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## UPDATE—The Path to 1,000 Members

TPI's "Path to 1,000 Members" membership drive has already generated favorable results thanks to the efforts of several TPI members.

Deserving recognition goes to: Bobby Winstead of Winstead Turf Farms, Bob Weerts of Blue Valley Sod, Ian True and Mark Henson of Trebro Manufacturing, Johnny Trandem of Ostfold Gress AS (Norway), Mike Blair of Green Velvet Sod Farms and Linda Bradley of Turf Mountain Sod. These individuals alone have provided nearly 50 new member prospects to TPI's Membership Manager Veronica Iwanski. Veronica has already had 12 of these prospects sign up to become TPI members and the others are being contacted.

It should be noted that Linda Bradley and Ian True both got four new members each to sign up.

If every TPI member made an effort to get just one new member we would substantially exceed our goal to reach 1,000 members by 2015.

### Do your part to grow your association.

Those members who encourage fellow turfgrass producers or local suppliers to join TPI not only strengthen their association, they also receive a \$50 Visa Gift Card for every new member\* they bring into TPI.

**For more information call TPI at 847-649-5555 visit [www.TurfGrassSod.org](http://www.TurfGrassSod.org).**

\*See website for official rules.



### SPECIAL EXPANDED DISTRIBUTION of November/December issue of **TURF NEWS** Equipment & Product Buyer's Guide Distributed to over 1,000 Prospective Members

To increase awareness of Turfgrass Producers International and as part of our membership drive, the Nov/Dec issue of **Turf News** is being distributed to over 1,000 turfgrass producers and suppliers worldwide who are prospective TPI members. This special issue will also include a 4-page insert promoting the many benefits that TPI membership has to offer.





This view of the National Mall, shot from the Washington Monument, shows the wear and tear on the lawn panels from the over 30 million visitors each year. Photo: National Park Service

## NATIONAL MALL FINALLY GETS A MUCH NEEDED FACELIFT



When TPI's Executive Director, Kirk Hunter traveled to Washington D.C. back in 2009 he met with representatives of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall and a representative of the National Mall Third Century Initiative to discuss the deplorable condition of the turf on the National Mall and to get an update on what could be done and what was being done to care for the number one tourist attraction in Washington D.C.

At the time Hunter took a series of photos that reflected the shocking conditions of the turfgrass panels between the Washington Monument and the U.S. Capitol.



The TPI E-Newsletter has addressed this subject numerous times, so we were especially pleased to learn that the first of three planned renovations finally began in late August and will continue through the Fall of 2016.

### A considerable challenge

The National Mall has eight center lawn panels and each panel is about 90,000 square feet. Proper repairs would require:

- Renovating the existing lawn with better soils and removing existing soils and amending them.
- Installing a reliable pop-up sprinkler irrigation system.
- The installation of cisterns (underground tanks to store up to 250,000 gallons of rain water runoff that can be used later for irrigation).
- Installation of curbs to delineate the edge of the grass panels.
- Provide a full under-drainage system designed to collect rain water to fill the cisterns.
- The installation of new turfgrass sod that meets required specifications.
- Reevaluate scheduled mall events and modify as necessary.
- Review and improve upon existing maintenance procedures.

At the present time the Trust for the National Mall only has sufficient funds to do three of the eight center grass panels and two of its cisterns . . . but it is a wonderful start to showcase one of the most heavily visited tourist sites in the nation.



PHOTOS: Kirk Hunter 2009



## TPI Member - Tuckahoe Turf Farms Helps the National Mall get a major makeover!

TPI member **Tuckahoe Turf Farms** out of Hammonton, New Jersey provided nearly 10,000 square yards (slightly over two acres) of turfgrass sod in big rolls for the first phase of the National Mall turf project. Based on the recommendations of a team of turfgrass specialists led by Dr. Peter Landshoot, Penn State professor of turfgrass science, Tuckahoe planted, harvested and delivered a specific fescue/bluegrass mix comprised of 30% Wolfpack 2 Tall fescue, 30% Firenza Tall fescue, 30% Turbo Tall fescue and 10% P-105 Kentucky Bluegrass.

It should be noted that the project included many other professionals (far too many to mention) who were involved in the design, pre-planning, developing the right soil structure, on-site inspections, irrigation, construction, installation and even propose feasible surface coverings to protect the turf during special events.

The new turfgrass was laid atop a formulated topsoil sand blend that created an ideal base to encourage turf growth. This considerable undertaking represents Phase I of three planned renovations schedule to be completed in the Fall of 2016. (Read more about Tuckahoe Turf Farms on the following page.)

### National Mall - Phase 1 renovation in 2012



Big roll sod harvesting at Tuckahoe Turf Farms.



Harvested sod on its way to the National Mall.



Irrigation pump station and the sub-drains installation.



Coarse sand base awaits 6 to 18 inches of topsoil.



Installation of turf on engineered topsoil sand blend.



Testing of irrigation system prior to sod installation.



New turfgrass enhances the Mall and showcases the Capitol.



Newly laid sod being irrigated following installation.

Photos: Trust for the National Mall

According to the *Washington Post*, the top 6 to 18 inches of soil was enhanced with a mixture of coarse sand and compost to alleviate compaction and increase water permeability.

Grass panels were raised two-inches higher than surrounding walkways.

Each panel will be edged by a granite curb-and gutter-system to channel rainfall runoff into underground concrete cisterns. Cisterns will then supply water to the new irrigation system.

**TPI Member - Tuckahoe Turf Farms**

Helps the National Mall get a major makeover!

**ABOUT TUCKAHOE TURF FARMS**

The farming operation of Tuckahoe Turf Farms includes twelve hundred acres, all family owned. Eight hundred acres are cultivated, primarily in sod. The remaining five hundred acres consist of permanently preserved watershed, wetlands, and service areas.

Tuckahoe Turf Farms is one of the largest growers of sod in the Northeast and a leader in new and innovative varieties of sod and growth technology. They also do specialty work such as, golf course construction and major off-site seeding. Distribution is throughout New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and New Jersey.

Although the farm dates back to 1931, it wasn't until 1967 when they made the transition to the production of turfgrass sod, and by 1969 the entire farm was in sod production. In 1980 the family farm was purchased by Tom and George Betts, who continue to operate it today, with their sons, John, James, Phil, and David.

The first land in Hammonton was purchased in 1980. With the availability of water and excellent soil conditions, the area was an ideal site for growing sod so they expanded into the main operations with over 700 acres of sod under cultivation.

Sod production has undergone many improvements over the years with the most beneficial being the advent of the automated sod harvester and the development of improved grass varieties. Pivot and lateral machines irrigate the vast fields with little manual labor required.

Tuckahoe Turf Farms is proud to say they feel as if they're setting an industry standard in top quality sod and passing that standard to the third generation. They plan to continue to provide high quality sod and exceptional service into the next millennium.

**Tuckahoe Turf Farms has been a proud member of Turfgrass Producers International since 1973.**

**TurfSide-UP****HIDE and SEEK**  
**Lawncare & Landscaping**

Tamaqua Lawncare & Landscaping professes they are professionals when it comes to providing outstanding lawn and landscaping services to their customers. That may be true, but their recent effort to promote their business wasn't generating any new business. To find out what was wrong they hired a marketing guru to take a look at their current campaign. He offered these comments:

1. Nothing personal, but I've seen better signage at the local high school for an annual car wash fundraising campaign.
2. Do you happen to own a lawn mower or maybe a weed-whacker?
3. Maybe it's just me, but is there any chance you can find a location with even higher grass so people can't see your signs at all?
4. You might consider changing the name of your company to "Hide & Seek Lawncare & Landscaping".



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

TPI'S MIDWINTER CONFERENCE  
IN SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS  
FEBRUARY 11-15, 2013

MARRIOTT SAN ANTONIO  
RIVERCENTER

## Early Bird Registration Adds Up To BIG SAVINGS!

If you take advantage of TPI's **Early Bird Registration** (which ends December 10, 2012) your savings will be \$150 per person compared to Standard Pricing at the Midwinter Conference in San Antonio. That's a considerable savings!

### Why does TPI offer special pricing for Early Bird Registration?

**Early Bird Registration** is intended to provide members with affordable pricing, considerable savings and encourage early sign-ups, but it also makes it easier to project the anticipated number of attendees in pre-conference and general conference activities. The ability to pre-plan and coordinate based on realistic numbers better positions TPI to negotiate prices with the host hotel and other on-site and off-site vendors and service companies, as a result, TPI can pass the savings on to its members,

**Enjoy BIG SAVINGS—Take advantage of  
Early Bird Registration Pricing today!**

# SAVE \$150

per person

Click the image below to take advantage of  
**Early Bird Registration Pricing**





## Department of Labor Announces Electronic Filing For H-2A Foreign Labor Certification Applications

**Target Release Date:  
December 10, 2012**

### H-2A Electronic Filing System

As a component of the Department of Labor's E-Government initiative, the Employment and Training Administration's Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) is developing a new web-based tool that will re-engineer the processing of H-2A applications filed by U.S. farmers, ranchers, and associations of agricultural producers.

The release of the new H-2A Program Module will be integrated into the OFLC's existing iCERT Visa Portal System ([icert.doleta.gov](http://icert.doleta.gov)), which also supports the filing and processing of more than 450,000 employer H-1B applications and requests for prevailing wage determinations annually.

The Department believes this new electronic filing capability will enhance the accessibility and quality of visa program services, reduce the data collection and reporting burden on small employers, facilitate more streamlined business processes, and establish a greater level of transparency in the OFLC's decision making.

**Target Release Date: December 10, 2012**

### Key Design Features:

- **Online Account Management:** Agricultural associations, employers, or authorized attorneys/agents can establish and maintain a customized iCERT account, profile information, and sub-account users; manage client or association membership lists; prepare, submit and track H-2A applications; and reuse H-2A applications from previous seasons to reduce data entry time.

- **Automated Data Quality and Integrity Checks:** Strengthens data quality by providing real-time form validation (e-checks) to warn customers of mandatory or missing entries on the ETA Form 9142 that, when not completed, may result in application processing delays. Customers will receive immediate warnings during the data entry and again in summary form at the final pre-submission stage of the process.
- **Elimination of Paper-based Submissions:** Significantly reduces administrative time and costs by allowing customers to upload supporting documentation (e.g., ETA Form 790, signed and dated Appendix A.2, FLC registration, surety bond) as part of the ETA Form 9142 submission process in either Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF, or text file formats for more efficient storage and retrieval by the Chicago NPC in processing the application.
- **E-mail Customer Notifications and Correspondence:** Improves transparency of OFLC decisions by providing employer customers with e-mail notifications and other official correspondence (e.g., Notice of Deficiency or Acceptance) during key points of the business process and quick access to check the status of pending applications.

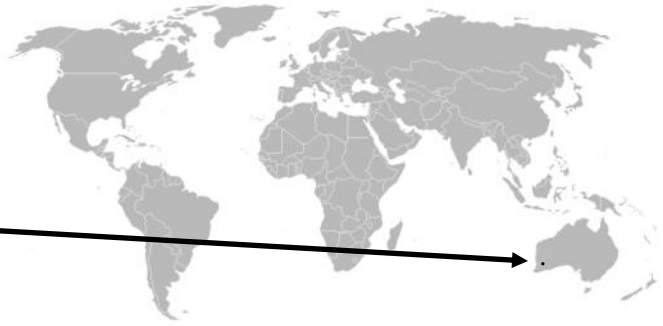
The H-2A program establishes a means for U.S. employers to hire foreign workers on a temporary basis when qualified U.S. workers are not available, and the employment of those foreign workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of U.S. workers. More information on these programs is available at: <http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov>.

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

An on-going series featuring photos and copy from TPI member websites.

### Greenfields Turf Farm & Bullsbrook Turf Wannaroo, Perth, Western Australia

<http://www.greenbull.com.au/>



Our fleet of trucks provide quick and efficient deliveries.



Top quality turf from our field to your location.

## Welcome to Greenfields Turf

Greenfields and Bullsbrook Turf are a family owned and operated business. John & Jenny Maas with their son Nathan have been producing top quality turf for over 30 years.

## Our Products

Between the two farms, four varieties of top quality weed free lawn are produced. These being Palmetto Buffalo PBR (Plant Breeders Rights), Empire Zoysia PBR, Village Green PBR (the only PBR Kikuyu in the world and is a sterile male variety which produces a very short white flower in comparison to the old style which produces a 2cm long white flower), and Wintergreen.

## Turf Delivery

We have a modest fleet of trucks to provide quick and efficient morning deliveries to all metropolitan areas. In addition, we can supply and deliver to regional areas. Our minimum quantity for delivery is 50 sqm, pickups from the farms are always available. No quantity is too small or too large.

If you'd like any more information about our company or our range of turf products, please contact us.



Palmetto Buffalo Grass is a tough, soft leaf Buffalo, that grows Australia wide. This turf provides a lawn grass that has excellent winter colour, and can generally out compete weeds when established. Palmetto Buffalo Grass generally requires less watering and less mowing than most other turf varieties. Available in Instant Turf rolls or slabs, and in Viro-Cell Lawn for patch up.

A proud Member of  
Turfgrass Producers International  
since 2004



# Don't Let the Interstate Bypass Your Business



There was a time, only a few generations ago, when families drove across the U.S. and had an opportunity to visit small towns and businesses along the nation's back roads and rural highways. When the U.S. interstate highway system was finished many rural communities and small towns were bypassed. Their world changed overnight. Eventually customers went elsewhere, people moved, businesses closed, and many small communities became mere shadows of what they once were. A similar story is playing itself out today, but it has more to do with the "information highway" rather than an interstate highway. The question is . . . **are you letting today's information highway bypass your business?**

Many TPI members are starting to use the internet to market their products, build awareness and deliver worthwhile information to prospective customers. A growing number of members are also using social media, such as Facebook, to showcase their business and provide valuable news and information to customers and prospects.

For those of you who have put off exploring the benefits of having a website or a business Facebook page, now's the time to consider what you're missing, and more important, who might be missing you.

The means to market goods and services continues to change at a very rapid pace. Today's consumers are connected in ways that are far different than their parents. How you respond and adapt to these changes can have a dramatic impact on the future of your business.

A Kantar Media company *Online Shopper Intelligence Study* in 2010, revealed that 83 percent of U.S. consumers were shopping online weekly. It also suggested that consumers were seeking retailers on Facebook and Twitter in growing numbers, twice as many people as reported in 2009. Consumers aren't just buying widgets, they are also using the internet to research a wide variety of products, services and "how to" information. A similar report released last year, "*Understanding How U.S. Online Shoppers are Reshaping the Retail Experience*," released by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, confirmed that 83% of U.S. consumers go online to research just about anything and everything before buying. An Ofcom report out of the UK in 2011 reported that eight in ten UK internet users (80 percent) said they had ordered goods or services online in 2010, higher than any other European country. UK internet users were also more likely to visit retail websites online than other countries, with nine in ten (90 percent) claiming they would do so in 2011.

Consumers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and companies (including turfgrass producers) need to better align their business operating models with today's sophisticated consumers.



The TPI website, our Facebook page and the use of Constant Contact to deliver this monthly TPI E-Newsletter and Business Management newsletter all provide your association with a cost effective means to reach out to a broad audience, share timely information, and highlight stories and events that are informative, educational and worthwhile. A growing number of TPI members worldwide now have company websites and we randomly feature one each month in the TPI E-Newsletter under "*Where in the World is TPI Represented? EVERYWHERE!*"

In the September/October 2012 issue of *Turf News*, Helen Albrightson of NG Turf in Whitesburg, Georgia offered a step by step introduction for those members who have an interest in setting up a Facebook page. Take a moment to read it. Using the TPI website you can find the TPI logo, articles, photos and other information to embellish your website or brighten your Facebook page. Take advantage of these resources that are available to all TPI members.

**Don't let the information highway bypass your business . . . embrace it!**





## SPORTS TURF ADVANTAGE

Division of Plant Sciences—Turfgrass Research Center  
College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources  
University of Missouri

# Sports Turf Industry Fact Sheet

The Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Missouri released some interesting statistics regarding the U.S. Sports Turf Industry based on a survey that was conducted within the Sports Turf Managers Association.

### Overview

- The annual purchases of sports turf products and services is over \$1.29 billion on over 2.8 million acres. That's approximately \$457 per acre. These figures do not include salaries.
- Parks and recreation makes up \$480 million in annual purchases while schools are at \$685 million, college/universities \$71 million, and professional facilities spend approximately \$52 million.
- Professional sports facilities average approximately 15 acres spending \$4,333 per acre, colleges/universities spend \$1,075 per acre on an average of 30 acres, schools spend \$658 per acre on an average of 65 acres, and parks spend an average of \$284 per acre over 130 acres.
- Average annual spending on equipment and supplies at colleges/universities is \$32,300, while parks spend \$38,850. Schools spend \$42,750 and professional facilities spend \$65,000.
- It is estimated that there are approximately 16,000 schools, 2,200 colleges/universities, 13,000 parks, and 800 professional facilities.

### U.S. Sports Turf Managers

- The average sports turf manager has worked in the industry for 13 years.
- Typical manager has been in his/her current position 7.5 years, while 38% had more than 10 years tenure in their position.
- Twenty percent of managers have a single field to maintain.
- Forty-two percent of managers maintain 5 to 10 fields.
- Two in three sports turf managers have a four-year college degree or an advanced degree.
- The average crew has 16 full-time and five part-time.
- Seasonal staff average is approximately nine.

### Root Zones

- Cool-season bluegrass fields: 81% native soil, 19% sand based.
- Warm-season bermudagrass fields: 82% native soil, 18% sand based.

- Sports managers expressed a 3 to 1 preference for sand-based fields. Major reasons: (1) Greater resistance to compaction and (2) Better playability under wet conditions.
- Greater soil strength was cited as the most important advantage of native soil fields.
- Loss of nutrients to leaching was the major problem encountered with sand-based fields.

### Mowing

- Frequent mowing is essential for healthy, dense turf because it reduces scalping, disease incidence, the need for sweeping and it improves field appearance.
- Of those surveyed, all mow more than once a week - 2 times (21%), 3 times (30%), 4 times (9%), and daily (40%).

### Soil Testing

- Annually (42%), 2 times annually (22%), 6 times annually (10%), 12 times annually (2%), bi-annually (22%), tri-annually (2%).
- More frequent soil testing was reported by managers who have sand-based fields.
- The use of tissue testing is a standard practice by 44% of survey respondents.

### Fertilizers

- All managers use more than one type of nitrogen fertilizers (soluble, slow-release, specialty, and natural organics).
- Sulfur-coated urea (SCU) was the most widely used slow release source due to acceptable performance and lower cost per unit.

### Irrigation

- Eighty percent of sports fields have pop-up sprinklers, 11% have water cannons, 7% have quick coupler, and 2% have travel or tow impact sprinklers.

**Interested in seeing the entire survey?  
Go to the following link:**

<http://turf.missouri.edu/stat/reports/pdf/industry.pdf>

Thank you to Brad Fresenburg, Assistant Extension Professor, Division of Plant Sciences, University of Missouri for permission to reprint.



## Golf Industry Commits to Sustainability Measures



The International Golf Federation, which includes member organizations representing more than 150 countries, agreed to a policy that will make sustainability a core priority within the sport through a number of initiatives aimed at conserving water, reducing impact on land and increasing awareness.

The IGF outlined eight sustainability measures, including a commitment to expand awareness among golfers and golf facilities; help golf facilities to incorporate sustainable principles and practices into daily business decisions; conduct high profile golf events in an environmentally responsible manner; and embrace measurement, target setting, transparency and verification. The IGF also said it would continue to work to raise the profile of the sport's contribution to environmental issues and encourage golfers to embrace environmentally sound practice in course preparation.

Implementing sustainable best practices will enhance the sport's profile and improve its financial performance; provide the golfer with quality playing surfaces; and offer the community employment, recreational green space and educational opportunities, the IGF said.



### USGA Announces Support of International Sustainability Efforts

The United States Golf Association announced its official support of the IGF's policy statement and renewed its commitment to a number of its own initiatives, including funding turfgrass research and addressing water conservation issues.

"Sustainable management practices are critically important to the future of the game and need to be encouraged throughout the world," said USGA President Glen D. Nager. "Here in the United States, sustainability principles have been embraced by the golf community for some time, but we can still do even more, especially in promoting solutions-based planning and management strategies.

"Environmental and economic sustainability are central to the USGA's mission and are primary components of our long-term commitment to the game," Nager continued. "We have invested significant time and



Since 1920, the USGA has been a leader in advocating responsible, sustainable practices that help thousands of golf courses around the country.

PHOTO: USGA/John Mummert

resources over many years to ensure that we are basing decisions and recommendations on sound scientific and economic principles that will foster the future health of the game."

"The future ramifications of a more proactive approach to sustainability will be far-reaching," said USGA Executive Director Mike Davis. "From the golf course operator who can more effectively allocate his maintenance budget, to the player who benefits from firm course conditions, every part of the game can benefit from this global industry-wide commitment."

The USGA will fund \$2 million in grants in 2012 and 2013 to universities across the country to support turfgrass research. The research seeks to develop and improve grasses and playing surfaces that are more resistant to disease and require less water.

The USGA also has committed staff and resources to provide as many as 3,000 Turf Advisory Service visits to golf courses nationwide in 2012 and 2013. One of 17 USGA agronomists provide recommendations during each site visit to help course officials and superintendents improve maintenance practices and manage costs more effectively.

The association is holding a water summit in November to identify and discuss the most challenging issues surrounding golf's use of water, as well as promoting best management practices and policies that will advance the long-term sustainability of the game.

## A Collective Voice—TPI and our Oregon members set the record straight!



***“I’m impressed with how quickly the turf growers are responding. Wish we had more of that kind of passionate response for all aspects of the nursery industry when it’s needed.”*** - Ann Murphy, Director of Marketing, Oregon Association of Nurseries

When Ann Murphy, Director of Marketing for the Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN) wrote an article titled “Plants Not Lawns” in the October 2, 2012 issue of “Random Acts of Gardening” the response from Oregon turfgrass producers and TPI was immediate. TPI members **Anne-Marie Tribbett**, Vice-President of JB Instant Lawn, Inc. in Silverton, OR and **Tom**

**DeArmond** of Oregon Turf & Tree Farms drafted letters expressing their displeasure and concerns. Anne-Marie also contacted other turfgrass producers in the area (many of whom are also members of OAN). She also contacted TPI requesting a possible rebuttal to the article in question which is featured below.



### PLANTS NOT LAWNS

By: Ann Murphy - Director of Marketing—Oregon Association of Nurseries

Contrary to popular food growing discourse, I’d like to see front lawns replaced with beautiful plants, or replaced with a combination of plants and hardscapes (which, by the way, includes good, crunchy-sounding, permeable gravel). Of course, ornamentals can always be mixed with beautiful edible plants—blueberries, chard, kale, or rhubarb—for the best of both worlds.

I was walking the neighborhood with Barney, my adorable Golden Retriever, when I realized that there were quite a few front gardens where no lawn was visible. Design styles differ significantly though quite a few had an Asian aesthetic. The no-lawn approach works especially well on sloped lots. I hope you enjoy a few of the photos of no-lawn front gardens I’ve collected over the years of touring gardens.

Approximately 50,000 square miles in the US is planted in lawn (this includes golf courses). That’s a little bigger than Mississippi, a little smaller than Louisiana, and about half the size of Oregon. I was expecting it to be much more than that, actually. To put it in perspective, it’s more than

the US has planted in corn or wheat. America’s obsession with perfect lawns can be traced back to the rise of the suburbs in the 1950s when people took great pride in the perfection of the green expanse. I’d like to suggest that people can take great pride in the perfection of lovely plant combinations. I hope one day to replace my paltry, sparse front lawn with a no lawn design that invites neighbors to stop a visit, gives Barney something soft to roll around on and allows me to rake fall leaves from the large silver maple that dominates the space.

Click [here](#) to read an insightful—and a bit tongue-in-cheek—article, written in 1998 but which is still relevant today, on the physical and emotional toll of the lawn cult. The article is by Robert Fulford, a Toronto author, journalist, broadcaster, and editor.

###

**TPI’s rebuttal and additional comments appears on the following pages.**

## TPI REBUTTAL — “Plants Not Lawns”

A Collective Voice (Cont'd)

Email sent to: Jeff Stone, Executive Director, CEO—Oregon Association of Nurseries (OAN)

The attached rebuttal is in response to Ann Murphy's recent article titled, “*Plants Not Lawns*”. Be advised that we wanted to respond in both a respectful and professional manner to Ann's comments, while at the same time, expressing our concern.

Turfgrass Producers International has seven major turfgrass producers serving the state of Oregon as well as nine major

turfgrass seed companies that serve producers worldwide. While we well appreciate Ann's intentions, we felt compelled to give a voice, not only to our members, but to all parties associated with the green industry.

It is our hope that our comments are taken as intended and they are considered when lawns are addressed in the future by the OAN. - Jim Novak

In the October 2, 2012 issue of *Random Acts of Gardening*, Ann Murphy, Oregon Association of Nursery's Director of Marketing authored an article titled “*Plants Not Lawns*” and stated a few things that were somewhat troubling. For starters, the title of the article is somewhat misleading as lawns are plants, so to use “*Plants not Lawns*” as the title of the article is a bit inaccurate.

Ann goes on to suggest that she would like to see “*front lawns replaced with beautiful plants, or replaced with a combination of plants and hardscapes (which, by the way, includes good, crunchy-sounding, permeable gravel).*” While we certainly don't take issue with a combination of plants, I'm not quite sure that permeable gravel falls into the plant category. She also states that she would like to give her dog Barney “*something soft to roll around on.*” I'm not quite sure what that “*something soft*” might be if grass is removed, unless of course they have created a soft grade of permeable gravel.

I certainly don't take issue with the idea of creating a beautiful garden, be it flowering plants, assorted trees and shrubs, select vegetables, etc., but to totally dismiss the idea of having a lawn is troubling. Beautiful landscaping can incorporate numerous plants including turfgrass.

The environmental benefits of natural turfgrass are considerable and should be taken into account when considering any landscaping endeavor and to suggest otherwise is most unfortunate.

- Natural turfgrass lawn areas in the United States store up to 37 billion tons of carbon that would otherwise be in the atmosphere and contribute to global warming. Turfgrass actually serves as a sink for storing carbon dioxide in the soil. Nearly a ton of carbon, per acre, per year, is stored in the soil of fairways and greens on golf courses.
- Turfgrass helps prevent air pollution and it has been estimated that in the United States alone, turfgrass traps approximately 12 million tons of the dust and dirt that's released into the atmosphere every year.
- Turfgrass promotes soil restoration through organic matter additions derived from the turnover of roots and other plant tissues. Grass roots are continually developing, dying off and decomposing adding organic materials and nutrients to the soil. During this process organic matter keeps soil microbes active and improves the soil's chemical and physical properties.
- Dr. James Beard, Professor Emeritus of Texas A&M University, a leading authority of turfgrass, has stated that,

“turfgrasses are relatively inexpensive, durable groundcovers that protect our valuable, nonrenewable soil resource from water and wind erosion.”

- Turfgrass has the ability to substantially reduce storm water runoff as noted by Dr. John Stier, currently the Assistant Dean for the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (CASNR) at the University of Tennessee reported that preliminary results indicate that while the roots of turfgrasses aren't as deep as prairie plants and other native species, turfgrass has a higher plant density which affects infiltration, decreases water runoff and increases water percolation.
- Turfgrass helps ground water recharge. Not only does it increase water infiltration to help protect surface water quality; it also helps recharge ground-water aquifers. The dense network of turfgrass roots help to trap nutrients and remove pollutants from water moving through the soil. This filtering effect through the turfgrass root zone improves water quality.
- Natural turfgrass lawn areas produce a considerable amount of oxygen. It is estimated that as little as 55 square feet of turfgrass provides enough oxygen for one person for an entire day.
- Turfgrass lawns cool our atmosphere and in turn, reduce home energy costs. It's estimated that the front lawn on a block of eight average houses has the cooling effect of about 70 tons of air conditioning. Turfgrass not only cools, it also dissipates heat. Dr. James Beard reports that urban areas tend to be 10 to 12 degrees warmer than adjacent rural areas.
- Closely mowed residential lawns reduce the number of nuisance pests such as snakes, rodents, mosquitoes, ticks and chiggers. Turfgrass also minimizes allergy-related pollens that can cause human discomfort and potentially serious health concerns to some individuals.

The intent of this rebuttal is not to dismiss Ann's point of view, but rather broaden her perception of the role turfgrass plays when it comes to our environment. Lawns provide immeasurable benefits and to suggest otherwise by omission is a disservice and misleading.

Jim Novak  
Public Relations Manager  
Turfgrass Producers International

A Collective Voice (Cont'd)

## RESPONSES to TPI's REBUTTAL

**"I appreciate this. I will ask Ann Murphy to respond. I hear your views clearly."**

Jeff Stone  
Executive Director/CEO  
Oregon Association of Nurseries

**"Thank you for the rebuttal. Tom DeArmond (Oregon Turf & Tree Farms) recommended the TurfGrassSod.org website to me as a resource and Anne-Marie Tribbett (JB Instant Lawn) pointed out that turf grass is a plant and is classified as a nursery crop. I have to admit, I haven't viewed grass/turf as an ornamental plant per se. Before seeing your rebuttal, I posted this on the blog this morning:**

*'In my opinion, having a variety of landscape styles in a neighborhood enriches our environment, a sense of community and allows a garden to reflect personal style. There's no question that a beautiful lawn has great eye appeal—my front lawn does not qualify because of the challenges posed by my 50+ year old silver maple. I use grass to set off the borders in my back garden and to give Barney, my adorable golden retriever, a place to play.'*

**"Perhaps we can have a conversation in the coming months about the benefits of turfgrass such as cooling, pollution control, soil erosion reduction, and filtering our water supply.**

**"We'll be posting your rebuttal and I'll be using information on the TurfGrassSod.org site (which is also in your response) in an upcoming blog.**

**I appreciate you, Tom and Anne-Marie broadening my perspective and always like to learn more about this industry that I'm so passionate about."**

Ann Murphy  
Director of Marketing  
Oregon Association of Nurseries

Ann Murphy posted a follow-up article on the OAN website:

**"Turfgrasses are Plants Too!"**  
**[CLICK HERE](http://www.randomgardening.blogspot.com/2012/10/turfgrasses-are-plants-too.html)**

<http://www.randomgardening.blogspot.com/2012/10/turfgrasses-are-plants-too.html>

**"Just wanted to touch base to express my sincere appreciation for your efforts on our behalf out here in Oregon on this current blog issue. You do a phenomenal job for all of us in TPI and I have always appreciated all your writing over the years! Thanks again!"**

Zach Kuenzi  
Kuenzi Turf & Nursery  
Salem, OR

**"I think your rebuttal is very well done and I thank you for the time taken to write it and offering your support in this way to your loyal turf growers in Oregon! We may have just made a very strong ally for our industry!**

**Thanks again for your time and help."**

Anne-Marie Tribbett  
Vice-President  
JB Instant Lawn, Inc.

### ADDITIONAL COMMENT:

The TPI office is inundated every day with articles from assorted sources, especially blogs and do it yourself sites, that dismiss lawns based on misinformation. It is difficult to respond to all such articles because of the sheer volume, and often times a generic response doesn't have the desired personalization that would generate a response from an author or editor.

We elected to respond to this article for two reasons—First, it was presented by a reliable and respected source, the Oregon Association of Nurseries; secondly, the leadership demonstrated by Anne-Marie Tribbett in wanting to address this issue and get fellow turfgrass producers throughout Oregon involved called for TPI to draft a polite and courteous rebuttal to the OAN.

We suspect that many TPI members don't know that the TPI staff addresses such issues on a regular basis although we seldom publicize such efforts. Perhaps we are at fault for not tooting our own horn. If anything, this exchange serves to illustrate one of those intangible benefits TPI often does behind the scenes to support our members and the industry. - Jim Novak



## SHOW & TELL

### Bladerunner Farms/The Turfgrass Group 2nd Invitational Zoysiagrass Field Day September 25—26

David Doguet is a widely respected turfgrass breeder and his enthusiasm when it comes to talking about Zoysiagrass is evident. Doguet believes Zoysia is the grass of the future and goes so far as to state that, "Zoysiagrass offers the best quality turf when you take away all the inputs." He adds, "Given the widespread concerns about water use, fertilizer use, and chemical use, this is the right—the only—direction we should be headed in."



Doguet and The Turfgrass Group have been working with Zoysiagrasses for decades and they have been committed to selecting the best for release for further evaluation.

During their 2nd Invitational Zoysiagrass Field Day those in attendance had an opportunity to see first-hand why Doguet is so enthusiastic. The event took place at Doguet's Bladerunner Farms Zoysiagrass Breeding facility, the largest private breeding program in the world, located in Poteet, Texas.

Attendees were presented with both the genesis of the Bladerunner program and their current selection, evaluation and release protocols. Doguet was very specific as to those characteristics that are most important to the turf producer, as well as those that will meet the demands of the end-user. Field Day activities included a tour of their research and production facility, and presentations of their current produced cultivars, including Zeon, JaMur, Y-2, and Carrizo Zoysia, as well as their newest release LIF Zoysia, a dwarf-type variety.

The program also included presentations by Dr. Milt Engleke, Zoysiagrass Breeder with Texas A&M retired, Dr. Brian Schwartz, Zoysiagrass Breeder with the University of Georgia, Aaron McWhorter, President of The Turfgrass Group and North Georgia Turf, Ken Mangum, Director of Golf Course Operations Atlanta Athletic Club, and Scott Hamilton, Golf Course Superintendent Escondido Golf Club.

This year's event was preceded with a dove shoot and some fishing followed by a fish fry and fellowship. Over 50 people attended the event including turfgrass producers and turfgrass research scientists.



David Doguet explains the selection and evaluation process of two year old Zoysiagrass plots that were grown from a single 'cup cut'.



Doguet addresses 'golf course zoysia greens material' plots. Ten week old "dwarf type" Zoysiagrass selections grown from single sprigs, being evaluated for leaf texture and rate of spread.



LIF Zoysia plot with Eco Buffalograss, a male flowering Buffalograss in the foreground.