

Building a Better Toolbox- Tools You Can Use! - Part 3

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The Information Toolset- Identify Your Resources!

Even the best grounds managers don't know all the answers to their questions, but here is how to find them! We live in the information age, where we can quickly find out almost everything about anything. We look to our resources to find the answers. Anyplace that you can find information is a potential resource.

I believe that my most important informational resources are the people. It began with the instructors that I had in school and the bosses and coworkers who taught me the fundamentals of my job. Trusted colleagues helped me figure out what to do- and sometimes what not to do, and continue to do so. My vendors partner with me and help me find solutions to problems. I network with my industry peers constantly. I try to surround myself with people who know more than me and I listen, ask questions and learn from them.

My next choice is information that I can find in print. I have textbooks and reference books on my bookshelf. Some of these books are like a "groundskeeper's bible", they contain the fundamental facts about what I need to know and what I need to do. I read and reference them often. There are also a number of trade magazines that I read monthly. Publications such as Sports Turf, Grounds Maintenance, Landscape Management and others offer timely information for the reader as most issues have a monthly theme. The articles are usually well written and concise and have useful content. Most subscriptions are free, thanks to an abundance of advertisers.

Another great place for information is the Internet. There are a number of good e-magazines out there for groundskeepers and sports field managers. Some are weekly newsletters with links to other websites, others are monthly. If you are looking for something specific, search engines such as Google, Yahoo and others can find tens if not hundreds of search results about whatever topic you choose.

Continuing Professional Education courses that Rutgers or your local community college offers are a good way to become trained and many offer credits and a certification of completion. Among the formats in which courses are offered are seminar, traditional classroom and online or distance learning classes. I took a soils course online last year and it was just as rigorous as any that I had in college. The advantage was that I could fit it around my busy schedule.

Some of the best clearinghouses of information are professional organizations such as the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey, the New Jersey Turfgrass Association, and others. These organizations publish newsletters by and for their membership, sponsor field days and demonstrations.

Lastly, if you need to know about a control product, ALWAYS read the label. A label is a tremendous resource. The label will tell you many things including what pests it will and won't control, what things you can safely apply it to, when, how and the amounts much to use.

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Excellent References

DID YOU KNOW?

Large soil pores called *macropores* and water will drain from these pores under the influence of gravity, thus called *gravitational water*.



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