

The right stuff

"Advice is only as good as its source," says William Bengeyfield of the USGA Green Section. "In this technical age, two heads are better than one." He refers, of course, to the services offered by his group. But he could just as well be referring to the general dissemination of knowledge within the entire green industry.



Once upon a time, landscape managers could keep clients happy enough simply by demonstrating a general knowledge of living things and having a sixth sense.

But the industry has evolved long past that stage. Nowadays, landscape managers have to be well educated in the classroom and well trained in the field to survive in this very competitive marketplace.

Indeed, Dr. Fred Grau of the Musser International Turfgrass Foundation took a few moments recently to marvel at the industry's increasing sophistication. "I can't get over the facilities you have to create beautiful, safe turf today," he said during a session at the GCSAA convention. "The equipment and chemicals are so much improved over the equipment and chemicals of 10 and 20 years ago."

It is up to the individual landscape manager to keep abreast of the times, and the ones who do so will be those who prosper.

Bengeyfield tells a parable about a broken machine.

The machine's owner called on a consultant to fix the unit. The consultant removed his trusty hammer, gave the machine a whack and—lo and behold—it started up with no problem. The consultant then told the owner that his fee was \$1,000. The owner, reluctant to pay such an exorbitant price, said that he could've hit the machine just as easily himself.

"I charge \$100 for hitting the machine," replied the consultant. "The other \$900 is my fee for knowing *where* to hit it."

Okay, so maybe you're not in the consulting business. But such is the value of education and training. The astute turfgrass and landscape manager would thus be advised to heed the moral of Mr. Bengeyfield's story.

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