



The Future Is Bright

By Tom Schwab, O. J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

You're really going to notice something different next time you visit the Noer Facility. The facility ran out of research land a couple years ago. We have been installing some new studies on adjacent lands that are not even owned by the UW Agricultural Research Stations, who manages the Noer Facility. Well that has all changed as of summer 2002. The UW Foundation and UW Athletic Department gave Ag Research Stations the go ahead to develop 10 more acres right next to Noer. That's all fine and dandy. We have the land but there's no money to develop it. This newly acquired land is a rocky outcrop with 12 feet of elevation change, which would add a variable into the research deeming the studies invalid.

Bruce Company comes to the rescue! What we needed was an inexpensive way to level and renovate the hill and inconsistent soil of the new land into a 2% sloped property with an even depth layer of topsoil over the whole property. We needed heavy earth moving equipment that could work within our budget. Similar to what Lee Bruce, owner of the Bruce Company, has done for the Noer Facility so many times before, he made us a deal we couldn't refuse.

The five turf program professors dug deep as did Ag Research Stations, and the UW-Madison Ag Hall to come up with the funds to pay the Bruce Company basically for their time



Scrapers heading into the work zone.



Subsoil is contoured to specifications and ready for topsoil.

and materials to reshape the land. Work started on June 22nd and was finished on the exact day they predicted to be done, three weeks later. The lead shaper on the crews name was Bob and talk about talented! It was a pleasure to watch how carefully, exactly, and professionally he transferred the land into the final dimensions on the project blueprint.

Now we have a level piece of land. What's next? We still don't have any budget at the University to grow in the new land. But there has never been any doubt how the next step would resolve. Chris Wendorf, of Olds Seed Solutions, has been such a significant supporter of the turf program at the UW and has said numerous times that if ever we move forward on the new land

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Bruce Company tells me this is some of their small scrapers. They looked plenty large to me.

that Olds would be ready to help with the turfgrass. And they did.

Who else pulled through for the new land development? UW-Madison alumni and fertilizer company owner Bill Vogel did. His company, Spring Valley Turf Products, has been helping the Noer Facility for years and once again he is donating his quality starter fertilizer to help grow in the new land.

The list goes on. West Madison Ag Research Station is donating seedbed preparation equipment and Hancock Ag Research Station is donating portable irrigation equipment. Johnson Turf Equipment has offered a slit seeder. Everything is so humbling to see how people are willing to support the turf program at the University, without asking anything in return. We are so grateful.



Bob Theodozerguy starts to reinstall the topsoil.

The turf program will not let you down. The team of turf researcher at the UW is committed to finding real solutions for your turf dilemmas well into the future. They are a dedicated bunch of professors who are easily accessible. This new land, that you helped develop, will help them find many new answers.

Let them know if there is a recurring problem that you are having with your turfgrass or of any future problems that you are predicting. Wisconsin's bright turf future is secured for many years to come, with this huge development of new land, and with the dedicated team to work on turf projects. 🍀

See You In A Couple Days

By Tom Schwab, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Summer Field Day is upon us. Where has the summer gone! Every year on the second Tuesday in August the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association hosts an extravaganza for professionals that work with turfgrass. Different associations like the NGLGCSA, WGCSA, WSTMA, and the WSPA gather during the day to discuss the season's concerns. You should have received

registration materials in the mail but if not, there is still time to register. You can either quickly mail or fax in the registration form or register on-site on the day of the show — **August 13th**. Call Audra at 608-845-6536 if you have any questions.

There is education for everyone whether you're dealing with compaction on your athletic fields, ball roll on the putting

greens, strange diseases on your customer's lawns, or ways to increase the shelf life of sod for transportation. Field Day is the event that gives the University Turf Program an opportunity to show off the research they're doing for you. It allows you time to meet with all the UW turf professors and research staff, in one place, to discuss your agronomic concerns.

More talks are being added to the research tour this year to give you more of what you come to Field Day for. Two clinics are being added this year also — one is on sprayer calibration and the other focuses on enhancing wildlife habitat on your property. The research tour will be divided into two themes like it is every year. One theme will focus on golf course subjects and the other will be for athletic field, sod, and lawn care subjects. You can divide your time between the two tours if you so wish.

The golf subjects will include two presentations on fairway renovation. One renovation talk will explore using Basamid soil fumigant for the renovation process while the other talk will address using compost to improve fairway soils. In addition, high and low maintenance turfs will be discussed for turfing those fairways. Two tour stops will talk about new

systems of putting green construction. The golf tour will round up with talks on fungicide/plant interaction talk, and ornamental grass maintenance.

The Lawn and Sports Tour subjects will include portable athletic fields for replacing heavy traffic areas, insect management, and new herbicides to use for broadleaf control. In addition the tour will address management of different species, blending cultivars of Kentucky bluegrass, and how to choose turf cultivars based on National Turfgrass Evaluation Program data.

The other big reason to come to Field Day is the trade show. Every product, service, and piece of equipment that you need for your work is on display. And there are knowledgeable sales people and factory representatives to answer all your questions. Many vendors let you test drive equipment so that you can compare features between manufac-

turers. The vendors also sponsor an auction to raise money for turf research — so come prepared to take home some valuable prizes while helping the industry.

You never leave Field Day without getting your money's worth. In addition to the research tour and trade show there is great food, plenty of time to meet with your peers, and so much more to view and find out about. You may want to see the new developments occurring at the Noer Facility this summer. The Bruce Company has renovated ten adjacent acres for more research land. This will let the professors conduct important new turf studies well into the future. We added some new parking and landscaping at the facility also. There are also about ten new studies installed this year, which the research team is eager to tell you about. So we hope you all can make field day — tell your friends to come as well. 🍀

MEET THE U.W. - MADISON TURF PROGRAM GRADUATE STUDENTS

Characterization of *Typhula* Snow Mold in Wisconsin: A Look at Genetics, Biology and Beyond

By Elizabeth Scheef, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

I came to Madison six years ago as a young, bright-eyed undergraduate from Racine, Wisconsin. I have always had a strong curiosity, especially for science, and chose to study towards my BS in Genetics. The field was really starting to take off in the public eye, and I felt the opportunities I would find would lead me to endless possibilities. And it certainly has helped. I got involved in research through one of my curriculum courses, and began to work with cancer in transgenic mice my sophomore year. For three years I studied the intricate details of cancer in my little mice and learned exciting particulars every week. However,

after several years of undergraduate study, I also began to look at the bigger picture. I wanted to know how the minute, molecular details affected large-scale ecology and evolution. So I added another major of Wildlife Ecology. Along with adding a new field of study, I also thought it would be fun to try research in a completely different organism: plants.

That is when I came to work in Dr. Geunhwa Jung's turf lab as an undergraduate student-hourly. Since the lab was only a few months old when I arrived, and there were only two other people working in the lab at the time, I got to dive right in and get involved with many of the

research projects. Almost a year later, I began work on my very own project of designing DNA markers to identify different species of bentgrass, which has just recently been accepted as an article in *Crop Science*. Pleased with my progress and my enthusiasm, Dr. Jung offered me a position as a Masters student in his lab, and I happily accepted.

I officially began my Masters a year ago and began investigating *Typhula* snow mold for my project. This organism is perfect for using molecular genetics work to impact environmental ecology. The main objectives of my project are to determine distribution of

Typhula species and varieties throughout the state of Wisconsin, determine the influence of factors such as temperature, snow cover, and species interactions on *Typhula* distribution, and then use the information gathered along with the knowledge of fungicide sensitivity to design an effective fungicide use plan that will reduce the types of fungicides and number of applications used for snow mold control.

Typhula spp. is a cold-loving fungus that grows in the microclimate under the snow and can cause extensive damage to turf. It often is found on golf courses and turf areas in the Great Lakes region, Canada and the northwestern US. Each fall in Wisconsin, just before winter arrives, golf courses individually spend \$12,000-\$20,000 in fungicides to control snow mold. Unfortunately, due to limited research investigating *Typhula* spp., not much is known about its biology and how it is influenced by factors such as weather and fungicides. We do know that the genus *Typhula* is composed of three different species which are differentiated by morphological characteristics such as color, sclerotia size and rind pattern, color of infected patches of turf, and color and size of sporocarps. However, these characters can sometimes overlap or be indistinct, resulting in misidentification. We have also recognized that weather patterns, such as duration of snow cover, affect the severity of snow mold damage. For example, the winter before last when the winter was long and cold with deep snow cover in Wisconsin, damage from *Typhula* snow molds seemed to be severe. This past winter however, after a very mild weather with frequent snow melts, many courses did not find any symptoms of *Typhula* snow molds. These correlations with weather have been observed by many who work with turf, but



Beth, hard at work in the Geunhwa's lab.

have not been scientifically investigated.

In the spring of 2001, we collected samples of *Typhula* from over 100 golf courses in Wisconsin, and also recorded variables such as temperature zone, snow cover duration, grass species found on, fungicides used, and age of the turf. For each sample, we also collected coordinates using geographical positioning system (GPS) units in order to visualize our data on maps. We then repeated the experiment in the spring of 2002 and collected *Typhula* samples on the same courses again. For sample identification, our lab has designed genetic markers, which indicate which species of *Typhula* the sample is. We are now just beginning to analyze all of the data from 2001 and are finding some very interesting correlations and patterns. For example, the gray snow mold species is an indiscriminate grower, and was found throughout the state, regardless of temperature, or duration of snow cover. Another species of *Typhula* snow mold, commonly known as speckled snow mold was found mainly in the northern half of Wisconsin. Interestingly, the distribution of speckled snow mold tended to be north of the Tension Zone in Wisconsin, which divides the state between the northern forests and the

southern oak savannah. This may be an indicator of the effects of climatic differences on *Typhula* species distribution. We are also using statistical analysis to look for correlations between all of the variables and I will be presenting my first year's results at the American Phytopathological Society meeting at the end of July in Milwaukee. Since the winter of 2001 was so severe, and this past year's winter was so mild, we are hoping to find even more exciting affects on species distribution from climactic differences.

In my future, I hope to continue my work in the molecular arena, while still maintaining opportunities to apply my results to ecological areas. I am currently debating either continuing work in research or going into science education. If I continue on in research, I know I will look for more projects in the plant and turfgrass fields. I have really enjoyed both working with the molecular aspects of turf and having the opportunity to talk with superintendents and other turf managers to discuss their ideas and concerns in regards to turf diseases. I would like to continue such interactions where I can use consumer input to gain a fresh perspective on my own work, and direct my projects to have a greater beneficial ecological and economical impact. 🌱

The Meadow Valleys Course at Blackwolf Run

By Tom Schwab, O. J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

If ever you wanted to attend a WTA golf fundraiser event, this should be the year! This event is nothing but fun and is usually held at some of the nicest golf venues in the state. This year is no exception. Mike Lee will again be hosting the event, like he did to great acclaim two years ago at Whistling Straits. This year he will be showcasing the Meadow Valleys Course of Blackwolf Run for the golf fundraiser. Nine holes of the Meadow Valleys Course was host for the 1998 U.S. Women's Open.

Mike was able to secure a spectacular registration cost for the fundraiser. And 80% of the registration cost will go to turfgrass research. That cost is \$125 to play this wonderful golf course and benefit the turfgrass industry at the same time.

And golf isn't all you get for

\$125. Every golfer gets a door prize. Many of those door prizes are worth more than the cost of registration. Some of the prizes last year included:

- A \$450 Taylor Made 3-wood
- TVs and boom boxes
- Ping and other putters
- Other golf clubs
- Several gift certificates for golf foursome passes
- Brewer ticket four-packs (maybe I shouldn't have mentioned this prize this year)
- All kinds of clothes
- Fishing poles and camping gear
- And so much more

The price also includes cart, practice balls, lunch, and golf prizes. It's quite the event for only \$125. I pay out of my own pocket every year, and I'm not that much of a golfer. Plus I have several friends that have become regulars, who love the first-class way



this event is run. So tell your friends. Tell your members. You'll all have a blast. Everyone goes home with nice prizes, a great golfing experience, and a great day with friends and colleagues. Details have been mailed out and are also included in this newsletter. If you have further questions call Audra at 608-845-6536. I would venture to guess that this event will sell out this year. 🍏

Disease Spotlight: Dollar Spot

By Jeff Gregos, Turf Diagnostic Lab, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Dollar spot is the most prevalent disease on turfgrass in the U.S. More money is spent on the control of dollar spot than any other diseases of turfgrass in the U.S. While the causal agent of dollar spot has remained the same, we will soon see the name change from *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa* to *Rustroemia floccosum*. The name change came about due to the recent advances in molecular identification. In the future, with the advancement of molecular techniques, we could see more specie names change.

Dollar spot is probably one of the easiest diseases to control chemically, but there is some confusion about cultural controls. This article will help shed some light on some of the cultural controls and alleviate any confusion.

Dollar spot and nitrogen fertility

The common belief is that higher nitrogen levels will reduce the development of dollar spot, but this might not totally be true. Dr. Kussow has shown that dollar spot is reduced when you apply around 6 lb/1000 of nitrogen per year. In most cases this would be unreasonable for most turf maintenance situations. At lower rates dollar spot is not decreased, but recovery rates of the turf are increased. So providing adequate levels of nitrogen won't decrease the amount of disease, but could help with recovery after disease development.

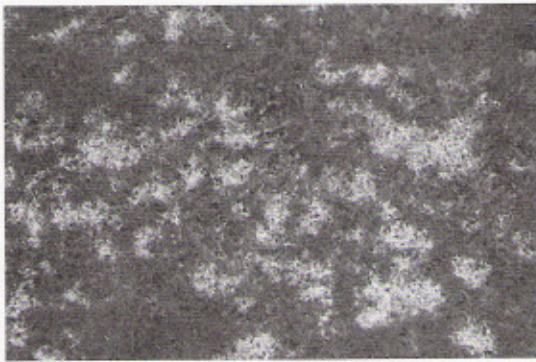
Dollar spot and mowing height

For several years Dr. Kussow

has shown that dollar spot is more severe at higher cutting heights on greens. This is also evident when you compare fairway turf to green turf. The sizes of the spots on fairway are larger and are more likely to coalesce. This phenomenon could be due to the disruption of the disease cycle of the pathogen. This could occur when infected tissue is removed every day with closer mowing.

Dollar spot and soil moisture

Since dollar spot is a foliar disease, not much consideration is given to soil moisture. Soil moisture is however one of the most important conditions for disease development. When soil moisture is low and heavy dew is present, dollar spot incidence will be increased. This has been



Dollar spot on a *Cynodon dactylon* athletic field.

observed on the high knobs on fairways that tend to have lower soil moisture than surrounding areas.

Dollar spot and irrigation/dew removal

As noted above soil moisture and dew have the most influence on disease development. So an

irrigation program that helps alleviate both of these situations will help with control of dollar spot. If you think back to the Bioject program that required nightly irrigation, you have to consider whether it was the nightly irrigation or the bacteria that was the workhorse in that program. The nightly irrigation will help remove the guttation water that the fungi will thrive on. The nightly irrigation also knocks down any mycelium that has started to grow. Third fold the soil moisture will be maintained at adequate levels to help decrease disease development.

Dollar spot and turfgrass variety/specie

Like any disease, turfgrass variety/specie plays an important role on the amount of dollar spot. While most turfgrasses are sus-

ceptible to dollar spot some differences are found between species and varieties. It has been shown that colonial bentgrass is less susceptible to dollar spot than creeping bentgrass. Also Crenshaw is probably the most susceptible creeping bentgrass. Reviewing NTEP ratings will help with the proper selection of turfgrass species and varieties.

Dollar spot and the full moon

There is not enough research to validate the coincidence of the full moon and dollar spot development. If there is a clear night during the full moon this could result in heavy dew set and an increased chance of dollar spot. But for now there is not enough supporting information to support this hypothesis. 🌕

The OJ Noer Facility: Growing for a Stronger Industry

By Dr. John Stier, Department of Horticulture, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Your O.J. Noer facility at the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus continues to grow through the support of the WTA and friends. As you probably know, the UW-athletic department has secured an additional 10 acres for the O.J. Noer facility. This spring the Bruce Company came in and in a massive effort stripped the ground, shaped the sub-grade, then replaced the topsoil on the site to give us some much-needed land. L.L. Olds Seed Co. has graciously offered to donate turfgrass seed for the new site, and Spring Valley donated the starter fertilizer. The additional land brings us into the upper echelon of turf research facilities in terms of space.

The land was needed for additional research projects. Originally the primary users of the O.J. Noer facility were only in Soil Science, Horticulture, and Plant Pathology. Faculty from Agronomy and Entomology now have dedicated turf research projects. Their involvement, coupled

with the need to serve a larger turf industry ranging from sports turf managers to public environmental issues, had resulted in the original 13 acres of the O.J. Noer becoming too small for us to develop solutions to problems posed by Wisconsin's turf industry. In some cases we now receive project interest and assistance from faculty outside the Big 5, notably Biological Systems Engineering (formerly Ag Engineering), Civil Engineering, and Landscape Architecture.

For the past two years we had literally used all available plot space for projects and occasionally turned projects away due to lack of space. The additional land will be used for projects to support virtually all aspects of the turf industry. Some of these are outlined in the following paragraph.

Progress in the development of disease and stress-tolerant turf for Wisconsin dictates additional areas for space plantings in the breeding program. Space plantings allow us to determine the rate

of spread of new potential cultivars, their pest/disease/stress resistance, agronomic traits, and other characteristics. The NTEP trials have become much larger than they were 10 years ago. Instead of having 30 or 40 cultivars in a trial, some trials have nearly 200 cultivars, which requires more plot space. Other new grasses such as Texas bluegrass, combgrass, and tufted hairgrass will be evaluated for their ability to thrive under low management conditions.

Turf entomology has also become increasingly important to us in the turf industry. Problems caused by Japanese beetle, black turfgrass atenioides, black cutworm, and sod webworm have all seemed to become more numerous than in years past. Some of the new plots will be dedicated to helping solve these and other entomological types of problems.

The environmental aspects of turf management have become a huge issue in recent years. Part of the new site will be used for

additional runoff plots to investigate the capability of turf to reduce contaminated runoff and improve our environment. Other plots have been designed for irrigation studies, with treatments that will include varying levels of irrigation amount and frequency. Some additional disease work will be conducted on the new site, particularly for taller-cut grasses. Testing of new, biologically-based pesticides is likely to be conducted as new products based on conventional chemistry decline.

While we would like to develop the entire area into plots immediately, financial constraints will require us to add irrigation in segments. Ultimately we anticipate placing most of the projects using tall-cut turf (e.g., > 1 inch) on the new addition and using the older

section of the O.J. Noer for closely mown turf. The main reason is largely financial: having the closely-mown turf such as greens and fairway height close to the building will reduce the amount of travel time between the shop and the plots. Furthermore, we will be better able to keep an eye on the closely mown turf if it is close to the building and take corrective action to prevent fast-acting problems from destroying the plots. Tall-cut turf is generally more resilient to problems than is closely mown turf.

As you stop out at the Field Day this year, please take a moment to reflect on how much the O.J. Noer Turf Research and Education Facility has grown as a result of your involvement. We at the university are extremely grateful for



the assistance provided by the WTA members and friends and feel we have one of the best relationships in the country. Don't be shy about letting us know if you have a particular question or problem that we may be able to solve through research! 🍀

Recent Outbreak of Black Turfgrass Ataenius (BTA) at O.J. Noer

By Dr. R. Chris Williamson, Department of Entomology, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The black turfgrass ataenius, *Ataenius spretulus* (Haldeman), can be a serious pest on golf course greens, fairways, tees, and even research farms. However, due to the sporadic nature of the black turfgrass ataenius (BTA), this important insect pest can be quite unpredictable.

Recently, at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Educational Facility, we have experience a serious infestation of BTA grubs. Visual inspections revealed counts as high as 125 BTA grubs per one square foot. Populations this high nearly always result in serious injury to turfgrass. In fact, populations as low as 30-40 grubs per square foot can cause measurable damage to turf.

As many of you are aware, this year was anything but "normal." Typically, BTA adults begin laying their eggs in the

late spring, usually sometime in mid-May. However, this year adult BTA adults were not observed until mid to late June. Subsequently, grub activity and damage was not seen until early to mid-July.

Damage associated with BTA grubs is quite easy to detect. As a result of the grubs consuming succulent root tissues, the turf typically exhibits signs of heat or drought stress on the surface of the turf. Upon closer inspection, the turf can be literally "rolled-up," similarly to carpet. When the turf gets to this point, the only option is to apply what is known as a curative insecticide treatment, apply an appropriate level of fertility, and irrigate regularly (i.e., daily) to help aid the turf recover and "mask" any further damage.

Ideally, BTA grubs should be controlled preventatively with either contact insecticide applied to the adults or a soil

insecticide designed to control newly hatched grubs. Preventative soil insecticides must be applied prior to egg hatch, thus they are typically applied when BTA adults become active. Should one miss this treatment-timing opportunity, the only option is to apply a curative control product when the grubs are detected or noticeable feeding damage has occurred.

Preventative soil insecticides labeled for BTA include imidacloprid (Merit®) and halofenozide (Mach 2®). Curative insecticides labeled for control of BTA include carbaryl (Sevin®) and trichlofon (Dylox®). Regardless of the treatment approach or product selected, be sure to water the respective insecticide into the turf canopy with an appropriate amount of water (i.e., at least 0.25 inches of water). 🍀

Irrigation Evaluation

By Kevin L. Hensler, Integrated Turfgrass Management Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison

When is the best time to evaluate the effectiveness of your irrigation system and application practices? How about July and August? When the heat and drought of recent Wisconsin summers come a 'knockin' at the door, it's sometimes hard to keep that door from blowing wide open. The upside to hot and dry conditions is twofold.

Irrigation systems can be evaluated for coverage. Depending on the manufacturer, elevation changes, system length, number and size of heads, etc., an irrigation system can easily exceed a million dollars. That's a hefty price tag, especially if it is not utilized as an effective tool to keep grass from going dormant, or even dying. Poor head spacing or settings become painfully obvious when the rainfall stops. Mapping areas of poor coverage during times of drought stress will allow you to rectify system design problems at your leisure.

Periods of drought stress also enable turfgrass managers to evaluate irrigation practices or philosophy. Supplemental irrigation should be utilized to develop a deep, healthy root system when environmental conditions are optimum for plant growth and to maintain an established root system through periods of environmental stress. The proven and time-honored approach to establishing a deep root system is to water deeply and infrequently. By only replenishing the root zone with irrigation after soil moisture has been utilized throughout, root systems are encouraged to expand deeper within the soil profile to find growth-sustaining water.

Frequent irrigation and rainfall events will lead to a shallow-rooted turfgrass population. Constantly refilling the root zone with moisture on short time intervals will give the root system little motivation to go deep. When the going gets tough, the weak and shallow-rooted will

wither and die. Many times, turf managers have little choice in the amount of rain that Mother Nature sends our way, but we can control how we complement her gifts. That's when turf managers earn their money. Anybody can grow grass under optimum conditions.

If your grass takes a hike due to poor irrigation practices, it's probably time to evaluate your system and your practices. Evaluate and critique the events leading up to a turfgrass stands failure. Be honest. It's easy to blame the weather, excess play, oversight committees, etc., but those are all part of the challenge. Turf managers earn their salaries by dealing with precisely those situations that the majority of people cannot find answers to.

For more information on developing an effective water management program, contact the ITM Program at (608) 845-2545, hensler@entomology.wisc.edu, or <http://itm.entomology.wisc.edu>.

Public Relations

Addressing The Public's Perception Of The Turfgrass Industry

By Kevin Hensler, Integrated Turfgrass Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Community Awareness

As an industry we must make the citizens of our communities aware of the facts identified with the management of turfgrasses. The environmental community has, for years, effectively presented their case from an emotional perspective. They have presented emotion, half-truths, and hyperbole, rather than facts, as they relate to the utilization of fertilizers and pesticides on the green spaces within our communities.

The environmental groups have "educated" the public, making their emotional concerns and perceptions a matter of "common knowledge." The "facts" preached by those opposed to the turfgrass industry have become so prevalent, and an active component of our society, that they have entered the category of "urban legends." Children in the grade schools of Wisconsin have learned the evils of golf courses, sports fields, and other facilities that

utilize turf to enhance the quality of daily life. They have convinced the public that all fertilizer and pesticide applications are unnecessary and evil.

We, as an industry, have sat by idly, doing little, or nothing, to counter these campaigns against our livelihoods. While the public has been "educated" of the dangers of all turfgrass facilities, we have not developed an outreach program to educate the public of the benefits of turfgrasses. James Beard, Ph.D.

authored an article on the benefits of turfgrass in our daily lives, and the environment. This was written and published in 1993 in the peer-reviewed science journal, *Journal of Environmental Quality*, and an adapted version was published in *Golf Course Management*. But this information has never been presented to the general public in any form.

The turf industry must begin to address the public about the safety and benefits of our individual facilities, and industry, to our communities. We are all assets to the daily lives of the citizens where we live. Golf courses and sports fields, parks and municipal grounds provide recreational opportunities for families, and our children.

Industry Role

A few green industry organizations effectively lobby the United States Congress on issues that impact our livelihoods. They support research and educational forums that enhance our decision-making abilities. They have taken the lead on researching potential environmental harm related to turf industry practices, and developing alternative practices and technologies to address needed changes.

Several professional turfgrass organizations, in particular the United States Golf Association (USGA) and Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA), provide monetary support for research projects dealing with environmental concerns related to turfgrass management practices. These topics cover a wide range of categories that include golf course construction practices and integrated turfgrass management projects. The goals were aimed at reducing water, pesticide, and fertilizer use, turfgrass germplasm enhancement, sustainable land use, and the Wildlife Links Program - a cooperative program with the National Fish and Wildlife

Foundation.

Another research category the USGA sponsors is the Environmental Impact of Golf. This type of research is in response to public concerns about the effects of golf courses on the environment. It concentrates on evaluating turfgrass management recommendations that protect environmental quality. These projects evaluate pesticides or nutrients that pose an environmental risk, and identify cultural practices and programs that minimize volatilization, surface runoff, and groundwater contamination.

Over the years, the turfgrass industry has provided millions of dollars to research projects with environmental application. The scientists, collecting and interpreting the data from these projects, are unbiased university faculty looking for answers that benefit not only the turfgrass industry, but our world as well.

Each of the turfgrass organizations that sponsor research also do a good job of disseminating the results to their membership. Through their respective magazine publications, the research they sponsor is presented and interpreted for membership consumption. Managing turf is all about decision-making, and educated decisions are based on reliable, up-to-date, information acquired through applied research. This information is then utilized to improve the decisions made in developing and implementing turfgrass management plans. In addition, these publications serve as a communications tool to share individual experiences, practices, philosophies, etc. at other facilities.

Unfortunately, most of this research and communication is self-contained, crossing occasionally between different commodity groups within the turfgrass industry. The general public is not being informed of the benefits of turfgrass, and the role our facilities play in enhanc-

ing the environment and wildlife habitat. We are preaching to the choir. Why are we not spreading the word about the benefits we bring to our communities?

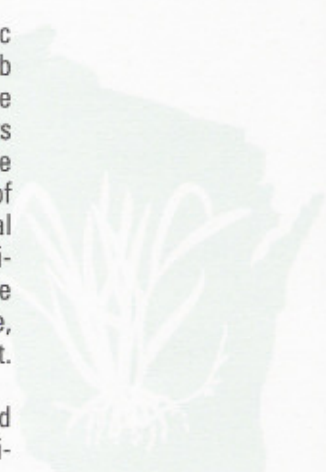
Most recreational turfgrass facilities (golf courses, parks and recreation, sports fields and complexes) are overcrowded and over used for individual and family activities. Some of the same people, who have been taught about the evils of lawns and turfgrass facilities, are utilizing and enjoying public turf spaces. In many cases, they believe that the fertilizers and pesticides they use on their home lawns are much safer to the environment than the ones the industry uses. Why have we not countered these myths?

Leadership

We must make Public Relations a part of our job responsibilities. We must be proactive in presenting the facts and benefits of turf to preserve the soundness and integrity of our industry, and the financial livelihoods upon which our families depend upon. Not because we are under the microscope, but because we are right. Because we are a benefit.

The individuals, facilities, and organizations that are participating in this program have exhibited the type of leadership this industry needs to get the word out about the benefits we offer as an industry. You are taking proactive steps to improve the turfgrass management plans and strategies utilized by your facility.

Followers are easy to find. Most individuals are willing to follow someone who is stepping up and exhibiting leadership qualities. It's the leaders that are hard to find. But this industry is full of individuals with capable, competent leadership traits. If you are a member of any professional organization, you are a leader. If you attend any type of continuing education event (turf conferences or field days), you are a leader. Look



around at these functions. How many people do you NOT see enhancing their knowledge base and decision-making abilities? And people reading this article are leaders too!

There are a variety of activities and projects we can initiate to increase public awareness about the benefits of turfgrass and/or turfgrass facilities.

Projects

A great way to have short-term and long-term impact is to develop youth projects and volunteer projects utilizing adults. Wildlife habitat projects are proven ideas that have been successfully utilized in the past. And there's no need to re-invent the wheel.

Youth Projects - Bluebird trails utilizing youth groups is a fantastic idea. A bluebird trail is a series of nest boxes placed at appropriate intervals in habitat suitable to the eastern bluebird. Providing and enhancing nesting habitat for any type of bird-life is easy, educational, and extremely satisfying. The youth group can be a grade school class, a scout troop, 4-H club, church group, or any other group already in place. You can utilize local bird-watching groups, or individuals in your area. Birders are many in number, though can sometime take a little effort to find. But once you locate a birder, they are usually easy to work with, and excited about sharing their passion with others.

The group can research, build, and place appropriate nesting habitat matching your sites habitat. After birds have taken up residence in the nesting sites, the nests can be periodically inspected and monitored for egg numbers, length of incubation, hatching interval, etc. The "take-home message" is to understand the role and interaction between wildlife and your facility.

Volunteer Projects - This same concept can be utilized

with adults and adult organizations. If you live in an area of prairie or wetland habitat, plan a restoration project. Develop a cooperative effort with a native habitat society, or environmental group in your area. Invite the public to participate. The idea is to get them on your facility to see what really goes on there. It's a great opportunity to showcase the benefits you provide for your community.

And even if your recruitment collects no volunteers, you've still informed the community that wildlife habitat enhancement and creation is taking place on your grounds. Volunteers can sometimes be hard to come by, but getting the word out is always a Public Relations plus.

Open House/Tours

How about an open house? If you have concerned citizens inquiring about what goes on at your facility, open the doors and let them in. Turn their concerns into your positive. Show the equipment you use, and the fertilizers and pesticides you use as well. That's what they're really interested in.

Get the fertilizers and pesticides out and line them up. Provide MSDS sheets. Provide label information that shows you are utilizing safe materials. Show them the safe and secure facilities where you store them. Get out a sprayer or spreader, and explain how they work. Don't hide anything.

Make a point to inform attendees that the materials you use on your site are the same homeowners use on their home lawns. It is surprising how many people think turfgrass managers utilize "super-strength" chemicals.

While speaking to the public, don't refer to the "chemicals" you use to "kill" weeds and insects. Instead of "chemicals", use "materials." Use "control" instead of "kill." The differences are obvious.

Conduct tours highlighting

wildlife habitat and life you maintain. Bird watching, night sounds, native plant walks, etc. are all great ways to get the public to see what really goes on where you work.

Media Utilization

Utilize the local media to your advantage. Most media outlets are hungry for good ideas and topics to cover. Turfgrass sites with habitat enhancement projects (i.e. bird nesting or habitat restoration) make a great topic, and will provide a lot of positive exposure.

A newspaper article is a great way to go. If you utilize a youth group to monitor bird-nesting habitat, get them to write the article. A regular column directed at home lawn maintenance would allow you to highlight the environmentally sound practices you use at your facility. Periodic submissions bring attention to special activities or events.

Whichever route you choose, developing a positive relationship with the media in your community will reap immeasurable benefits.

Media Committees

Propose the idea of a media committee to any professional organization you belong to. Developing press releases for regular distribution among the membership is an easy and effective way to report your activities to an entire region. The Northern Great Lakes Golf Course Superintendents Association (NGLGCSA) held a symposium on Insects and Turf. They had a press release prepared before the meeting was over, highlighting the environmental stewardship component of the symposium. Members then had the opportunity to let the public know how they were educating themselves to benefit the community.

So simple, yet few of us do it! 🍀

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 8	NGLGCSA Monthly Meeting	Wawonowin CC, Champion, MI
Aug 13	WTA Summer Field Day	OJ Noer Turfgrass Research Facility, Verona
Aug 13	WNA Summer Field Day	Bruce Co. & West Madison Ag Station, Madison
August 18-26	WLF Horticulture Tour	Oregon
Sept TBA	NGLGCSA Monthly Meeting	Tree Acres GC, Plover
Sept 9	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	Fox Valley GC, Kaukauna
Sept TBA	WSTMA Fall Chapter Meeting	TBA
Sept 30	WGCSA Monthly Meeting	Pine Hills, Sheboygan
Oct 4,5	WGCSA Dinner Dance	Quit-Qui-Oc GC, Elkhart Lake
Oct 9	NGLGCSA Monthly Meeting	Timberstone GC, Iron Mountain, MI
Oct 10	WTA Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Tournament	Meadows Course, Blackwolf Run, Kohler
Nov 11-14	ASA CSSA SSSA Annual Meetings	Indianapolis
Nov 12,13	Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium	The American Club, Kohler
Dec 12,13	WGCSA/ GCSAA Regional Seminar	Ramada, Fond du Lac
Jan 6,7,8	Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO	Marriott Madison West
Jan 15-19	STMA National Convention	San Antonio
Feb 9-16	GCSAA International Convention	Atlanta
March 12,13	Reinders Turf and Irrigation Conference	Waukesha Expo Center

WTA Members — If you have an important date you'd like to share with other members —
Call 608-845-6895 or Fax 608-845-8162 and let us include it in the next calendar.

Contact Telephone Numbers

ASA	American Society of Agronomy Annual Meetings	608-273-8080
EXPO	Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO	608-845-6536
GCSAA	Golf Course Superintendents Association of America	800-472-7878
Reinders	Reinders Turf and Irrigation Conference	800-782-3300
NGLGCSA	Northern Great Lakes Golf Course Superintendents Assoc.	715-542-2373
STMA	Sports Turf Manager Association	800-323-3875
Symposium	Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium	800-287-9645
WGCSA	Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association	414-786-4303
WNA	Wisconsin Nursery Association	414-529-4705
WSTMA	Wisconsin Sports Turf Manager Association	608-845-6895
WTA	Wisconsin Turfgrass Association	608-845-6536

Mark these important dates on your 2002 calendar now.

WTA Summer Field Day — Tuesday, August 13th

- Research Tours with learning for everyone
- Huge Trade Show
- Seminars
- Lunch
- "Ask the Experts"

**Golf Fundraiser for the Turf Research Fellowship — Thursday, October 10th
Meadow Valleys Course at Blackwolf Run**

- Moneys raised will support turf research well into the future.
- This fun event could sell out early.
- Door prizes for everyone.

Watch your mailbox or call 608-845-6536 for details.

WISCONSIN TURFGASS ASSN.
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