

QUESTIONS

for Superintendents Around the State

Editor's Note: The purpose of Hole Notes is to get information to MGCSA members. Some of the most important information is that from exchange between superintendents. It could be a simple idea, a complex plan or a certain philosophical approach to golf course management.

In this issue, three superintendents were asked the same questions. Sometimes the answers will be similar but the idea is to exchange information and perhaps learn from a fellow superintendent. A thank you to Gerald Bibbey, Goodrich Golf Course; Rob Barr, St. Cloud Country Club; Bob Distel, Wayzata Country Club.

Describe any maintenance practices you use to either maintain *Poa annua* or eliminate it.

Rob Barr: On our greens, I feel we're doing a little of both by using a plant growth regulator. The PGR regulates the *Poa annua* to a greater degree than the bentgrass, allowing the bent to out compete. While this conversion approach will be slow (3 to 5 years), an immediate result has been more consistent green speeds throughout the day. We also overseed with bentgrass and implement a fertilization program that favors the bentgrass; i.e., lower levels of nitrogen and phosphorous. Soil tests indicate that an N-P-K ratio of 1-0-1 is adequate for our greens. With a fairly high percentage of annual bluegrass on our course, we are structuring our irrigation program more towards management of the *Poa*.

Gerald Bibbey: We do not have a problem with *Poa Annua* on our golf course. There is a very small amount on our greens. We try to maintain this through proper maintenance practices.

Bob Distel: We have approximately 30% *Poa annua* on our greens and we are trying to manage it more than

eliminate it. We are implementing cultural practices to create a favorable growing medium for the bent grass. We are also exploring seed head inhibition techniques.

What are your procedures for safety training employees?

Rob Barr: Although it seems inevitable that certain new crew members became "specialized" in one of two areas, it is our goal to train employees in all areas of maintenance. To do this, we try and work one on one with new employees when training them in on the operation of equipment and how we do things at our course. I feel it is a good practice for an inexperienced person to sit down and read the operator's manual. It is also essential to stress that if they don't know or are unsure, to ask questions!

Gerald Bibbey: The parks department offers classes, demonstrations and videos on the proper handling of equipment, chain saws, riding mowers, etc. The assistant superintendent instructs all part-time employees of the proper servicing of equipment.

Bob Distel: We are implementing a new employee training program for the 1995 season. During the winter we put together a Policy & Procedures manual for the Grounds Department. We hold a two-hour meeting to go through and explain the day-to-day operations of our department. The purpose of the manual is for employees to have a written reference regarding their roles and responsibilities.

The next step in training is to explain and demonstrate the proper techniques involved in specific tasks. This is where safety and quality must be stressed. The employee performs the task under supervision until he or she achieves the desired results. This training is done by the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent

or an experienced senior staff member. The employee is then signed off as competent in performing that specific task.

What are some of the benefits you find from belonging to the MGCSA? Are there any suggestions you have for our organization?

Rob Barr: I would say one of the main benefits in belonging to the MGCSA is attending the monthly meetings and having the opportunity to visit with superintendents you don't usually communicate with. The Annual Turf Conference is also a major benefit. Something I would like to see are different, more diversified speakers.

Gerald Bibbey: There are many benefits to being a member of the MGCSA. The Annual Conference, Mini-Seminars and the monthly meetings. The camaraderie you have with fellow superintendents in discussing your problems and their suggestions is very valuable. I think the Board of Directors is doing an excellent job of running the MGCSA. I would encourage more superintendents to attend our monthly meetings.

Bob Distel: The most important benefit of belonging to the MGCSA is meeting and getting to know people in our industry at monthly meetings, seminars and the state convention. These gatherings provide the opportunity to share ideas, discuss issues and realize that there are others dealing with the difficult and stressful situations involved in our business.

One change I would like to see is a review of the procedures involved in dealing with difficult issues such as ethics. A comprehensive plan of action should be developed and put in place to deal with these matters.