Resources For Prairie Establishment And Management

By MARY H. MEYER Assistant Professor, University of Minnesota Department of Horticultural Science

With all the interest in native plants these days, you may be thinking of establishing a prairie or native plant area on your golf course, park or grounds. Some things to consider are:

• Most prairies grow best in **full sun** or with minimal root competition from trees and shrubs.

• The tallgrass prairie here in Minnesota prior to European settlement was probably **60-80% grasses**, especially the "big four": little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*; big bluestem, *Andropogon gerardii*; switch grass, *Panicum virgatum*, and Indian grass, *Sorghastrum nutans*.

• Prairie establishment takes a few years of patience. The first three years weeds predominate while the prairie plants establish roots.

• The larger the area to be planted the more likely you will use only **seed and not plants**. Small plantings can be completed with just plants, which will compete better with weeds and reach maturity sooner but will be much more expensive initially.

• Many people need "new eyes" to see prairie plants for their beauty, thus **elements of care**, such as mowed edges, paths, bird houses, painted or rail fencing and signs can help people accept native plantings. Using attractive flowers placed along the edges also helps.

• What about the cost? Initial establishment costs vary, but seed for prairie grasses is slightly higher than turf seed, with wildflowers costing much more. The first few years of prairie establishment the labor costs include mowing and weed control, but after establishment, **long term costs are much lower** than traditional turfgrass.

The following resources are available to assist you in deciding which specific plants will work best in your area as well as establishment and management techniques.

1. Plants in Prairie Communities¹ lists plants for three types of tallgrass prairies, **dry**, **mesic** (medium soils) and **wet**. Included is a large table of 158 grasses, sedges and forbs typical of the tallgrass prairie including such characteristics as competitiveness, flower color, height, habitat preference, period of bloom, etc. Additional references and plant societies in North Central United States are included. This is an ideal reference to use in determining a plant list for your specific site.

2. Establishing and Maintaining

a Prairie Garden,² covers how to plant a prairie for small areas, such as a backyard or a few acres. Topics covered include seed versus plants, soil preparation, weed control and prairie management. References and sources of seed and plants for Minnesota are included.

3. Using Native Plants³ is a 2-hour video tape that covers establishment of woodland wildflowers, prairies and lakeshore plantings. On-site visits to Eloise Butler Wildflower garden, Curtis Prairie at University of Wisconsin's Arboretum in Madison, Big Sand Lake in McGregor, Minn. and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum are featured. A 20-page informational packet with references, sources and plant lists is included with the tape.

¹Minnesota Extension Service Pub. AG-FO-3238-C. R. Robison, D. White, M. Meyer. \$1.50. 18 pp. ³Minnesota Extension Service Pub. FO-6748-C, J. Kyhl, M. Meyer, and V. Krischik, \$1.50. 7 pp. ³Minnesota Extension Service Video. AG-EP-6700 \$50 purchase, \$35 rental. Publications and video are available from the Minnesota Extension Service Distribution Center, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108-6069, 612-624-4900, 1-800-876-8636.



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MGCSA BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

(Editor's Note: The following is a brief synopsis of the April 29 Board of Directors meeting held at The Lafayette Club.)

Roll Call

Pat Walton, Fred Taylor, Jim Nicol, Scott Turtinen, Tom Johnson, John Queensland, Steve Shumansky, Steve Young, Jeff Backstrom, Leif Erickson and Bob Distel.

Treasurer's Report

Johnson reported that he estimates \$13,000 to \$14,000 profit for year 1996-97 ending May 31. "We are in very good financial shape at this time."

Discussion on the Long Term Investment Plan of our Trust Fund.

MGCSA Executive Committee to devise SOP for investing Trust Fund.

Communications

Letter from Ross Galarneault regarding "Ice Alert" letter. GCSAA Scholarship letter.

President's Report

Taylor reported Past Presidents' Meeting at Manitou Ridge very helpful and more Past President meetings will be scheduled in the future. Past Presidents' concerns focused on:

1. Guidelines for Distinguished Service Award.

- 2. Investment strategies.
- 3. Annual Conference reinstitute luncheon.

4. Communication with and from the MTGF.

Taylor also attended a meeting of the Allied Associations of Golf. Discussion on MGA legislative team and PGA carrier link.

Business Office

Turtinen to attend a GCSAA computer training seminar on June 26th. Many calls to business office concerning ice damage. 1997 Membership Rosters have been sent out. Turf Tourney applications mailed first week of May.

Bylaws

Tom Fisher is reviewing bylaws with Taylor.

Conference and Education

Young is in contact with Brede regarding upcoming conference in December. Past Presidents' Luncheon to be held Wednesday at noon prior to Annual Meeting and reception to be held that afternoon and evening.

Editorial

The May issue of Hole Notes was 44 pages.

Environmental

Environmental Handbook information is all in. Additional information to be mailed to members in June. Committee is developing a one-page letter on the "Benefits of Golf to the Environment."

Human Resources

Backstrom working with Terry Mueller of OSHA on ROPS situation. They are now looking at the weight of the vehicle as the determining factor versus horsepower. Looking at 1500 lb. level at this time. Backstrom will have more information at next Board Meeting.

Membership

Shumansky reported 19 new members.

Industrial Relations

Standard Operating Procedure addition to go in *Hole* Notes regarding Vendors' Dues.

MTGF

Walton not present at last MTGF meeting. Joe Moris served as alternate. The MTGF Board approved \$4,000 to co-op a survey to be developed by Brad Pedersen and distributed by the Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota to determine the economic impact of the Green Industry in the State of Minnesota.

Public Relations

Backstrom reported that the MGA has a Web Site available to us. Taylor was interviewed about Winter Damage on the radio with Joe Andrews.

Scholarship

Queensland reported that the Scholarship Committee met April 7th at North Star Turf and prepared a budget for the coming year.

Charlie Pooch is working with Hank Wilkinson on the Trans-Mississippi Scholarship.

1997 Scholarships will be four \$1,000 Turf Scholarships, two \$1,000 Legacy Scholarships and one \$1,250 Garske Legacy Scholarship.

Old Business

Discussion on creating a Benevolence Fund for MGCSA members who were affected by the spring floods. Need to determine if there is a need prior to establishing the fund.

With funds being available this year a motion was made that the MGCSA make a \$1,000 donation to the Fairway Foundation. — Patrick A. Walton, CGCS

MGCSA Secretary



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Serve and Turf: Customer Service and Your Crew

By JACK MATEFFY Mateffy and Company

During the March Mini-Seminar we had the opportunity to spend the afternoon looking at customer service skills. At the heart of our discussion was building trust and rapport, the goal of any customer service effort. The result of building trust and rapport with customers is they become more willing to do what you want them to do, such as:

- Return to your club
- Tell others about your course
- Pick up the pace of play
- Respect the work you've done by treading lightly

The flexibility that comes with trusting relationships is what great customer service is all about. So to help you build those trusting relationships, here are five ideas to put into practice today:

Teach Your Crew Why Customers Love Golf

Golf means many things to each player. While some golfers are totally focused on their scores and the execution of each shot, others use hitting a little white ball as an excuse to walk on a perfectly groomed fairway. Although the walk isn't always straight, it can be the best part of golf. Once your crew members understand why golfers are so passionate about the game, they will start seeing their role in meeting customers' expectations.

Encourage Crew Members To Play & To Learn What Golfers Expect

Like falling in love, golf is one of

those "you don't know until you try it" things. You may have a crew that needs to gain a new perspective. Take them golfing and have them look at the course through a golfer's eyes. Ask them what they expect from the tee box, the fairways, and the greens. One of the best ways to stay focused on service is to walk in the customers' spikes for a day. Only by seeing things from the customers' viewpoint do we create an enthusiasm for serving others.

Demonstrate Patience In The Face(s) Of Anger

Being a good example is one of the superintendent's hardest jobs. When players, who are probably lost in a poor round, yell at you about the condition of the course, what do you do? With crew and customers watching, do you keep your cool? Being a good example is tough. Yet the way you respond is seen by your staff as the standard for dealing with anyone's anger. A good thing to keep in mind is that customers are usually not angry at us, they are angry at a situation they can't control. I can think of fewer situations that are harder to control than the flight, bounce and roll of a golf ball.

Show Crew How To Accept Compliments

When golfers share positive comments about your course, every crew member should accept that encouragement with open arms. Too often heart-felt compliments falls on what seem to be deaf ears. The words hit the ground and even, like a chip shot, roll backwards toward the customer. As a superintendent, you want to know what people like about your course and that you appreciate their willingness to offer some kind words. So, make sure every comment, even critical ones, are received with a genuine "thank you for sharing that" from your crew members. Remember, compliments that are not acknowledged will not be repeated.

Maintain A Positive Voice

Just as in how you respond to angry customers, your example of positive communication with them will become the standard for your staff. Do your customers know you appreciate them? Do they know you want them to come back? Do they know you welcome their comments, compliments and suggestions? Does your crew see a high regard for customers through your words and behaviors? If your answers are yes, then the right standard of customer service is being set daily.

These ideas can help you make the goal of building trust and rapport with customers a reality. Your commitment to leading the way is an alal important first shot!

* * * * (Editor's Note: Jack Mateffy is the president of Mateffy and Company, a training and consulting firm located in Minneapolis. Mateffy and Company designs and presents employee development and training programs for clients around the nation. For more information on their services, please call Jack at (612) 472-0820.)

GCSAA Board Approves '97 Legislative/Regulatory Agenda

At its pre-conference meeting, GCSAA's board of directors approved a new legislative/regulatory agenda. Developed by the government relations committee, the agenda identifies current government issues that affect golf course superintendents and describes GCSAA's plan of action for addressing each issue.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

EPA Budget (enforcement)

EPA was given additional funding to implement the new pesticide and drinking-water laws passed in 1996. Congress will oversee implementation of the new laws. There is a threat that these activities will distract from lower priority regulatory activities, but there is not a consensus on whether the existing level of regulation and enforcement activity by the EPA is good or bad for superintendents.

Plan of Action: GCSAA will monitor and report on EPA spending and priorities and encourage compliance with laws regardless of the level of EPA enforcement.

Endangered Species

Enforcement of the Endangered Species Act has had an impact on landowners, and reports on its effectiveness in preserving species have varied. The proposed solutions would alter the ESA and generally allow more flexibility in ESA enforcement strategies. Superintendents report that laws regulating the protection of habitat have been burdensome to golf course development.

Plan of Action: GCSAA will monitor and report on proposals to



amend the Endangered Species Act, inform members about opportunities for grassroots action and provide information about compliance. The Environmental Principles for Golf Courses will serve to answer inquiries about GCSAA's position on endangered species, and reports about members' efforts to provide or preserve habitats for endangered or threatened species will be publicized.

Wetlands

Legislative proposals on wetlands would offer more alternatives to landowners with wetland areas that need protection. These proposals included altering the federal definition of wetlands to include fewer land areas and applying the "takings" approach to compensating landowners affected by wetlands restrictions. Regulatory activity has included a proposal to eliminate "nationwide" wetlands permits that streamlined the approval process, and business is opposing this change. Many of these changes could impact golf course renovation and development.

Plan of Action: GCSAA will monitor and report on proposals to amend wetlands laws, inform members about opportunities for grassroots action, communicate an association position as appropriate and provide compliance information. The Environmental Principles for Golf Courses will serve to answer inquiries about GCSAA's position on wetlands, and reports about members' efforts to provide or preserve wetlands will be publicized.

Pollution/Runoff

Proposed amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) did not address nonpoint source pollution rules affecting golf courses, but issues may arise during the implementation phase.

(Continued on Page 28)

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MGCSA AFFILIATE NEWS

Par Aide Practice Range Signs Designed To Go The Distance

Par Aide Products Co., St. Paul, has announced new, highly visible Practice Range Signs designed to be easily seen from distances up to 275 yards.

These heavy duty signs can be assembled to indicate distances in increments of 25 yards.

Constructed of thick, black rubber with molded-in white rubber numbers, these signs are as tough as semitruck mud flaps. Avaialble in a kit form, each of the eight combination kits contains three number flaps and a heavy gauge, black, powder coated steel frame. Ruggedly built to withstand the elements, the frame also moves easily for ball collecting and mowing. The numbers, measuring $11'' \ge 23''$ each, can be hung up to three panels across to indicate the desired distance. Individual numbers can also be purchased separately to modify yardage distance.

For further information about this product contact Par Aide Products Company at 612/779-9851.

MTI Expands Both Fargo And Plymouth Locations

MTI Distributing Company, the exclusive regional distributor of Toro products, announced the expansion of its Fargo and Plymouth locations. In Fargo, it has more than doubled its yard capacity and fenced area, adding substantially to its capabilities for storage, moving of equipment, and the presentation of used equipment. The outside used, demo and new equipment lot is now directly accessible from a newly installed doorway in the inside display area. This inside area has been completely remodeled for easier viewing and customer comfort.

MTI's Plymouth location has also added to its facility. Now offered is an outside used equipment office and a heated indoor display area for winter viewing. MTI is currently operating under expanded hours for the summer season.

MTI also announces that Randy Mackeben has joined MTI in the newly created position of Director of Customer Support Services. Randy's role will be to assist and coordinate the flow of service administration, with a lot of attention to primary customer contact, customer satisfaction issues and pursuit of better ways to organize, track and improve the entire flow of service functions.

"We believe the addition of Randy Mackeben in this position will help MTI to improve and expand its customer support services," said MTI General Manager Jim Kaufman. "We're pleased to have Randy on board, and we feel he is an outstanding addition to our team."

JUNE 1997

Leitner Company Has New Crumb Rubber Top Dressing

Crown III Crumb Rubber Top Dressing is now distributed in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota by the Leitner Company, St. Paul.

Ninety tons of Crown III Crumb Rubber Top Dressing (made from recycled tires) is being installed on the football field at the newly constructed stadium at East Central High School in Tulsa, Okla.

The resulting turf reportedly will have a consistency and resiliency which will reduce the chances of injuries to athletes, reduce soil compaction, reduce abrasion to the grass blade, extend the growth season in both the spring and fall and reduce water evaporation.

The use of crumb rubber as a top dressing was researched and patented at Michigan State University. Internationally marketed under the trade name Crown III starting in 1994, the product has over 300 installed sites and claims to have won the respect of turf industry professionals for its ability to reduce or eliminate turf grass wear.

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MGCSA Scholarship Scramble Set For July 14

Martin Terveer will be the host superintendent at the 1997 MGCSA Scholarship Scramble to be held July 14 at Hidden Creek Golf Club in Owatonna.

This is THE annual event geared for the superintendent and his/her staff to get out together and enjoy a round of golf and a little competition between clubs. It's a great way to reward your key crew members. Get your team in early as this year's event will likely fill up fast. Single players and/or partial teams are welcome. We'll pair you up or fill out your team. And remember, all net proceeds go to the MGCSA Scholarship Fund which supports both turf student scholarships and MGCSA member legacv awards.

Please indicate your preference for morning or afternoon shotguns. (We have arrangements for afternoon golf at a nearby club for morning participants but need to know your interest immediately as the clubs do not want to hold the tee times any longer than necessary.)

Entry fee is \$40 per player which includes:

- Entry in Scholarship Scramble on the new Hidden Creek Golf Club.
- An outdoor Pig Roast following golf.
- Entry in a raffle for some nice gifts.
- Closest to the Pin contests on all Par 3's.
- Pro Shop Credit awarded to the top six teams.

Also, though not determined as of this writing, we are

intending to earmark a small amount from each registration towards a memorial to Randy Nelson. Randy was a long time member of the MGCSA and instrumental in the development of Hidden Creek. Randy passed away, long before his time, in 1995.

Golf carts are an additional \$10 per person. Contact the Hidden Creek pro shop at (507) 444-9229.

Bring a few extra dollars if you want to get in on the Giant Skins game, the Putting Contest, or to buy a couple of Mulligans. The Scholarship Committee will also be selling MGCSA merchandise.

The format will be a four-person scramble. All players will tee off from the same markers. Teams must use two drives from each player during the round. Team members must be MGCSA members or key people on the member superintendent's staff. Registrations will be accepted for more than one team per club; however, an additional team(s) may be requested to play in the morning shotgun. This event is meant to be a fun day of camaraderie, to the benefit of the students the MGCSA supports in their quest for higher education.

If you would like to enjoy the pig roast and comradery without the stress of driving home, we have reserved a small block of rooms at the Ramada (507/455-0606) at the special rate of \$54, single or double, including breakfast. These rooms will be held until 7/1/97. Make plans early if this appeals to you.

1997 MGCSA SCHOLARSHIP SCRAMBLE HIDDEN CREEK GOLF CLUB • JULY 14, 1997

----- REGISTRATION FORM ------

Golf Course/Company:	
Address:	
City:	State: Zip Code:
Player 1:	Job Title:
Player 2:	Job Title:
Player 3:	Job Title:
Player 4:	Job Title:
Shotgun Preference: 🗆 Morning (8	:00 a.m.) 🗆 Afternoon (1:00 p.m.)
If you play in the morning shotgun,	would your team like to play at a nearby course in the afternoon? \Box Yes \Box No
person(s) will attend the 6:0	0 p.m. barbecue.
Carts are available Please make ar	for about \$13 per person payable at the Hidden Creek pro shop. rangements through the pro shop by calling (507) 444-9229.
Please register golfers at	\$40 each and non-golfers at \$25 each for a total of \$
N	OON LUNCH AVAILABLE ON YOUR OWN.
	Mail Entry and Payment to:
ENTRY DEADLINE: JULY 1, 1997	MGCSA Scholarship Scramble P.O. Box 617 Wayzata MN 55391

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