70*

they did at the end of the previous year.

If superintendents follow a light and frequent fertilization plan, they should prepare in the spring by putting down heavier granular products, Kussow says. It's easier to find combination products containing micronutrients in granular form rather than in foliar, so if the soil is deficient in potassium or phosphorus, granulars can build a reserve of them in the soil. Then he recommends finishing the year in the fall with a foliar product to put the course to bed, Kussow says.

"Granular feeding should be at least part of the feeding regime because an all-liquid plan isn't the best way to optimize turf-root development," says Pat O'Brien, director of the USGA Green Section's Southeast Regional office. "Most superintendents are better off using some mixture of the two types."

Oscar Miles, certified superintendent at The Merit Club in Libertyville, Ill.,

agrees that the preparation for the spring should begin in the fall.

"Superintendents should build the root system and carbohydrate reserve in turf in October through November," Miles says. "If this is done through cultural methods and nutrient applications in the fall, superintendents won't need to supplement it to promote vertical growth until the soil temperatures are averaging 55 degrees F and above since the soil doesn't really become biologically friendly to promoting growth until then."

Miles says golfers enjoy the fruits of good fall preparation.

"Golfers really like the green speed and trueness in the spring when the turf isn't growing vertically," Miles says. "Superintendents don't need to promote spring growth unless there has been winter damage from low-temperature kill, ice damage, wind burn, snow mold or new grass growth."

In the Western region, which includes

Utah, O'Fee says fall fertilization is vital to getting off to a good start in the spring.

"We always get winter damage, so fertilizing in the fall before the bad weather hits allows nutrients to build up in the soil," O'Fee says. "If you fertilize before the damage hits, you'll have some fertility in the soil that will help the turf recover more quickly in the spring."

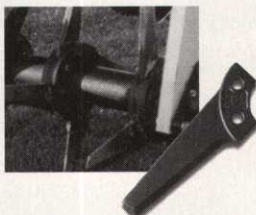
Happ says he recommends performing soil tests again in the summer so any deficiencies can be made up before the fall. "Much regrowth occurs in the fall/winter, and this is the best time to start preparing for the next season."

In the end, the University of Wisconsin's Kussow may offer the most succinct advice for superintendents about preparing a spring fertility program.

"My rule of thumb for spring fertility is that if it ain't broke, don't fix it," he says. "If it worked last year, stick with it. There's no substitute for experience in this kind of planning." ■



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CIRCLE NO. 138

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January 2003

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**GOLF COURSES**

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- 02  20 Semi-Private
- 03  30 Private
- 04  40 Resort
- 05  50 City/State/Municipal
- 06  55 Other Golf Courses (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- 07  60 Golf Course Architect
- 08  70 Golf Course Developer
- 09  90 Golf Course Builder
- 10  105 University/College
- 11  115 Distributor/Manufacturer/Consultant
- 12  100 Others Allied to the Field (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Which of the following best describes your title? (fill in ONE only)**

- 13  10 Golf Course Superintendent
- 14  15 Assistant Superintendent
- 15  25 Owner/Management Company Executive
- 16  30 General Manager
- 17  35 Director of Golf
- 18  70 Green Chairman
- 19  45 Club President
- 20  75 Builder/Developer
- 21  55 Architect/Engineer
- 22  60 Research Professional
- 23  65 Other Titled Personnel (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**3. What is your facility's annual maintenance budget?**

- 24  A More than \$2 Million
- 25  B \$1,000,001-\$2 Million
- 26  C \$750,001-\$1 Million
- 27  D \$500,001-\$750,000
- 28  E \$300,001-\$500,000
- 29  F \$150,001-\$300,000
- 30  G Less than \$150,000

**4. If you work for a golf course, how many holes are on your course?**

- 31  A 9
- 32  B 18
- 33  C 27
- 34  D 36+
- 35  E Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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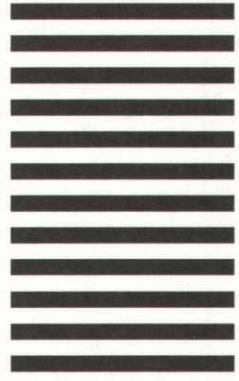
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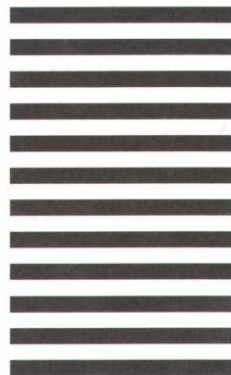
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**Y**ou've probably noticed. Golf has reverted back to its pre-1997 place in the world. It's viewed by outsiders as an elitist, environmentally harmful pastime that's played only by the arrogant and corporate (is that redundant?).

Maybe it was the frown your great-grandfather failed to conceal when someone yelled into his one good ear that you're in the golf business. Or at your spouse's company holiday party, you mentioned your ties to golf. A few years ago, such a reference would earn something like, "Oh, really? I'm so glad we met. I've been thinking of taking up golf. Isn't Tiger amazing?"

Yes, you said. Tiger is the Second Coming. Then you suggested lessons with your course's best sweater folder and went on your way with pride. Golf was "cool."

Now all we get is, "Oh? Golf?"

What happened?

For one thing, our attention-deficit world-order can only devote its euphoria so long. Tiger gave golf a coolness extension with his 2000-2001 four-Majors-in-a-row-slam. Even into early 2002, golf was exempt when it seemed he might go on a real Grand Slam run.

Since midyear, golf's stock has gone the way of the real market. Most blame the demise on the economy. But as we head into 2003 and beyond, the hangover figures to last no matter what happens with the economy. Why?

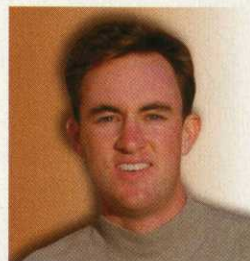
One reason is the environment. Golf is now regularly cited as public enemy No. 1 in fights over water, land and wildlife protection. The Bush Administration is working hard to undo as much environmental legislation as possible. Some of the laws are silly and unwieldy. Many more make perfect sense because they protect places that need preservation. (Do we really need obnoxious snowmobiles in Yellowstone? There isn't snow elsewhere?).

The Salton Sea in California may eventually be extinct because of water wasting golf courses. That was a recent passing shot in one of our nation's more reputable magazines. But the magazine apparently forgot that every new house in Las Vegas has a pool and a swampy front lawn.

Overcoming this fervent and at times irrational hatred of golf will be difficult in light of

## Bummer! Golf Now Viewed as Uncool

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



WHAT HAPPENED?

SINCE MIDYEAR,

GOLF'S STOCK HAS

GONE THE WAY OF

THE REAL MARKET

various scandals. Environmentalists can point to the average American golfer's dream course, one that clashes with its native surroundings.

Another reason for golf's demise is Hootie Johnson. His spat with "that woman" will unfairly take most of the golf malaise blame. No matter how you feel about the membership issue, the saga reminds the rest of the world that golf has its share of odd, out-of-touch characters — golf's versions of Trent Lott and William Byrd.

When Enron and the economy went, so did our rapture with CEOs. When he pointed his bayonet with that press release, Hootie forgot that golf is often associated with corporate greed, making golf an easy target. Johnson and golf's big wigs have been put on alert: When you make a lot of money as a nonprofit organization, you have to play by modern society's rules no matter how silly they may seem.

Another reason for golf's fall is inaccessibility. If underprivileged and even privileged kids were allowed to caddy, they'd have a much better chance of getting into golf. They'd earn money outdoors, get to watch adults make fools of themselves and maybe even take up golf in a natural, unforced way. If there were more affordable, shorter public courses along with some beginner facilities, the sport would actually grow the way its visionaries have hoped.

But no one will be sacrificing golf car revenue to let kids caddy. Building beginner or short courses is out of the question. Tiger's going to spend \$25 million for his 23-acre golf learning center in Anaheim. What a deal!

Well, golf may not be cool anymore, but it could be worse. We could be in the health-care industry. Or in the FBI. Or Arthur Andersen accountants or . . .

*Contributing editor Geoff Shackelford can be reached at [geoffshac@aol.com](mailto:geoffshac@aol.com)*

# Real-Life Solutions

■ IMPROVING THE TEE AREA

## Sprucing Up Tees on a Bargain Budget

You'll be surprised what you can do without breaking the bank

BY PETER BLAIS

**T**he tee area is an opportunity for a golf course to make 18 first impressions.

With a little time, effort and a minimal amount of money, superintendents can make those initial impressions a round full of good ones.

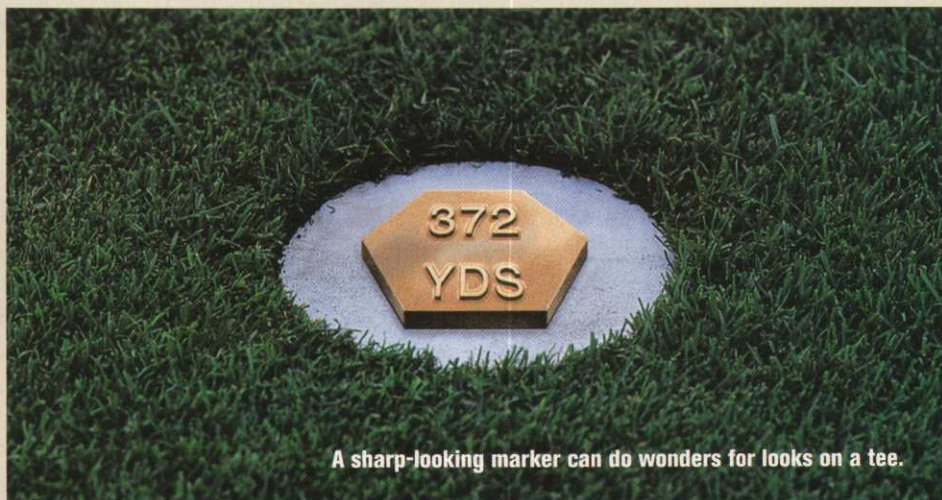
Many of the materials and most of the labor needed to improve tee areas can be supplied by the course. For example, rather than purchase tee markers, Gari Scherting uses mesquite branches, which are cut to size and painted the appropriate tee color on

### Challenge

You don't have a lot of money to invest, but your tees need a slight facelift. In order to spruce them up, you need to be creative with dollars and your thinking.

### Solution

There's a lot you can do that costs little or even no money. For instance, cutting down on "scatter" on a tee will make it more appealing visually. You can also buy new tee markers and use other inexpensive gadgets.



A sharp-looking marker can do wonders for looks on a tee.

STANDARD GOLF

the ends. "We cut new branches and redo those markers when we overseed every year," says the superintendent at the 45-hole Palm Valley GC in Goodyear, Ariz.

Buck Workman, superintendent at Cateechee GC in Hartwell, Ga., makes tee markers by sawing off pieces of fence post 10 inches long, mitered on each side and painted on the ends.

"They are very inexpensive," Workman says. "You can buy one fence post for \$3 and get seven to eight tee markers out of it."

On his par-62, Hale Irwin-designed Short Course, Scherting saves money by overseeding just the tops of the tee areas in the fall rather than overseeding all of the walk-ups and approaches to the tees. "It gives us a nice look in the winter and leaves less grass to maintain," says Scherting, who estimates his

savings at \$5,000 in labor and another \$200 in seed during the fall and winter months.

Organizing tees is one of the main things superintendents can do to give them a better look, says Par Aide Products President Steve Garske, who recommends finding a place near the tee where the trash can, ball washer and bench can be placed together. A rock base underneath these items provides an area for water and soap drippings to disappear rather than sitting on the ground, he says, noting that adding a planter or two will provide some color.

"Put them in a central place where

you can make sort of an oasis that is convenient to both walkers and riders," Garske suggests. "It's a nice approach rather than having things scattered all over the place. You'd be using the same equipment you already have. The only added expense would be clearing the spot and putting down some rock and a planter. A better-organized space also cuts down on mowing and the need to move equipment."

Workman places brick paving stones around the bottom of ball washers and tee signs.

"The brick work adds a tad of detail without overdoing it," he says. "I would compare it to whitewalls on tires. It adds a little something, but not too much. It's easy to install. You just go out

*Continued on page 78*



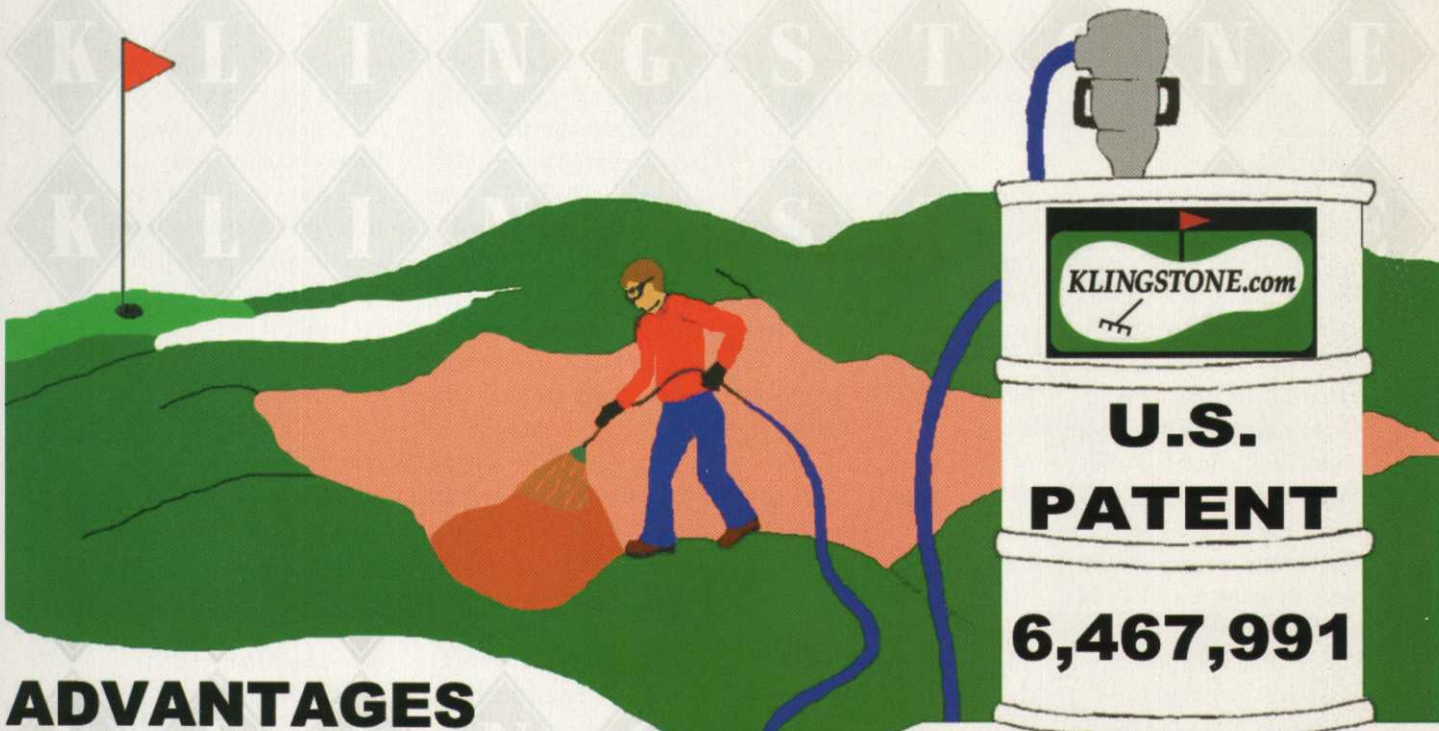
**Broken tee caddies are becoming more popular, particularly on par-3 holes.**

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## Real-Life Solutions

*Continued from page 76*  
there with some sand and level the area. It also eliminates some of the trim work you might normally have to do around signs.”

Minimizing the amount of equipment is key, says Steve Tyler, western regional sales manager with Standard Golf. “Too much stuff on the tee box is simply not attractive, even though I sell product,” adds Tyler, who was a superintendent for 18 years before joining Standard Golf.

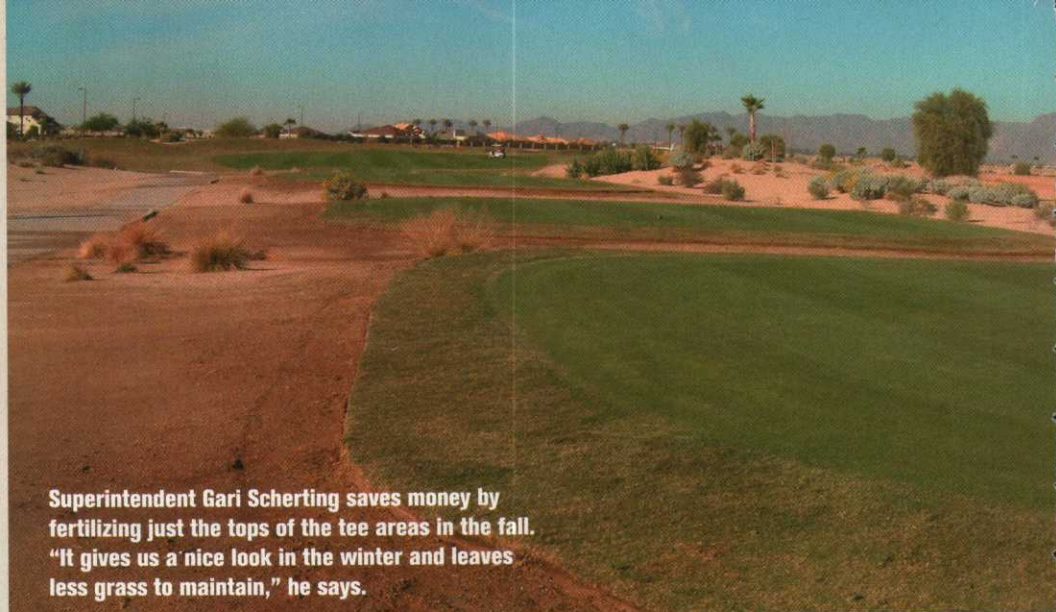
Tyler suggests mowing tees four times a week.

“Tees are as important as the putting surface when it comes to how they are trimmed,” he advises. “You can use a different striping pattern every few days to make your course look a little more professional. If you’re mowing parallel with the fairway one day, do the same with the tees. If you’re mowing across the fairway, then mow across the tees. Tee boxes should be uniform with the rest of the course.”

Like Garske, Tyler urges superintendents to keep all accessories clean.

“Change the soap and clean the ball washers three or four times a week,” Tyler says. “Change the tee towels three times a week. Disposable towels only cost about 10 cents apiece.

“Rather than just dumping the garbage, the receptacles should be brought in every couple of weeks and power-washed,” Tyler adds. “Just dumping them doesn’t get everything out, particu-



**Superintendent Gari Scherting saves money by fertilizing just the tops of the tee areas in the fall. “It gives us a nice look in the winter and leaves less grass to maintain,” he says.**

larly in the summer. It’s not the kind of thing that costs you a lot of money, just a little time.”

For ladies’ days or tournaments, Tyler suggests temporarily replacing the regular tee markers with small flower pots from local nurseries. Use a hole cutter and set the pot in the ground. The flowers can be given away at the luncheon or at the end of the event. “That’s always a big hit and gives you some color out there,” he adds.

Steve Swanson, superintendent at Siena GC in Las Vegas, needed to address the amount of play and inadequate size of some of his tee boxes. In the past year, he’s expanded or added six tees to improve playability. “To keep it affordable, we’ve done everything in-house, from design to construction to finding soil,” he said.

Previous agreements with course architects require many facilities to bring in the original designers to expand or build new tees, Swanson says. Siena had no such agreement, which saved a considerable sum in design expenses.

“This was the first time I

had constructed a tee box,” he says. “It’s not a difficult task. It’s really a matter of making sure the design blends with what the original designer had. That’s not something you can teach. It’s more a matter of feel.”

Sometimes superintendents need to purchase additional materials to spruce up their tees. But they don’t have to cost an arm and a leg.

Tour Golf of Wellington, Fla., sells in-ground, granite distance markers for \$25 apiece. Measuring 5 inches by 7 inches and buried 4 inches deep, they have a polished face with the yardage distance engraved on them. “Typically, we sell 90 to a course,” said Tour Golf representative Julianne Eubank. “That’s \$2,250. They are classy looking and last a long time. We sell bronze distance markers that are about double the price of granite.”

Standard Golf recently introduced a new distance marker made from recycled automobile tires that’s good for the environment, Tyler says. They come in different colors to designate different tees. They measure 8 inches in diameter and sit flush with the ground so they can be used on tees or fairways.

Those interested in environmental stewardship and saving money may be interested in Par Aide’s new water-cooler stations, trash receptacles and divot boxes made of recycled materials, according to Par Aide Sales Manager Dan Brown.

Standard Golf offers seven or eight different styles of tee markers. Prices range from \$6 to \$13, with personalized ones as much as \$20.

“Pick one that’s clean and easy to repaint annually or semiannually,” Tyler recommends. “The personalized ones should be cleaned every day. Courses don’t always take care of their accessories like they should. Some superintendents make their own tee markers, but you have to weigh the difference between what it costs you in time and materials vs. what it would cost to just buy them.”

Broken-tee caddies are becoming increasingly popular, particularly on par-3s, Tyler notes. Providing golfers with a place to deposit broken tees improves tee box appearance and can reduce mower damage. ■

*Blais is a free-lance writer from North Yarmouth, Maine.*



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# Tips

## Pump Station Maintenance

**Experts suggest you keep it clean and test its performance to ensure uninterrupted performance during the irrigation season**

**BY FRANK H. ANDORKA JR.,**  
Managing Editor

**A** smooth-running irrigation system is central to keeping turf alive and healthy during the height of the golf season. Consequently, most superintendents do a test run to make sure all the system's heads are working and perform necessary maintenance.

One piece of the irrigation system that often gets overlooked, however, is the pump station. Although it drives everything else, it's usually far down on

the list of tasks superintendents perform during the spring.

But experts say taking care of the pump station is just as important. Here are a few tips on how to get it in shape before the season begins.

### **Develop a performance baseline**

If they haven't done it already, superintendents should run a test early in the season to see how the pump station is functioning, says Brian Vinchesi, president of Irrigation Consulting in Pepperell, Mass. The test should consist of turning on a set number of sprinkler

heads at the same time and measuring the water pressure and the gallons-per-minute rate.

"Once this baseline is established, you can turn on those same sprinklers and compare the numbers to what you saw earlier," Vinchesi says. "If you see a significant drop in either number, it should raise red flags about the overall performance of your pump station."

Michael Kronos, president of Hydro Designs, an irrigation consulting firm in Frederick, Md., says superintendents should log these figures so they can make side-by-side comparisons over a period of years.

"Expect a pump station to deteriorate slowly over time, but look for significant decreases from one season to the next,"



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