



USGA

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# A New Theme for the Green Section and Turf Advisory Service:

A Green Section Turfgrass Service visit has been scheduled to your golf club on:

"GOLF MAKES  
AMERICA  
BEAUTIFUL"

Copies to:

In order that we may be of the greatest possible service to you, the below listed items relating to turf programs and management practices will be discussed during our visit. This list has been prepared to encourage a more meaningful discussion of your entire turf program, which we hope will help you obtain the maximum benefits from the Service visit.

Areas of special concern or interest will be covered in detail in the written report following the visit.

Greens	Renovation	Vertical Mowing	Herbicides	Soils
Tees	Aeration	Liming	Nematicides	Irrigation
Fairways	Thatching	Fertility	Drainage	Equipment
Roughs	Spiking	Fungicides	Topdressing	Budget
Bunkers	Overseeding	Insecticides	Mowing	General

of the toughest questions — with answers we trust their equal:

**Question:** Isn't \$450 a lot of money for one visit?

**Answer:** Over the years, many clubs have found one small bit of Green Section advice has saved them many times the cost of the service. In relation to the average golf course maintenance budget today, the annual TAS fee of \$450 (if paid by April 15, 1983; thereafter the fee becomes \$500) is less than 1/4 of 1 percent! And, actually, the \$450 covers more than just a walk in the park and on-site discussions. It also includes:

A. Each visit is followed by a written report, a permanent record of problems and progress.

B. Consultation by correspondence and telephone is always available.

C. All expenses (including travel, salaries, office work, etc.) are covered by the original fee.

D. By maintaining regional offices, Green Section agronomists are able to attend and participate in regional conferences and local meetings. They are able to keep up with turf problems and research station activities in their area.

The Green Section Service, like all USGA activities, is a nonprofit enterprise. By utilizing the services, any club can improve its golf course and its playing conditions. The \$450 fee is established to cover costs only.

**Question:** How can only one visit a year be effective?

**Answer:** The Green Section's purpose is not to tell anyone how to run his golf course on a daily or even monthly basis. Our purpose is not to tell anyone what products to buy, nor is it our intention to become super superintendents. Rather, our purpose is to bring to each club a vast storehouse of information and experience regarding grass plant requirements, how these requirements might best be met and what other golf courses have found to be beneficial and good. The TAS is concerned with efficiency of operation, in developing and maintaining high golf course standards and quality turf. Wastefulness has no place in golf course operations; neither does indiscriminate cost cutting. Emphasis is placed on getting the most for your money — better turf for your golf course. Emphasis is placed on "how good" rather than "how cheap." That's an important consideration in golf course management today! Besides, if a club wants more than one visit a year,

by WILLIAM H. BENGLEYFIELD  
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**H**ERB GRAFFIS wrote those words in autumn, 1982. He then, typically, gave the thought to the USGA for use in developing and promoting Green Section services. But Herb Graffis has always believed in the USGA and its Green Section. He once said, "They have done more for the beauty, attractiveness and the environment of America than any other sports organization or sports activity." His words are not only a tribute to golf, but also to the decades of work of the golf course superintendent, the turfgrass researchers, and the green committees as well.

In this age of big government, businesses, and organizations endeavoring to be all things to all people, the Green Section's future is relatively simple. We plan to continue to do (and improve

wherever possible) what we've been doing best for over 60 years — identifying and supporting meaningful turfgrass research for golf. Then, Green Section agronomists take information directly to subscribing clubs by means of the Turf Advisory Service (TAS). After all, why change something having a 60-year record of success?

Now it is a new year and 1983 stretches before us. Almost every economist predicts uncertain times, and cost consciousness is once again a byword. How can the Turf Advisory Service prove its worth and, at the same time, hold the cost line? Just what can the Green Section do for USGA Member Clubs and their superintendents in times like these? These and similar tough questions have been posed to us over the years. They deserve an answer. Here are a few

additional visits are possible, and many clubs already take advantage of them.

**Question:** There is so much free advice today (from state university specialists, commercial consultants, salesmen, turf conferences, magazines, etc.), why should we *pay* the Green Section for its advice?

**Answer:** All that you say is true and all of this is to the good. Indeed, the more *factual* information one has, the better he will perform. But there is also an old Scottish proverb that reads, "You get nothing for nothing — and very little for sixpence." Good advice is only as good as its source. "The source" is only as good as its background, experience, and actual performance. The USGA Green Section is the *only agency in the country* devoted solely to golf course turf, its playing conditions, and its management. It has nothing to sell. Each Green Section agronomist averages over 150 on-site golf course visits a year. The total service offered to a club cannot be matched by any individual or agency anywhere in the world!

**Question:** Our club has subscribed to the Turf Advisory Service in the past. However, we have found the visits too general and the reports really didn't tell it like it is. What say you?

**Answer:** We have occasionally heard such criticism from others as well. Believe it or not, we have also been criticized for being too critical and for expecting too much. The Green Section agronomist's training is to deal with agronomic fact; the clear purpose of a Green Section visit is to offer sound agronomic advice. Sometimes it may also be necessary to consider and deal fairly with other facts and circumstances as they affect a particular situation. Nevertheless, if a club or superintendent asks specific questions relating to turfgrass science, they deserve and can expect to receive specific answers from the Green Section scientist.

**Question:** Will the Turf Advisory Service save our club money?

**Answer:** Almost anyone can study a golf course maintenance budget and soon find ways of cutting costs and saving money. The real trick is to save money without impairing the long-range quality or condition of the golf course, i.e., to spend wisely what is available. Our knowledge of golf course budgets leads to the belief that considerable sums are frequently wasted. The waste comes in a variety of forms:

A. Membership whims and requests that add little to long-range improvements but much to the budget.

B. Unnecessary equipment purchases.

C. Not purchasing *needed* equipment and labor-saving items.

D. Purchasing high-cost supplies and materials because some outside agency promises *better growth, less water use, released locked soil nutrients, eliminate tile and drainage needs, reduce labor requirements* (but doesn't get the job done), *will eliminate compaction, etc.*

Yes, the Green Section can save your club money! It will do so by strengthening the hand of the golf course superintendent, the green committee and the entire turf management operation. It will assist your club in maintaining the best possible golfing turf at whatever expenditure level chosen.

The Turf Advisory Service is being used by the biggest and smallest golf courses in the land today. Day after day, year after year, the USGA Green Section has helped advance the cause of quality turf for golf. Write Golf House, Far Hills, New Jersey 07931, for the sake of your turf management program in 1983. Remember, **GOLF MAKES AMERICA BEAUTIFUL** — and the Green Section plays its role every day of every year.

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## MAINTENANCE COSTS (Continued from page 8)

replacement cost is also minimal. I believe this further sets an example for the complete operation of a golf course, that is, neatness and cleanliness.

Another important item for control is gasoline. I am absolutely amazed at the sloppiness I have seen in this area. We keep track of every gallon pumped and where it goes. The tank is measured before and after gas is delivered, and is checked at the end of every month, and the inventory had better be in close balance.

Shop heat. Everyone should be using a wood stove to heat the maintenance shop, at least in the Northwest. First, you have your wood for free. You now do at least some cutting and hauling to the shop area. So, with a little more labor you can have your wood prepared on site.

I recently read an article in *American Forests*\* that analyzed cost of wood versus other fuels. It showed that oil, at \$1.20 per gallon (perhaps higher than ours), and wood, starting with the cutting down of the tree, cutting, hauling, and

stove tending, using \$6 per manhour for labor costs, had the same approximate cost per 1,000 BTUs. On most of our golf courses, the trees and the material are already down, or must be cut, and must also be cleaned up. And many must spend money to take or send this material to the dump. So by this analysis, our wood is cheaper than oil. This is another way to save costs, and controlling costs is the name of the game.

**T**O SUMMARIZE, I believe we must have everything orderly, neat, and clean. Budget manhours for all maintenance functions. We must be organized in the assignment of work. We do it in writing so there is no misunderstanding. There is no "make-work time" and our equipment is well maintained and as modern as we can get. We go through it every winter, and we get it ready for the growing season, and we are continually looking for ways to save wasted time, as well as looking for equipment that will do the job more efficiently, which

means doing the same job with a lower overall cost.

We are maintaining our golf course for the enjoyment of our customers, not to satisfy our personal ego. We are spending our money as if it is ours — or mine — which it is.

\*"Does It Really Pay to Heat with Wood?" by David E. White and G. Edward Wilson from the December, 1981, issue of *American Forests*.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

We want to acknowledge and express thanks to Dr. John King, University of Arkansas, for his ideas and concepts in developing Tables 1 and 2 found in Charles B. White's article "Sand — The Building Block," in the September/October 1982 issue of **THE RECORD**.