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Turf Times

Bi-Monthly Update
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The newsletter from the Northern Michigan Turf Managers Association

President's Message

As the golf season begins to slow down, it gives us time to reflect on practices we used this season and what we can do to make improvements for next season.

One of the thoughts that comes to mind is what can be done to increase interest and participation at meetings of the NMTMA. I don't have the numbers at hand, but attendance at meetings seems to be on the decline. I realize everyone is busy during the season and it's hard to make every meeting.

The following suggestions have been made:

- *Reduce the number of meetings during the season,
- *Meetings be educational, without golf,
- * Meetings be more social than educational during the middle of the season,
- *Attract speakers who are more recognized in the turf industry.



I do feel that each one of us should make the commitment to attend as many meetings as possible. I think we all benefit from getting together with friends and colleagues, visiting properties to see what other superintendents are doing, and stepping back from our own operations for possibly a new outlook.

I would welcome any input you feel would be helpful to increase interest in our meetings. Thank you and I'll see you at the next meeting.

Brian Holmes

“To mix or not Mix”

Getting the most out of your Pesticide program.

Because pesticide products are among the highest - priced products per pound that you as a Golf Course Superintendent can buy, using them effectively helps keep overall maintenance costs low.

Rarely do pesticides fail. It's usually other things that can cause the product to not perform up to expectations. Most of the time, it's the Golf Course Superintendent or one of his applicators who is at fault: not knowing the pest to be controlled, not mixing the pesticide correctly, not reading the label, or one of numerous other oversights. The key is to know each chemical, because they all have their own properties, and accurate identification of the pest is essential whether the "Pest" is a weed, insect or a turf disease.

Each pest responds differently to different products. Pesticides should be applied for a specific pest. In the case of turf diseases, too much or too little precipitation or irrigation can mean an increase or decrease in initial disease appearance, so controlling water is one of the cultural means you have to limit your pesticide use.

If you are tank-mixing pesticides, tank mix problems aren't very common, but when they do happen, they can be a real nightmare. Product labels don't always list all the tank mix incompatibilities, because the label maker can't anticipate all the combinations you could come up with.

If you find yourself needing to mix up a number of different products in different formulations, one easy way to remember the correct order to add products to your spray tank is the four letter word "W.A.L.E." . The "W" stands for wettable powders or water soluble bags or a product that needs to be suspended. The "A" stands for agitate to get the WP or WSB suspended. The "L" stands for liquids or flo-ables such as iron, fertilizer, etc. And last but not least the "E" stands for emulsifiable concentrates such as Dursban, so any solids are truly in suspension and separated. Before you put any product into your spray tank, be sure to fill your spray rig at least half full with water, especially when using WP or WSB type products.

I hope everyone has a great fall and winter, and I'll see everyone at the MTF conference in January.

Eric Denoyer



Tee Construction

One of the representatives of the USGA Greens Section was making the tour of my course a few years ago and he asked, "How often do you topdress your tees?" I replied, "almost never, why?" How did you get them so level," he asked, I replied, "We built them that way."

So, for the record, here is the way we built them...all hard work but not very complicated.

Don't handicap your turf growing expertise by locating a tee in the shade where tree roots will invade it (even years from now, you may still be there) or in an area where trees or other features (hills, fences, buildings, etc.) will hamper the free flow of air movement. Conditions may be such that you must build in a cul de sac, in shade and right beside a willow. Cutting away brush to form air channels, trimming to let the sun in and trenching to cut roots will all help but each adverse factor will work against you.

Elevate the tee slightly for drainage and better air movement. Bank run gravel, a minimum of one foot should be the base. Don't make the mistake of thinking just any old fill will work - it might - but you need every edge you can get. Use the lightest equipment you can to shape this up into rough grade; a light tractor with a bucket on the front and a blade on the back. Bulldozers do a great job but tend to pack the mass down there by decreasing drainage.

Align the base to the fairway by standing in the middle of the proposed tee and facing a spot about where an average drive should land. Put your arms out, hands shoulder high, palms down. This will give you the angle for the front edge of the tee. Drive in two stakes, one in each front corner. Do your angle shot again. Again from fifty feet in back of the tee. Go out in the fairway and look back at the stakes from 200 yards. Make any adjustment needed. Drive two stakes in the back corners. Determine size now. A good rule of thumb is to make it twice as big as you (or anyone else) had planned. If it is too big you need not mow it all as tee. If it is too small, you get to rebuild in a few years. Make the choice now.

Grade the base as close to the finished tee as you can. Put on about one foot of the best topsoil you can get...screened sandy loom if I had a choice. Again use light equipment, even keeping the tractor off the actual teeing area unless it is so large as to be impractical. I am always amazed at how much a few interested hands and the #2

shovel can accomplish. Spread soil with the shovels and use the common wooden hay rake with 2" gap in the teeth to pull a rough grade. Get it shaped up fairly decent and then roll with a light roller - power or hand - our tennis court roller, no water, was just right. Rake for grade - roll again. Do this over and over till the top is level, the banks are gently sloping and there is just a hint of a slope from front to back, and as you stand on the tee facing the fairway an even fainter hint of a slope from your right to your left. This is to insure surface drainage. If, as sometimes happens, the back of the tee butts a slope, make sure no water can be entrapped there. A tile at the low point is good insurance and fairly easy to install in new construction.

At this point I find I get the, "Can't see woods because the trees are in the way" syndrome. I've looked so long and hard at the grade level I loose my perspective. The cure is simple - leave the construction till the following day. Sizing it up after an absence of a few hours, the need for corrections will be self evident.

In any given group of ten greensmen, only two will be able to fine grade a tee to the desired level. The other eight will continually undermine the project unless they are directed by the two who have this born-with skill.

You will find that your most aggressive and intelligent workers have this knack - which is a combination of interest, self - confidence and practicality. After all, it is simply moving the high spots into the low spots until they are both eliminated.

I find that when you think it is finished and the grade is "perfect" you should rake it at least four more times, right side to left, left side to right, front to back and finish with back to front. This should not be an attempt to move soil, the corrections in this move will be very subtle, gravity and the head of the rake will do it, with no effort on the part of the raker. Fertilizer or lime can be raked in with this last grading.

Mason line and a line level is an aid in determining the grade when you start out but for the finishing touches I discard the cord and rely on the human eye.

In summary : do not build in any problems - build it big enough and avoid shade and tree roots. Provide for air movement and drainage. Work on the final grade until you are satisfied then fuss for another hour.

Credit Foreground

The 68th Annual Michigan Turfgrass Conference will be held January 19 - 22, 1998, at the Holiday Inn - South Convention Center in Lansing, Michigan. Details regarding this event will be mailed in early November. For further information contact Kay at (517) 321-1660

Important

Remember to let Kay know of any changes to your membership information. These changes will be needed in order to update the membership directory. Kay has been receiving dues payments without updated information. Any questions/concerns call Kay Patrick at 517- 327-5474

For Sale

Toro 7 gang. Newer frame with box of good parts. Very good condition. Asking \$3800.00.
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60 Sand Trap Rakes. \$150.00.
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Steve Hammon, Traverse City Golf & C.C.
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Safety Message

Chainsaws

I could fill this newsletter discussing chainsaw safety. Let me relate one personal experience that I'll bet happens frequently.

It was getting near the end of a long day of work, and I was getting tired (don't run a chainsaw when you're tired). My saw was not running good (never use a chainsaw if it's not running properly!!). I was a long way from the maintenance building, but was determined to finish up this tree (don't let your stubborn male ego override common sense). If I did not keep revving the saw, it would stall (uh-oh). So as I was walking around with the saw, the chain was moving continuously on the bar (a recipe for disaster). I lifted my leg over a log. Unfortunately, my weary arms did not lift the chainsaw in unison. As a result, my knee contacted the moving chain (should have been wearing chaps). Even though the chain was relatively dull, (another error in chainsaw operation) this nick cost me seven stitches and considerable embarrassment. It could have been much worse. Does any of this sound familiar? This whole story is a case study in how **not** to operate a chainsaw.

When the doc was stitching me up, he told me an old woodsman from over near Atlanta had just been in. This old-timer had just received a kickback on the head. The doc put over a hundred stitches in his head. The amazing thing is, this guy wasn't even going to come in and have it looked at!

Be careful out there!

For Your Information

Sportswear now available with the NMTMA logo! Embroidery Today in Gaylord (124 W. Main) has the goods. Contact them at (517) 732-4399.

ITEM	COLORS	SIZES	PRICE
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Hey, you computer junkie's call Kay Patrick or E-mail her with your E-mail address and we will include your address in the 1998 N.M.T.M.A. ROSTER. You can reach Kay at (517) 327-5474 or E-mail at mtfturf@msn.com. Look forward to seeing you on the web.

Lights! Camera! Action!

Coming soon to Anaheim, Calif., the 69th International Golf Course Conference and Show will be held in the Anaheim Convention Center. Don't miss this action-packed week of educational opportunities, the newest golf course products and services, and the chance to network with fellow professionals.

Educational Seminars

Monday through Thursday, Feb. 2-5
and Saturday, Feb. 7

Trade Show

Friday through Sunday, Feb. 6-8

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Friday, Feb. 6

Educational Sessions & Forums

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GCSAA Golf Championship

Saturday, Jan. 31, Practice Round

Sunday, Feb. 1, Four Ball Championship

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...and we encourage you to support them.

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P.O. Box 80086
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Box 10065
College Station, TX 77842

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