

Thoughts on Being a MAAGCS Member

by Nick Vance

I have been an MAAGCS member for almost 10 years, and for 5 of those years, I was just that — a member. I didn't really appreciate what the association is and does for us as professionals and individuals; I attended meetings only when it was convenient and never made the extra effort. I know now that was my loss.

Looking back over the associations I have belonged to in the past, I can't remember one that is more devoted to its members or that has a better reason to exist.

I'm sure many of us know a lot of people who are really not happy with what they are doing, but I don't know any golf course superintendent who wants to change professions. I think most of us are not only happy with what we are doing but are proud of it, too, and that is what makes the MAAGCS so strong.

That is why just being a member is not enough. Understanding the association, knowing what it does, and helping whenever we can is what it takes for us to continue as a strong and healthy membership. I have found in the last few years just how important the association and its Code of Ethics are to our existence, and making them a part of our everyday life bring us closer to each other and our profession.

The holding of the annual GCSAA meeting in Washington, D.C., this year will give us a chance to show others what a great association the MAAGCS is: as the host chapter, we must strive to let everyone know that we have a great organization and are proud to be among its members.

Monday morning at 9, the General Pesticide Session will start, with the Trade Show following at 12. Tuesday's general session will be followed at 2 p.m. by a golf course session covering a variety of topics and concluding with a panel led by Mike Larsen, Bill Neus, and Pat O'Brien of the USGA. On Wednesday, Jan. 9, the general session will cover a number of topics of interest to superintendents, and the golf course session at 1:30 p.m. will cover fungicides, topdressing studies, water management, and a panel discussion that includes George Thompson, Ken Braun, and Merrill Frank.

Meeting Today's Demands: Fairway Maintenance and Improvement

by Bruce R. Williams, Bob O'Link Golf Course

Aeration

Aeration equipment came a long way during the 70's. The new equipment allowed us to take more cores and have deeper penetration into the soil.

Some superintendents actually used a greens aerifier for troublesome spots on the fairways. Well, if the Greensaire was beneficial to the worst parts of the fairway, why couldn't it improve the entire fairway?

Again we followed the lead of several other superintendents and used the Ryan Greensaire to aerate all of our fairways beginning in 1980. Using four aerifiers, we aerate two fairways per day. Machines are lubricated hourly and oil changed daily.

Plugs are dragged with a cyclone fence drag mat. The residual thatch and vegetative matter are then blown to the center of the fairway for pickup.

The deep penetration and close proximity of holes gives us a super job. Using this method once a year in the spring, we have reduced our thatch level and aided water penetration into the soil.

Pest Management

Weeds have not been a problem in our fairways — with the exception of an occasional patch of clover, which we spot-treat.

Insects had never been a problem on our fairways, but along with the 80's came a new pest: *Ataenisu spretulus*. We treat our fairways with 40 lbs. per acre of Oftanol 5G to solve this problem. Last season, we also treated the fairways for cutworms after finding populations as high as 15 per square foot.

Our disease control program is preventative using alternating applications of contact and systemic fungicides.

A typical season would start off with two applications of Actidione RZ at 1.2 oz./m in the spring. This would be followed with:

- Bayleton 1 oz.
- Daconil 2787 3.7 oz.
- Bayleton .6 oz. + TGF ½ oz.
- PMAS .8 oz. + AD Thiram 2.14 oz.
- 26019 1.5 oz.
- Bayleton 1.0 oz.
- PMAS 1.0 oz. + Thiram 4 oz., applied for snowmold control.

Until 1983, *Pythium* was not much of a problem and we only spot-treated when *Pythium* was visible. However, with more than 40 days in the 90s last summer, *Pythium* became probably our largest fairway problem and we made five applications of Banol or Subdue at 2 oz./m. Fairways with clippings removed had less *Pythium* pressure than those mowed with conventional gang units.

Root Pruning

Root pruning has become necessary since the height-of-cut has been reduced and the application of water has been limited. The trees that cause the fairway turf the most problems in their struggle for moisture are elms, willows and cottonwoods.

Whenever we see a localized dry spot in a fairway with one of those trees nearby, we immediately root prune. A trench is dug in the rough at a depth of 2-3 feet. The trench is lined with tarpaper and then back-filled with gravel.

The Program in Retrospect

Our long-range plan for fairway improvement has been quite successful. Our members are pleased with the playability of the fairways. The ball gets more roll and flier lies have been eliminated.

It is certain that such a program is not inexpensive. Yet, the cost of improved fairways is not prohibitive. Once the permanent improvements of drainage and irrigation were completed — at a cost of \$130,000 — then we were only dealing with three increased expenditures annually:

- Mowing with clipping removal (costs an additional \$6,000).
- Aeration with Greensaires (costs an additional \$6,000).
- The use of wetting agents (costs \$3,000).

The key to our program is that we have employed a number of different procedures to accomplish our objectives. We are using a variety of methods which have been proven effective by other superintendents. Using all of these professional practices together in a holistic approach, we benefit from a synergistic effort — our fairways are healthier and easier to maintain during stress periods.

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