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# BETTER TURF TIPS

## The Three Rs Of People Management. **RETAIN. RECRUIT. RETRAIN.**

According to innovative superintendent Kevin Pattison of The Fairmont Banff Springs, there are three keys to successfully managing people.

### **RECRUIT The Right People**

When looking for quality staff, always keep in mind these recruiting pillars.

*Industry:* Those with a knowledge of the industry are more likely to make a positive contribution right away.

*Lover of plants:* These candidates are typically gentle spirits and good for the team.

*Passionate about golf:* The more finicky they are about the course from a player's perspective, the better.

*Competitive:* This is a hard job. A competitive streak will help them grind it out during the tough assignments.

*Seasoned:* Life experience can provide great insight that will help your team succeed.

### **RETAIN The Right People**

*Measure morale:* Whether through regular employee opinion surveys or a common place where staff can post comments, make sure you always know the mindset of your team.

*Address the why crowd:* They like to know how their input supports the operation. Tell them!

*Celebrate:* Celebrations and traditional gatherings are important for employee retention. They boost morale and let staff members know they are valuable. Speaking of value ...

*Create value in the workplace:* Let your employees know they are important. Greet them when you see them. Get to know them as a person. Listen to them. And never, ever, slam them in public.

### **RETRAIN Yourself**

Retrain or realign yourself continually. Make a plan by examining yourself and your work relationships. Have you set your team up for success or painted yourself into a corner? Taking the time to review your own performance is just as important as reviewing your staff.

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## **Avoiding The Budget Bite.**

Many courses are facing cutbacks, and no one feels them more deeply than you, the superintendent. Often you have the biggest slice of the budget pie, so it's the easiest to target for trimming. While nothing can help you avoid cutbacks all the time, these tips can help you stay on track and make the most of your limited dollars.

**WORK ON YOUR LONG GAME:** Make long-range plans. Planning for the coming year only won't pay off in the long run. This year's expenses will affect major projects down the road, possibly even canceling them if you're not properly prepared.

**GET IN THE KNOW:** Your budget may be the most important, but it is still just one piece of the total club budget. Learn your club's income and expenses. Know what other departments are budgeting. This will help you better understand the financial pressures affecting your budget.

**DO THE "WRITE" THING:** Document everything. Keep accurate records and consider supplementing them with pictures (they're worth a thousand words). Know your actuals versus budgeted amounts. The more on top of your budget you are, the more success you will have on future budgeting issues.

**BE A PRO:** When presenting your budget, treat it as a business plan. Put a stated objective in the forward of your budget. Type it neatly and include visuals such as charts, graphs and pictures when possible. The more professional the presentation, the more likely it will be taken seriously.

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### Avoiding The Budget Bite (cont'd)

**DON'T OVERDO THE OVERTIME:** The first thing everyone wants to cut is labor, because it is a significant cost. But keeping additional workers can actually be more efficient (financially and physically) than allowing too much overtime.

**TRIM THE FAT:** Using your budget wisely could mean getting creative with daily tasks. Can you mow fairways three times a week instead of four? Can you rake your bunkers less often? Consider reducing the kinds of jobs that won't noticeably affect your standard of quality.

**BUY SMART:** At certain times of year, you can get course essentials like fungicides at a substantial savings. Planning your purchases around these programs will help you stretch your budget and still get the quality products you need for a quality turfcare program.

## Warm-season Tips

### Overseeding Bermudagrass? Don't Overextend Yourself.

Overseeding can be a considerable expense, but proper planning can help you control costs. Here are some tips to help you stay as close to your budget as possible:

1. Check temperature models for your region and overseed when average air temperatures drop consistently below 70° F (at least 50% of the time). This indicates warm-season turfgrass growth is beginning to slow and temperatures are ideal for cool-season overseed emergence and establishment.
2. Aerification, top-dressing and Bermudagrass renovation should be completed prior to overseed so as to not stress Bermudagrass and cause turfgrass thinning. Preventative fungicide applications, such as **Insignia® fungicide**, in mid- to late-summer rotation can contribute to overall turf quality health.
3. Plan ahead so you know your *Poa annua* (annual bluegrass) control strategy and use of pre- or postemergent herbicides weeks prior to overseed. Postemergent sulfonylurea herbicides will provide new control options. Bermudagrass competition can be reduced with timely use of a product such as triclopyr or trinexapac-ethyl before or after seeding, respectively. See product labels for specific use directions.
4. Don't forget your late-fall and winter weed control. Following overseed establishment, **Pendulum® AquaCap™ herbicide** can be applied in November for residual control of *Poa annua* that continues to germinate as well as many broadleaf weeds.
5. Scout routinely to keep your overseed and Bermudagrass healthy. Preventative applications with a broad-spectrum fungicide such as **Insignia, Trinity™ fungicide** or chlorothalonil may be needed.

## FALL DISEASE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR WARM-SEASON TURF Warm Weather's Most Wanted List.

In the warm regions of the country (where the mercury remains above 70° F), scout for these diseases:

### Gray Leaf Spot On St. Augustinegrass, Perennial Ryegrass And Kikuyugrass Fairways

*The Pacific Coast & Hawaii*

If your course has a history of severe damage or if weather conditions in August and September favor this disease, a preventative program of **Insignia** will provide excellent control. After two sequential applications, rotate to a different mode-of-action product such as propiconazole-, chlorothalonil- or mancozeb-based products. For a curative application, **Insignia** can be tank-mixed with a contact fungicide containing chlorothalonil or mancozeb for excellent control.

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## Warm Weather's Most Wanted List (cont'd)

### Helminthosporium Leaf Spots And Curvularia Stress-Induced Diseases On Bermudagrass

*Southeast & Gulf Coasts*

As the summer stress builds on ultra-dwarf Bermudagrass, so does the incidence of these diseases. Timely applications of **Insignia**, **Curalan™ fungicide** or **Trinity™ fungicide** will provide turfgrass recovery from discoloration and thinning.

### Spring Dead Spot On Bermudagrass

*Transition Zone*

If your course experiences an epidemic, consider late-summer to fall applications. The best control has been demonstrated with three consecutive Rubigan® AS applications with the most effective use timed before average temperatures drop below 60° F and the last two applications made two weeks prior to overseeding Bermudagrass.

### Rapid Blight

*California, Nevada & Arizona*

Occurrence is greatest in the late summer and early fall. Check your soil-soluble salt levels and remember that aeration and other mechanical activities can aggravate the onset of rapid blight. University research shows a preventative application of **Insignia** at courses with a history of rapid blight should be made within two weeks following overseed emergence to protect *Poa trivialis* (rough bluegrass) and *Lolium perenne* (perennial ryegrass) from infection.

## Cool-season Tips

## Fall Fertilization Promotes Perfect Spring Playing Conditions.

The best way to have your turf look its best next spring is to feed it this fall.

As cool weather begins to hit, northern turfgrasses will begin to direct food reserves (carbohydrates) to the root system of the turf. By fertilizing heaviest in the fall, you can direct large amounts of food reserves to the roots which will result in:

- Excellent turf color and growth in the fall
- Extended turf color into the winter
- Better winter survival
- Early spring green-up
- Enhanced spring color

*Although nitrogen is the most important nutrient for fall fertilization, applying adequate amounts of potassium will help with winter stresses, allowing for healthier turf in the spring.*

## FALL DISEASE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR COOL-SEASON TURF

## How Can You Improve Disease Control On Your Golf Course? Think "First and Last."

- FIRST:**
- Use a residual fungicide (like **Emerald® fungicide**) as the first fungicide application in the spring. This will help get your turf off to a good start.
  - Make the application several weeks before you expect dollar spot to hit. This will provide excellent preventative, long-term control.

- LAST:**
- Time two late-fall fungicide applications prior to the first frost to reduce overwintering inoculum. This will keep the turf disease-free during the winter and reduce disease problems the following spring. By doing this, you will not have dollar spot lesions that are present all winter on your greens, and you won't hear the complaints from your "favorite" members.

Research from university turf pathologists has shown the value of early-spring and late-fall fungicide applications as a way to significantly help in your battle against dollar spot and other diseases.

Always read and follow label directions.

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