

LETTERS

I am writing in response to a letter written by Mr. Eric Madisen, Jr. Editor, *Park Maintenance*, in the March, 1978 issue of *Weeds, Trees and Turf*. My purpose in writing is certainly not a personal grievance with Mr. Madisen nor with parks people because I count numerous park and recreation directors and maintenance supervisors as close professional friends and associates in the Pacific Northwest. My question is, who are the parks professionals and what is their position in the important issue of turfgrass management. In my view we have two distinct professional groups in parks — the administrators (P and R directors) and the professional grounds supervisors. Frequently in small park districts this individual is one and the same. He has to double as the director and the supervisor.

With regard to the golf course superintendents receiving too large a slice of the cake in research and attention in publications such as *Weeds, Trees and Turf*, I feel it is because they are better organized and show a great deal more enthusiasm, interest and support in these areas than many parks people particularly in the Pacific Northwest. I am sure that parks people know that most of the research conducted is as adaptable and useful to parks as it is on golf courses, but when we hang the name of a golf course on released information it is usually branded as being suitable only for the golf courses. Fairways and tees on golf courses are very similar to the management of most park areas. Work done on putting greens in research and by the golf course people, especially from the standpoint of specialized soils, is easily adapted to high use playgrounds and athletic fields in the parks system.

I have attended many parks meetings including meetings of the NRPA and find that most of the attendance is composed of administrators. The person actually responsible for making decisions in turf and ornamental maintenance is frequently not present at these meetings where technical information about this type of management is being discussed. Furthermore it appears that the maintenance supervisors are not as well organized as the administrators and they have

less exposure to turfgrass conferences, field days, workshops, etc.

It also appears, from where I sit, that parks have placed their emphasis on hiring professional administrators which is highly justifiable and neglecting to hire highly skilled and trained people to supervise what happens to the park maintenance system. Highly experienced or college trained agronomists and horticulturists should be considered for key roles in the parks system.

I would have to ask the question also, is there a movement in the parks system for professionally upgrading the maintenance supervisors such as the progress made by golf superintendents over the past 20 to 30 years.

In conclusion, I would encourage the parks to get better organized on the maintenance supervision level and give these key people opportunity to professionally improve themselves and you will find there is lots of help available. I will be very happy to work with parks people as I have for the past 20 years, but a little organization will tremendously improve their professional status.

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