

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

Back To Basics



The first story I wrote as a boy was in long-hand on paper with inch-high columns. By the time I was a sophomore in high school, I was pecking away at a manual typewriter. In college, I switched to a luxurious electric typewriter. Once out of school and working for a small town newspaper, I learned to use a word processor.

Whatever tool was used to accomplish it, the job was always the same — writing is writing whether you do it in your own hand or on a computer screen. But the

need for improvements in the tools for writing were born of the fact that much of the process is mechanical and drudgerous. A word processor can't turn a phrase or write a sizzling lead, but it can move a block of text in an eye-blink — a process that once required a pair of scissors and a bottle of glue.

Tools are born out of need, forged out of hardship or even simple inconvenience. Technological advancement comes most often not out of some noble pursuit, but because some task is a pain in the neck to accomplish. Refinements in technology begin with building upon technology that exists, or when "road blocks" force re-evaluation of it.

The sports turf industry is no exception to technological advancements and shifts, or the impetus for them. Mechanical aerators were developed, not because it's impossible to aerate large areas of turf by hand, but because it's back-breaking and time consuming to do so. Integrated Pest Management has gained momentum largely in response to increasing restrictions, both rational and panic-driven, on chemicals. A major equipment manufacturer recently unveiled an electric greensmower in response to impending clean air standards. The list goes on and on.

Sometimes, in light of real or perceived problems with a specific tool, the solution is to use it sparingly and go back to basics. Such is the case with many chemicals today. They can be unbelievably useful, but rather than relying on them solely, a growing number of sports turf managers are rediscovering the role of proper management in disease and pest prevention. As we all know, healthy turf is less susceptible to these problems than unhealthy turf. The basic idea, as you'll read in this month's article by Mary Owen of the University of Massachusetts, is to keep turf thriving through cultural practices and, in the process, stop problems before they start.

If my word processor crashes, I can still use my electric typewriter, and if the electricity goes out I can drag the manual dinosaur out of the closet. If I can't find the thing, I can put pen to paper. When current technology is jeopardized or simply fails, going back to basics can help solve my immediate problems. And it can help solve yours.

Matthew Trulio

EVENTS

CALENDAR

APRIL

11-12 48th Annual Southeastern Turfgrass Conference. Spring Hill Country Club, Tifton, GA. Contact: Waldene Barnhill (912) 386-3353 or Brenda Poston (404) 229-8125.

JULY

4-8 World Scientific Congress of Golf. St. Andrews, Scotland. Contact the Sports Turf Research Institute/World Congress of Golf at 44/334-75560.

19-21 3rd Annual Midwest Grounds Management Conference. Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois. Contact: Chuck Scott (309) 438-2032 or fax (309) 438-7955.

13-16 American Association of Nurserymen Conference. Baltimore, MD. Contact: (202) 789-2900.

24-26 International Lawn Garden and Power Equipment Expo. Louisville, KY. Contact: (502) 473-1992.

24-26 Texas Turfgrass Association Seminar. Arlington, Texas. Contact Shirley Duble at (409) 693-1656.

SEPTEMBER

11-13 Golf Europe '94 Munich. Munich, Germany. Contact Jerry Kallman, Jr., Kallman Associates at (201) 652-7070.

18-21 Florida Turfgrass Conference. Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact: (407) 898-6721.

OCTOBER

5-6 Southern California Turfgrass Expo. Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, CA. Contact: (619) 723-0947.

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