

hardness and amount of ball spin retained after impact.

Another study conducted in the UK specifically addressed golf ball impact on the green. A conclusion of the study was that greens with low amounts of annual bluegrass provided a more firm surface that enabled golfers to utilize backspin. As annual bluegrass populations increased the ability to utilize backspin decreased. This relationship was suggested to be indirect, possibly a result of increased moisture levels that encourage annual bluegrass. Do large populations of annual bluegrass limit a superintendent's ability to develop firm surfaces?

Player Perspective. Stephen Baker suggests an interesting concept relative to player evaluation. He suggests a written survey distributed to the golfer to determine overall putting green turf performance on the same day that physical measurements of ball roll and ball impact are collected. This would enable a superintendent to determine the actual quality preferences of the golfers using the course. A superintendent could then focus on maintenance practices that provide the conditions most appreciated by the players. This process has begun in Wisconsin as the putting green

research at the Noer Facility strives to identify some guidelines that could then be tested on courses and evaluated by golfers. Is it possible we are over-grooming the course?

The Game

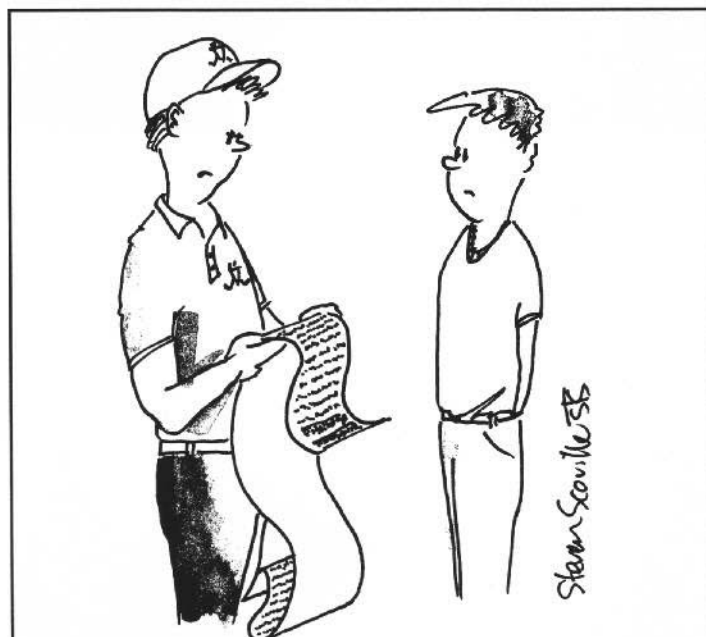
The golf course section of the *Proceedings* contains articles on pesticides and the environment, black layer and other interesting topics. However, an analysis of professional player performance provides some interesting bits of information with respect to course maintenance. Driving distance over the last 25 years has increased only 12 yards, greens in regulation is the same, but putting has improved by approximately one stroke and accounts for improved scoring over the 25-year period. I contend that the lack of significantly improved performance over the period is a result of refined maintenance practices that have enabled the courses to maintain a consistently challenging test that still rewards accuracy and patience. Course maintenance has improved as player skill has improved.

The *Proceedings* conclude with articles that address the future of golf and the need for new course development. I was glad to see the discussion bal-

anced among demand for golf, economics and environmental concerns. We are truly becoming more aware of the biological and social issues that impact the game. There is even a suggestion that golf has a civilizing function that attempts to explain why it has grown from an obscure and casual game played by an elite few, to a worldwide global obsession. The authors suggest that the discipline involved to excel at golf has a civilizing effect on the masses. Clearly, these authors have never attended a green committee meeting or been around on men's day.

Closing Thought

I will always consider myself to be a student of my profession (the science of turfgrass) and may never embody all that the game of golf strives to teach me. Yet, I am convinced that continued progress in golf course management and science must include the golfer. The superintendent will need to develop management programs that are refined to address the golfers' reasonable expectations, linking quality to maintenance. These programs will emanate from the accumulation of knowledge and experience—also known as science. ♣



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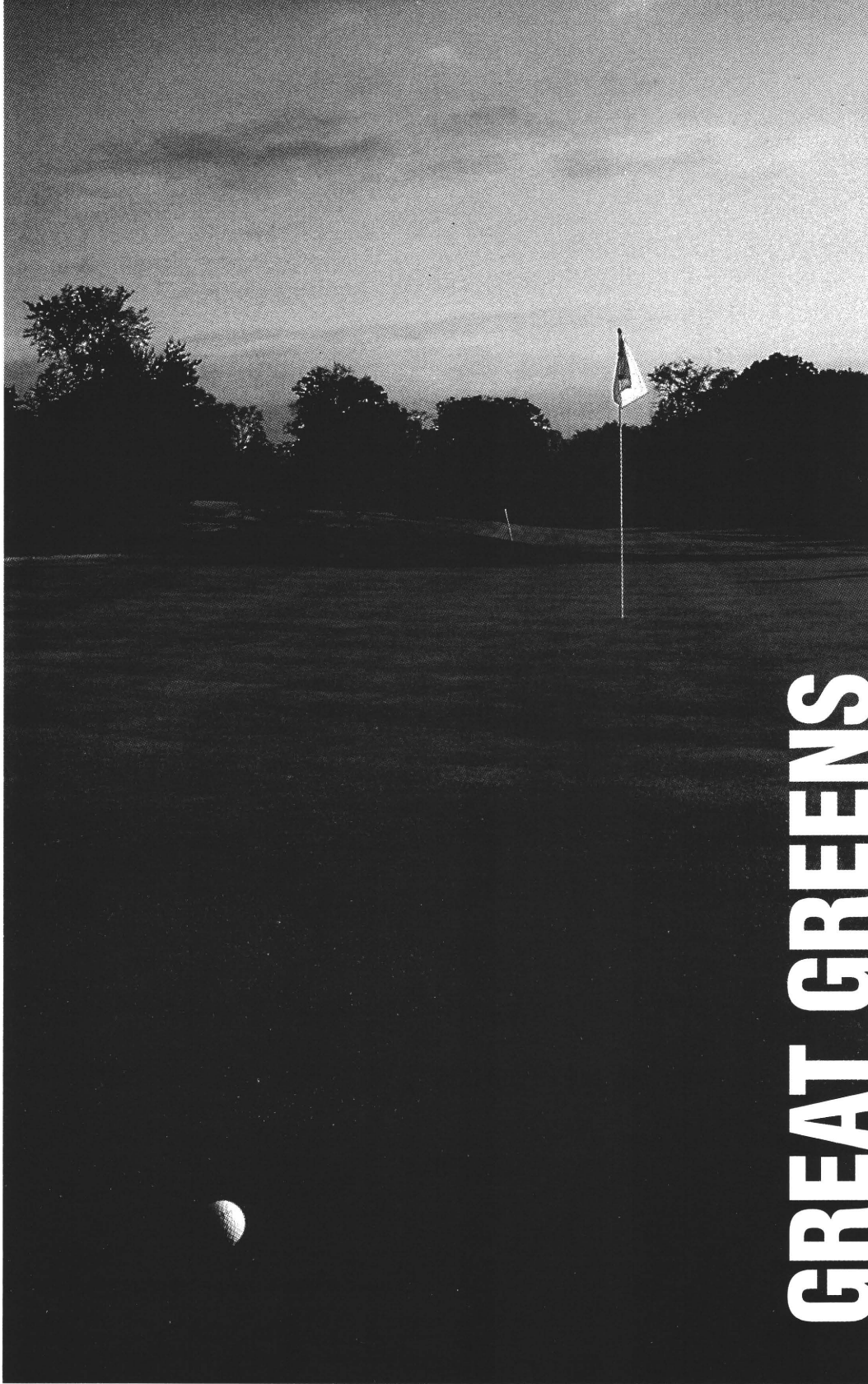
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Grass Never Grows Under His Feet

By Lori Ward Bocher

It may sound strange to say this about someone who works in the turf industry, but the grass never grows under Dan DeVault's feet. Oh, it's true that he spends lots of time on turf-grass. But he never stays in one place for very long.

"I'm on the go a lot. If I'm not on the go, I don't know what to do with myself," he admits. "I like to be running and to be on the edge all of the time."

In the summer, his job certainly keeps him on the run. As a sales rep in the turf division of Hanley Company, Inc., (Sun Prairie), he spends about 95 percent of his time on the road during the growing season. His territory in Wisconsin covers an area roughly southwest of a line from LaCrosse to Wisconsin Dells to Beloit.

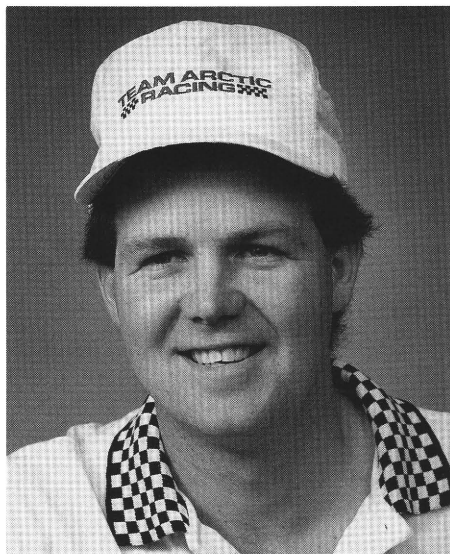
And in the winter, his snowmobiles keep him on the run — so much so that this past winter he finished first in final point standings among all snowmobile racers in the U.S. (compiled by United States Snowmobile Association). His brother and racing partner, Ed, finished second.

"This was a real good year for us," Dan emphasizes. "The points added up. We won three races at Eagle River, which attracts a lot of racers from all over the world."

Dan travels to snowmobile races just about every weekend from early December to the middle of March. "It pretty much eats up the whole winter," he says. "But it fits in pretty nice with my work because that slows down in the winter."

Dan and his brother have traveled to races as far away as Grand Forks, N.D., Brainerd, Minn., or Manitoba, Canada. In addition to the travel, they spend two or three week nights working on their machines. "After getting home from work, we'll work on the snowmobiles 'til midnight or one in the morning," Dan points out, adding that they do all of their own maintenance.

"I started racing snowmobiles in 1973 when I was just 12 years old," Dan explains. "My dad was racing prior



Dan DeVault, world class snowmobile racing champion!

to that. They had junior classes that you could start racing in when you were 12, and I've been racing ever since." His father still goes to the races with his two sons.

"My brother and I race together. For the past six years we've been running it as a business," he continues. "We have a lot of sponsors who help us. Triangle Tool Corporation out of Milwaukee is one of them. Arctic Cat is the brand we race, so they support us with parts and traveling money."

Dan and Ed run five different race sleds. "The type of racing we do is oval sprint racing which is done on pure ice," he points out. The race track is half a mile long, with races running five, seven or ten laps depending on whether it's a heat, quarter final, semi final or final. "And we race in five different classes, so we can put on a lot of miles in a weekend."

The classes are based on the power of the engines. "We have some souped up engines, one that puts out at 115 horsepower," Dan points out. "The others are stock snowmobiles — the same as a consumer could buy in a store. Our smallest is at 80 horsepower and our largest at 102 horsepower."

Their fastest machine will run at 98 mph in 600 feet. Because they're operating on pure ice, they add studs to the snowmobile track and put carbide on the skis.

"We wear leather race pants for protection against the studs. We've got very good, expensive helmets. And we wear an impact-resistant jacket," Dan says of their protective gear. So far, he hasn't had any major accidents. "A couple of bangs and bruises, but no broken bones as of yet, knock on wood. I have been hit by snowmobiles passing by at about 80 miles per hour. It leaves a heck of a bruise on your leg."

Why does he race snowmobiles? "It's a hobby that we enjoy a lot," Dan answers. "It keeps us really busy in the winter. It's very competitive, and we both like competition. And I think racing is safer than riding on the trails these days because you're riding on a closed circuit instead of out in the woods."

When the snowmobiles are put away for the season, Dan finds other sports to keep him busy. "I play fast-pitch softball a couple of nights a week in the summer," he points out. "I like to hunt deer, pheasant and grouse. I and try to get up north to do a little muskie fishing."

Dan and his wife, Sandy, live in Cottage Grove and have two sons who help keep life hopping. Bradley is 7 years old and Billy is 3. "The kids like to fish, so I take them out whenever I can," Dan says. "In the summertime we try to go out real early on Sunday mornings. The boys are in sports, too — soccer, basketball and T-ball. And they like to swim. They keep us busy running around."

With their hectic schedules, Dan and Sandy sometimes run into each other unexpectedly. Sandy is a landscape architect for Herman Landscape in Madison and a sales rep for McKay Nursery. "We have a lot of the same clients. And once in a while we run into each other at a turf show," Dan explains. "She tells me she's going

(Continued on page 15)



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(Continued from page 13)

some place one day, and we don't know we're going to the same place until we get there."

Dan helped organize the Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape Expo '95. "I worked with the vendors in the trade show and really enjoyed it," he says. "It's become one of the premier shows, I feel."

Hanley Company, Inc., is an associate member of the WGCSA, and Dan attends some of the meetings. "I really enjoy the association," he says. "Monroe is a great person. He's involved me, let me know who the people are. He's made it a lot of fun to be in the business."

"The best part of my job is being out on the golf course with the superintendents," he continues, adding that about 50 percent of his business is with golf courses. "It's like visiting friends every time I stop at a golf course. It doesn't seem like a job some days. It's always fun to demonstrate new equipment. People are always intrigued by it."

Dan listens to what others say about the new equipment. "After you demonstrate it and get input from five or six people, you form an opinion about a new piece of equipment," he says. "A lot of times we pass comments back to the factory. Sometimes they can make a change (in the equipment) quite easily."

But there are some people who don't want to be bothered with equipment demonstrations, so Dan stays away. "I try not to be a pain," he says. "If they want something, I let them know that I can always be reached at any time, at home or at the office. But I don't want to be a pain in their side."

The turf division of Hanley Company carries equipment from some old, familiar companies like Ransomes, Cushman, Ryan and Ford, as well as from some newer

companies like Land Pride and Daihatsu. "There are a lot of new companies coming into the turf business," Dan explains. "Even Cushman, Ransomes and Ryan are growing in leaps and bounds right now. It's hard to keep up on it."

He believes the increase in business is due to the growing number of golf courses. "It's unbelievable. There are more people wanting to golf and more golf courses being built every year," Dan says. "There's a big market out there. And there's a lot being missed. We spend our time looking at the bigger golf courses while driving by the smaller ones. That's something that I want to work on a little bit more — to concentrate on the courses that we are missing."

Dan came to his present sales job at Hanley Implement through a rather interesting route — one that emphasizes his need to be active and outdoors. The route also makes him more effective in his career.

Born in Madison, Dan graduated from Madison East High School in 1980. Then he attended Madison Area Technical College to study diesel mechanics. "My father was a diesel mechanic and I was always around him," Dan explains. "It seemed interesting to me."

After graduating from MATC, Dan went to work for Diesel Injection Service in Sun Prairie. "The work was completely indoors. We were locked in all the time, never outside," Dan recalls. "That was one of the reasons I wanted to get out of there."

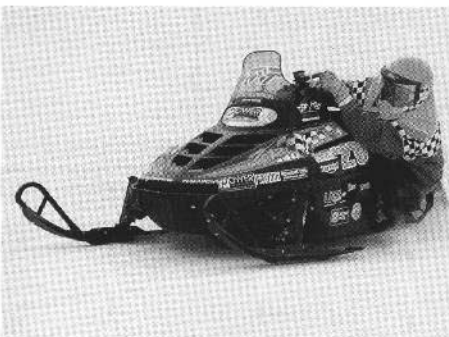
So he went to work with his grandfather on his 40-cow, 400-acre dairy farm near Cazenovia. Dan had spent a lot of childhood weekends on the farm, so he had good memories. "The farm was so appealing — to go from a locked environment to being outside all the time," he points out.

But things didn't work out. "There was a discrepancy between the old ways and the new ways," he explains. "My grandfather didn't want to give up anything or let me invest in the farm. He wanted to be in charge of everything. All the money was in his pockets. I knew I had to go someplace where I could make a long-term investment."

In 1983 he started at Hanley Company as a mechanic. Later he was promoted to shop foreman in the lawn and garden division, and then to department manager of the same division. "And about seven years ago I started selling turf equipment," Dan says.

"The former sales manager took me on a trip once because he needed a mechanic," Dan recalls. "We ended up going to Sentry World and a couple of other courses. The golf course side of the business intrigued me. I liked being outside with the equipment and on the golf courses. I was never a great golfer, but I always liked being around golf courses."

So he moved into his newest job, the one that he has stayed with the longest. And even though he spends a lot of time on turfgrass, this avid sportsman still doesn't let any grass grow under his feet. 🍷

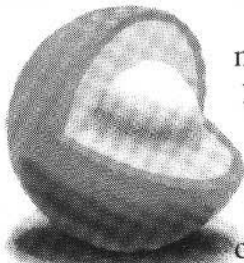


Dan runs to a first place finish on December 11, 1994 in the D stock class.



Watch ESPN for the races and, as in this November 26, 1994 picture, interviews with our Dan DeVault!

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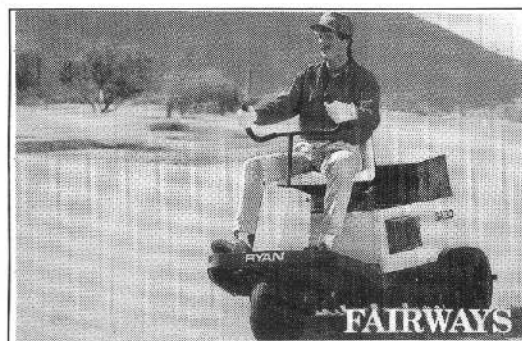


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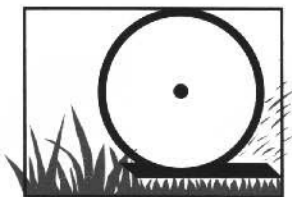
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Prairies Are Spectacular On Golf Courses

By Tom Schwab

Some people think prairies on golf courses are just a fad. Other people think they are hard to establish. I'm no prairie guru, but I think they are not that difficult to establish. What they add is a spectacular new dimension to your landscape. Prairies add different textures in the spring, a ton of color in the summer, a golden feeling with mellow colors in the fall, and a differentiation in the winter landscape. To be successful, one needs to do some planning, start small, and enlist the help of some local enthusiasts. I learned some basic steps by planting a prairie at Monroe Country Club (MCC), doing some reading, and talking to people. Some books I found helpful are "The Prairie Garden" by J. Robert and Beatrice S. Smith, "The Vegetation of Wisconsin" by John T. Curtis, and the catalog and growing guide from "Prairie Nursery" in Westfield, WI. Another great resource person you already know is Mark Grundman from "Medalist America Turfgrass." He's been doing prairie consulting for years. He recommends that you purchase seed that was grown within 200 miles of your site. I have a list of 40 native plant nurseries that you can get from me at the Noer Facility.

The main thing I have learned researching prairies is to start planning for your prairie long before you plant the first

seed. The main thing to determine is what type of soil you will be working with. Are the soils mainly sand, loam, or clay? That will determine what type of plants to use, when to plant, and later maintenance practices. Next, determine how much of the day's sunlight your site will receive. Most prairie plants need 70-100% of the day's sunlight. If you want to plant in a shady spot, many prairie nurseries also carry woodland plants.

To determine what type of plants to buy, decide how you want to use your prairie. Do you want mainly prairie grasses or prairie wildflowers? You should plant more grasses if your goal is to establish a more authentic native Wisconsin prairie or to attract more birds. There are about thirteen different prairie grasses that grow natively in Wisconsin. Don't plant too much big bluestem because it can dominate. Plant more wildflowers if you want more season-long variation of colors. Plant some grasses, 10-30%, to get that golden color in the fall and winter. Grasses will add different textures giving your wildflower prairie more interest. We planted mostly wildflowers at MCC because I wanted to give the golfers more color. The golfers wouldn't know the difference between native prairie and native bent anyway.



Initially area treated with glyphosate.



Preparing seedbed with rototiller.



Placing light cover of straw over planting.



MCC Staff, Green County Prairie Association and volunteers.

There are two times you can plant your prairie. I'll refer to them as "in-season" planting and "dormant" planting. In-season planting is done late spring to early summer or from about May 15 to July 15 for our area. Most prairie plants are warm season plants that need warm soils to germinate. In-season planting needs warm soil for germination and allows enough time for plants to establish before winter. With in-season planting you have to artificially expose seed to winterlike conditions to prime it. More on this will come later. Dormant planting takes place from late August to snowfall. Dormant planted seeds won't germinate until the following spring. The seed has to be exposed to winter conditions to break dormancy.

After you decide to go ahead with the prairie, you have to start preparing your site. First lay out the boundaries. Create a free flowing shape of gentle turns and curves. The prairie will look more natural and aesthetic. Angles and straight lines look manipulated. A paint gun or roll of string is a good way to lay out the shape because it's easy to change if you don't like what you have drawn.

For in-season planting, the best time for killing off your existing vegetation (weeds) is the fall before you plant. Weeds are any plants that will interfere with the success of your prairie. Perennial cool season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass, brome and quack can be the most persistent weeds to a prairie. Their roots and rhizomes can haunt you if they aren't dealt with. The best way to prepare your site is to use an application of glyphosate herbicide. After the herbicide has killed the vegetation, cultivate the soil to fallow any remaining plant parts. We cultivated with a rototiller behind a tractor and went 4" deep. Any weeds that come up again in the spring should be retreated and recultivated one more time so that you're ready to plant by about June. Cultivate shallower this time so you don't expose more weed seed. For dormant planting, treat and cultivate twice over the summer so that you're ready to plant in the fall.

The best time to purchase your seed is in winter or early in the spring. This is because most prairie seeds are harvested in the fall. So your best selection is soon after harvest. Try to select plants that bloom at different times of the year. This will make your prairie interesting because something will always be blooming. Nurseries have catalogs with indexes of flower color and time of bloom. Use the expertise

of the nursery. We also sought the help of a local prairie club. Not only did they give invaluable advice but they helped in planting and giving follow up care.

If you choose to plant in-season, the prairie seed has to be primed to break its dormancy. This is called stratification. There are two methods of stratification, dry and moist. Use dry stratification for prairie grasses and moist stratification for wildflowers. In dry stratification the seed is exposed to cold and dry conditions for a month or longer. This is all that the prairie grasses need to break dormancy. Moist stratification for wildflowers requires mixing the seed with an equal amount of vermiculite or clean sand and refrigerating it for three or four weeks. Plant the seed right after you bring it out of the refrigerator to keep it from going back into dormancy. Moist stratified seeds need a light watering about every other day for a month to get best results. If you're dormant seeding in the fall, you don't have to stratify the seed at all. The moist cool conditions which the seed encounters overwintering is natural stratification. Dormant seeding works very well, unless your site is prone to erosion.

If you are in-season planting, the best time to plant between May 15 and July 15 will be determined by your soil type. As stated, you need warm soils for germination. Some of the prairie grasses need soil temperatures as high as 85 degrees. With sandy soils you can plant earlier because they warm up quicker than other soils. Also sands generally have less weed problems that may be bothersome to other soils when planting early. With clay soils you should wait a little longer in the spring because clays warm up slower than other soils.

Seeding by hand works great if you have enough people to help. People spread the seed in a more natural pattern than a machine would. After seeding, just like with turf, it's best to rake the seed lightly under the soil. Then roll over it to get good seed soil contact. The planting could benefit from placing a light cover of clean straw over it, especially if you're on a sand or clay soil. Sand dries out too quickly and clay could become impenetrable to seedlings, if allowed to dry too much. Watering every other day, as mentioned, should suffice. You don't need to water with a dormant seeding because the seed needs to overwinter to germinate first. Follow all the rest of the planting techniques though.

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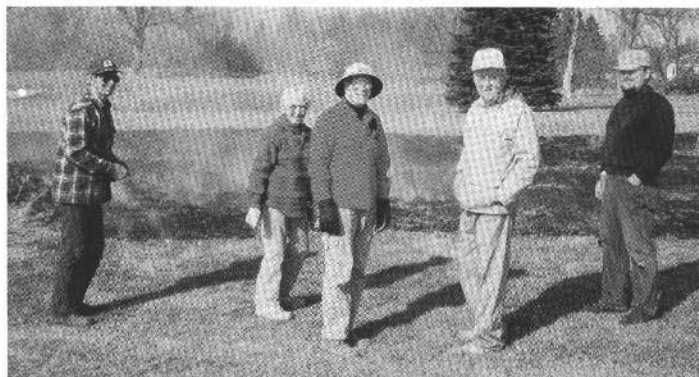
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Weed control is very important the first two years. The first year (year of seeding) keep the area mowed to a height of about four to six inches. Most native wildflowers and grasses won't grow more than that their first year so they will not be damaged. Mowing will keep the taller faster growing weeds from producing seed or getting a foot hold. We used an agricultural type flail mower. It mowed very nice at the tall height and we were able to catch the clippings in a hay wagon to keep them from smothering the young desirables. I made the mistake of letting the weeds get too tall, though. If I had gone in earlier I could have gotten by with a turf type flail mower and could have probably let the clippings lay without smothering plants.

The first year (year of seeding) it's not recommended to pull weeds because you could disturb the roots of the young prairie seedlings. Often when you pull weeds up, you just expose more weed seed anyway. Just keeping the whole site mowed to a four to six inch height is the best technique. Our prairie came up almost all crabgrass which I found out was not much of a problem because the second year the prairie shaded out the crab and we never saw it again. We may have lost a couple prairie plants by not mowing earlier that first year. It still turned out pretty nice.

Early in the spring of the second year, mow the area right to the ground. This is a way to warm the soils and encourage germination of any dormant prairie seed. Burning will also expose the soil for warming but that tends to encourage more weeds to germinate. If weeds still persist that second year they could be mowed back to about four to six inches again. Do this in early summer when the weeds are in full bloom. The prairie plants shouldn't be tall enough yet to be damaged. That should set the weeds back or kill them, especially the biennial weeds. At MCC, because we had planted a small site (1/4 acre), we opted for spot removal of the weeds. We used lopping shears and a small string trimmer to chop the weed right down to the ground.



Prairie Pyros! New Glarus superintendent Dick Beutel (right) helps out.



My next article will be on how to grow crabgrass!

There are some good reasons to start small with prairie restoration. The seed is expensive because most of it has to be hand harvested at the nurseries. So you want to make sure the seed you choose works well in your soils before you expand. You can harvest your own seed to expand the site or to start a new prairie area. If you start too large you may not be able to do the maintenance that is needed those first couple of years.

The only long term management you need to do the third year and beyond is to occasionally burn. Burning is needed to keep aggressive weeds or trees from getting reestablished. If burning is not allowed then mowing right down to the ground works OK. Burning works best, so if your community doesn't allow burning, try to apply for a special permit. Burning is usually conducted mid-spring, except on sandy soils. Mid-spring is about the time cool season weed-grasses like quack, brome and Kentucky bluegrass growth has begun, and burning will set them back. That'll expose the soil for earlier warming to favor the warm season prairie plants. The crown of the prairie plants is still in the soil early in the spring so burning doesn't hurt them. A sandy soil prairie has earlier blooming wildflowers so burn them very early in the spring or maybe in the fall so you will not destroy those early bloomers.

Burning should be conducted about every third year. Burning every year will favor the prairie grasses to dominate over the wildflowers. The most reasonable approach I read was to divide the site in thirds and burn one section each year in rotation. That will present the overall site with various levels of maturity and interest. It will also save some butterflies and moths from all being destroyed in a complete burn. Lastly, it'll prevent any single species from gaining overall dominance and preserve those great traits of the prairie which are diversity, variability, and year round interest. Your native Wisconsin prairie will give the golf course a spectacular new landscape asset that will last for years. 🌿



Third year. I wish these pictures could be in color.



Even the most pessimistic golfers fell in love with the prairie.



Real Green Committee Chairmen Can Read Blueprints!

By Monroe S. Miller

When asked about including green committee chairmen among those featured in REAL columns, one colleague observed "you're dumber than I thought."

Another said "pretty risky," and a third noted "you like living dangerously." And then there was Rod Johnson egging me on, suspecting the chances I'd put my foot in my mouth were pretty high. "Go for it," he giggled.

The years I have been around private golf courses—nearly thirty now—have exposed me to green committee chairmen of all stripes, both at my own course and from others I worked on as a student as well. I know of what I write.

My own career has been blessed by this group and our course is far better because of them. Not everybody has been as lucky as I have been, and I know that is fact. The chairman's influence, in the extreme, can be a negative.

I offer these real observations with the confidence the real green committee chairmen will be able to tell when I'm teasing and when I'm serious.

Admittedly the title should be real chairpersons or real chairmen/chairwomen since up to five green committee chairs of WSGA clubs have a woman's name; two are for sure and three (Lynn, Jo, Pat) could be.

Let's see; we have dealt with real superintendents three times, real salesmen and now real green committee chairmen. That only leaves real golf pros and real clubhouse managers. Are we saving the easiest until last? We'll see; stay tuned!

- Real green committee chairmen can read blueprints!
- The real green committee chairman knows when the real golf course superintendent talks about "Millie", he isn't talking about the Club Women's champion. He knows he is talking about Milorganite.
- The real green committee chairman knows what Milorganite is.
- The real green committee chairman has thick skin and does not believe in appeasement. He is a person of sound philosophy and firm convictions. He knows solid golf course management will sometimes irritate and aggravate players. They are interested only in the immediate; the chairman takes the longer view.
- Deep down, real down deep, the real chairman would really like to climb aboard a Toro 5100 or a LF 100 and mow fairways. Just once.
- Real green committee chairmen know there is nothing more obvious or out of place on a golf course than a feature designed by a green committee, its chairman or the superintendent. He leaves golf course design to golf course architects; that's why we have them.
- The real green committee chairman insists on dealing with the golf course superintendent on a first name basis. "Ceremony isn't a part of this job," he says. "We are in this together," he remarks to the real golf course superintendent. "There is no reason we cannot be friends."

- The real chairman knows the best way to kill a good committee is to meet too often. He convenes the group when there are decisions to make, planning to do and progress to report. The real chair is a leader, for sure, but he is also democratic. Oftentimes he is a facilitator, drawing the best thinking from each committee person.
- The real Wisconsin green committee chairman knows that when the real golf course superintendent talks about Dr. Kussow, he isn't talking about his GP.
- The real chairman wonders, as he watches a golf course staff person loading topdressing with a powerful Ford loader tractor, if that is as much fun as hitting a good nine-iron shot.
- Real green committee chairmen from Wisconsin know who O.J. Noer was and his significance in the history of golf turf, not only in Wisconsin but in the U.S. as well.
- The real green committee chairman subscribes to the Zontek principle: golf isn't played on a Polo sweater or a hamburger. He works to keep the club priorities in order, which isn't always easy.
- Real chairmen insist on a USGA Green Section visit each year. Although they respect the golf course superintendent, they realize he doesn't get around like the Green Section agronomist does.
- The real green committee chairman knows that John Deere isn't one of the real golf course superintendent's buddies.
- Real green committee chairmen know there is more to a good golf course than ultra fast greens, super short fairways and skinny sand. They know if they insist on these conditions day in and day out, they won't be popular in the clubhouse for long. And the golf course is at risk as much as they are.
- The real green committee chairman knows that a Lawnboy isn't a kid who works on the clubhouse grounds.
- The real green committee chairman, like the real golf course superintendent, prefers not to have to deal with the endless and somewhat dainty amenities that pollute tees and tee stations on too many golf courses these days, making them somewhat resemble a strip mall. You know, ball-washer, two trash containers, a fancy bench, exotic signage, divot mix containers, broken tee canisters, etc., etc. (All that's missing is a McDonalds). The real chairman likes a flag, a stick and a set of tee blocks only. "Have at it," he tells others in his foursome as they gather on the first tee.
- The real green committee chairman cringes whenever he takes a divot. When he does, he looks around sheepishly to see if the real superintendent is watching.
- When the real chairman sees Professor Rossi on the golf course, he recognizes him and doesn't mistake him for a member of the summer staff of college students or the lead guitarist of Led Zeppelin (the summer staff isn't allowed long hair, shorts or earrings).