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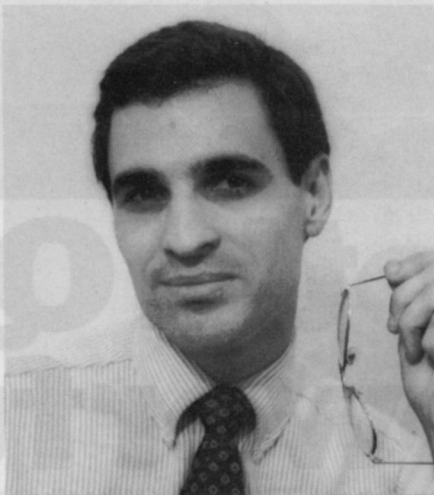
Circle No. 132 on Reader Inquiry Card

and topsoil were mixed and used on site, savings thousands of dollars in hauling costs.

In fact, since most of the coarse sand was found near the stadium, the board saved an additional \$15,000 by eliminating the drainage system beneath the football field.

(Ultimately the stadium field's growing media will consist of 75% sand, 15% peat, 10% topsoil and the equivalent of 80 lbs. of "Sand Aid" per 1,000 sq.ft. The soil mix for the remaining fields will be 50% coarse sand/50% topsoil mix over a sand/tile drainage system.)

Says Wrona: "A project like this is a constant series of tradeoffs and planning moves. But it can only be done if you have a very good relationship with the owner, and everybody understands where every-



Wrona says a planner's job is to get the most for dollars allocated for site work.

body is in terms of the budget."

Wrona continues to work with school leaders on the 80-acre site.

"All playing fields at Rockford High School will have an additional advantage not often afforded to many new sports fields," explains Wrona. "All fields will be allowed to grow a minimum of two growing seasons (one spring and one fall) prior to their use."

Preparing for the day when the fields are playable, Rockford has already hired a new grounds manager, and is developing fertility and field use policies.

The key to Rockford's success?—"A knowledgeable owner representing a positive, supporting community and taking best advantage of available sight design opportunities," says Wrona.

—Ron Hall

Seasonal help: where to find them, how to choose them

Seasonal workers might some day become full-timers, if you hire wisely.

by Ed Wandtke

■ Seasonal help has been one of the standards of personnel recruitment for the green industry. The use of seasonal employees allows the green industry company to avoid the extra costs of full time personnel and at the same time capture the enthusiasm received from fresh employees.

Some job applicants will be looking for more than just a job, although some will only be looking to make money. Others will want an opportunity to learn some additional skills and apply current knowledge. In the past, the seasonal employee has typically not been motivated, but the current economic conditions make this a buyer's market for the employer. Will you be ready to meet the challenge of these job applicants or are you just looking for people to fill the various jobs you have open at this time?

The financial needs of the unemployed will lead many over-qualified individuals to your company if the unemployment rate is very high. Be careful in hiring these job shifters. If an individual has been highly compensated in the past and your job

opening will not pay what he has been used to earning, expect him to leave as soon as a better paying job is offered.

Much of the turnover in the green industry occurs in the first two to four weeks on the job. It is extremely important to advise them that they will be expected to work in almost all weather conditions. Remember: you are used to working 10- to 12-hour days, but the prospective employee might be thinking he will only work eight-hour days.

When to hire — Deciding on how many seasonal employees you need should be done at least two months before you go to the market place to compete for the potential employees in the market. Letting your current employees know in advance of your seasonal employee needs will allow them to recruit for you. One of the most effective systems of finding quality seasonal employees is to have a job notice posted at the various churches within one mile of your shop. The quality of the applicants, their integrity, and highly-dedicated work ethic results in better-than-expected performance.

If your seasonal recruitment takes place at the start of the season, you will be forced into making decisions on the hiring of individuals based on the immediate need for the individual to be working. As a result, you will not be choosing the individuals who can satisfy both the short- and long-term needs of your company. These

type of last-minute hiring decisions will often result in increased turnover or in the hiring of an individual who just doesn't seem to work out. Avoid this process in your company by making the seasonal employee interviewing process a year-round activity.

How to choose — How would you describe your company's personality? You must now determine this before you hire seasonal employees. If not, you may hire some quality individuals who just don't seem to fit in.

When you hire your seasonal employees, you should consider the individual's adaptability to your company.

Flexibility, cooperation and a sense of teamwork are the key characteristics a person needs to bring to the job in order to contribute to the overall profitability and effectiveness of your company.

Their job description — It is very important to allow these people the opportunity to make decisions and have a chance for authority and responsibility. This opportunity for the individual to make decisions on the job and accept criticism will help the employee become an integral part of the company.

Evaluating their performance as well as that of your full-timers will encourage all employees to be concerned more with the job than the job title.

Helping all employees realize that there is a consistency requirement in the performance standards they will be expected to meet will help everyone become part of company.

—The author is a senior consultant with Wandtke & Assoc., Columbus, Ohio.

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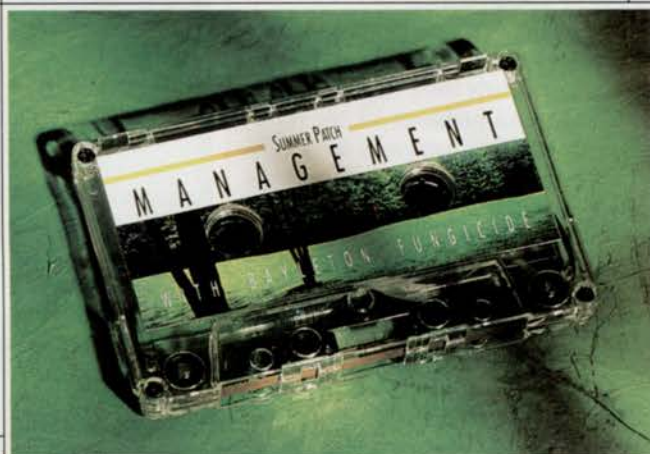
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Removing trees to improve play

Veteran golf course superintendents say tree management programs may be necessary on many golf courses.

■ Stanley Zontek says the chain saw is a marvelous tool in the fine art of maintaining golf turfgrass.

"Sometimes turf managers have to get out there and clear some underbrush and down some trees," claims Zontek, who travels the Mid-Atlantic region as the USGA's turf expert.

"The essence of our jobs as turf managers is to grow strong healthy grass, and we're not going to do it in the shade and we're not going to do it in pockets of poor air circulation," he adds.

Few golf course superintendents would argue with Zontek. They know their reputation and job hinges on how well they grow and maintain quality turf. They're

graded on the condition of turf, not the beauty or utility of trees.

Even so, stately or colorful trees grace most U.S. golf courses. Golfers, for the most



Quast: anyone hitting a tree with a mower at Medinah must report it.

part, appreciate trees and recognize them as valuable on the course.

Zontek himself claims he's not advocating "the wholesale removal" of trees on courses, particularly those that don't cause turf maintenance problems for the superintendent and aren't hazardous for golfers. "Who's going to argue with the spring color of sunburst honey locust after just coming out of a bleak winter?" he asks.

Danny Quast, golf course superintendent at the Medinah Country Club about 30 miles west of Chicago, says superintendents can provide fine turf and keep valuable trees on their courses.

They'll need a separate tree program to do it. They'll also probably need the help of an arborist.

Quast has had arborists on staff at both Milwaukee Country Club (where he was employed previously) and now at Medinah. "You need to have a management program for the trees just like we do our turf," he says.

A tree inventory was conducted by Dr. Tom Green before Quast joined Medinah. Green of the Morton Arboretum also graded the trees on a scale of 1-6, with one being a newly-planted tree and six being a dead tree or stump. In all, Green developed 225 pages of information about the 7,000 trees at Medinah.

"The information needs to be developed into a working program," insists Quast. (See accompanying article.)

He offers these suggestions for implementing a golf course tree program:

✓ Purchase a chipper. They're expensive but with rising landfill costs, they'll pay for themselves in a few years.

✓ Have available and use the proper tree care equipment—power saws, hand saws, cabling equipment, etc.

✓ Many trees on a golf course can be



trimmed from below with a pole saw.

✓ Make sure your arborist has an ornamental pesticide license.

✓ Never let your arborist climb alone.

—Ron Hall

The tree program at Medinah C.C.

■ Medinah Country Club, site of three U.S. Open Championships, was built in a region once covered with oak forest. On its 650 acres are 799 white oaks, 449 burr oaks, 538 red oaks, 393 sugar maples, 326 shagbark hickories, 304 green ash and 103 American elm.

Medinah's working program involves:

- the services of an arborist (possessing a pesticide license),
- a planting program,
- pruning schedule,
- insect/disease control program,
- cabling and bracing procedures, and
- removal.

At Medinah, 120 new trees are planted annually. About 80 percent of these trees are species of the native forest; the remainder are chosen for their adaptability and ornamental characteristics.

Regular pruning, says superintendent Danny Quast, is necessary for the safety of players and spectators (40,000 a day attended the Open in 1990), and to improve the appearance and health of trees. He says some trees on the course were "topped" years ago. They're rotting from the top down. This improper pruning probably took 40 years from their lives.

Tree insect and disease problems on the large oaks are controlled by injections (Mauget's) and the smaller oaks receive Dursban spray in May and again in June. Every American elm at Medinah is treated at least once every three years to fight Dutch elm disease.

Quast says there are many reasons to remove particular trees on a course, including "just plain ugly."

—R.H.

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