

Growing More Green With A Greenhouse

With the opening of the golf season, superintendents with greenhouses on their courses are adding to the bottom line. Operating an on-course greenhouse can reap the following benefits:

Cost Savings

The ability to grow plants and flowers from plugs (or seeds, in very temperate parts of the country) and keep perennials from year to year saves financial resources as opposed to buying full-grown vegetation every year.

Better Quality Control for Flowers

Hands-on management of plants helps to keep annuals safe from late frosts between the date of purchase and setting them out on the course. Perennials can also be housed in the green house after dividing to maintain healthy growth and plant size throughout the growing season.

Better Control of Resources

Keeping tropical flowers and plants in the greenhouse helps to provide large, beautiful plants year after year for the clubhouse.

Immediate Availability

Having plants ready whenever the maintenance staff has the opportunity to put them in the ground is a tremendous time asset.

Abundant Supply

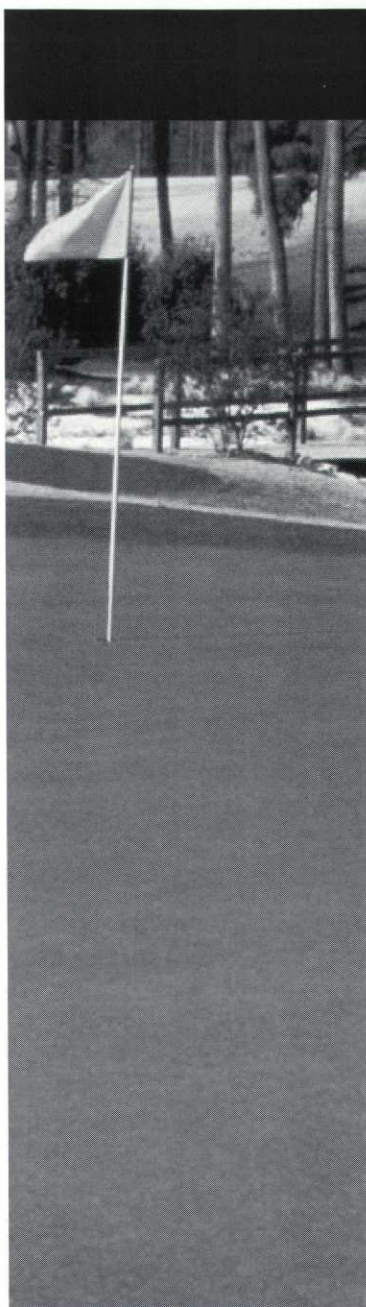
Long-term landscaping projects can benefit. Some golf facilities even supply other courses with plants and flowers.

Many golf facilities enjoy the pay-backs from the initial investment in construction and the cost of upkeep of their greenhouse. Beyond the economic benefits, some superintendents use their agronomic expertise to encourage member involvement.

In order to enjoy the positive aspects of a greenhouse at a golf facility, the budget needs to include costs not only to build a state of the art facil-

ity, but also to maintain it. The labor for potting and caring for the plants may come from early morning down time of the crew when the course has a frost delay or is too wet. Courses in colder climates may need to include heaters and the personnel to monitor the operation of those heaters during non-work hours.

(Editor's Note: This article was reprinted from the June 2002 issue of Leaderboard with permission from the GCSAA. Sources include Talking it Over discussion forum; Dean Graves, Golf Course Manager and Michael Gildea, Golf Course Superintendent, Chevy Chases Club, Chevy Chase, Md.



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