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## TPI's Midwinter Conference is a Texas-Size Success!

TPI's Midwinter Conference in beautiful San Antonio, Texas drew more than 350 attendees representing more than 100 turfgrass producing farms from around the globe. Among the countries represented were Australia, Canada, England, Mexico, Norway, Scotland, South Africa and the United States.

**MONDAY—February 11, 2013**

The week began with pre-conference **Working Groups** and **Committee Meetings** followed by an **Early Bird Reception**.

**TUESDAY—February 12, 2013**

Tuesday's optional activities included **The Lawn Institute Memorial Golf Tournament** at the beautiful private Briggs Ranch Golf Club recognized as one of the best golf courses in the country. Non-golfers had an opportunity to enjoy a **San Antonio Historical Tour** that included a cruise on San Antonio's famous Riverwalk, and visits to various historic sites in and around San Antonio including a visit to San Fernando Cathedral founded in 1731, the historic Alamo, a visit to the historic Menger Hotel and a trip to El Mercado Market.

In the late afternoon there was a **Next Generation Leaders Meeting** emceed by David Bradley of Turf Mountain Sod of Hendersonville, North Carolina. It provided an informal setting for next generation turfgrass producers to get acquainted with their peers and meet with and talk to experienced turfgrass producers and suppliers. All TPI Members then got together for a **Welcome Reception**.



TPI members had an opportunity to visit the Alamo.



A scenic ride along San Antonio's beautiful Riverwalk.

Cont'd on next page

## Next Generation Leaders Meeting



## Welcome Reception



Visit our **FACEBOOK** page at <https://www.facebook.com/TurfgrassProducersInternational> to see additional photos. Plus, look for more coverage of TPI's Midwinter Conference in the March/April issue of **Turf News**.





WEDNESDAY —February 13, 2013

Activities for the day included the **Women's Forum** and a **Pre-Conference Seminar** presented by Wayne Rivers, President of The Family Business Institute. River's presentation which was titled, "The Business Side of Succession Planning: The Eight Building Blocks for Creating a Sustainable Closely Held Business". The seminar provided those in attendance with insight into issues of importance for operating their business including things to consider that help to formulate a common vision, better self-management, maximizing your time, leadership development, managing people, marketing & sales management considerations, operations and administrative skills, business family management techniques along with strategic planning.

The always popular **Round Table Forum** gave members an opportunity to engage with their peers and discuss topics of interest and concern.

The **First Timers Meet & Greet** gave new TPI members an opportunity to meet with board trustees and get acquainted with one another; afterwards an **Exhibits with Dinner** provided a casual environment for all in attendance to meet with over 40 leading manufacturers and suppliers.

## Exhibits with Dinner



## Roundtable Forum



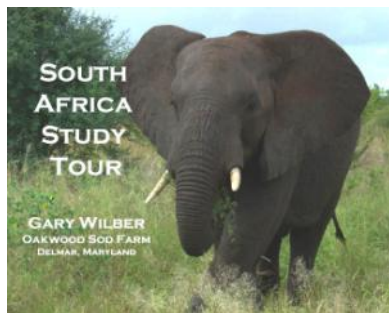
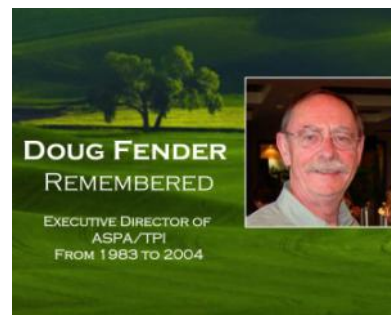
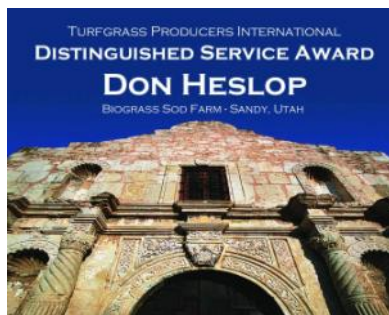
THURSDAY —February 14, 2013

**Education Session #1** started off the morning with a variety of informative presentations followed by concurrent breakout sessions.

After welcoming attendees, TPI President, **Bobby Winstead** announced that **Don Heslop** of Biograss Sod Farm in Sandy, Utah was the proud recipient of TPI's Distinguished Service Award. Don (only the 6th person to receive this prestigious award) was recognized for his commitment and years of dedication in helping to make TPI's Field Days a success.

TPI's Executive Director **Kirk Hunter** took a moment to remember **Doug Fender** who served as ASPA/TPI's Executive Director for over 20 years and passed away in December. **Gary Wilbur** of Oakwood Sod Farm in Delmar, Maryland provided a brief recap of TPI's recent South Africa Study Tour. Board Trustees, **Linda Bradley** of Turf Mountain Sod and **Ian True** of Trebro Manufacturing both gave interesting Show & Tell presentations. Linda presented a video showcasing Turf Mountain Sod's operation and Ian provided an in depth history of how turfgrass harvesting has evolved over the last six decades.

**Dr. Katarina Jordan**, University of Guelph, addressed recent research pertaining to commercial sod production and its impact on soil.



## TPI Distinguished Service Award presented to Don Heslop

*"Anyone who has ever hosted a TPI Field Day knows the enormous responsibilities that come with that task, and let's not lose sight of the fact that this commitment and dedication is a volunteered service. This year's recipient has been involved in helping to coordinate TPI Field Days since 2003. He's been described as warm, dedicated, loyal, good natured and someone who just finds out what needs to be done and gets it done."*

- TPI President, **Bobby Winstead**, Winstead Turf Farms

*"Don is smart, consistent, kind, and compassionate. He is trustworthy and personifies the word integrity. His life at work is a simple reflection of his personal life. He is loved and admired by all who know him!"* - **Warren Bell**, Biograss Sod Farm

*"Don and I have worked these shows together for around ten years, and we both know there are certain things that need to be done to put together a Field Day that reflects well on TPI and serves the exhibitors, members and the host farm. We don't talk about it much . . . we just do it. When we started working together for TPI, we instantly became friends, we're more like a team. I'm am extremely honored and proud to call him my friend, he is so deserving of this recognition."* - **Mike Blair**, Green Velvet Sod Farm



A pleasantly surprised **Don Heslop** of Biograss Turf Farm in Sandy, Utah accepts TPI's Distinguished Service Award from TPI president, **Bobby Winstead**.

PHOTO: Lynn Grooms



## Concurrent Breakout Sessions

### The Greatest Challenges Facing the Turf Industry

#### Panelists:

**Warren Bell** – Biograss Sod Farm, Sandy, Utah, USA

**Russ Nicholson**, CPA, CCA – Pennington Seed, Madison, Georgia, USA

**Hugh Dampney** – ECO Turf, Parley Court Farm, Christchurch, ENGLAND

This diversified panel addressed a variety of issues of importance to turfgrass producers including, but not limited to water, artificial turf, pricing and looked to the future.

### Profitability & Efficiency in Your Business

#### Panelists:

**Greg Skotnicki** – Manderley Turf Products, Inc., Nepean, Ontario, CANADA

**Peter Rauwerda** – Greenhorizons Sod Farms, Mount Hope, Ontario, CANADA

Greg and Peter provided insight into what they have done to reduce and/or control costs, better manage their operations, increase operating efficiencies and generate greater profitability. Greg provided a look at the key changes that brought Manderley Turf from bankruptcy to one of Canada's most profitable sod companies in five years. Peter demonstrated how he uses an integrated computerized system to take and dispatch hundreds of orders a day to maximize customer service through trucking efficiencies.

### Internet Marketing for Small & Medium Size Businesses

Speaker: **Lee Gientke** – Founder & Managing Partner, Webmix Marketing, Salt Lake City, Utah USA

Lee provided a step-by-step online marketing roadmap and explained how online marketing can pay for itself if you focus on tried and true methods that heighten exposure and generate leads.

**The Greatest Challenges Facing the Turf Industry**

MODERATOR: Duane Klundt

 **Warren Bell**  
Biograss Sod Farm, Sandy Utah, USA

 **Russ Nicholson**  
Pennington Seed, Madison, Georgia, USA

 **Hugh Dampney**  
ECO Turf, Parley Court Farm, Christchurch, ENGLAND

**Profitability & Efficiency in Your Business**

MODERATOR: Bob Veeerts

 **Greg Skotnicki**  
Manderley Turf Products - Nepean, Ontario, CANADA  
The Manderley Turnaround - Applying new thinking to an old business

 **Peter Rauwerda**  
Greenhorizons Sod Farms - Mount Hope, Ontario, CANADA  
How to put reliable systems into place to handle sod orders and follow them to harvest, delivery and payment.

**Internet Marketing for Small & Medium Size Businesses**

 **Lee Gientke**  
Founder & Managing Partner  
Webmix Marketing  
Salt Lake City, Utah USA

## The Lawn Institute Banquet & Fundraiser

Following the General Session attendees enjoyed **Exhibits with Lunch** and in the evening members had the option of attending **The Lawn Institute Banquet & Fundraiser** at the scenic Knibee Ranch which proved to be a fun evening for everyone. The banquet had it all — great food, wonderful entertainment, exciting armadillo races and a chance to have photos taken on a Texas Longhorn Steer.

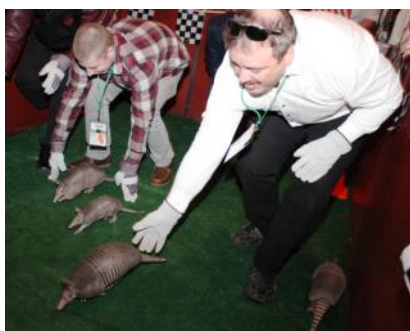


## The Lawn Institute Banquet & Fundraiser

### Armadillo Races



The Lawn Institute raised over \$2600 by hosting some exciting armadillo races throughout the evening. TPI's executive director, **Kirk Hunter** (above) poses with his Texas-sized entry prior to a race. The winner of the event was **Jason Pooler** of Tri-Turf Sod Farms of Paris, Tennessee.



**Jason Pooler** (in the white shirt) is seen pushing his armadillo to victory. We should mention that gently pushing your armadillo is allowed by all participants. So what did Jason win for this efforts, what was the grand prize?, how about a one-of-a-kind cowboy hat with a stuffed toy armadillo on the rim!

### Music & Dancing



Country and western music added to the evening's festivities which encouraged couples like **Tom and Joanna Crespín** of Bethel Farms, Arcadia, Florida to take to the dance floor.

Above photos: Lynn Grooms

### Texas Longhorn Photos



**Chip and Shari Lain** of Pine Island Turf Nursery, Pine Island, New York.



**John and Betty Addink** of A-G Sod Farms, Riverside, California.



**Steve and Jeannine Chont** of Waltz Green Acres Sod Farm in New Boston, Michigan.

Above photos: Daniel Morris

To get your picture from The Lawn Institute Banquet and Fundraiser go to:  
<http://tpiphotos.smugmug.com/>



FRIDAY — February 15, 2013

**Education Session #2** got off to an early start with a presentation by **Dr. Milt Engelke** who addressed "Developing Sustainable Turfgrass Systems." Dr. Engelke's presentation was followed by concurrent breakout sessions that included:

### **The Things I Learned Growing My Business**

#### Panelists:

**Rob Davey** – Evergreen Turf, Pakenham, Victoria, AUSTRALIA

**Mike Ward** – Eastgate Sod, Loveland, OH USA

**Ryan Thomas** – Thomas Brothers Grass, Granbury, TX USA

**Ike Thomas** – (TPI Past President 1985-86) Retired - Granbury, TX USA  
Everyone has a story to tell about the ups and downs of growing a business, especially turfgrass producers. With 120 years of experience between them the audience enjoyed what this panel had to say.

### **Upping the Green – Turf, Green Roofs, Prairie Parks and Roadsides for the Sustainable City**

**Speaker: Mark Simmons, PhD** – Ecosystem Design Group, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, University of Texas

Dr. Mark Simmons was quick to tell the audience that the current fashion of demonizing turf and grassed-based landscapes is misleading. He believes these systems have an essential role in the American urban landscape; not only as turf, but in other applications such as roadsides, utility corridors, urban prairies and even green roofs. He explained how new applications currently being researched demonstrate that this is not complex technology and emerging standards and metrics like the Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES™) can provide guidelines and incentives to promote a revised approach to using grass to optimize the function of our cities.

### **Plant Genetics and Genomics to Improve Drought and Salinity Tolerance for Sustainable Turfgrass Production in the Southern United States**

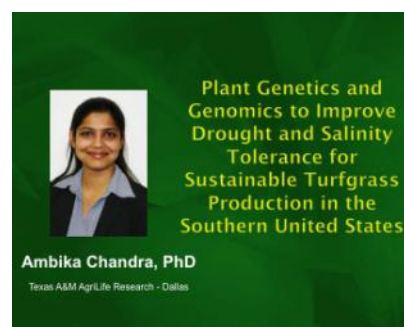
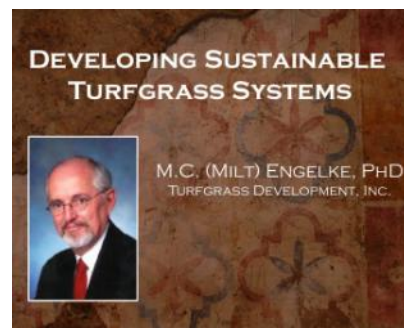
**Speaker: Ambika Chandra, PhD** – Texas A&M Agrilife Research-Dallas  
Dr. Chandra reported how a team of turfgrass breeders, extension specialists, plant physiologists, agricultural economists and social scientists are working together to develop turfgrass cultivars capable of tolerating drought tolerance and stress created by high salt soils and/or saline irrigation water for bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, St. Augustinegrass, seashore paspalum and ryegrass. She reported that this project will significantly increase the productivity, sustainability, and the economic gain of not only the individual state turfgrass programs, but the overall turfgrass industry worldwide.

The afternoon concluded with the closing of the General Session featuring:

### **What's Ahead for the Economy & Agriculture — DEBATE**

**Speakers: Charlie Stenholm and Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh**

Former Congressman Charlie Stenholm, Senior Policy Advisor at OFW Law in Washington, D.C. and Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, Professor of Agricultural Economics at Kansas State University agree to disagree on numerous issues, but when it comes to the future, the state of the economy, and agriculture they had plenty to say and a good deal they happen to agree on. Their insight and opinions on the current state of affairs in Washington was blunt, amusing, informative and very much to the point.



FRIDAY—February 15, 2013

On Friday afternoon TPI members had an opportunity to tour Bladerunner Farms in nearby Poteet, Texas.

**David Doguet** provided those in attendance with an opportunity to view research and development sites used to evaluate new grasses with a primary focus on the advancement of zoysiagrass varieties.

Bladerunner currently has four farms totaling about 800 acres in addition to their research and development locations.

Following the farm tour everyone got together for a great Crawfish Boil and musical entertainment sponsored by Trebro Manufacturing.



Zoysia sod samples were hung in the cattle shed at Bladerunner Farms during the Farm Tour. The first two, left to right are LIF, the second two are Zeon, then one strip of Y-2, and two strips of JaMur. All of the strips were 10 feet long and hung from two hooks.



## Live Entertainment

## Crawfish Boil



**Simon Graff**, the son of **James** and **Letty Graff** of Graff's Turf Farms in Fort Morgan, Colorado enjoyed the crawfish boil along with others in attendance.







Beautiful downtown Chicago will provide the background for this year's TPI Summer Convention & Field Days.

In addition to an exciting agenda planned for this summer's show, attendees will have an opportunity to see all that this magnificent city has to offer. From its beautiful lakefront to some of the finest museums, art galleries and restaurants in the nation, Chicago truly offers something for everyone regardless of age.

Our host hotel is the historic Drake, located on Chicago's Magnificent Mile and providing close proximity to the sites and sounds of this exciting city.

This year's field day will take place at H&E Sod Nursery in nearby Momence, Illinois.

As more information becomes available it will be posted on TPI's website at:

<http://www.turfgrassod.org/>



[www.TurfGrassSod.org](http://www.TurfGrassSod.org)



## Upfront and Personal Bob Weerts - TPI Vice President



**“His “just git’er done” attitude is based on nothing less than his personal life experiences.”**

- Jim Novak

You won’t find **Bob Weerts** of Blue Valley Sod Farm (Winnebago, Minnesota), sprinting from one meeting to another during a TPI conference or convention. In fact, you’re most likely going to see him sitting in a hotel lobby quick to shout out and greet fellow turfgrass producers as they pass by and engage them in conversation. During a TPI field day you’ll see him walking and conversing with exhibitors and fellow turfgrass producers, but sooner or later you’ll see him settling back in a chair somewhere. For those who don’t know Bob, it might appear that he’s holding court; waiting for people to approach him rather than the other way around. But, like many first impressions, there’s more to the story than meets the eye.

Between 1952 and 1953, the U.S. experienced an outbreak of nearly 100,000 polio cases far exceeding the average of 20,000 cases reported in previous years. Polio is an infectious viral disease that attacks the nerve cells and sometimes the central nervous system, often causing muscle wasting, paralysis or death. Bob Weerts was only 13 months old when his parents learned that his right leg was infected with the virus and there was no reversal of the consequences. Ironically, the Salk polio vaccine that would soon prevent the disease in the U.S. was still being tested and it wouldn’t be until a few months later that the U.S. would begin its mass inoculation of school children.

Bob had to wear a brace on his right leg to support his weight; a lift in his right shoe provided balance; a few years later he had a surgical procedure to have a metal peg implanted to stunt the growth of his good leg in hopes it would provide better balance.

Bob’s determination and his tenacity were tested at an early age, and so was his stubbornness. At age three he refused to wear a recommended leg brace and was determined to get on without it.

His disability didn’t diminish his drive or his persistence. Bob says he participated as best he could in school activities, didn’t hesitate to challenge bullies, and went about doing whatever needed to be done to get through his teenage years. His entrepreneurial spirit began at a young age as well. Discovering that he could purchase gum at a discounted price and sell it to friends and schoolmates for a small profit was just one of his early ventures into the world of business. Over the years he focused his entrepreneurial spirit and business savvy into a variety of diversified enterprises including but not limited to turfgrass farming.

If asked, Bob will tell you that his perceived disability hasn’t stopped him from meeting whatever challenges and/or opportunities that might come along. He understandably has little patience for folks who make excuses or whine about obstacles in their way. His, “just git ‘er done” attitude is based on nothing less than his personal life experiences.

So, the next time you see Bob Weerts sitting back as if he’s resting on his laurels . . . think again.

- Jim Novak



## TPI Member provided the turf for Cornell University Library



Photo courtesy of Cornell University in News

We received the following note regarding last month's article on the turf that was installed in Cornell University's Olin Library.

*We just wanted to say thank you for your "Cornell University Lays Down the Lawn" article in the recent TPI E-Newsletter [January 2013].*

*We (Saratoga Sod) actually delivered and donated 3000 sq. ft. of Turf Type Tall Fescue for the project. Steve and I are both alumni of the College of Ag and Life Sciences, as are our siblings, parents, cousins, nieces, nephews, etc. Additionally, our daughter and two nephews are currently students.*

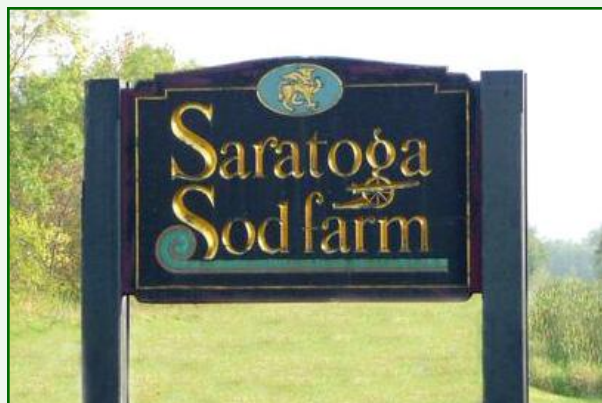
*It was a fun project and the students got a kick out of it.*

Thank you.

Laurie K. Griffen

VP/Co-Owner

Saratoga Sod Farm — Stillwater, New York



Steve and Laurie Griffen of Saratoga Sod Farm.



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## What will they say about you?

By Randy Tischer  
Chairman, PrimeraTurf  
Green Velvet Sod Farms, LTD

I was 29 years old and newly elected to the Board of the American Sod Producers Association (ASPA). My first board meeting for ASPA was held in Chicago at the airport Hilton. The board's job, for the next two days, was to interview the four finalists for the newly created executive director position within ASPA, and select a "winner." The interviews dragged on into the evening. It was not until almost 9:00 p.m. the last candidate was brought into the room for "interrogation" by the board. The only thing that this gentleman had going for him was that he knew a little bit about turf, having just resigned a position he held for several years with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America (GCSAA). Other than that, he was a real mess – he had a bad cold and proceeded to sneeze and sniffle his way through the entire interview. I was not impressed, and I don't think that the rest of the board thought that much of him either. We were all told at the beginning of the interviews, that we were looking for a guy who could jump right into this new executive director position and make an immediate impact on the association. "Great executive directors never last more than 4-5 years with any organization, so let's not worry about anyone for the long term" suggested our president.

It was almost midnight by the time the last interview was over, and our president suggested that we take a "straw poll" to just see where everyone was in their thinking. The leading candidate that evening was a guy that just left a position with a company involved with the trains that run throughout Chicago – he was my top candidate also.

The following day, the ASPA board met and spent a long time discussing the four candidates that we met the night before. And by some miracle, when it was

all said and done, the sneezing, sniffing golf course guy was elected to serve as the American Sod Producers' first executive director! To this day I still can't figure out how he got elected, as I cannot find anyone who was on the ASPA board that day who voted for this guy. All I can figure out is that our new executive director had an "in" with the Chicago political system: His name was Doug Fender.

*"To this day, I would put the talents of Doug Fender up against anyone in the country serving in a similar position. Throughout these 21 years, Doug and I became good friends."*

That was the fall of 1983, and for the next 21 years, Doug Fender taught me how to run an association and how to be a solid, contributing board member. To this day, I would put the talents of Doug Fender up against anyone in the country serving in a similar position. Throughout these 21 years, Doug and I became good friends. Doug was also a friend to the green industry, and received many honors including being named the Environmental Communicator of the Year in 2002 by the Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association. Doug retired as executive director of Turfgrass Producers International in 2004 (ASPA changed its name in 1994 in recognition of our many international members) and started a small travel company that took small groups on great trips all over the world.

Continued on the following page



## What will they say about you? (cont'd)

Doug Fender passed away unexpectedly December 20, 2012 at the young age of 67 (and the older I get, the younger 67 looks to me!). His family held a "Celebration of Doug's Life" a month after his passing. This "Celebration of Life" was attended by a room full of Doug's family and friends. Throughout the evening, several of Doug's closest friends and family members spoke to the crowd about the Doug Fender that they knew and loved. Tears and laughs filled the room.

What really hit home with me was that throughout the evening there was no mention of Doug's work at ASPA/TPI. You would not have known that Doug served as executive director of a turfgrass sod association for more than 21 years, or worked for a time for the GCSAA.

All you would have learned was that Doug Fender had a wonderful family and terrific friends that loved him just as much as he loved them. You would have learned that Doug loved to travel – especially to Africa, loved photography, loved to write and had a great sense of humor! You would have learned that Doug loved animals, and spent 10 years teaching his grey cat (named what else but "Cat"), to roll over on command!

There was no mention of the years he spent as an association executive director, the awards he won, the endless days of seemingly very important meetings that he participated in... none of this was important in the big picture of Doug Fender's life.



Doug Fender and his grandson Logan.

So I ask you, when your time comes, what will they say about you? What will everyone that shows up to say a final farewell to you learn about you as a person? It is very easy to let your business and this turf and ornamental world consume your every waking moment. I can only hope that you will be remembered as Doug Fender was – for the truly important things in life.

This article originally appeared in the February issue of the PrimeraTurf - "The Industry Edge" newsletter. We would like to thank Randy Tischer for giving us permission to reprint it in its entirety. The above photo of Doug was provided by the Fender family.

PrimeraTurf®, a business cooperative committed to providing leading technologies and advantaged opportunities to distributors, users, and manufacturers in the professional turf and ornamental, specialty vegetation management, pest control, and aquatic markets.

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

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

**Southern Turf Hawaii**  
Mililani, Hawaii (Oahu)  
Puunene, Hawaii (Maui)

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



# Southern Turf Hawai'i

Southern Turf Hawaii has supplied Hawaii with residential, commercial, retail, and golf course sod and grass for nearly 20 years. Our sod and grass landscaping experts will help you decide which grass variety best fits your specific needs.

All of Southern Turf Hawaii's grass is grown on plastic using green waste compost—an eco-friendly, renewable source for growing sod that is both weed free and environmentally friendly. Whether you're looking for sod to enhance your lawn or golf course, let Southern Turf Hawaii help with all of your grass and landscaping supply needs.

Southern Turf Hawaii's sod can be shipped between all of the Hawaiian Islands through Young Brothers Barge Service. We service commercial, retail, and golf course clients.

Southern Turf Hawaii's landscaping experts have many years of experience and are here to provide you with the high quality turfgrass that best suits your specific needs. We sell grass varieties by the square foot and the sod is cut into 2x4 square foot sheets for easy transport. Our wide variety of grass includes: Bermuda, Paspalum, St. Augustine, Tenuifolia, and Zoysia.

Orders can be made and picked up typically within the same day. Trays are available, and most grass varieties are available daily. It's easy to place an order -- Just call, email or fax it in!



**Danny Green, Managing Partner**  
Southern Turf Hawaii is a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona (California State Polytechnic University) where he earned a Degree in Ornamental Horticulture with an emphasis in Turfgrass Management. Earlier in his career he was the Golf Course Superintendent of the Koolau Golf Club in Kaneohe, HI.

**Southern Turf Hawaii**  
A proud Member of  
Turfgrass Producers International since 2009





# Global Worming?

## New study suggests earthworms accelerate greenhouse-gas emissions from soils.

*"Earthworms play an essential part in determining the greenhouse-gas balance of soils worldwide, and their influence is expected to grow over the next decades. They are thought to stimulate carbon sequestration in soil aggregates, but also to increase emissions of the main greenhouse gases carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide. Hence, it remains highly controversial whether earthworms predominantly affect soils to act as a net source or sink of greenhouse gases. Here, we provide a quantitative review of the overall effect of earthworms on the soil greenhouse-gas balance. Our results suggest that although earthworms are largely beneficial to soil fertility, they increase net soil greenhouse-gas emissions."*

So reads the abstract from researchers in the Netherlands, the United States and Colombia who looked at the results of over 200 separate experiments from other published studies to explore the role of earthworms in global greenhouse gas emissions.

They discovered that approximately 20% of global carbon dioxide emissions and two-thirds of nitrous oxide emissions came directly from soil due to the large number of natural biological processes that occur in the ground.

*"Our results suggest that although earthworms are largely beneficial to soil fertility, they increase net soil greenhouse-gas emissions."*

The problem is simply this, as earthworms burrow in the soil, they make it more porous. They also interact with the microbes that produce the bulk of carbon dioxide emissions, causing it all to be released into the atmosphere.

As the earthworm population grows so does the planet's greenhouse gas emissions. An added drawback is that earthworms produce nitrous oxide in their guts. Overall, the science team found that the presence of earthworms in soil increased nitrous oxide emissions by 42% and carbon dioxide emissions by 33%.



The report suggests that although earthworms play an essential part in determining the greenhouse-gas balance of soils worldwide and are largely beneficial to soil fertility they also increase net soil greenhouse-gas emissions."

The study's co-author Jan-Willem van Groenigen of Wageningen University in the Netherlands, said that traditional argument has always seemed suspect to him. "It's strange to claim on the one hand that earthworms are good for soil fertility by decomposing organic matter in soil, and on the other hand that they increase organic matter in soil," he said.

Van Groenigen was quick to note that the new study is not the last word on the earthworm question. Scientists, who often refer to earthworms as "ecosystem engineers" in recognition of the role they play in churning soil and improving its drainage, have been slow to understand the little organisms' role in the carbon cycle.

### Nature Climate Change

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FULL ARTICLE AVAILABLE AT:

<http://www.nature.com/nclimate/journal/vaop/ncurrent/full/nclimate1692.html>

## FREE full-color weed identification poster

WeedAlert.com, is an online weed identification and control resource which includes detailed color photos of 109 weeds, allowing landscape maintenance professionals, green industry professionals and homeowners the ability to search and identify weeds by name, appearance or region. [www.weedalert.com/offers.php/](http://www.weedalert.com/offers.php/)

The site offers visitors detailed information about each weed including a description, non-chemical ways to control the weed, herbicide use and recommended control products, maps of where the weeds grow and when they are prevalent in various growing zones.

The site also features the Tech Advisor resource, which allows site users to contact and interact with technical advisors. The advisors can help with specific turf weed control problems and answer questions concerning general turf weed control.

While supplies last, visitors can order a free full-color weed identification poster, which features photos of 48 common turf weeds. The order form is available at [www.weedalert.com/offers.php](http://www.weedalert.com/offers.php).



## TurfSide-UP

Back in the mid 1950's this may have seemed like a good idea. The sales pitch probably went something like this—

“You wanna mow your lawn in comfort? Now you can! This is the lawnmower of the future folks! Sit back on a nice cushy foam seat, relax inside a clear plastic sphere that protects you from the elements, and enjoy the comfort of air conditioning. That’s right! This super-duper model has it all; it’s own electric generating system for operating running lights, a radio telephone, and even a cooling system to provide you with a chilled drink in the event the air conditioning malfunctions and you’re sweating like a gerbel inside a plastic ball. In fifty or sixty years everyone is sure to have one, so why wait, order yours today!”

You have to wonder- - how much research and development money went into this brainy idea?



AP Photo