

“There is nothing so important as the book can be.”

Maxwell Perkins

## THE SUPERINTENDENT'S LIBRARY: The Top Shelf

By Mike Semler

*Editor's Note: The credibility of any author who is writing on a particular subject springs from his interest and expertise on that subject. Couple those things with the proper kind of research and review and you will have a written piece like each of those Mike Semler is presenting in the next three issues of THE GRASSROOTS. His interest in the written word is one I observed in the time Mike was on my staff, and it has continued in subsequent years. Bookstores and libraries are among his favorite places, and his own personal turf library reflects his view and gives credence to his three-part series. Additionally, he has sought the advice and suggestions of professors at the UW—Madison involved in plant and soil sciences, as well as input from many of his colleagues.*

*Mike and I have played the book-choice game over the years. I knew he was the right person for this task from the answer he gave to my question, "If you were stranded on a desert island in the middle of the ocean and could have only one book, which one would you choose?" Semler's reply was, "A book entitled — HOW TO BUILD A RAFT, naturally!"*

*Enjoy these definitive reviews and recommendations. "There's something special about people who are interested in the printed word," Nathan Pine once said. "They are a species all their own — learned, kind, knowledgeable and human." Who could disagree?*

MSM

The amount of information pertaining to golf course management that a Superintendent must have at his disposal at any given moment can be insurmountable. Since we must have an understanding of many different areas dealing with turfgrass management, we could be lost without some sort of help. One of the best means of having information at the Superintendent's fingertips is through his reference library. The need for one is undebatable!

Many of you probably have a library already, or have one started in some type of fashion, or maybe not! What I would like to do in the next three articles is give some ideas on what books I feel are worthy of our libraries. In this article I will give the books I feel every one of us should have. This priority, or top shelf, will have some of the best, in-depth texts which I consider invaluable to us as reference materials. The second article will deal with some worthy additions to the top shelf, if they can be afforded or are desired. The third will give some welcome additions, but on a lighter note.

Obviously, this list could never include all possible selections, nor could it be totally encompassing. Owning and purchasing a book is quite personal and

will depend on what you like and what information you are looking for. Everybody has their favorites, and you have my apologies if your favorite isn't on the list. However, if you are in the market for a book to start your library or are looking for another good reference source, maybe we can get you started on your search with these ideas.

One of the first and most important books to be included in our library would be a text on soils. One of the better ones in print today is:

*An Introduction to Soils and Plant Growth*  
Authors: Donahue, Miller and Shickluna  
5th edition, 1983. Cost — \$35.00

An excellent general text encompassing all of the important aspects of soil science, including; morphology, classification, fertility, weathering, management and more. A must-have book for all of us since our job requires that we deal with and properly manage the soil.

Dr. James Beard has been writing books on turf management for many years. His newest one:

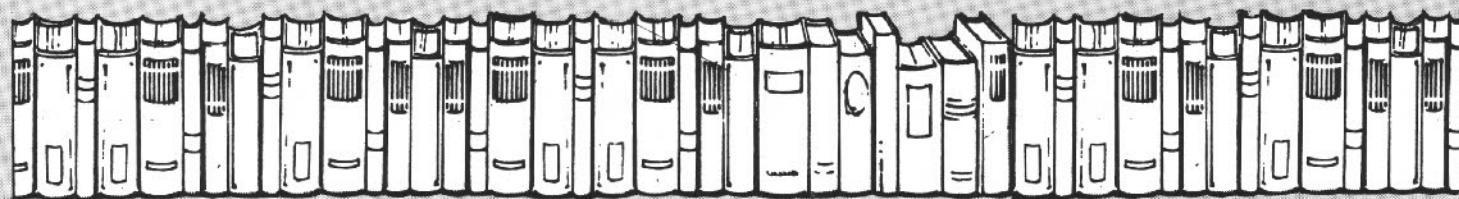
*Turf Management for Golf Courses*  
Author: Dr. James B. Beard  
1982. Cost — \$45.00

is as complete a book as you will find on Golf Course Management. It covers all topics including: design principles, disease identification and control, herbicides, insecticides, seeding guides, turfgrass species identification, nutrients and deficiency symptoms. . .the list goes on and on. Another must because of it's intent to cover all aspects of golf course management, something not found in many texts because of the specialized nature of our job.

Another good turf management book:  
*Turfgrass: Science and Culture*  
Author: Dr. James B. Beard  
1972. Cost — \$31.00

is designed as a guide in the proper selection and cultural practices of turfgrass for specific uses. It emphasizes principles and methods of operation in turfgrass cultures. It is worthy of the top shelf because of its intent to cover all turf management practices, including golf turf.

In general, disease and insects can make or break a season. Control must begin with identification





because without proper identification, control measures can be expensive and/or ineffective. Therefore a necessity for any library is:

*The Compendium for Turfgrass Diseases*  
By the American Phytopathological Society  
Author: Richard Smiley  
1986. Cost — \$20.00

which gives up-to-date names, morphology, identifying characteristics and some good pictures. It also includes cultural and chemical control measures and environmental factors influencing the diseases. One of the best, up-to-date books dedicated solely to turfgrass diseases.

Along with proper disease identification is proper insect identification. The causal organism must be known before control measures can be instituted correctly and economically. For turf insect identification:

*Destructive Insects of Turf*  
Author: Dr. Harry Niemczyk  
1983. Cost — \$15.00

is a good text with excellent color photos of each pest, resulting damage and identifying characteristics. Also included are the life cycles and timing schedules for chemical application.

A good general insect book which covers almost all plant materials and the insects which affect them is:

*The Gardeners Bug Book*  
Author: Cynthia Westcott  
1973. Cost — \$20.00

A funny name, but a good host index which lists the host and the known insect pests which attack them. This index makes the book a worthwhile addition. Some good pictures and control measures. It is generally a weak turf insect book, but is very strong in other areas, including trees, shrubs, flowers, fruit and vegetables.

In addition to managing turfgrass, we are becoming more aware of proper management of our trees and shrubs. They are an integral part of the game itself and proper selection and care is essential. A comprehensive book:

*The Manual of Woody Landscape Plants*  
Author: Michael Dirr  
1983. Cost — \$25.00

covers extensive identifying characteristics, proper site location and cultural management, growth habit, diseases and insects, propagation, cultivars and much more. It has a limited number of useful pictures. However, if you want to get information on a particular species of woody ornamental, chances are this book has it!

Many of us cannot afford to have an arborist on our staff and therefore we must be able to logically care for plant materials ourselves. To help in this care, the book:

*Arboriculture: The Care of Trees, Shrubs and Vines in the Landscape*

Author: Richard Harris  
1983. Cost — \$40.00

is better than most. It provides a comprehensive coverage of: site planning and preparation, fertilizer and water requirements, pruning guidelines, diseases, insects, chemical and cultural control, and more. This is the how-to book in arboriculture for the do-it-yourself Superintendent.

A manual put out by the University of Wisconsin Extension Service:

*The Urban Phytonarian Handbook*  
Editor: Christen D. Merck  
Published by: The Agricultural Bulletin  
Madison, WI

1983. Cost — \$30.00

is designed to help evaluate and treat all types of unhealthy plants. Disease, insect, nutritional, environmental, diagnostic and remedy information make up the bulk of the material. The topics are far ranging, but do include ornamentals, turf, flowers and more. It is an extensive guide to many of the pests found in Wisconsin and its agricultural community.

Since we manage golf courses, our management practices directly affect the game and its quality. It is imperative, then, that we have an understanding of the rules. Therefore, a book on the rules of golf is also essential. The USGA's concise book on "*The Rules of Golf*" is quite sufficient for our purpose and costs about one dollar.

Another necessary addition, one which I think is unquestionable in its merits and priceless to anyone, is a dictionary. It doesn't matter about cost or size, but rather something you are comfortable with. The ability to spell and communicate correctly, and use proper words is essential to anyone, and we are no exception to that rule.

One of the last items to be included on the top shelf of our library is a subscription to our National magazine, *Golf Course Management*. At a cost of 30 dollars per year, it is invaluable for finding out what is going on in the industry and keeping in touch with our peers. Also included in this would be subscriptions to: *Weeds, Trees and Turf*, and *Grounds Maintenance*. They are supplied upon request and free of charge. Once again, keeping up with the industry is essential and this is just one more way.

The amount of printed material available to us concerning golf course management is formidable. To try and review all of it without the possibility of overlooking some good books would be impossible. However, in these articles I hope to enlighten you to some excellent possible additions to your library.

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