

... dust to dust

The dried, cracking ground crumbled slightly under the weight of the man's boot. He stopped and knelt down, running two fingers of his right hand over the dry ground. He tugged at a couple blades of grass. The drought-stressed turf tore easily. The man could irrigate his greens and tees for a short time each day, but his fairways. . . .



Is this scene reserved for the arid Southwest? Or the Southeast, tortured by drought last year? For the moment, perhaps, it seems that way. But it is not. In most areas of the country, water is deficient: we use much more than Mother Nature can replace with her tears.

But this isn't how it should be. Nor is it how the situation can be. Sometimes as much as 40 or 50 percent of the water we use in landscaping and golf course irrigation is wasted. The problem is not how much we use, but how we use it.

Now, more than ever, there is a distinct need for precise computerized metering equipment which not only operates an irrigation system efficiently, but also knows when to operate it. Systems need to be leak-proof, and heads must be arranged in a way that minimizes overlap and maximizes effectiveness. Alternate sources of irrigation water such as effluent must be explored by industry groups. And it all must be affordable.

Is this too much to ask? I don't think so. A lot of people are refusing to accept the fact that a dwindling water supply is a real problem. It's time for those people to wake up and splash some cold water on their faces. The technology exists to create these systems. The management practices exist to implement them. It must be done.

We cannot sit back and wait for the problem to dry up. Because it will.

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