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Spray Technician/
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Contact Brian Bagley
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Landscaping with Native Plants: Topic of January Meeting

Dave Kaplow of Pacific OpenSpace, Inc. will speak about native plant and drought tolerant landscaping for the roughs and other landscapes that are out of play. Pacific OpenSpace provides consultation and also designs and installs practical and aesthetic landscaping for golf courses. Pacific OpenSpace operates the North Coast Native Nursery which propagates a wide variety of hardy, low-maintenance perennials, shrubs and trees. Dave will discuss the advantages, cultural requirements and maintenance tech-

niques of native grasses and other native vegetation in golf course settings.

31st ANNUAL TURF AND LANDSCAPE EXPO COMING IN JANUARY

The Northern California Turf and Landscape Council and UC Cooperative Extension will host Northern California's largest Landscape Expo January 11-12 at the Santa Clara Convention Center in Santa Clara, CA.

The program, designed to benefit professionals in the turf and landscape industry, is free of charge and no advanced registration is necessary.

Wednesday sessions include Turfgrass Management and Weed Management. Thursday's seminars will cover Landscape Tree Management, Irrigation Design, Pest Management and Urban Forestry.

For more information call 510/490-6282.

Tips from the USGA

Top Ten Questions Asked by Golfers

by Pat Gross
USGA Agronomist

I ran across an excellent article by John F. Anderson, Superintendent at the Oregon Golf Club, regarding the top ten questions asked by golfers at his course. I thought the questions were universal, and his answers were wonderful. This article is shared with you in the hope that you can put this in your file and possibly use it for your own club newsletter.

So, here they are, direct from the home office in Lake Forest, California, via our field operation in Portland, Oregon.

Question #10:

"Why is the grass cut so short on fairways and the rough cut so long?"

Answer: Specific mowing heights for the golf course are established by the green committee. They take into account what heights are best suited for the ability of our golfers and for maximum playability. Much thought was given at the time of construction choosing the proper grass varieties that would provide the best playing surfaces at these specific heights.

Question #9:

"Why are the greens so much faster than they were yesterday?"

Answer: Many factors determine green speed, they include: mowing height, wind, topdressing, fertility, moisture, and the time of day. Any of these factors can vary the speed of the greens. Although these factors may vary from day to day, we strive for consistent speed from one green to the next.

Question #8:

"What or who determines hole locations?"

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Answer: Although it is rumored that my mood and the number of cups of coffee consumed determine daily hole locations, this is only partially true. During the heavy play season, holes are changed seven days a week. A specific hole rotation is used to determine placement, so theoretically the golf course plays the same length every day. Each day, six holes are located in the front third of the green, six in the middle and six in the back. Hole locations are also rotated so that sequential greens have holes in varying thirds (i.e., No. 1 green--front; No. 2 green--middle; No. 3 green--back; etc.)

Question #7:

"How come you tear up the course and aerify when it is in perfect shape?"

Answer: Aerification has always been a necessary evil. The main benefits of this process are that it decreases thatch, relieves soil compaction, improves water infiltration through the soil profile and disturbs the playing surface, which in turn, disturbs the golfers. Because of our strategies to combat the invasion of *Poa annua*, new tech-

nologies and equipment will be employed for aerification so that disruption can be held to a minimum. Our plan is to aerify greens once in the spring and once in the fall since this is the best time for rapid turf recovery. Fairways will be aerified twice a year with a deep tine aerifier which has the capability of penetrating up to eighteen inches into the soil. This will help reduce the compaction on our heavy clay soil.

Question #6:

"Why are you handwatering during play? Can't you tell the course is already too wet?"

Answer: Although we have one of the most technically advanced irrigation systems, there has not been a system designed that can water every area on the golf course perfectly. Shade, slopes, soil types and grass varieties are just a few factors that can change water requirements in any given area. Our goal is to try to keep the playing surfaces as firm as possible while maintaining the health of the turf.

Question #5:

"Why do we have to stay on the cart paths when the course seems so firm?"

Answer: Because of the size and topography of the golf course, we realize the convenience that a cart provides for the golfer. We want to make the course as accessible as possible for all. There are only three reasons that cart usage is restricted on certain days: (1) Your safety: because of the unique terrain at the Oregon Golf Club it is very easy to lose control of a cart on a wet, slippery slope. (2) Damage to the turf: When the soil is wet and unstable, tearing and rutting of the course can occur from the use of carts. This not only takes time and labor to repair, it also detracts from the aesthetics and playability of the golf course. (3) Excessive wear on turf: This becomes a problem during the winter months when the plant is not actively growing or during summer months when heavy cart traffic can severely damage the turf.

Question #4:

"Why do you have to topdress so much?"

Answer: Through the years, I have found topdressing to be THE most important element in my putting green maintenance program. Some of the major benefits of topdressing are to: (1) control thatch; (2)

smooth the putting surface, (3) firm the putting surface, (4) provide a good growing medium for the turfgrass plant.

Question #3:

"Why is that person on the mower following me around from hole to hole?"

Answer: In the past, this has been a problem when the mowing operation is progressing at the same rate as the pace of play. This year, we will be trying some different routes and mowing techniques (i.e., mowing holes in reverse order so we will only pass a group one time rather than following them throughout the course).

Question #2:

"Why is it necessary to use so many pesticides?"

Answer: Our first rule of maintenance is to apply pesticides only when it is absolutely necessary. We have adopted an integrated pest management program which includes the following steps: (1) identify target pests, (2) establish acceptable threshold levels for damage, (3) determine cultural practices that can be used to deter the pests without the use of pesticides, (4) when intervention with a pesticide

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is necessary, we choose the most environmentally friendly product available. We will post signs on the first and tenth tee describing our method of control.

Question #1:

"Why do you schedule all the maintenance activities on the only day that we play?"

Answer: The majority of the staff works Monday through Friday. We start as early in the morning as possible so that the majority of the work can be completed before play begins. On weekends, when most of the golfers come out to enjoy the golf course, we limit our maintenance activities to those that are necessary to prepare the course for

play. Although our schedule varies throughout the year according to the weather, the staff normally works a 40-hour week. It takes many labor hours to keep the golf course in the condition you've come to expect. Obviously, some of this work needs to occur during playing time; unfortunately, this cannot be avoided. I feel that we are very fortunate to have a staff that is so committed to quality and excellence in their profession. Our goal is to give you the best-maintained golf course anywhere. We refuse to settle for second best.

We hope we can reduce these top ten question to just one...
"HOW DO YOU KEEP THE GOLF COURSE IN SUCH GOOD CONDITION?"

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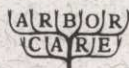
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