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**TPI Summer Convention and Field Days are a SUCCESS!**



In addition to some of its regular features and timely stories, this special edition of the TPI E-Newsletter offers a pictorial of some of the events at this year's TPI Summer Convention & Field Days, July 25-29 in New York. (Pictorial begins on page 7)



More than 450 people from nine countries attended the event which included tours of local farms and New York City, a visit to Rutgers University research campus in Adelphia, NJ, an information and exchange program, special guest speakers, the TPI annual business meeting, plenty of social and networking opportunities, and a great Field Day at Pine Island Turf Nursery in Pine Island, NY.



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## LETTER TO THE EDITOR of USA Today

The article written by Laura Vanderkam – **Out of Fashion: Green Lawns** USA TODAY 8/17/10\* begs for a response. It contains some misinformation, a distorted view of the facts and some very important omissions. At the outset Ms. Vanderkam refers to lawns as “wasteful suburban seas of green” and suggests that by changing our thinking about lawns we just might save our planet. Unfortunately Ms. Vanderkam fails to mention the tremendous environmental benefits of natural grass and what that “sea of green” actually provides.

America’s residential lawns along with the natural turfgrass that covers golf courses, parks, commercial landscapes, greenbelts, athletic fields, etc, helps to cool the air, produces oxygen, filters out pollutants, captures and suppresses dust, recharges and filters our ground water supply, reduces storm water runoff, controls soil erosion, retains and sequesters carbon, restores soil quality, dissipates heat, lessens the “heat island effect” and has been proven to improve mental and physical health.

Dr. Thomas Watschke of Pennsylvania State University has stated that “The strategic use of turfgrass is the most sensible and economically feasible approach to countering the greenhouse effect in urban areas.” He also estimates that turfgrasses trap an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt released in the atmosphere annually and 55 square feet of turfgrass provides enough oxygen for one person for an entire day.

Dr. James Beard, Professor Emeritus, Texas A&M University has stated, “One of the key mechanisms by which turfgrasses preserve water is their superior capability to trap and hold runoff, which results in more water infiltrating through the soil turfgrass ecosystem”. He also wrote, “Turfgrasses are relatively inexpensive, durable groundcovers that protect our valuable, nonrenewable soil resource from water and wind erosion”.

Dr. John Stier, University of Wisconsin has commented, “The roots of turfgrass have a higher plant density than native grasses which affects infiltration and decreases water runoff and increase percolation”.

Ron Follett of the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Soil-Plant Nutrient Research Unit in Fort Collins, CO., and Yailing Qian of Colorado State University estimate that nearly a ton of carbon per acre, per year is stored in the soil of golf course fairways and greens.

Cristina Milesi of the NASA Ames Research Center estimates that lawn areas in the U.S. alone could store up to 37 billion pounds of carbon.

The Maryland Turfgrass Survey 1996-An Economic Value Study reported that “the front lawns on a block of eight average homes have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air conditioning”.

These research scientists and green industry professionals evidently know something Ms. Vanderkam doesn’t know . . . that turfgrass just might be saving our planet.

And what of the new varieties of turfgrass that are more drought tolerant, require less water, have a greater natural resistance to pests and disease or don’t require mowing as frequently? Or new and innovative advancements in technology over the last several years that have resulted in lawn mowers that are more fuel efficient and eco-friendly?

Ms. Vanderkam reports that Stephen Kress of the National Audubon Society has suggested that maintaining non-native plants requires 10,000 gallons of water per year, per lawn, over and above rainwater.

I suspect homeowners in Seattle, Washington, known for its wet climate (36 inches of rain per year) would be somewhat surprised if not amused to learn that they were using 10,000 gallons of water a year to water their lawns. The same would likely hold true for other regions of the country where annual rainfall requires little if any additional irrigation.

John Mascaro, Executive Director, North Florida Sports Turf Managers Association put a pencil to Kress's claim that it takes 10,000 gallons of water to maintain the average lawn and offered the following:

"It's estimated that the national average lawn size is about one-fifth of an acre for the 85 million households with a private lawn. ( [http://www.grounds-mag.com/mag/grounds\\_maintenance\\_lawn\\_size/](http://www.grounds-mag.com/mag/grounds_maintenance_lawn_size/) )

If one acre equals 43,560 square feet than 1/5 acre equals 8,712 square feet. 10,000 gallons of water divided by 8,712 square feet equals 1.1478 gallons per square foot per year. One US gallon equals 128 US fluid ounces; so that's 146.92 ounces per square foot per year. If we divided by one year (52.177457 weeks considering Leap year) that equals 2.81 ounces of water per week per square foot or .40 ounces per day, that's less than a ½ ounce of water for a plant that provides numerous benefits to our environment!"

Dr. Ranajit Sahu has stated, "Many point out the excessive use of watering for lawns. However, excessive use of water and pesticides is neither necessary nor desirable for maintaining healthy turfgrass. In fact, what is often lost in the rancorous debate is that turfgrasses evolved over millions of years without irrigation systems and pesticides.

"Second, many point out the emissions from lawn equipment. But, it is ironic that critics fail to note the tremendous reduction in air emissions and noise emanations (equipment will be 95 percent cleaner under EPA's latest emissions standards) that have been achieved from lawn and garden equipment in recent years, and the fact that managing lawn and turf areas lead to reductions in dust pollution.

"The benefits of turfgrass are numerous and alternatives are often simply not realistic (xeriscaping or vegetable gardening), and in many instances far worse (artificial turf or paved surfaces). With proper education and awareness, it is now possible to retain the benefits of lawns and turfgrass areas while minimizing or eliminating the negatives associated with water overuse and other harmful practices – leading to an experience that affords community, lifestyle and environmental benefits".

Turfgrass and more specifically, that "sea of green" is one of the best groundcovers to actually filter water and allow it to penetrate the soil and recharge the watershed. Impervious surfaces like cement cause water to run off, and in urban areas, water has to be treated by municipal wastewater facilities, or put into retention areas that are lined with . . . you guessed it, turfgrass.

Since turfgrass is a plant that covers close to 100% of the soil surface as well as the matching area in root zone, it is the ideal plant for lawns. Compared to bunch type plants or vines like the "Confederate Jasmine" suggested in Ms. Vanderkam's article, that may have a fair to good ground cover rate with a Planting Density of 1700–4800 individual plants per acre, but the nature of vines is to have large leaves to gather the sunlight and a fairly sparse plant mass on the ground. While it looks green, it has nowhere near the potential to stop soil erosion and allow water infiltration into the soil. Soil erosion is a real problem, especially on sloped areas where grass is not present. In fact, the best farming soils in the country were former grasslands. Grass actually builds organic material into the soil and creates the best soils on earth.

For Ms. Vanderkam to state that "lawns are incredibly inefficient, and not just from an environmental perspective," couldn't be farther from reality.

To somewhat paraphrase Ms. Vanderkam, if we change the public's understanding about the benefits of "suburban seas of green," we just might help save our planet.

Kirk Hunter  
Executive Director  
The Lawn Institute

\* To view the USA Today column go to: [http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2010-08-17-column17\\_ST\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/opinion/forum/2010-08-17-column17_ST_N.htm)

# TurfSide-UP

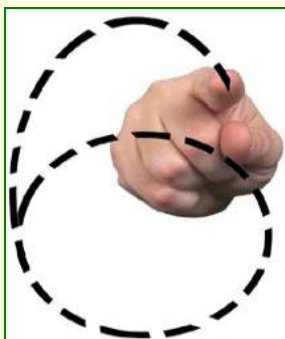
## HOW SMART IS YOUR RIGHT FOOT?

The following exercise will only take a few seconds.

While sitting at your desk, or in front of your computer, lift your right foot off the floor and make clockwise circles.



Now, while doing this, draw the number '6' in the air with your right hand.



Your foot will involuntarily and immediately, begin a counter-clockwise spin, and there's nothing you can do about it.

## The Benefits of Turfgrass Some People Just Don't Get It! Why?

Have you ever wondered why some people can't grasp the idea that natural turfgrass offers numerous benefits? It seems no matter how much information they receive they just don't get it.

To better understand how their brain works, try the simple exercise on the left. By the way, your children and grandchildren will enjoy this too!



## Searching for the Facts An Exercise in CONCENTRATION



Professor William Meyer, the director of the Turfgrass Breeding Project at the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science, has 40 years of experience with turfgrass. Thanks to researchers like Meyer and many others advances in turfgrass have excelled considerably over the last twenty years.

*Photo: by Nick Romanenko*



## A concerned adult poses a direct and unsettling question

### How long until someone dies of heatstroke on a synthetic turf field?



It's a question that has raced through the minds of many people, but because of the sensitive nature of the subject matter, it has never been presented so directly. It's also a question that community planners, athletic coaches, school districts, board members and especially parents should begin to take seriously.

Chris Hummer (pictured to the left) is Founder and President of HummerSport, LLC, publisher of Potomac Soccer Wire and numerous other soccer-focused web sites. Off the field, Hummer spends his days running his soccer company, writing about soccer and performing his duties as Assistant Director of Coaching for a youth soccer club in Virginia.

Hummer's credentials are important because the article he wrote in the August 31 issue of the Potomac Soccer Wire will trouble some people and awaken others. He has nothing to gain by addressing this issue. He has no hidden agenda and to our knowledge is not affiliated with any organization that is out to ban synthetic turf.

The following is an excerpt from his article:

#### How long until someone dies of heatstroke on a synthetic turf field?

Did you know there are studies out there recording synthetic turf field surface temperatures of 200 degrees on a day when the air temperature was 98 degrees? Did you know that synthetic turf field surfaces are hotter than black asphalt?

My feet know it. I am writing this article just two hours after playing at Wakefield Park in Fairfax County Virginia on a day with a 97 degree air temperature, wearing black shoes. The tips of my toes have heat blisters. We didn't have a thermometer, but the surface was literally too hot to touch with bare hands. It had to be north of 150 degrees. Water steamed off my shoes when I squirted them.

#### How hot is too hot, especially for kids?

Adults are adults. We can decide when it's too much (we called our game short, it was just too much. Guys were walking, and it was no longer fun.) But our kids can't decide not to play as easily. League and Tournament



administrators put them out there on days like this without thinking too much about the heat. If the air temperature was 150 degrees, would you even go outside? The waist-level temperatures on a turf field on a hot day can reach that level.

If there were a lightning storm coming, we'd pull the kids off the field for safety. If it rained too much on a grass field the night before, we won't let them play for fear of damaging the field or twisted ankles. If there's a little frost on the field in the mornings for an icebreaker tournament in March, the whole day's schedule gets backed up. But on a sunny day with no rain, 97 degree air temperatures don't seem to even enter into the minds of league, tournament, or field directors. "It's a beautiful day, just get out there and run your little super-stars!" seems to be the blissful mentality of adults who are supposed to be protecting children.

Has anyone died from heatstroke suffered on a synthetic turf field? I don't think so, at least not that I've heard. But it took a boy getting killed a few years ago in Virginia by a goal that flipped on his head during high winds to wake everyone up to the danger of non-anchored goals that had been around for 50 years. Now local municipalities are patrolling fields looking for non-anchored goals, and threatening to literally remove and destroy goals they find in violation! Is it going to take a death from heatstroke to wake up the soccer community in a similar way to the dangers of these fields?

The answer to Hummer's question isn't so much if, but when? And when such an avoidable tragedy does happen there will be those who will stand up and say, "I knew this was going to happen." Unfortunately, unlike Chris Hummer, many of them will have said or done little if anything to prevent it from happening.

To read Chris Hummer's article in its entirety visit: <http://www.potomacsoccerwire.com/news/5322/12633>

You can also reach Chris at [Editor@PotomacSoccerWire.com](mailto:Editor@PotomacSoccerWire.com).

Where in the world is  
TPI represented?  
**EVERYWHERE!**

### Ukrainsky Gazony

03027 Kiev Province,  
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Kieve Region  
UKRAINE

<http://www.ukrgazony.com/>

An on-going series featuring TPI member websites.



Ukrainian Lawns is the only Ukrainian member of Turfgrass Producers International, an association of manufacturers of finished lawns.



*"The lawn is one of the most important elements of any park. With skillful and patient care you get a wonderful grass carpet."*

*Ready rolled lawn is the only way to quickly and easily turn bare soil into a beautiful green lawn. In one day. the home, office, sports field, playground, shoulder of the road will be beautiful and well kept."*

Note: Copy reflects an effort to translate original text from Ukrainian to English. JN

**TPI Members find that using today's social media helps them reach prospects, share information, educate the public and promote their business.**



Justin Wallace, Communications Director for Sod Solutions relied on You Tube to deliver their message—LSU's Tiger Stadium has installed Celebration Bermudagrass for the 2010 football season and beyond. "Death Valley" is just the latest LSU park to add Celebration. The softball, baseball and soccer facilities already use this improved, dark green bermudagrass. Justin reports that the video received over 2000 hits in the first 5 days it was posted. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SelZamZ0oM>

West Coast Turf uses Facebook, You Tube and Twitter to deliver a wide variety of messages and timely information to their customers and to showcase projects such as Chase Field, home of the Arizona Diamondbacks at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2lZHVyLFOs>

Dr. Ali Harivandi, Turfgrass Extension Specialist and University of California Cooperative Extension Horticulture Advisor has two ninety minute videos on Turf Grass Management as part of the UC Master Gardeners program on turfgrass management. Topics include the basic grass structure, grass varieties including cool versus warm season grasses, and irrigation practices at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YHA9ZbnOets>

The Turf Company in Meridian, Idaho most recently used You Tube to promote RTF: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5NCzoihwoiM&feature=related>

Zander Sod in Kettleby, Ontario has a special promo on You Tube featuring their equipment capabilities at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDXNefGKM&feature=related>



# TPI 2010 Summer Convention & Field Days—PICTORIAL



The Sept/Oct issue of *TURF NEWS* provides extensive coverage of this year's event.



**“The Field Day at Rutgers was worth the price of admission. Meeting customers was just icing on the cake.”**

*Ed Lee*  
Summit Seed, Inc.  
Manteno, Illinois



**“THANK YOU so much for making New York as great as possible!”**

*Linda Bradley*  
Turf Mountain Sod  
Hendersonville, NC



**“I think everything was well organized and my compliments to the TPI team. Enjoyed the video sponsorship. Teamwork was good as always on the Field Day set up. Looking forward to Orlando!”**

*Christiaan Arends*  
Barenbrug USA.  
Tangent, OR

**“Best field day since going to my first one in late 80's early 90's ... the tours of the agriculture area were great!”**

*Allan Howard*  
Mid Tenn Turf, Inc.  
Manchester, TN



Photos featured in the pictorial others will be soon be posted on SmugMug: <http://www.tpiphotos.smugmug.com/>.



## MONDAY, July 26 Reid Sod Farm Tour



Over one hundred TPI members toured the Reid Sod Farm in Freehold, New Jersey which has been in the family for 150 years and is currently operated by David and Randall Reid (featured in above photo with TPI Field Day Host Chip Lain). The Reid's have four farms totaling approximately 600 acres and rent another 300 acres.





## MONDAY, July 26 Rutgers Research Tour—Adelphia Research Campus



Dr. Robert M. Goodman, Executive Dean of Agriculture and Natural Resources with Kirk Hunter greeted TPI Members upon their arrival at the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. The research facility is dedicated to turfgrass breeding, management and pest management.



TPI member, Fanus Cloete of Evergreen Turf South Africa in Eikengof, South Africa takes a moment to talk to Dr. Stacy Bonos, assistant professor in the Department of Plant Biology and Pathology of Rutgers University.

## TUESDAY, July 27 Prayer Breakfast

Retired FDNY firefighter Louie Cacchioli served as the guest speaker during the Tuesday morning's non-denominational Prayer Breakfast. Cacchioli experienced firsthand the horror of September 11, when terrorists flew jet airliners into the World Trade Center. He talked about the toll the attack took on firefighters and their families.

Although Cacchioli survived, he lost many friends within the same engine company and to this day, Cacchioli still meets with a 9/11 survivors group. He told those in attendance that it is his charge to move on and make a positive difference in life in remembrance of those who died. "Enjoy your families. Your family is number one," he said.

After the breakfast, TPI members generously donated over \$600 to the Uniformed Firefighters Association, which has established a fund to help the families of fallen firefighters with medical costs, housing and repairs, school tuitions and other costs.



## TUESDAY, July 27 New York City Tour





## TUESDAY, July 27 New York City Tour





**WEDNESDAY, July 28**  
**Information & Idea Exchange**  
**Keynote Presentation—Dr. Frank Rossi, Cornell University**



Dr. Frank Rossi, Extension Turfgrass Specialist and associate professor of Turfgrass Science, Cornell University addressed current environmental trends, noting that students are learning about climate change as early as third grade and the public is now looking more closely at how both something (like turfgrass) looks and is utilized in the environment. Even in the face of current economic pressures, environmental advocacy remains a huge issue, Rossi said.

In some respects, the economic slump is good for grass in that more people are “nesting” and taking “stay-cations.” This means they are spending more money and time on their yards and lawns. The Cornell turfgrass specialist pointed out that many times schools choose artificial turf over sod or seed because it is easier to get funding for a capital project than it is for a maintenance program (for a natural grass field). Rossi said that artificial turf offers a “teachable moment,” and that turfgrass producers have an opportunity to help their schools understand the environmental benefits of turfgrass. One source they can use, he said, is the Sports Turf Managers Association’s *Guide to Synthetic and Natural Turfgrass for Sports Fields* (available at [www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org)).

Rossi also told the audience that the turfgrass industry needs to conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) on itself. The strength is that turfgrass is natural and offers many “ecosystem services.” - As reported by Lynn Grooms, Managing Editor, TURF NEWS

**WEDNESDAY, July 28**  
**Annual Business Meeting**



TPI's Officers and Board of Trustees: Chip Lain (President) at the podium: BACK ROW: Randy Graff (Past President), Fanus Cloete (Trustee), Gary Wilber (Trustee), Duane Klundt (Trustee), Mike Selman (Trustee), Leon Dahle (Trustee). FRONT ROW: Dave Dymond (Secretary-Treasurer), Claus Zander (Vice President), Darin Habenicht (Trustee) and Toby Wagner (Trustee).



Retiring Trustee Fanus Cloete (left) receives recognition from outgoing TPI President Chip Lain.



Retiring Trustee Gary Wilber (left) receives a acknowledgement for his services to TPI.



TPI's incoming president Claus Zander expresses appreciation to outgoing President Chip Lain.

**WEDNESDAY, July 28  
Annual Business Meeting**



New Officers and Trustees: Dave Dymond (Vice President), Richard Stunkard (Trustee), Claus Zander (President), Bobby Winstead (Secretary-Treasurer), Chip Lain (Past President) and Johnny Trandem (Trustee).



TPI's Executive Director, Kirk Hunter provided a report on TPI and The Lawn Institute.

**WEDNESDAY, July 28  
Roundtable Forum**

The Round Table Forum is considered one of the greatest benefits by members. It provides the opportunity to discuss important topics, ask questions and provide or get suggestions from other turfgrass producers. This informal setting is continuously ranked high by members because of the unlimited networking opportunities it offers. Table recap summaries also provide the TPI Board with suggestions and insight into the needs of members.





### WEDNESDAY, July 28 Table Top Displays & Dinner

Attendees finished the day by visiting with exhibitors and enjoying a casual dinner. Over 40 companies were represented which provided everyone with an opportunity to ask questions, learn about new products and services and to network with fellow turfgrass producers in a comfortable and casual setting.





### THURSDAY, July 29 TPI Field Day—Pine Island Turf Nursery

Chip Lain's Pine Island Turf Nursery served as the host farm for TPI's Field Day. Over 400 people attended the event which showcased equipment demonstrations and exhibits by leading manufacturers and industry suppliers. Pine Island Turf Nursery currently farms turfgrass on approximately 850 acres and has been in the turfgrass business since 1966.



Charles Lain Sr., the founder of Pine Island Turf Nursery with his son and current owner Charles "Chip" Lain, Jr.





**THURSDAY, July 29**  
**TPI Field Day—Pine Island Turf Nursery**





**THURSDAY, July 29**  
**TPI Field Day—Pine Island Turf Nursery**





**THURSDAY, July 29**  
**TPI Field Day—Pine Island Turf Nursery**





**THURSDAY, July 29**  
**Tour DeBuck's Sod Farm**



A side tour to DeBuck's Sod Farm provided an opportunity for visitors to see the rich soil that makes the Pine Island area unique. Through an odd twist of geological fate, some of North America's most fertile soil lies an hour's drive from Manhattan in the 22 square miles of Orange County, N.Y., known as the "Black Dirt" region. In some areas the sulfur and nitrogen-rich black soil is up to 30 feet deep. Visitors at the DeBuck's farm had an opportunity to see the actual depth of the rich soil. (See above photo)



**THURSDAY, July 29**  
**Tour A. Gurda Produce Farm**



One half the onions grown in New York State come from 5500 acres of farmland in the Pine Island area thanks to the rich soil. A side tour to A. Gurda Produce Farm provided TPI members with an opportunity to see the workings of a successful family owned farm that produces 100 acres of onions and 60 plus acres of salad greens and corn.