More lessons learned in 25 years with STMA

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This is a continuation of the January Q&A where we were discussing 25 lessons learned in 25 years with STMA (http://www.greenmediaonline.com/uploads/ST/features/O601_qa.asp).

As a general rule you should realize that if your turf never wilts then you are probably overwatering. Mild turf wilt is important because it signals a hormonal response in the plant to grow roots. It also assures that aeration of the soil has been maximized. Look for foot printing and turf purpling as indicators of beneficial wilting that signals the proper time to irrigate.

The old adage of "deep and infrequent watering" applies here; water the field to recharge the soil moisture, wait until wilt occurs to force root growth, then water the field again. After mastering this intuitive skill you will have a better understanding of how to use all of the modern irrigation features that use ET and water scheduling.

Lesson #8: "It is the man in manager that makes the difference." It was 1985 when I first heard Mr. Toma utter those words, which proved to be a lesson for me over the years. Of course, 20 years later that catchy little phrase encompassed both women and men in the sports turf profession. On and off the field women in STMA are clearly breaking barriers and contributing to a better organization. Some of those leaders who have influenced my world are Abby McNeal, CSFM, Lynda Wightman, Kim Heck, Connie Rudolph, CSFM, Pam Sherratt, Heather Nabozy, Theresa Bayer, and Debbie Kneeshaw. These women and others like them are breaking barriers and paving the way for new leaders in sports turf management.

Gender aside, employers should realize that there is a new breed of sports turf manager that comes with proven experience and the title of Certified Sports Field Manager, CSFM. They sit at the top of the heap with experience and professional dedication. The value added CSFM should be the type of individual you seek when looking for the sports turf manager that makes a difference. The message in this lesson is that you need to seek talented people with good personal skills to fill your positions and then step aside and let them do their jobs. Simply put, as Floyd Perry reminds us, it’s “hire smart and work easy.”

I really enjoy discovering the strategies of different sports turf managers and how that shapes their overall philosophy. Whether your sports turf career is short or long do take the time to reflect and put in writing the lessons you have learned. Your sports turf philosophy can be found in those lessons learned. The details of field management may develop specific strategies, but revealing a sports field management philosophy will require a little self analysis of how you use those lessons to solve problems and influence your career, along with those around you.

I’m always interested in your strategies and philosophies, so don’t feel that a question is required to chat me up on the email.