

MAINTENANCE OF SMALL TOOLS

For most golf course superintendents, spring, summer and fall activities call for heavy use of the many hand and gardening tools associated with maintenance of a golf course. Now is no time to lose the use of an important tool because of improper care.

Many people find that wiping tools with a rag soaked in lubricating oil regularly is a good idea. For garden tools, try keeping a bucket of builder's sand mixed with lubricating oil available for quick cleaning and oiling after every use.

Wax is an excellent preservative for both wood and metal. A solution of paraffin wax dissolved in mineral spirits and kept handy in a spray bottle is an inexpensive way to keep hand tools protected.

Wooden handles can become rough and splintery. Often, a rubdown with a light grade of sand paper is all they need, but replacement handles for both gardening and hand tools are usually available.

Keep saws and other cutting tools sharpened. Remember that under heavy use, chisels and screwdrivers can also become dull and difficult to use properly.

Standard screwdrivers should have square ends and symmetrical faces. Chisels should have a 20-30 degree bevel with no nicks in the cutting edge. Either can be sharpened on a bench grinder, but frequent touch-ups with an oilstone or file delays this major operation.

Proper storage of tools is important for maintaining them in good condition. Gardening tools should be hung, if possible, in a protected area where it is cool and dry. Most hand tools, too, can be stored on a wall or pegboard. You may find it useful to designate a spot for each tool, either with a label or by drawing an outline shape of the tool where it should be located when not in use.

Having a special place for tools not only makes them easier to find when they're needed, but makes it easier to see if any are missing. This can help cut down on tool loss through negligence or theft.

Good quality tools will last many years with regular maintenance.