

## Tensiometer Cuts Water Bill In Half, Survey By UC Turf Expert Proves

Millions of gallons of water are saved each month by using tensiometers, new moisture-measuring devices, according to recent research by Wayne Morgan, University of California turf expert, Riverside, Calif.

Tensiometers, relatively new instruments which tell if plants or soil need water, are closed tubes filled with water. On the lower tip sits a piece of ceramic with a porous wall, and at the top is a vacuum gauge. The device is inserted into the ground, and as soil dries, moisture is sucked through the ceramic tip, creating a partial vacuum inside. The gauge registers this soil suction, and gives a reading of relative soil wetness.

Morgan supervised installation of tensiometers at five golf courses, four bowling greens, two parks, and three cemeteries in Los Angeles County during the past two years. He returned to check watering records after the inexpensive (\$10-20) tools

were placed, and here's what he found:

Water use down 50% at Holmby Park Bowling Green (West Los Angeles), 40% reduction at

**Tensiometer**, new water-saving device, gets close scrutiny here at Victoria Club Golf Course, Riverside, Calif., from Wayne Morgan (right), UC turf expert, and Rod Barker, Victoria superintendent. The latter said his facility saved \$1,200 in 1963, and \$1,500 last year by using this water measuring instrument. Today many sod producers are experimenting with forms of irrigation to increase harvests, and the possible use of tensiometers to cut down on water bills could be promising for these sod growers. With water shortages experienced in many parts of the country during summer, this could be especially important.

Deauville Country Club (Tarzana), and down 57% on a section of UCLA campus. Other facilities reported even larger savings with tensiometers.

"It's not just a matter of saving water," Morgan asserts. "Better irrigation promotes healthy, attractive grass."



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