

Most people who have been reestablishing natives up to this point are preservationists who do not believe in chemical control. I respect their opinion. But when a planting is done in a public area and not somewhere out of sight in a preserve, there are always lots of doubters and second guessers in the first year when weeds begin to appear. We spot treated several areas with various chemicals and found some interesting results. Some chemicals will not harm certain native grasses, but they will torch others. A randomized complete block research design will be carried out by us to produce scientifically accurate results that should benefit us in the future. Once you get through the first two years of weed-control work, the game is over. It should not be necessary to treat it chemically again.

Thatch control is needed for native prairie grasses, just as it is for turf-grasses. If left unattended for several years, the grasses begin to choke themselves out. For millennia, nature took care of prairie thatch and tree invasion

with fire started by lightning. Prairie fires would rage so intensely that settlers, when trapped by these fires, would have to disembowel their horses and climb inside their carcasses to survive. Fortunately, we do not have to resort to those means. Your conservation department will gladly show you how to burn safely in your area if it is permissible. I am going to control thatch in many areas by mowing and picking up the residue with a sweeper.

What is the future for native vegetation? A recent edition of *Landscape Management* magazine discusses how to deal with widespread water shortages in the 21st century. Only an ostrich would believe it is not going to happen. What will my priorities be when I am told to limit water usage? Obviously, greens, tees, and fairways will take priority. But will there be enough water for landscape beds and out-of-play areas? The recent San Francisco earthquake was a terrible tragedy, but it could have been unthinkable worse without construction codes developed

to limit damage. We need to establish the same long-term strategy for our vegetation in order for it to survive the worst crises that mother nature offers in the future.

Native vegetation is a long-term landscaping investment. Once established, it works. Our glaciated prairie of northern Missouri was in existence for roughly 10,000 years. The unglaciated prairie of western Missouri, as well as the Ozark region and southeast lowlands, have been evolving for millions of years. The drought of 1988 was brutal, but native vegetation has been through it thousands of times without a hitch.

Many articles have been written about prairies and native vegetation that have a poetic, Zen-like connotation to them. I would not go quite that far, but for me, it was still an extraordinary experience the first time I saw a true prairie. I now am convinced that our area takes a back seat to none in terms of natural beauty. You will feel the same way about your area when you discover your natives.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED

Superintendent and Pro: Build a Constructive Relationship

by TIM MORAGHAN

Agronomist for Championships, USGA Green Section

ONE OF THE unfortunate realities in golf is that many golf course superintendents and golf professionals are not always the best of friends, and do not always see eye to eye with regard to the maintenance of their golf course. "Their golf course" may be the operative words here. I thought it was the members' course. After all, the members are the ones who should be setting the policies for the course and facilities. The superintendent and pro are two of the professionals hired by the club to carry out these policies; they shouldn't be involved in a war of words that disrupts the smooth operation of the course at the expense of the members' enjoyment.

Can this situation be avoided? It most definitely can. The key words in unlock-

ing the doors to cooperation between the superintendent and pro are basic ones: professionalism and communication.

Professionalism is defined quite simply as the conduct or qualities that mark a professional. If a superintendent and pro claim to be professionals, as most do, then it ought to be clear that infighting should be replaced with a spirit of cooperation and understanding.

Now, can it be so difficult to conduct oneself in such a manner? I don't believe so. To begin with, each professional should make a concerted effort to understand the trials and tribulations of the other, and to recognize the importance of the other's position to the club. This is best achieved, as you might

guess, through effective communication. Take the time to meet regularly and to learn the names of the employees on the other's staff. Have a weekly meeting, perhaps for lunch, to discuss the next aeration or 7:00 A.M. shotgun. Use the phone, send memos or play a round of golf as means of communicating your respective activities. Do whatever it takes! Those who have done so can testify to the many benefits that can be realized.

The course superintendent and the golf professional are employed by the club to produce a properly conditioned course and a pleasant atmosphere for the members to enjoy. When a free exchange of ideas and opinions can be shared on an equal level, everyone gains.