



"As environmental responsibility becomes an increasing priority, the First Green Program serves as a vital educational tool that bridges the gap between education and industry. The First Green Program ensures that future generations recognize the role of golf course management in environmental stewardship, setting the stage for a greener future in golf and beyond." - Ken Tilt, Superintendent, Club at North Halton.

First Green Program

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF GOLF STEWARDS

*Written by OSGA Vice President Kevin Collier,
Superintendent, RiverBend GC*

The First Green Program is an environmental and STEAM education initiative led by the Golf Course Superintendents' Association of America (GCSAA) and supported by the Ontario Golf Superintendents' Association (OGSA). It transforms golf courses into outdoor classrooms where students engage in hands-on learning about soil science, water conservation, environmental stewardship, and plant biology through hands-on activities and field experiments. This program aims to spark interest in careers related to agronomy, sustainability, and turf management.

KEY BENEFITS

- **Hands-on Learning:** Students conduct soil testing, water quality assessments, and turfgrass health analyses, providing a real-world application of STEAM subjects.
- **Environmental Awareness:** The program highlights how golf courses serve as green spaces that support biodiversity, improve air and water quality, and contribute to local ecosystems.
- **Career Exploration:** By interacting with golf course superintendents, students learn about career opportunities in turfgrass management, agronomy, and environmental science.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT WE ALL GET INVOLVED:

One of the most rewarding aspects of participation is seeing students develop a newfound appreciation for the profession, with many expressing interests in pursuing careers in turf management and agronomy. Watching young learners engage with sustainability and golf course science not only strengthens their education but also helps shape the future workforce of the industry. Each First Green program aims to plant seeds to grow future golf course superintendents.

All golf clubs should be considering their outreach to their community and join in the movement to look to our future superintendents.



"Watching students' enthusiasm as they explore, ask questions and get involved in activities is incredibly fulfilling for everyone involved. Not only do you get to share the beauty of your golf course as a living laboratory, but you also help inspire and perhaps even ignite the spark in a student to one day become a superintendent, mechanic, or golf course architect!" - Ryan L. Scott, Beverly Golf Club.



"Participating in the first Green Program is incredibly rewarding and creates a deep sense of fulfillment. It will be a significant highlight for your season and will allow you to make a lasting impact on the future of the industry. You're potentially helping to shape and inspire the next generation of superintendents and knowing that your involvement will have a positive ripple effect on the field for years to come makes this experience even more meaningful." - Kevin Collier, Superintendent, RiverBend Golf Community.



FIRST GREEN LIAISONS

To get a firsthand account of what it is like to host a first green event at your club, reach out to one of our First Green Liaisons.

Ken Tilt, Superintendent
Club at North Halton
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Kevin Collier, Superintendent
RiverBend Golf Community
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Ryan L. Scott, Superintendent
Beverly Golf Club
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Golf is not always accessible to youth, and that can be limiting when it comes to exposing golf course turfgrass management as a viable and rewarding career path.

GCSAA AND OGSA'S ROLE

The GCSAA and OGSA are both available to help you prepare for your event. If you are interested in participating in hosting a First Green event, you can access all the resources you need to plan for and register your event

online at www.thefirstgreen.org, or scan the QR code. Once your event is registered, the OGSA will be notified and can provide support as required.

Limited funding is also available through the GCSAA or the OGSA to help cover costs to host the First Green event at your club.



Through junior camp workshops, school partnerships, and on-course field trips, GCSAA and OGSA members are starting to foster a new generation of environmentally conscious turfgrass professionals. The program aligns with broader industry efforts to promote sustainability, workforce development, and community engagement in golf course management. Be a part of the movement. ■