

## The Golf Superintendent

Time, money and personnel present greater problems to today's superintendent than anything Mother Nature can dish out.

by Maureen Hrehocik, managing editor

Time and money. Those two words seem to sum up the greatest concerns facing golf course superintendents across the country.

In an informal survey conducted by WEEDS TREES & TURF, declining budgets and increasing expectations from boards of directors and golfers and an increasing work load, have done more to hobble golf course superintendents than Mother Nature ever could.

"What I've found hard is the ability to hire competent people who take pride and an interest in their work," said one superintendent.

"I think everyone is interested in providing a quality product at minimal cost," said another, "but more and more members are wanting more, but aren't willing to pay for it."

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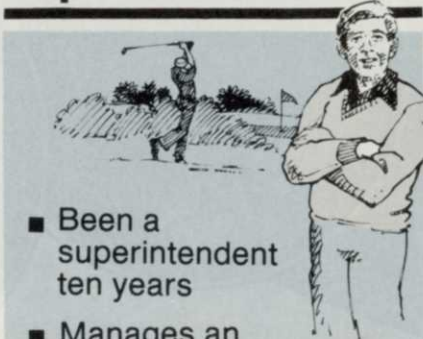
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Yet another Midwestern golf course superintendent agreed.

"Our biggest problem is coming up with adequate funding to accomplish the standards demanded by the management and golf patron. We want to satisfy the golfer, but in the long run, do what's best for the course."

Survey results show the WEEDS TREES & TURF respondents to have, on the average, 10 years experience as a superintendent and managing a privately-

### WT&T Profile of a Superintendent



- Been a superintendent ten years
- Manages an 18-hole, privately owned, membership restricted course
- Belongs to a local golf course superintendents' association

owned, membership restricted 18-hole course. Eighty-seven percent are members of local golf course superintendents' associations with 66 percent of those surveyed members of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America.

### Typical Annual Budget

- Herbicides \_\_\_\_\_ \$2,396
- Fertilizers \_\_\_\_\_ \$11,245
- Fungicides \_\_\_\_\_ \$7,985
- Seed renovation/establishment \$1,735
- Seed for winter overseeding \_\_\_\_\_ \$2,933



Greens fees at the courses averaged \$6 for nine holes (a high of \$18 and a low of \$3.25) and \$13 for 18 holes (a high of \$50 and a low of \$5). Rounds played have steadily increased, as have maintenance budgets, however not as much to offset burgeoning demands on the superintendent's time, crews and areas of responsibility. Most responses came from the South, Midwest and East.

In 1981 the average respondent's maintenance budget was around \$150,000, jumping to \$167,277 in 1982 and \$183,568 in 1983. The range was from a high budget of \$545,000 for one course to a low of \$21,000 for another.

### Equipment

A little more than half of the respondents have a planned replacement program for their equipment. A vast majority preferred hydraulic to mechanical drive mowers. Ninety six percent serviced and repaired their own equipment.

In the golf cart area, most superintendents were not involved in the concession with

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only a little less than 5 percent maintaining the golf cars. Courses averaged 40 cars with E-Z-Go the preferred manufacturer.

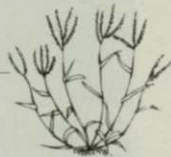
There was almost an even split of those who delayed purchasing turf equipment the past two years and those who didn't.

None of the respondents picked up grass clippings on fairways.

Irrigation systems were mainly the newer automatic type with good controls, while some had the older quick-coupler systems. Most planned to improve the irrigation system.

## Major Turf/Weed Problems

Goosegrass



Crabgrass

Clover



Dandelions

Plantains



## Weeds, trees & insects

While weather presents a perennial problem to the golf course superintendent, dandelions, crabgrass and clover add to the natural problems he must contend with. Grubs, sod webworms, cutworms and armyworms, are the most troublesome and fre-

quently-cited turf pests. Japanese beetles, scales and webworms are the three most bothersome tree and shrub insects.

## Chemicals

A majority of superintendents prefer liquid concentrates in the chemical formulations they use. A majority used IBDU (Par Ex) slow release fertilizer, sulfur coated urea, Scotts brand, or Milorganite. The average turf fertilizer budget is \$11,245; \$2,895 for insecticides, \$2,396 for herbicides and \$7,985 for fungicides. All budgets in the areas of herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and fertilizers have increased in the past two years.

"I would like to see longer-lasting insecticides come on the market," said one superintendent. "There has been more turf damage over the last few years as supplies of the older hydrocarbon pesticides are being used up. Some courses are spraying insecticides routinely which not only increase hazards to spray personnel, but also may lead to resistance."

Most superintendents answering the survey base their seed purchases on variety name rather than price and budget. On the average, they spend \$1,735 for seed renovation and \$2,933 for winter overseeding annually.

Other superintendents and industry publications provide the best buying sources followed by extension agents, advertising, and promotional literature.

While management is expecting more from the superintendent, many respondents said the need for being recognized as a turf professional was still great.

"I find it hard to convince the management of the course that there are different conditions on the course that I must contend with and to have them view me as a professional who knows his job. Trying to control this facet of the operation is a bigger headache than any turf problems I may have."

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