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# CLIPPINGS

CONNECTICUT  
ASSOCIATION OF  
GOLF COURSE  
SUPERINTENDENTS

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## NEW ORLEANS OFFERS VISITORS VAST ARRAY

Exciting history, excellent dining, fabulous night life and sight seeing galore will all present themselves to the golf course superintendent, his wife and guests in New Orleans, when they attend the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's 46th Annual International Turfgrass Conference and show, February 16-21, 1975.

While an excellent education program and turfgrass industry show will be the primary reasons for attending the annual Conference, there will also be sufficient time to take in some of the other attractions the city has to offer its visitors.

Originally claimed as a French territory in 1682, it became a Spanish possession after 80 years, beginning in 1762. In 1801 the French once again were granted title to the area and then sold it to the United States in 1803 as part of the \$15,000,000 Louisiana Purchase. Becoming the Union's 19th state in 1812, General Andrew Jackson, in the famous battle of New Orleans in 1815 finally secured the strategic port city.

By 1840, the development of the steamboat, and the cotton and tobacco industries made New Orleans the second wealthiest and fourth most populous city in the U.S. Because of its port activities, it recovered from the Civil War much more rapidly than most of the Southern cities.

Today's visitors to New Orleans will find that much of the history presents itself in ways other than just historic markers, and even the markers, such as Jackson Square, are quite notable.

Throughout the city, French, Spanish and Creole dining are highlights to menus that also feature more standard

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## CAREFUL PLANNING CAN HELP YOU GET MORE OUT OF EDUCATIONAL MEETINGS

Conferences, conventions, field days, seminars, workshops, annual meetings — regardless of what they are called, periodic gatherings with an educational purpose can result in new or refined knowledge, providing the attendee goes in with a plan.

Each year there are ample opportunities to attend meetings and glean additional information, from the local level through state and regional, all the way to national and international gatherings. In most instances, money for this type of gathering is limited, so care must be taken to see that the greatest value is received for the money expended. In order to achieve such a purpose, the following suggestions are made:

1. *Familiarize Yourself With Schedules.* Learn what is coming up, where it is going to be, who is going to be there and what they will be covering. Often times, magazines on the subject will include a listing of up-coming events and a review of these publications will give you a good start on the list of possibilities. Some meetings occur so regularly that personal knowledge can give you a general time frame for such meetings, or acquaintances may be able to recommend various meetings which they have found valuable.

2. *Request Advance Materials.* Most meetings are planned well in advance and as a result, considerable information is available to potential attendees. Receipt of this information will allow you a better opportunity to review the organization and contents of a future meeting.

3. *Evaluate the Program.* Once you have determined you will be attending

a meeting and have the materials in hand, begin immediately to review and evaluate the program. Try to determine which of the offerings will be the greatest value to you personally. Doing this in advance of the meeting will permit you to better plan your time and as a result accomplish much, more.

4. *Register as Early as Possible.* Advance registration will help you and the sponsoring organization. You will receive additional materials which can be extremely useful, and the organization can better determine the number of attendees and make necessary arrangements. In some cases, advance registrants can save money, but certainly they will be expected at the meeting, and materials will be prepared for them. In addition, there will be less of a delay upon your arrival at the meeting registration area.

If pre-meeting registration is not available, plan to arrive early and register on-site as soon as possible. Turn-away attendance is unusual, but important materials may not be available in sufficient quantities for late registrants.

5. *Follow Your Meeting Plan.* At the meeting, there may be last minute changes that will draw you away from some planned activity, but try to avoid missing those meetings which you predetermined would be personally important. If you learn some session is not going to be what you expected, change your plans accordingly, but don't lose time and information by procrastinating in the hallway.

6. *Mingle and Meet Others.* Answers to the questions you have may not be scheduled for the program, so the one method of acquiring answers is to meet attendees. Meeting and talking

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## CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENTS

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The object of this association is to promote research, education and an exchange of practical experiences in the field of turf grass culture so that the increased knowledge will lead to more economic and efficient management of golf courses and related turf areas.

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937 Black Rock Turnpike  
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### EDUCATIONAL

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with new people will heighten your opportunities to learn.

7. *Ask Questions at Every Opportunity.* There is no such thing as a "dumb question," and the only way you will receive specific information concerning your questions is to ask for it. Your problems may be so unique that your question has never arisen before, or it may be so common that everyone is suffering from it. In any event, seek answers to your questions during question and answer periods, or during casual meetings.

8. *Seek Out the Experts.* At every gathering you can safely assume that someone will be present to answer your questions or to provide you a source of information. If you are uncertain who you should go to, ask fellow attendees for suggestions.

9. *Make Notes and Gather Materials.* Regardless of how good you feel your memory is, take notes and pick up every possible handout. What appears to be insignificant at the time may be specifically what you need later. That bit of information noted during the meeting may come in handy later. This will also facilitate easier follow-up if you need additional information in the future. While your memory may fail you, your notes and materials probably won't.

Attendance at meetings can be extremely valuable, or an extreme waste of time. Normally, the results will depend upon the "homework" completed prior to leaving home and the attitude of the attendee.

## TOP-DRESS GREENS AND SEE THE DIFFERENCE

WILLIAM H. BENCEYFIELD  
Western Director USGA  
Green Section

(From USGA Green Section Record, January 1969)

In this age of science and technology, where man's knowledge is increasing at a great rate, it is still difficult to improve upon some things. Top-dressing greens is one of them.

Last October, at the Northwest Turfgrass Conference, Dr. John Escritt, Director of the Sports Turf Research Institute, Yorkshire, England, was telling his audience of his observations of turf management practices in the United States:

"Americans," he mused, "seem to want to overdo everything. For example, I feel you are overdoing putting green fertilization. You are constantly spraying fungicides and insecticides. You seem forever to be veri-cutting and aerifying greens. But there is one important practice you should be doing and are not doing at all: top-dressing greens!"

Many agronomists in this country will heartily agree. His point is valid. Top-dressing is not easy. It may seem worth every effort and the money if your goal is championship putting turf. It is one management tool your golf course should use even though your neighbors have been overlooking it for the past three decades.

In the early days of greenkeeping, the ritual of top-dressing was carried out every few weeks. The old-timers may not have known all the reasons why, but they knew it worked. World War II put an end to that. Shortages of labor, equipment, and material practically eliminated the practice, and it has never regained popularity. The advent of the mechanical aerifier in the late 1940s further discouraged a return to top-dressing. The soil cores, it was believed, would do the job for us. Only in recent years have the better managed golf clubs returned to sound top-dressing practices.

Why is top-dressing important? How does it work? What are proper top-dressing procedures? Are there really major advantages for today's golfer and course superintendent in a top-dressing problem? There is much to be said on the subject.

### WHY TOP-DRESS AT ALL?

Golf has expanded so rapidly in the past 20 years that the technical advantages of top-dressing have perhaps been forgotten by the old, and never fully appreciated by the new. Ask ten turf

managers, "why top-dress?" today and at least nine will reply, "to smooth the surface." But the story has far greater dimensions than this.

"The principles behind top-dressing originate deep in the basic tenets of agriculture, and anyone who manages fine turfgrass would do well to learn the real reasons for the practice," says turfgrass agronomist Bob Wiley.

More than merely "to smooth the surface," the following amazing advantages also await the top-dressed green: *Tighter, Finer-Textured Turf:* By following proper top-dressing techniques, the fresh soil material encourages new growth of grass shoots and stems. A dense, fine-bladed turf results. *Grain is Checked:* Whether your greens are bentgrass, bermudagrass, or Poa annua, certain strains of any grass type are going to be more vigorous, more included to lay down than others. Top-dressing encourages upright growth and checks grain development in any type of turf.

*Thatch Control:* With heavy fertilization, high or infrequent mowing, etc., aggressive grasses soon form a spongy layer known as thatch accumulation by intermixing soil materials with plant materials. It encourages new microbiological activity, which in turn breaks down thatch and converts it into valuable soil humus.

*Less Disease:* Thatch is an ideal medium for disease organisms and insect activity. With thatch under control, this problem is reduced.

*Better Water and Fertilizer Infiltration:* Because top-dressing checks heavy thatch accumulation by actually separating the plant residues, tight turf matting is prevented. The passages for air, water, fertilizers, etc., are preserved in the turf profile. Localized dry spot problems are reduced, and better overall irrigation infiltration is achieved.

*Alleviates Compaction:* Top-dressed greens have better "holding qualities" for the golfer. The material physically supports the grass plant and thereby helps it absorb compacting forces. It develops resiliency. On heavily played greens, this point is of particular importance.

*Protects Against Winter Kill:* Years of experience and research have shown that greens top-dressed just prior to the winter have fewer problems from desiccation and winter injury. The crown of the plant is protected from the winter's drying winds and wide temperature swings.

*There's a Technique to Top-Dressing:* The success of any top-dressing program depends on how well it is carried

out. Poor top-dressing procedures are worse than no top-dressing at all.

At the very beginning, the soil material to be applied must be "standardized," that is, made of uniform quality from one year to the next. Turfgrass agronomist Charles G. Wilson put it best when he said, "Each club should require an act of Congress before anyone is permitted to tamper with or alter the soil mixture decided upon, no matter how well-meaning he may be."

If the present soil in greens has a history of success (good drainage, deep rooting, minimum compaction, etc.), the top-dressing material should be of the same general nature, if available. On the other hand, if it is not available, or if greens do not have a good soil, than an additional effort is needed. In this situation, a physical soil analysis (see "USGA Green Section Specifications for a Method of Putting Green Construction") should be made of these materials that are and will be available at a cost within budget means. The physical analysis will determine what mixture of soil, sand, and organic matter is best for your program. This mixture then becomes THE permanent mixture for all future top-dressings and construction.

The physical mixing of these components is less tedious than it once was. Large quantities can be fairly rapidly mixed with today's front-end loaders, power shredders, screens, and other modern equipment. Time and labor costs have been enormously reduced.

Now two additional steps are needed before this "soil mixture" becomes eligible for "top-dressing" status: sterilization and composting. A weed-free mixture can be obtained by several sterilization methods. Methyl bromide, calcium cyanamid, Vapam, steam, and other techniques have been used.

Finally, there is but one factor that can change a soil mixture into a top-dressing soil: TIME. It is too often overlooked.

Composting was known even to gardeners in the early 100s. It remains of extreme value today. Top-dressing material should be mixed or composted for at least eight or ten months before it is used on a green. The top-dressing soil should be properly stored (soil sheds are best and kept dry enough to insure free flow at application time.

#### LIGHT AND EASY DOES IT

The question of "how much top-dressing and how often" is always good for spirited debate. But with the advent of today's power top-dressing machines, a program of light but frequent applications is recommended, and is important. For example, four dress-

ings at 3/4 cubic yard each are far more effective than two dressings at 1 1/2 cubic yards each. Certainly, a top-dressing should never be so heavy as to bury the grass plant. Depending upon the size of the green and normal circumstances, an optimum schedule might be one of applying 1/2 to 3/4 cubic yards per 5,000 square feet of green on four occasions spaced throughout each growing season. The 'light but frequently' approach allows each dressing to silt into the turf, mingle with the grass, and carry out its many important functions.

Because of the frequency required and the great need for uniformity of application, a power top-dressing machine is an absolute necessity. It will more than pay for itself in any serious top-dressing effort. Hand spreading is of a bygone era.

The use of flat boards, or the back or rakes are needed for the "boarding" operation. They move the top-dressing more uniformly over the surface. The boarding or matting operation must be done very slowly, carefully and in several directions. If it is done rapidly, it does not move the new material uniformly over the turf. Uneven coverage produces irregular surfaces, rather than smooth surfaces.

#### AERIFICATION AND VERTICAL MOWING?

Aerification and vertical mowing are now considered practically synonymous with top-dressing, but this need not necessarily be the case. Certain aerification will continue to be important for most good putting green turf, but it need not accompany every top-dressing. In fact, two aerifications annually are generally accepted as standard practice today, unless a special problem exists.

Light or moderate vertical mowing prior to top-dress (as well as regular mowing) is desirable. However, it is not mandatory. The absence of any of these practices should not be used as an excuse for not top dressing.

#### IS IT WORTH \$500?

Is top-dressing worth the expense? Many of this nation's better golf course superintendents and agronomists firmly believe it is. In fact, there is substantial evidence for believing that a good top-dressing program can reduce other costly maintenance practices. At the same time, it will produce better turf on better greens.

Although costs vary, recent figures in California place the total expenditure of top-dressing 18 greens at \$500 per application. This is an average cost of \$4.50 per 1,000 square feet. Labor as well as material costs are included in the figure.

Fred Bachand has asked me to ask the members to start thinking about next year's meeting places.

If you have not had a meeting at your club yet, or have not had one for a few years, why don't you think about having one next year.

If you feel you might like to have a meeting at your course next year, contact the Education Chairman after the elections in November.

#### GCSAA SLATE 1975

The 1975 Nominating Committee met at the Headquarters office on September 13-14, 1974.

The purpose of the meeting was to place candidates on the slate for the election at the 1975 Annual Membership Meeting in New Orleans, La.

After very careful evaluation of each prospective nominee's background, character, reference and qualifications, it was unanimously decided to place the following candidates on the slate for election at the 1975 Annual Membership Meeting in New Orleans, La.

For President: Palmer Maples, Jr.

For Vice President: Richard W. Malpass, Theodore W. Woehrl.

For Directors (Three to be elected): Michael Bavier, George W. Cleaver, Louis D. Hains, Roger A. Larson, Gordon Witteveen.

By the 1975 GCSAA Nominating Committee whose signatures appear below: Keith Nisbet, Chairman; D. William Adams, Richard H. Eichner, Carlton E. Gipson, John J. Perry CGCS.

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

As Chairman of the Public Relations Committee, I would like to extend an invitation to the membership to help us formulate a program. Involvement by many people from different parts of the state will be needed for a successful presentation.

With all the interest in conservation, ecology, and recreation, it is important for us to have an organized program and people who would be willing to present it.

Those of you wishing to join the Public Relations Committee, please call me by December 1974 so that I will be able to set up a meeting date. Call me at Shenencossett Golf Course at 445-0262 or my home at 445-4688.

BOB CHALIFOUR  
Chairman

### NEW ORLEANS

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fare. Page after page of fine establishments could be written, but among the more famous are Antoine's, Brennan's, Commander's Palace and Top of the Mart, as well as the Cafe duMonde Coffee Stand with its cafe au lait and beignets (hot French donuts, sans holes).

A real delight to most visitors are that cast iron balconies found on many of the buildings of the French Quarter. This area was originally planned in 1718 by Sieru deBienville and his engineers, in honor of the Regent of France, Phillippe, Duc d'Orleans. Although two disastrous fires destroyed all but 20 per cent of the city in 1788 and 1794, it was rebuilt each time, and today its narrow, winding, and interconnecting streets, with the many specialty shops, still intrigue visitors.

As the birth place of jazz, New Orleans abounds with all types of nightly entertainers such as Al Hirt, Pete Fountain and others, who can be found on the "entertainment street of America," Bourbon Street.

While it is difficult to separate history, dining and night life from sight seeing in New Orleans, there are several places which visitors should make mandatory stops. In addition to the French Quarter, Jackson Square, and Bourbon Street, there is the magnificent Longue-Vue Gardens Estate, the new Superdome, many restored antebellum homes, beautiful Lake Pontchartrain, the Garden District, Audobon Park and the campuses of Tulane and Loyola Universities.

New Orleans definitely measures up as one of the finest conference cities in the United States,

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