

Thank You 2022

By Bruce Schweiger, Superintendent, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility

As the first snowfall of the year descends on the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Facility, I can't help but re-live the past growing season. During the year the season can seem so long but as I look back, the year went by quickly. Could it be my age or the emergence of the light at the end of the tunnel they call retirement? I hope it is not the later because I enjoy the turf industry and I am not ready to leave. The old man in me thinks there are still a few good years left and one or two bits of experience I can share.

In review of the 2022 growing season, it was much like every other turfgrass manager. A few highlights at the Noer: WTA Summer Field Day - The 30th anniversary of the opening of the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Educational Facility, The AmFam Senior Golf Championship (hosting Golf Channel and UW Police Incident Command, along with John Daly and Alex Cejka and their RV's), Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association Fall Educational Event, WLECHA (Wisconsin Law Enforcement Canine Handlers Association) dog training event and possibly best of all, no floods!!

As I re-live 2022 I am reminded of those that assisted in making it a good year: Reinders, Inc, John Jensen and Aaron Goninen stepped up as always with assistance in a myriad of ways. Without their assistance the Noer Facility would not be the facility that makes all of Wisconsin proud. Their invaluable help allows the budget at the Noer Facility to be stretched.

All the bentgrass plots at the Noer Facility were maintained due to the help of our three benefactors. Each of these three companies continue to provide donations even though we all know the rise in costs of the supply chain.

The Anderson's and Dave Louttit provide the Noer Facility with all our granular fertilizer, granular fungicides and granular insecticides. Mr. Louttit and I discussed a few issues from the previous year and he provided the Noer Facility with the products needed to remedy those issues.

Jay-Mar, Inc and Tony Grapas have always provided the Noer Facility with sprayable products to correct nutrient issues or just 20-0-0 liquid urea for plot maintenance and research sprays. When there is a need to add urea to a research plot the 20-0-0 urea is an easy and fast way to provide that feeding without weighing out material and dissolving in water. Many plots applications are sprays at 0.9 gallons per 1000 square feet on a treatment area that could be 160 square feet. Tony, you make our lives much simpler!

For our general grounds requirements, the Noer is blessed to have fertilizer donations from E.C. Grow, Joe Ernst and some larger applications performed by InSight FS, Mike Krupke. This can include routine fertilizer applications or this year crabgrass control application in prime areas.

In attempts to keep parts of the Noer Facility looking clean and well kept, I need to thank Scott Verdun of NuFarm (continuing the Kerry Anderson legacy) has kept the Noer Facility well stocked with herbicides. Beth Duschack of Corteva is always there with product, especially NativeKleen to keep our now mow native type areas looking clean and weed free.

Many of you may not know that the Noer Facility does not own a grinder for reels or bedknives. For as long as the Noer Facility has been around, Blackhawk CC, Chad Grimm and his staff, have taken all the Noer reel mowers and walking greens mowers and performed the winter maintenance. In the very recent years, I have come to rely on Hawks Landing GC, Neil and Matt Radatz, for in-season touch ups on the greens mower. They have sharpened and installed new bedknives as needed. Whenever either course has been asked, they have always stepped up to the plate and amazingly in a very timely fashion, thank you.

Over the years the Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association, WSTMA, has stepped up to purchase various pieces of equipment, items or parts the Noer Facility has needed. As the budget cuts for 2023 loom these funds will help soften the blow. This support has been amazing and greatly appreciated.

This annual article cannot be complete without a thank you to University Ridge Golf Course, Phil Davidson, Lee Mahnke, Stuart the Equipment Tech. The equipment list at the Noer is not extensive and there are always various pieces the Noer Facility might need throughout the year. Phil is always willing to save the Noer the expense of renting the extra needed equipment. Over the years with the road construction that was completed, Schwab Creek has become more of a creek that just a drainage area. Multiple times per year Phil will lend the Noer Facility his brush hog to keep Schwab Creek trimmed. In the Fall he will allow the Noer to use the brush hog or send it with an operator to mow down our wildflower and pollinator plots.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Path To Turfgrass Professional Is Not Always Simple

By Brad T. DeBels, PhD, Weed Man Lawn Care



As I recall, which is becoming more and more difficult by the day, my first experience as a 'turfgrass professional' was not really turf related at all. Instead, it was more of a golf course custodial/restaurant employee combination. By day I was cleaning restrooms, filling water jugs, replenishing golf pencils, score cards, etc., by night I was bussing tables and attending to guests in the restaurant. I

know, glamorous! Somehow that experience and the half dozen or so years at the same course, brought me all the way to UW Madison to embark on a college education in the turfgrass field.

So there I was, traversing the bowels of King Hall at 1475 Observatory Drive in search of Dr. Birl Lowery. For those of you that had the pleasure to know him in his time at the university, he is one of the greats. Keep in mind this building was erected in 1894 and has not changed much to this day. As I passed corn filled plant dryers, dusty soil coring equipment and stacks of textbooks as far as the eye can see, I couldn't help but question my loyalty to the industry.

That was 18 years ago, and I find myself now trying to shape the vision and introduction of the green industry to the next set of professionals. That vision is still the same, but the path is ever changing. The turfgrass degree enrollment is not what it once was at the UW, but the future is encouraging. I recently met with the new Dean of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Glenda Gillaspay and it is apparent she on board with our vision of increasing enrollment and staff within the department.

It is now the 2nd year of Dr. Soldat and Dr. Koch's version of the turfgrass short course. Enrollment in their Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program has nearly tripled since its inception in 2021. Through their leadership and outreach I anticipate this will be a very popular option moving into the future.

The Wisconsin Turfgrass Association has embarked on a process over the last couple years to realign our commitment to our mission of financially supporting turfgrass students, staff and research. This comprehensive examination has provided the association with more funding opportunities for students, faculty and staff. Thank you to all of our members and event attendees for making this all possible!

For each of us, our initial introduction in the turfgrass industry was undoubtedly unique, all with a great story to tell. For the future of the industry, it is crucial we continue this trend of first experiences. And with the plethora of innovative minds at the forefront of this shift in our industry, I am convinced the future is bright. I encourage you to be vocal to leadership in your region, especially those of you in near proximity of the UW. If our voices are not frequently heard loud and clear, they will soon become silent. And for each of you embarking on your green industry journey, the opportunities are endless. Enjoy the ride! ■



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Year behind board member name, is the expiration of their current term. January is the month the term is up.

I am sure I forgot someone and to those that I have forgotten I apologize. Without the continued assistance from all these people presenting the O.J. Noer Educational Facility would not be what it is today. Thank you to all that assisted the Noer Facility and myself over this past year and all the time at the Noer.

As the snow is falling, I am already looking forward to another successful year at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility. Who knows what 2023 will bring but with industry support the Noer will respond for another good year. ■

WTA Research Day Is Joining Forces With Symposium

By Garrett Luck, Superintendent Hidden Glen Golf Club, WTA & WGCSA Board Member

The Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association is pleased to announce the 2023 Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium on January 11th and 12th at The American Club in Kohler, Wisconsin. The annual Symposium is the pinnacle of local turf education in the state of Wisconsin and covers a wide range of turf, professional development, and health-related topics. The theme for the year, Healthy Self, Healthy Turf, will certainly resonate with attendees as we reflect on the many challenges that we all face in an ever-changing and stressful industry.

Of particular interest to WTA members will be the inclusion of the WTA Research Day within the Wisconsin Golf Turf Symposium. The WTA Research Day has taken on various forms throughout the years and with your support has hopefully found a new home within the Symposium. On day two, graduate students from UW-Madison will have the opportunity to present their research projects to a room full of industry professionals. We look forward to supporting the students and the WGCSA will donate any profit from the Symposium to the WTA to support future turfgrass research at the university. The total donation will be directly driven by the number of attendees.

While the professional development, support of the turfgrass research, and camaraderie with other golf course professionals is certainly enough to make the 2023 Wisconsin Golf Symposium a can't miss event, the Wee One Foundation will also be picking up the bar tab and hosting an auction during the evening the reception on January 11th. The auction is a great way to purchase products that you are likely already using at your property while supporting a great cause. Registration is live on the WGCSA website (wgcsa.com) and discounted rooms can be booked directly through The American Club by mentioning the Symposium 855-444-2838.

The schedule of events is as follows:

Wednesday, January 11th, 2023

11:30am – 12:30pm	Registration
12:30 – 12:45	Scott Anthes - 2023 WGCSA President <i>Welcome – Opening Remarks</i>
12:45 – 1:30	John Fulling Jr. – GCSAA Past President <i>Keynote</i>
1:30 – 2:15	Don Armstrong <i>Stop Standing There – One Step is All it Takes</i>
2:15 – 2:30	Break
2:30 – 3:15	Adam Moeller – USGA Central Region Agronomist <i>Bunker Construction, Putting Green Management, Trees</i>
3:15 – 4:00	Hannah Keesler MS, LPC <i>Mental Health</i>



4:00 – 4:15	Q & A
4:15 – 5:30	Reception & Wee One Auction
Thursday, January 12th, 2023	
7:00am – 8:00am	Breakfast Buffet
8:00 – 8:45	Eric Watkins – University of Minnesota <i>Winter Injury</i>
8:45 – 9:30	Stephen Tucker – Tucker Equipment Management <i>Shop Organization and Efficiencies</i>
9:30 – 9:45	Q & A
9:45 – 11:00	Badger Power Hour – UW – Madison Presentations
11:00 – 11:45	Dr. Scott Allen <i>Leadership</i>
11:45 – 12:00	Q & A
12:00pm – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 1:45	Zach Nicoludis – USGA Agronomist <i>Year in Review</i>
1:45 – 2:45	Paul Koch – UW Madison & Eric Watkins – University of MN <i>Interactive Winter Injury Discussion</i> ■

New Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program Opens Strong

By Doug Soldat, Ph.D., Soil Science, University of Wisconsin - Madison

The UW-Madison Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program (TAP) officially began at 10 AM on November 1st, 2022 in a packed classroom at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility. The program welcomed 19 students hailing from Illinois, Minnesota, and Wisconsin with representatives from the golf, sod, and lawn care industries. The Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program is an applied, hands-on education in turfgrass management that consists of a boot camp and a field apprenticeship. The new Apprenticeship program grew out of the recently dissolved program in Turfgrass Management in the Farm and Industry Short Course that was initiated to educate those with an interest in a career in turfgrass management, but without the interest, ability, or means to pursue a bachelors degree in the subject. The boot camp portion of the program runs from 10 AM to 3 PM Tuesday through Thursday for six weeks in the fall/winter of 2022 and another six weeks in the winter/spring of 2023. Approximately half of the students commute weekly and stay two nights at a nearby hotel with a special program discount. The other half live close enough to commute daily. The cost for enrollment in the boot camp is \$3500. The hotels and meal costs are not included in the program fee. We are grateful for the several thousands of dollars of scholarships that have been made available through industry groups including the WTA, Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association, Wisconsin Sod Producers Association, and the Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association.



Students working together on computers to develop an irrigation budget in the O.J. Noer Facility classroom.

By the end of February, the students in the boot camp will completed 144 hours of classroom content and will be ready to embark on the field apprenticeship portion of the program, where they complete tasks at their place of employment and work to demonstrate competency in a range of skills necessary for a management and

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Eric Leonard at TPC Wisconsin talks about bunker construction to the students in the Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program.

decision making role in their specific industry (golf, sports, sod, lawn care, etc.). Dr. Paul Koch and I are working with industry leaders to finalize the list of skills. After successful completion of their apprenticeship, students will receive a certificate of completion.

While students spend the majority of their time in the classroom learning the fundamentals of turfgrass management from myself and Dr. Koch, they have spent time in a UW-Madison campus greenhouse identifying turfgrasses, learned how to estimate sand,

silt, and clay content in the laboratory by hand texturing in a UW-Madison soil science teaching laboratory, visited Eric Leonard at TPC Wisconsin (formerly Cherokee CC) to learn about the grow-in and renovation process, conducted an irrigation audit using catch cans and soil moisture meters, talked with Neil Radatz at Hawks Landing Golf Club about cultivation and soil management, used the Web Soil Survey to identify soil properties, and met with Josh LePine at Maple Bluff CC to learn about staff management and

budgeting. And those activities cover just the first month of the program! Paul and I are excited to be teaching full classrooms of students once again, and are already making plans for growth and improvement for the next offering in November of 2023. If you have any questions about the Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program, please visit the website at www.turf.wisc.edu/academics or contact me at djsoldat@wisc.edu or Dr. Koch at plkoch@wisc.edu. ■



Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program students conducting an irrigation audit at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility on a beautiful November afternoon.

WTA Fall Golf Classic 2022 Is A Success

By Bruce Schweiger, Superintendent, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research & Education Facility

On October 10th, 2022, the WTA Fall Golf Classic was held at Oneida Golf and Country Club in Green Bay. This outing is typically played on the first Monday in October but this year we had a scheduling issue, so we chose the second Monday in October. Early October weather can be an issue but with the opportunity to play such a special course, we took the gamble. The Monday before the event, the weather was great in Green Bay and doubt began to surface about what the next week would bring. It brought a near perfect day, mostly sunny, a high temperature of 65, light winds and 100 golfers. When you add the great weather and a very special golf course, this might have been the perfect Fall day for golf!

The WTA Fall Golf Classic is one of the WTA's largest fundraisers. The attendance at the event was 100 players. When this event moves north, the attendance can dwindle, but not this year! This was the largest turnout in seven years and the highest turnout at a northern location since 2005 when the WTA played at Whistling Straits. This is a tribute to how special it was to play at Oneida Golf and Country Club.

Oneida Golf and Country Club rolled out the red carpet. I cannot say thank you enough for all they did. As expected, Mark Storby and Brian Kindle had the course in impeccable shape. As the day wore on, I was very happy that Mark and Brian set the course up objectively and did not use what

could have been some very difficult pin placements. The discussions with players after the round were all great. The one common thought, the greens baffled many groups, especially mine.

The entire clubhouse staff also brought their "A" game. General manager Kevin



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Betts was extremely helpful and made it a very low stress day. Mr. Betts and his staff went well beyond expectation with their food service. The pro shop staff organized the outing flawlessly and even introduced me to a scoring app. Okay Dave Marach used the app and he said it was easy to do. I heard no complaints and only rave reviews on the entire day. To feel so welcome and valued should make all turfgrass professional proud.

The golf event was a four-person scramble. This year the event recognized three winning teams: first place with a score of -13 Peter Meyer, Scott Anthes, Alex Benson-Crone and Dan Vatter. Each player from this team received a \$100 pro shop credit. The next two winning teams each received \$50.00 pro shop credit. Those team members were ninth place with a score of -7 Aaron Hansen, Greg Gage, Nick Peinovich, Kristin Witkowski. The third team was Brian Haag, Dan Prochazka, Justin Mottl, Ethan Rosenberg.

The event had five flag events, each worth \$57.00 in pro shop credit. The two closest to the pin events were sponsored by Aquatrols/Redox and our friend John (JT) Turner.

Closest to the pin #8 was Alex Beson-Crone; closest to the pin #17 was Dan Vatter; long drive male Ben Story; long drive female Kristin Witkowski; long drive senior (over 60) Bradd Bucks.

In addition to all the golf registration we had numerous hole sponsors:

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This year we had two companies add extra support to the event, Reinders, Inc. and Aquatrols/Redox. Aquatrols/Redox sponsored closest to the pins on #8 and #17. Reinders, Inc. made a large donation toward the cost of lunch and hors d'oeuvres. I would like to give them a special thank you for their outstanding support!

The WTA Fall Golf Classic always ends with an all-inclusive raffle. The goal of the raffle is that everyone leaves with a prize. When the event is being planned this is a very high goal. I am willing to admit that the week before the event I thought this might be the first year that everyone would not get a prize. Audra kept telling me not to worry because we have the best supporters in the industry and they will come through. Boy was she right! The number of people and companies that arrived at the registration table with prizes for the raffle was staggering. Please thank these individuals and companies when you see them (if I omitted someone I apologize): Gabe Lopez/Irrigation Protection Services, four

flashlights; Shawn Hilliard/Helena, air pods pro; Mike Upthegrove/VanDiest, jacket; David Louttit/The Andersons, 2 dozen golf balls, 2 hats; Beth Duschack/Corteva, umbrella, 2 jackets, backpack, 2 headlamps; David Marach/Northbrook G C, foursome with carts; Scott Anthes/Brown County G C, foursome with carts; Dan Harrier (WTA board member)/SiteOne, 4 golf shirts and muckboots; Matt Kregel/The Club at Strawberry Creek, foursome with carts, 2 sweatshirts and 2 hats; Phil Spitz/Syngenta, stocking hat, vest, buck knife; Peter Meyer/National Golf Graphics, Journeyman Distillery Whiskey and 12 pack Leinenkugels; Scott Bushman/Fox Valley Golf Club, foursome with carts, hat and golf shirt; Jim VanHerwynen/South Hills Golf & C C, foursome with carts; David Rutz/SafePlay, 6 golf shirts. A special thanks to the extra effort donors: Jon Hegge/Evansville C C, Badger basketball tickets, Badger hockey tickets, New Amsterdam vodka, Red Moscato, Moscato Dash, Effen cucumber vodka, Drink Wisconsibly brandy; Kristin Witkowski/Durrell

Naquin Pendelton Turf Supply, 2 golf shirts, 2 large Yeti cups, 2 - \$25 Home Depot gift cards, 2 - \$25 Lowe's gift cards; Ryan Menken (WTA board member)/Jasperson Sod, 2 stocking hats, 6 pack Leinenkugels Toasted Bock, 6 pack Spotted Cow, cooler bag; Scott Verdun/NuFarm, pullover, 6 spray pitcher calibration kits, pen, ball markers, belt clip, 2 notebooks.

As you can see by all the people and companies, this was a great Fall Golf Classic. Thanks to Monroe and Cheryl Miller for keeping Audra and the registration desk organized. Most of all, thank you to all those who took the time out of their busy schedule to play golf and have some fun for a good cause. The 2023 WTA Fall Golf Classic will be hosted by Jim VanHerwynen at South Hills Golf and CC in Fond du Lac. We will announce the date as soon as we get one selected. I am looking forward to another great event in 2023. ■

WSTMA Winter Education Conference

By Mike Krupke, WSTMA Manager and WTA Board Member

Please join us on February 22nd and 23rd, 2023 for our Annual Winter Education/Business Meeting at the Wilderness Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Along with great education, we will be presenting our inaugural UW Turf Apprenticeship Program scholarship and election of officers to the board of directors.

Wednesday will focus on our commercial partners as they will be giving educational presentations focused on a particular product or service they specialize in. There will be a

networking event that evening with free food, liquid refreshments and lots of smart talk.

The general session on Thursday will include Brad Jakubowski from Penn State, presentations from the University of Wisconsin-Madison graduate students, and much more turfgrass education. Go to wstma.org for more information or contact chapter manager, Michael Krupke at mkrupke.wstma@gmail.com. ■



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2023 Landscape & Grounds Maintenance Short Course Program

By Vijai Pandian University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension/Kenosha & Racine County

UW Madison Division of Extension's 2023 Landscape and Grounds Maintenance Short Course is for landscape professionals to learn up-to-date science-based information to help you increase the economic and environmental sustainability of your business and the landscapes you care for. This four-week program will be hosted via Zoom Wednesdays in February from 1:00pm – 3:30pm. To register visit www.wo.wisc.edu/lgmisc and scroll to the bottom of the page to select the registration information.

Wednesday, February 1st

- 1:00pm Emerging Wisconsin Insect Pests of 2023
PJ Liesch, UW-Madison Extension
- 2:20pm Effective Management of White Grubs in Turf
Dr. R. Chris Williamson, PBI-Gordon Corporation

Wednesday, February 8th

- 1:00pm Woody Plants for Screening
Dr. Laura Jull, UW-Madison Extension
- 2:20pm Crabgrass Control: The Impacts of SGN and Nozzles
Ed Nangle, Ohio State University


Wednesday, February 15th

- 1:00pm Planting a Prairie: Choose Your Own Adventure
Frank Hassler, Good Oak Ecological Services
- 2:20pm Native Plants for Pollinators
Susan Carpenter, Wisconsin Native Plant Garden Curator


Wednesday, February 22nd

- 1:00pm Oak Wilt Interactives
Dr. David L. Roberts, The Plant Doctor, LLC
- 2:20pm Trees & Ice Storms: Predictable, Preventable and Planning
Dr. Rich Hauer, UW Stevens Point


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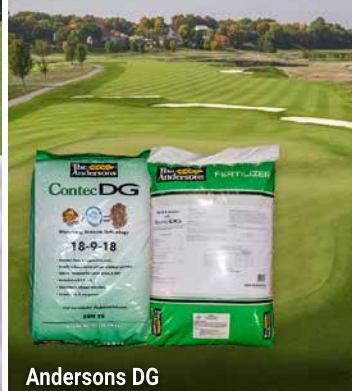
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Fall 2022 Snow Mold Research Roundup

By Kurt Hockemeyer, TDL Manager, Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin – Madison

There are a couple of inches of snow on the ground here in Madison in mid November. This is not quite normal, and the weather will be warming up here around Thanksgiving and should be getting rid of all of it soon. There are still a couple of snow mold trials here at the O.J. Noer Research Station that need wrapped up, and so we will be shoveling snow off these plots this week and get them put to bed before Thanksgiving. I would like to take this opportunity to briefly discuss this year's snow mold trials and hopefully provide some context for what we should expect from these trials come Spring.

Our large snow mold study this year is 126 treatments, which is the largest we've ever had to my knowledge. This study is replicated in both Marquette, MI and Wausau, WI. All treatments in Marquette went down on October 27 and the Wausau treatments went down on November 14. I do not see any major snow events in the forecast currently at either location but that can change rapidly. Marquette has been very reliable in getting heavy disease pressure, which means we get meaningful disease control data. Wausau has been less consistent. Only time will tell this Winter.

The snow mold timing study has reached a new stage this year. We have taken all the data we've collected over the years, fed it into a computer, and the computer has been spitting out some predictions at us. We are now going to test how well the computer model can accurately predict the proper timing of snow mold applications. Unfortunately, that means we are still a couple more winters away from publishing a tested snow mold timing model.

We also have the pink snow mold study here at the O.J. Noer. We spray various fungicides, inoculate the plots with rye grains covered in the pink snow mold fungus, then cover the plots with custom made insulation frames, then cover all that with a Greenjacket tarp. All this to emulate the insulating properties of snow cover. In Madison, snow cover is not consistent enough for us to get disease every winter. These techniques have resulted in a fairly consistent display of pink snow mold every Spring.

There are a few new studies that went out this Fall as well. These studies are a small part of the much larger WinterTurf project that you may have heard about from Dr. Koch or even Dr. Watkins at the University of Minnesota. Hopefully everyone reading this is participating again in the winter injury part of the project. We are looking at how different rates of nitrogen and potassium during the summer affect snow mold severity the following winter. A similar study is looking at how the timing of nitrogen and potassium in the fall affect snow mold severity. And then finally, we are looking at how different leaf mulching techniques and leaf depths affect snow mold in home lawns. Some interesting stuff. I am definitely curious about what will happen with these studies.

As we enter December, I will be sending out TDL Contract Renewals. So please be on the lookout for those renewals in your (snail) mailbox and please renew your contract if you can. Not sure if things have started to get back to normal in the turf industry, but if you are not already a contract member, please consider becoming one and help be the foundation that holds up the TDL. Without our contract members, the TDL would simply not exist. In addition to submitting samples at a reduced price, getting the bi-weekly TDL Updates during the summer, and getting timely diagnoses, I also have a TDL winter hat that I can send to you. The winter hat keeps your head warm in style. If you would like me to send you a hat, please let me know

after you have renewed your contract for next year. More information on becoming a TDL contract member can be found on the following webpage, by visiting the TDL's website (<https://tdl.wisc.edu/contract-membership/>). Please contact either myself (hockemeyer@wisc.edu) or Dr. Koch (plkoch@wisc.edu) if you have any interest in becoming a contract member. Or you can phone the lab at 608-845-2535. Thank you for your time and consideration.

One last note, I would like to share with everyone that my wife and I welcomed our first daughter into the world in late October. This means our family size is now up to four (plus dog)! Crazy to believe but here we are barreling headfirst into the next phase of our lives. I definitely feel blessed. Now if only we could catch up on some sleep....

Happy upcoming holidays to everyone! ■

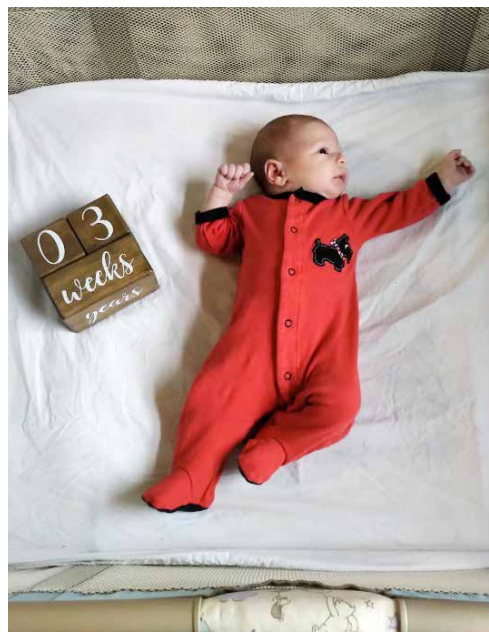


Figure 1. Evelyn Jane Hockemeyer is the newest addition to the Hockemeyer family!



Figure 2. Kurt, Jenn, James, Evelyn, and dog Max.

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Tree Leaf Mulching Impacts On Turfgrass Quality And Soil Health

By Paul Koch, PhD, Department of Plant Pathology, University of Wisconsin - Madison

Fall is that glorious time of year when the temperatures cool after a long, hot summer and the leaves begin to change into those hues of yellow, orange, and red. But as those leaves fall they can have large impacts on the environment. A US Geological Survey study commissioned by the Clean Lakes Alliance found that nearly 80% of the annual phosphorus load into Madison lakes came from tree leaves piled on the street for pickup (Figure 1). Another option is to leave the leaves on the lawn...but that could potentially lead to smothering of the grass and increased rates of winter injury and/or snow mold.

Research investigating the impacts of tree leaf mulching on turfgrass quality is limited. Kowalewski et al (2010) conducted a study in East Lansing, MI that mulched tree leaves and left them in place on the lawns and found that plots that received mulched tree leaves had reductions in weed cover of 85% compared to plots that had the leaves completely removed. However, the impact of tree leaves on other aspects of the turf such as soil health and snow mold were not investigated in this study.

My program, along with Dr. Soldat's, is part of a multi-university, USDA-funded research project investigating many aspects of winter injury on turfgrass. One particular project we initiated in the fall of 2022 investigates the impact of multiple depths of mulched and non-mulched tree leaves on turfgrass quality, snow mold development, and multiple soil health metrics such as soil respiration. The study is being conducted at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility in Verona, WI and the leaves were collected from around the O.J. Noer and University Ridge Golf Course (Figure 2). Dr. Kevin Frank at Michigan State University is also replicating the study in East Lansing, MI. Leaves were either mulched using a mulching leaf blower or left unmulched and piled at a depth of 2 inches (buried within the turf canopy) or at a depth of 6 inches (fully covering the turfgrass). We intend to repeat this study on the same plots for at least 3 years to determine the long-term impacts of tree leaf mulching on turfgrass quality, snow mold development, and soil health. The results of this study will provide much needed information on the best way to incorporate tree leaves into the turfgrass system, keeping them (and their phosphorous) out of the local waterways.

Reference:

Kowalewski, A.R., Calhoun, R.N., Hathaway, A.D., Rogers, J.N. 2010. Using cultural practices and leaf mulch to control weeds in established turfgrass. *Applied Turfgrass Science*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1094/ATS-2010-0416-01-RS>. ■



Figure 1. Piling tree leaves at the curb in the fall can lead to large influxes of phosphorous into local waterways. This picture was taken in a Madison neighborhood.



Figure 2. The tree leaf mulching study at the O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research Facility that was initiated in the fall of 2022.



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2023

January 11th & 12th	Research Day/Symposium	The American Club, Kohler
February 10th & 12th	PBS Garden & Landscape EXPO	Alliant Energy Center, Madison
February 1st	Landscape & Grounds Short Course	Zoom Webinar
February 8th	Landscape & Grounds Short Course	Zoom Webinar
February 15th	Landscape & Grounds Short Course	Zoom Webinar
February 22nd	Landscape & Grounds Short Course	Zoom Webinar
February 22nd & 23rd	WSTMA Winter Education Conference	Wilderness Resort, Wisconsin Dells
March 9th	Happy Hour with the Turf Docs	Zoom Webinar
March 14th	Pesticide Applicator Training.....	Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee
April 11th	Pesticide Applicator Training.....	Ingleside Hotel, Pewaukee
April 25th	Pesticide Applicator Training.....	Rock Garden/Comfort Suites, Green Bay
May 9th	Pesticide Applicator Training.....	Metropolis Resort, Eau Claire
May 17th	Pesticide Applicator Training.....	Zoom Webinar

**To make sure a Winter/Spring turf event is still scheduled, please contact them directly.
Phone numbers for some of the common organizations are listed below.**

**WTA Members -- If you have an important date that you would like to share with other members,
Call 608-845-6536 or email audra.anderson@wisc.edu to include it in the next calendar.**

Contact Telephone Numbers

GCSAA	Golf Course Superintendents Association of America	800-472-7878
iLandscape	the Illinois + Wisconsin Landscape Show	630-472-2851
NGLGCSA	Northern Great Lakes Golf Course Superintendents Assoc	906-424-4176
Northern	Northern Green	651-633-4987
PAT	Pesticide Applicator Training (Turf and Landscape 3.0).....	608-262-7588
STMA	Sports Turf Managers Association	800-323-3875
TDL	Turf Diagnostic Lab.....	608-845-2535
TPI	Turf Producers International	800-405-8873
WDATCP	Pesticide Certification & Licensing	608-224-4548
Wee One	Wee One Foundation Golf Outing	630-457-7276
WGCSA	Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association	920-643-4888
WPT	WPT Garden Expo.....	608-262-5256
WSPA	Wisconsin Sod Producers Association	262-895-6820
WSTMA	Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association	920-723-0936
WTA	Wisconsin Turfgrass Association	608-845-6536