

# Trained Graduates Can Cut Operating Costs



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Generally the horticultural industry is not willing to pay full value for the well-trained graduate, though he would pay his own way through savings made in operating expenses.

Turf managers today are worth more money than the common industry pay level. In many cases, they could be paid \$12,000 to \$18,000 yearly out of money wasted by inept construction plans. Few starting salaries are fair to the calibre of man graduating today in turfgrass or landscape management. You'll find plenty of jobs at the \$6,000 to \$8,000 level. Yet many employers would be both time and money ahead to pay the salary needed to attract better qualified people.

Our low pay philosophy drives many of our better men to competing fields. The effects then show up in industry shortcomings. Take the case of many almost new golf courses in California. Any number have at least one major construction mistake—the result of saving a few thousand dollars during planning and building. Poor planning and management are costly and the problem has been solved on the California courses only by reconstruction. Parts of courses have been rebuilt in the first five years at costs of up to \$100,000 and more. Less objection seems to stem from spending \$50,000 on rebuilding than an extra \$5,000 in the beginning.

Golf courses have plenty of

company when assessing rebuilding costs. Most of the big athletic arenas recently built in California have had turf problems. Hundreds of schools building athletic fields have settled for inadequate irrigation systems. Often they have also spent money on unneeded soil amendments—rather than putting money into the fertilizer needed to give them decent turf.

### Extra Costs Seldom Recognized By Industry

These and similar cases entail extra costs to the public, most of which go unrecognized. Practically all are caused by making wrong choices, poor design, and compromising on specifications. Research personnel who have the answers can only help during the rebuilding stage. They are reluctant to establish rigid guidelines because there is usually a flexibility of choice. Thus the calibre of the turf manager is most important in positions where he develops and carries out an effective and efficient construction plan.

Yet despite these needs, the graduate turf manager does not enjoy a labor market willing to pay adequately for his services. Too often, a substandard salary is offered.

Most consistent job opportunities today for our California graduates are in park adminis-

tration. We have placed students—based on their interests—in parks, in nurseries; with landscape contractors, golf course builders and landscape architects; helped them find positions as plant breeders, arborists, teachers, golf superintendents, floriculturists, garden writers, and as principal personnel in botanic gardens and arboreta; in laboratories, and in service and sales positions.

Personally, I feel that a prime future opportunity exists in a new form of golf course management. Surprisingly, many golf clubs of successful businessmen lack good business management. I think a void will be filled when some turf graduate leases equipment to, and contracts for maintenance services to several golf courses in one area. This can provide better maintenance and management at lower costs to the course, and at the same time provide good income to the manager.

By way of summary, I believe the sophisticated nature of turfgrass management today will lead to a recognition of the qualified manager. We need trained men to make correct choices during planning and construction—to prevent mistakes and accompanying waste and to eliminate costly rebuilding. When the value of highly trained men is more widely recognized, we will attract a new calibre of leadership to the turf industry.