

EVENTS

CALENDAR

DECEMBER

8-11 Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show, Ohio Center, Columbus, OH. Contact the Ohio Turfgrass Foundation, (614) 422-2601.

12-13 Southern Nevada Desert Turfgrass Conference, Palace Station Hotel/Casino, Las Vegas. Contact Bob Morris, Nevada Cooperative Extension, 953 E. Sahara, Suite #207, Las Vegas, NV 89104. (702) 731-3130.

15-17 Texas Turfgrass Conference and Show, Hilton Palacio del Rio, San Antonio. Contact Texas Turfgrass Association, 3603 Holly, Bryan, TX 77802.

JANUARY

5-7 Maryland Turf Conference, Baltimore Convention Center. Contact Dr. Tom Turner, Department of Agronomy, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. (301) 454-3716.

21-23 Virginia Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, Virginia Beach Pavilion Convention Center, Virginia Beach, VA. Contact J. R. Hall, (703) 961-5797.

21-22 Northern California Turf & Landscape Exposition, Santa Clara Convention Center, Santa Clara. Contact Northern California Turfgrass Council, P.O. Box 268, Lafayette, CA 94549.

31-1 Sports Turf Managers Association Annual Meeting. Phoenix Civic Plaza, Phoenix, AZ. Contact STMA, 1458 North Euclid Ave., Ontario, CA 91764. (714) 984-4677.

31-2 58th International Golf Course Show, Phoenix Civic Plaza, Phoenix, AZ. Contact the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, 1617 St. Andrews Drive, Lawrence, KS 66046. 1-800-GSA-SUPT.

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

TRADE SECRETS ONLY SLOW PROGRESS



Athletic field managers can learn a lesson from what took place in golf course management. Secrecy does not promote job security, it only slows the application of important turf management techniques.

Back in the days when golf course superintendents were called greenskeepers, secrecy was a big part of job security. The vast majority of early golf courses were private. Facilities operated independently from each other and rarely shared turf management information. The important skills needed to maintain golf courses were slowly passed on to apprentices who were lucky

enough to be taken under the wing of knowledgeable greenskeepers.

Following World War I, the United States Golf Association formed the Green Section to develop and spread golf course management techniques to its member clubs. Green Section Director Dr. John Monteith cooperated with two turf scientists employed by the United State Department of Agriculture, Drs. C.V. Piper and R. A. Oakley. In 1917, Piper and Oakley had coauthored the first comprehensive book on golf course turf management, "Turf for Golf Courses."

The combination of an association collecting and disseminating technical information, a book which put management practices into perspective and the support of the government was the key needed to start lifting the cloak of secrecy off golf course maintenance. With the help of the "Green Section Bulletin," secrecy was slowly replaced with scientific information on turf management.

Had this foundation not been established, the rapid development of golf courses after World War II would not have been possible. The number of golf courses doubled as Americans sought to get away from War and enjoy a few rounds of golf like President Dwight Eisenhower did. During this boom, the percentage of public courses started rising rapidly since private courses could not meet the demand. Finding and training the people to build and maintain these courses would have been a significant obstacle to growth if the university community had not been prepared to handle them.

Compare the development of the golf course market to the current status of athletic fields today. We are facing a demand equal to or greater than the post-war demand for golf courses. Yet, the foundation is new and not fully developed. Secrets are still a big part of the trade. Most equipment and chemicals are adapted from golf course management or landscaping. If golf course technology wasn't closely aligned, we'd be in a real mess.

Everyone in the business of athletic field management needs to help build the foundation for the market now. Universities and extension agents are feeling the pressure from athletic field managers. They are starting to respond with programs. A book on athletic field management is being written. State turf associations are adding sports turf programs to their conferences. The Sports Turf Managers Association is making adjustments to serve the market as it grows.

A whole sports turf contractor industry is needed to help the institutional turf manager. Read the story about Kevin McCarthy on page 12. You'll begin to understand that there are solutions to institutional sports turf problems that have just started to gain recognition. That's how young the market is now.

We don't have time for secrets. Get involved. Share your knowledge. The market needs your help now.

Bruce Shank