

FROM THE PUBLISHER



RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG... That call has been heard many times over the years. I'm sure that as each call went out it awakened a body of people. Well, the call is going out again, this time on behalf of a very select group — you, the professionals who maintain our golf courses, stadiums, recreational areas, campus grounds, etc.

The call is for awareness of your vital contributions in maintaining our country's sports and golf complexes. You need to be recognized for the professionals you are. I hope the call is answered.

I believe the companies and municipalities that you work for don't fully understand the challenges you face. They don't realize the vast amount of knowledge that's required to supervise a crew of people to maintain these complexes. How can they appreciate the skills you possess if they don't know about them? Today, a professional grounds manager must be knowledgeable about trees, shrubs, flowers, and groundcovers. He must know which tree will do well in a northern exposure and which will thrive in a southern exposure. He should have a working knowledge of groundcovers, shrubs, and flowers, how to identify insects and diseases, and how to treat them.

A professional should know about hardscapes, softscapes, and waterscapes. He needs to know about grading and drainage. Surely he must be knowledgeable about irrigation and the many components that make up his system. He must know how to troubleshoot when something goes wrong.

Most importantly, he must have a good knowledge of turfgrasses. Should he use sod, sprigs, or seed? What grass or mixture of grasses will do well in his climatic area? What turf will hold up better for his purposes? He must be able to diagnose insect and disease problems and be able to treat for them. He will probably employ preventive care, before the damage is done. He needs to know about fertilizers and what combination of formulas to use at what time of the year.

He surely has to know how to manage people. He makes decisions on capital expenditures of all equipment. In short, he is educated in these skills, many of which are not taught at universities. They are developed in the field and polished with experience.

The professional grounds manager is truly a Jack of many trades — and Master of all. With all of the knowledge we must have to maintain our properties, we are constantly defending ourselves in front of our greens committees or city managers or whoever else we report to, because someone feels our grounds are not always in the best condition.

They complain that we have a budget, "So why don't our grounds look good?" Although you can try to explain that you're dealing with nature, and sometimes Mother Nature doesn't cooperate, you end up being the scapegoat.

We can't control Mother Nature, but we can use our skills and knowledge to make the best out of any condition. Still, we have to let management know that we are doing the best we are capable of with the tools we have. Perhaps we have not been doing too good a job on getting this message out. That could be one reason we don't have the high respect we deserve.

If we are not doing our best, if we do not continue to learn, we are helping to project a poor image. You deserve better than that. The skills you have polished took years to attain. I hate to see you criticized because management doesn't understand what you are up against.

Golf & sportsTURF magazine is an integral part of the learning process. We try to give you insight into what others are doing. We report the industry happenings. This journal is for you, by you and of you. So use it. Let **Golf & sportsTURF** be your flag, and...RALLY 'ROUND THE FLAG, BOYS!