

IN THIS ISSUE

- “It’s the yards that pull everything together.”
- TOXIC TURF? A soccer coach asks, “Could artificial turf be causing cancer?”
- TPI commentary generates interesting response.
- Update: SOD-Urday Celebration at Lakeside Sod Supply.
- TPI’s Facebook page reaches 500 LIKES.
- Supply & Demand: The law of economics suggests a GROWING opportunity for Texas turfgrass producers.
- Where in the world is TPI represented? Megagraes in Gorlev, Denmark.
- Turf Australia features TPI’s 2014 International Education Conference & Field Day in a 2-page spread.
- And much MORE!



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“It’s the yards that pull everything together.”

We came across a booklet published by The Scotts Company back in 2002 titled “*The Benefits of Lawns: A Balanced Look at Published Information*”. The booklet is filled with a great deal of insightful information from an assortment of reliable sources, including The Lawn Institute; but what really caught our attention was the booklet’s Introduction which is so well written, and so to the point, we thought it was worth sharing. - JN

Americans didn’t spend the last fifty years moving out to suburbia so they could spend more time in their cars. They did it so they could have yards. And lawns. Green space. With trees and flowers and shrubs. Yards for the kids and the dog. Yards for gardening. Yards to put a little space between them and their neighbors. Maybe even a fence. Yards to call their own.

“Yards and lawns are what transform strangers into neighbors, neighbors into neighborhoods, and neighborhoods into communities.”

Green yards and lawns are the matrix upon which the success of the suburban residential development is built. It’s not readily apparent. Look at a map, and you see only roads. Residential streets feed into through streets that lead to major thoroughfares which cross freeway interchanges. But the roads are just a way to get to work and the mall. Fly over the residential portions of a city, and you see mostly trees and rooftops with islands of parking lots for office buildings, shopping malls, schools, and churches. But to really understand how important yards and lawns are, you have to walk through a neighborhood. That’s when you see that it’s the yards that pull everything together.

It’s the yard that gets people out of the house, away from the TV, the Internet, computer games, the home entertainment center and puts them in full view of their neighbors. Young couples watch over their kids and their kids’ friends and soon meet other parents. Older couples walk the dog and say hello to the people they see along the way. And everybody works in the yard and says hello to their neighbors walking past.

Then, when the kids go off to college and the dogs are no longer around, there’s still the yard and the neighbors ... and the neighborhood. We don’t think it’s an exaggeration to say that yards and lawns are what transform strangers into neighbors, neighbors into neighborhoods, and neighborhoods into communities.

It’s grass that makes yards possible. It’s low cost, low maintenance, good looking, and resists wear and tear because grass has the unique capability of responding to mowing by growing faster, thicker, deeper, and spreading underground to fill in bare spots without the nuisance of seeds or pollen.

A well-tended lawn not only looks good, it’s good for the environment. Ecologically speaking, your lawn is the saving grace of the suburban landscape. Moreover, the judicious use of fertilizer, water, and pesticides increases the ecological benefits that derive from lawns. Grass minimizes erosion, cleans the air, and neutralizes pollutants and chemicals (including pesticides). The denser and healthier a lawn is, the better it can protect the environment.

The average suburban development is environmentally friendlier than a farm. Lawns are ten times better at soaking up rainwater than actively farmed cropland planted to corn or beans or small grains. They’re so good at absorbing rainwater, in fact, that they can balance out the 100% runoff from roofs, drives, and streets that are connected to storm sewers and convey storm water directly to streams or lakes.

So, don’t let anybody tell you that your yard and your lawn are bad for the environment. Just the opposite. Your yard and lawn are environmentally friendly, and that’s what this paper is all about — how your lawn works and how it improves your life and the environment.

To see the booklet in its entirety go to:

<https://www.landcarenetwork.org/legislative/TheBenefitsofLawns-ABalancedLookAtPublishedInforma.pdf>

TOXIC TURF?

Soccer Coach: "Could artificial turf be causing cancer?"

By Jim Novak

When we posted a news report by Gaard Swanson of KOMO-TV in Seattle, Washington on TPI's Facebook page last week we were sure it would generate a great deal of interest. The news report titled, "**Soccer coach: Could artificial turf be causing cancer?**" has already become the highest shared video ever posted on TPI's Facebook page.

In the news story, Swanson reports that University of Washington assistant coach Amy Griffin began to raise questions about the material used to make artificial athletic fields. Her "troubling concern" had to do with the crumb rubber from shredded tires that's used on soccer fields throughout the country and a possible link between the crumb rubber and cancer among soccer players.

What triggered Coach Griffin's concern was a list she has of 13 players from Washington who have all been diagnosed with rare types of cancer. Of those 13, 11 come from an even smaller pool of players, they are goal keepers.

"Everyone says it's just a coincidence and kind of walks away, but the ratio of goal keepers to field players is 15 to 1, 16 to 2, and I know plenty of goal keepers that have cancers and I don't know many field players," Griffin said.

Swanson reports that Griffin said she can't walk away from what she's discovered, and she's not alone. Former professional goalie and reality TV star Ethan Zohn, who has twice beaten non-Hodgkins lymphoma, had been keeping his own list, which he has now handed over to Griffin.

Combined, the lists name 27 players with cancer, and 22 of them are goal keepers.

Griffin can't say why goalies are getting cancer, but she wonders if it's the field turf and the crumb rubber used to make it. She said goalies spend a lot of time on the ground diving for balls, blocking shots and sometimes ingesting the small rubber pellets.

"She said, 'I just think it's something with the field turf. I don't know what it is, but I think there's something in those black dots,'" Griffin said. But she also knows that feelings and suspicion do not equal evidence.



"The team's head physician, Dr. John O'Kane, says the concern is valid and has talked with Griffin about the need for scientific and medical research on the effects of crumb rubber. He said Griffin's list is only a starting point. The question you would need to ask is over that same time period, how many goalies are there that haven't gotten cancer?" O'Kane said. "And until you understand that number, you really can't interpret that there's anything particularly dangerous about being a goalie when it comes to cancer." O'Kane said that kind of research could take years.

Griffin hopes someone is willing to take on the work to provide her with an answer. She said any answer will do.

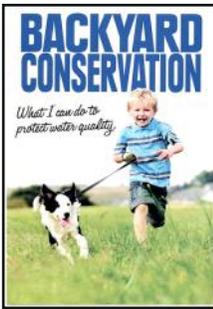
"I would love for it to be disproven or for someone to grab me by the throat and say, 'These are the facts. This is why it could never be this. This is just happenstance.' That would be great," she said.

To see Gaard Swanson's news report in its entirety visit TPI's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/TurfgrassProducersInternational>



NOTE:

See the June/July 2011 issue of the TPI E-Newsletter to read a related story – "**Is artificial turf hiding an 800 pound gorilla?**" <http://www.turfgrassod.org/files/6/tpi-e-newsletter/page-2>



TPI commentary generates interesting response:

Last month's column regarding the "Backyard Conservation" booklet being distributed by the Lancaster County Conservation District in Pennsylvania generated several interesting responses. Below is a cover letter that was sent along with a copy of the article to Bob Krimmel, Township Manager, East Hempfield Township. Mr. Krimmel's response and that of others appear on the following page.

Dear Mr. Krimmel,

It has recently come to my attention that the leaders of the East Hempfield Township have been distributing a booklet entitled "*Backyard Conservation – What I can do to protect water quality*" throughout Lancaster County.

We received a copy and were happy to have an opportunity to review it. I am writing to suggest that the people who produced the booklet may have received some incomplete and biased information from the sources that contributed to the publication.

We agree with you that there is a need to educate and inform the public on the importance of proper lawn care and the conservation of our natural resources, especially water. There are however, numerous statements and/or omissions that are most troubling and somewhat misleading.

In reading the booklet we felt a responsibility to respond to some of the generalizations and omissions that are evident in the booklet. We presented our point of view in a recent issue of the Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) association newsletter. I have attached a copy of the column for your convenience.

In reading our position please take note that we clearly state, "This personal commentary is not intended to minimize the efforts of the Lancaster County Conservation District, but it does have to do with how we; be we concerned legislators, community organizations, green industry representatives, environmental activists, or concerned citizens, communicate to the general public in an effort to build awareness and educate them on proper lawn care."

I wish to stress that our rebuttal is not to diminish your efforts in disseminating information to the public. Rather, we want the residents of Lancaster County to understand the environmental, economic, health and safety benefits that a properly-maintained lawn can provide. And we want to help your residents understand how to administer the correct levels of nutrients and water that a lawn needs in order to prevent waste.

We invite your response to our article and would be happy to publish your comments in our June issue of the TPI newsletter.

We would also like to encourage you to direct homeowners to The Lawn Institute website at <http://www.thelawninstitute.org/>. They will find a considerable amount of worthwhile and beneficial information on proper lawn care.

Your response is both invited and welcomed.

Sincerely,
Jim

Jim Novak

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TPI commentary generates interesting response — Cont'd

RESPONSES:

5/23/14 10:06 am

I found this information interesting and forwarded it to the Lancaster County Conservation District. Thank you for your time to better educate us.

Bob Krimmel

Robert S. Krimmel
Township Manager
East Hempfield Township

5/23/14 11:21 am

Thank you for your concerns. I've forwarded this on to the authors of the booklet.

Jill Whitcomb

Grants Coordinator/Ag Conservation Technician
Lancaster County Conservation District

5/30/14 3:05 pm

Thank you for your opinions on our publication. I say opinions because that is what I feel they are. We did a lot of research for this publication, like all publications we create, and feel the publication is based on information we feel is accurate for the audience we are targeting; the urban/suburban Lancaster County resident. Is everyone going to agree with every statement we put out there, no. Are they going to have a different opinion on something, sure. The publication was meant to really be a starting point to talk with Lancaster County landowners about proper lawn care and more specifically what we, local environmental non-profit organizations, are seeing on the ground here. The information gathered for this publication came from reputable non-profit organizations like the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, and other groups concerned with the Bay's water quality. I am not familiar with the Lawn Institute or who might be funding your research. When we did our research search we were looking for unbiased information regarding lawns and water quality. Finally, we sent our final draft document to the PA Landscape and Nursery Association (PLNA) which oversees most of the PA lawn care services here in Lancaster County and they approve of the document before it went to print. Everyone can have their opinions, what I take issue with regarding your email are two things;

Emailing others, like our funders, about your claims. Normally I would not take offense to a critical email about the District but when other people and our funders are brought into the mix I do feel like I need to respond. I would like to apologize to our funders for having to get this email from

me. You should not have to be in this email chain and this will be the first and last email on this topic you get from me.

Is calling out the Lancaster County Conservation District in your newsletter without even contacting us about your issue with our publication. For us this is very unprofessional and really not the way we conduct our business. We realize not everyone can be like us but a simple phone call or email to us before hand to allow us to answer your claims is the professional way to do business.

Once again you and your entity are entitled to your opinions and values for the customers you deal with but we stand behind the publication we put forth. Thanks for your correspondence.

Matthew, W. Kofroth

Watershed Coordinator
Lancaster County Conservation District
Farm & Home Center

TPI response:

It should be noted that in my commentary I clearly stated that the author(s) were not identified (so knowing who to contact regarding content was an issue), and secondly, I was also extremely clear in stating, "This personal commentary is not intended to minimize the efforts of the Lancaster County Conservation District, but it does have to do with how we; be we concerned legislators, community organizations, green industry representatives, environmental activists, or concerned citizens, communicate to the general public in an effort to build awareness and educate them on proper lawn care." - JN

UPDATE — SOD-Urday Celebration

By Jim Novak and Becky Braddell

John and Ed Braddell of Lakeside Sod Supply in Clarence Center, NY had their 2nd **SOD-Urday Celebration** on May 17th and WBEN Radio 930 AM did a live broadcast from their farm. The show gave listeners an opportunity to call-in and have their questions regarding lawn care answered.

Ed's daughter, Becky Braddell shared a few of the questions that were called-in by listeners during the two hour broadcast. The following are a few examples she provided:

Q: Let's start with a general discussion on everyone's mind; the tough winter and how the severity of the winter had an impact on all of our lawns.

A: It's been a very hard winter and we've seen some significant tissue death this year. It's a good time to take a look at your lawn and get a good fertilizer down. Maybe even take a look at newer varieties of turf that can stand up to the winter cold and perform better.

Q: Does sod wear better than regular grass seed?

A: Sod will give you that instant lawn, and seed is going to take a little bit more nurturing to come in, fill in and develop roots. Sod gives you a mature lawn ready for use.

Q: When we talk about fertilizing, we should be conscientious about what we put on our lawns as it can seep into creeks and streams. Could you give an explanation about this?

A: It's against NYS law to use any fertilizer with phosphorous (the middle number) unless you're sodding, seeding, or if a soil test has indicated your soil needs phosphorous. You can also look into using organic fertilizers and soil supplements as an alternative or in addition to your current fertilizing regimen.

Q: What about controlling weeds?

A: You can use different products to help prevent the weeds from growing in the spring-time and/or use a post-emergent, often called a weed-and-feed, during the remainder of the year. But keep in mind that nothing is better at helping to prevent weeds from coming in as a dense, healthy lawn.

Q: How is sod formed, grown, and what gives it its density and properties? What makes that carpet of grass?

A: We seed in mid-August and don't harvest it for approximately 18 months. We nurture it through the entire time and make sure it gets the appropriate amount of fertilizer. We never harvest sod until it is mature.

LAKE SIDE
SOD SUPPLY Co. Inc.



John Braddell of Lakeside Sod Supply pictured on the right with WBEN radio host Ken Brown prior to the 2-hour live radio broadcast.

Q: Where would you want to use sod?

A: Bluegrass sod is ideal in a sunny, high traffic area. A bluegrass/fescue mix would be good for shadier areas. Anywhere grass grows sod will perform well.

Q: How do you know how much sod to order?

A: You should measure the length of the area and the width of the area, and multiply those two numbers. That will give you the square footage. From there you can call the office and we can help you determine how much sod you'll need.

Q: I have moss in my yard. Is there anything I can do to get rid of it?

A: You can use some herbicides on moss to get rid of it. It will turn yellow, which is unsightly, but it will eventually die out. Moss is common in shady areas and there are specific seed varieties that are a bit more tolerant of the shade than others that you could also use. Another option is to get a soil test to determine where the pH is and we carry the products you would need to alter the pH. Poor air circulation and poor soil chemistry and shade are usually the causes of moss.



Peter Landschoot, Ph.D.
Professor of Turfgrass Science

CORRECTION

In the May issue of the TPI E-Newsletter we mistakenly misspelled the last name of Dr. Peter Landschoot, Professor of Turfgrass Science at Penn State who so kindly gave us permission to reprint his article “*Winterkill Damage to Turfgrass*”. We sincerely regret the error. —JN

Dr. Landschoot’s primary responsibility is to serve as the resident extension turfgrass management specialist in Pennsylvania. This assignment involves organizing and implementing extension education programs and is accomplished through organizing large regional conferences; development of extension publications, slide sets, videos, and computer programs; contribution to newsletters and trade magazines; and participation in media events. Dr. Landschoot provides current management information to clientele through presentations at meetings, seminars, workshops, and field demonstrations. His research program focuses on integrated pest management with emphasis in disease management, use of composts as soil amendments in turf, turfgrass variety evaluation, and soil fertility.



A MILESTONE 500 LIKES



Our sincere thanks to all TPI members, prospective members and our green industry friends for helping us reach our 500 LIKES milestone. Our target date to achieve this goal was August 2014. If you haven't already visited the TPI Facebook page please do, we think you'll be impressed- JN





Turfgrass. With you every step of the way.

Turfgrass Producers of Texas create a series of engaging and effective television announcements.

We came across a series of television ads produced by Turfgrass Producers of Texas (TPT) and thought they were worth sharing. Our thanks to John Cospier, Executive Director of TPT for letting us direct our readers to the following links.

<http://www.tx sod.com/videos/LittleGirl.htm>
<http://www.tx sod.com/videos/Relationship.htm>
<http://www.tx sod.com/videos/Sisters.htm>



TPT video screen captures

\$UPPLY & DEMAND

The law of economics suggests a **GROWING** opportunity for Texas turfgrass producers.

By: Jim Novak

Not much more than a year ago I seem to recall John Cospier, Executive Director of Turfgrass Producers of Texas (TPT), advising turfgrass producers in Texas to hold steady; warning them that when the economy turned around those that weathered the recession would reap the rewards, and those that held back would miss a big opportunity when things began to get somewhat back to normal. His advice is proving to be well founded.

Cospier now reports that demand for turfgrass sod in Texas is stretching supplies. In addition to the increased demand there are fewer acres of sod in production than there were four or five years ago.

In TPT's recent issue of their "Pallet" newsletter, they state that a study conducted in 2005 reported approximately 56,000 acres of turfgrass was in production. But that's changed due to the recession that began in 2007. Many growers converted thousands of acres to corn, cotton and other crops due to the unprofitability of sod production. Cospier feels that the current estimate is between 35,000 and 40,000 acres in the Lone Star State.

The current supply and demand scenario has resulted in most growers raising prices for their product. The "Pallet" quotes one producer as stating, "We have been long overdue for a price increase and the cost of production has been steadily increasing. If we are going to stay in business, we need more for our sod."

Cospier is quoted in the "Pallet" as stating that his phone has been ringing a lot as landscapers and others try to find grass. He also stated that some growers have raised their prices not once, but twice since the first of the year and to that he says, "Hallelujah!" . . . as do we.

An additional note, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our congratulations to members of Turfgrass Producers International who were elected as new directors of TPT at their recent annual meeting. Congratulations to: Kevin Joyce of King Ranch Turfgrass, Bubba Simons of Texas Sod Leasing (Stone Turf).and William Gavranovic of Horizon Turf.

Where in the world is TPI represented? EVERYWHERE!

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

Megagraes Gorlev, Denmark

<http://www.megagraes.dk/>



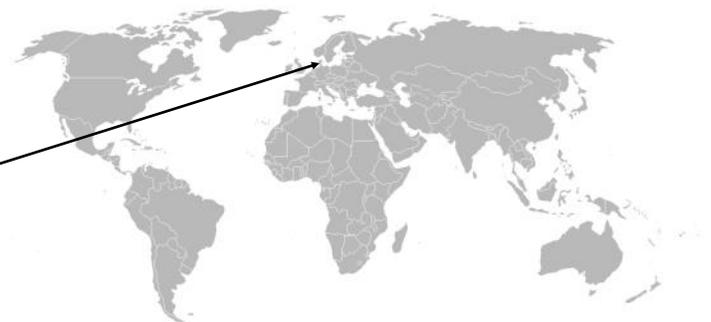
Mega Grass was established September 2003 by Thomas Rasmussen. The company's desire is to stay ahead of demands from the Danish Plant Directorate in Denmark.

All our Roller grass fields are free of disease and environmentally friendly.

Our machines are equipped with GPS technology that enables us to be as efficient as possible and operate with an accuracy of a maximum 2.5 cm (less than 1-inch) overlap, which in turn results in less CO2 emissions.

The quality of our rolled grass is achieved by using Danish produced grass seed from the latest grass varieties that are bred to cater to the Danish climate, and require less water and less fertilizer than conventional lawns. Because they are intentionally slow growing grasses they also require less mowing. We supply quality products in all of Denmark.

Roll Grass —Our roll grass is shortcut for a lush, durable and weed free lawn. Rolling grass is grown from quality seeds which are part of our grass seed mixtures, and planted and cared for according to Danish requirements.



When it is fully grown and ready for harvest, we cut it into rolls, put it on pallets and drive it to you home. The grass is made up of a blend of:
 10% normal. ryegrass (greenway S)
 10% normal. ryegrass (Sauvignon S)
 30% Red fescue (Cindarella S)
 25% Red fescue (Calliope S)
 25% Kentucky bluegrass (Conni S)

It is fine-leaved, has good drought tolerance and establishes fast. A truly robust quality that is perfect for landscaping



The grass is supplied in roll 40 x 250 cm. rollers (1 m2.) or approximately 16 X 98 inches) having a thickness of approx. 2.5 cm. (1-inch). Each roll weighs approximately.15-20 kilos (33-44 lbs.)

A Proud Member of
 Turfgrass Producers International
 Since 2006



Want to see photos of TPI events? It's easy!

Visit TPI's Facebook page at
<https://www.facebook.com/TurfgrassProducersInternational>

Or visit TPI's SmugMug page at
<http://www.tpiphotos.smugmug.com/>



“Many of the issues we face in Australia’s turf industry are similar to those faced by growers worldwide.”

Richard Stephens



Turf Australia features TPI’s 2014 International Education Conference & Field Day in Orlando

A tip of the hat and thank you to **Richard Stephens**, Business & Industry Development Manager at Turf Australia for the great two-page spread he wrote in the Autumn 2014 issue of Turf Australia magazine about TPI’s 2014 International Education Conference & Field Day.

Stephens wrote that more than 70 Australians from the turf industry travelled to the United States and were welcomed with open arms by Turfgrass Producers International. He went on to say, “The benefits from international networking with the best turf producers from around the world cannot be underestimated. New ideas, gaining reliable and relevant information, identifying opportunities for collaboration and feeling part of a dynamic and professional industry are just some of the benefits to be gained from this type of event.”

Stephens went on to add, “Many of the issues we face in Australia’s turf industry are similar to those faced by growers worldwide. For example; the need for more water efficient turfgrass varieties, knowing your actual costs of turf production, promoting to the community the substantial benefits from turf, attracting and maintaining reliable staff and opportunities for diversification and value adding, were just some of the topics covered at the conference.”

He also expressed he thanks to TPI for the warm audio visual presentation that welcomed them to Orlando featuring the soundtrack “I Still Call Australia Home”.

Some of the Aussies who attended the conference and field day went on a pre-conference tour which included parts of Texas, Georgia and Florida before arriving in Orlando. Others stayed on after the conference ended and participated in a Zoysia grass maintenance information session and then travelled to the University of Florida in Gainesville to review research and development and extension activities.



VOTE FOR A TPI TWITTER HANDLE NAME TODAY!



Select your favorite TPI Twitter Handle from the TOP 5 submitted names listed below. After you have decided which is your favorite, click on the SurveyMonkey link to cast your vote. Voting ends **June 23, 2014** so cast your vote today!

@TPITurfNews
 @TPIGreenSideUp
 @TPITurfTalk
 @TurfTweets
 @TPIWeSpeakTurf

Cast your vote at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/FZJJWLP>

JOIN US in Philly – The City of “Brotherly Love”



Field Day Jubilee and Field Day Host
Johnson Farms, Inc

Online Registration is Open!
Click image below



<http://www.turfgrassod.org/publisher/events/2013/3/13/tpi-summer-convention-and-field-days>



TRIVIA: So why is Philadelphia known as the City of Brotherly Love?

ANSWER: The name Philadelphia is actually a combination of two Greek words; Phileo, which means love and adelphos, which means brother.

UPDATE: Winterkill damage to turfgrass

In last month's newsletter we addressed how the harsh winter had taken its toll on turfgrass throughout the northeast. We have since learned from Linda Bradley of Turf Mountain Sod in North Carolina and Ben Copeland, Sr. of Patten Seed Co./Super Sod, Georgia, that this year's harsh winter impacted a far greater area. Warm-season grasses have suffered serious damage as well.

Grady Miller of North Carolina State University reported the hardest hit grasses have been the fine-textured zoysiagrasses (e.g. Emerald, Zeon, Zorro, Pristine, etc.) and Centipedegrass (both Common and TifBlair). Damage in the coarse-textured zoysiagrasses (e.g. Empire, El Toro, Zenith, Compadre, etc.) and bermudagrass has been more sporadic; whereas Meyer zoysiagrass generally was not injured to any great extent.

Miller added, "Weak turf going into the winter was more susceptible to winter damage than healthy turf. Generally herbicide applications do not cause increased winter damage. But some pre-emergence herbicides can make re-establishment of turfgrasses more challenging. Most product labels have information related to re-establishment timings following application. Establishment timing following herbicide applications may also be herbicide rate-specific.

"Microclimate and cultural practices can influence winter damage as well as the green-up response among cultivars and species. At this point temperatures have still not been very conducive for optimum growth, so recovery continues to be slow." - JN

MSU Turfgrass Program to acquire low-temperature growth chamber for turf research

By Mariah Montenegro (Michigan State University)

Polar temperatures combined with ice this past winter left many turf areas in Michigan with a large amount of winterkill damage. The destruction is seen on putting greens and other turf areas. The harsh winter weather has had an impact on the turfgrass industry resulting in potential business losses.

"Golf course superintendents not only have to resolve the issue of re-establishing the greens by purchasing seed, fertilizer and covers, but they also may lose revenue from golfers not playing the course, and also losses in food and beverage sales," said MSU AgBioResearch scientist Kevin Frank.

The turfgrass industry faces the challenge of the best way to solve the current problem and to prevent similar damage in the future. Because of limited information on winter damage, the [MSU Turfgrass](#) team and board members of the [Michigan Turfgrass Foundation](#) have agreed to obtain a low-temperature growth chamber to help investigate new findings.

The MSU Turfgrass team consists of nine faculty members focused on research, extension and teaching in the areas of turfgrass science that include golf courses, athletic fields, home lawns, sods and commercial properties. The MTF is a nonprofit organization that supports MSU research for better turfgrass maintenance methods.

"The partnership between MSU and the MTF is very strong and effective," said director of [MSU AgBioResearch](#) Doug Buhler. "Together, we are able to promptly



respond to this major industry issue and provide scientific insight that will help golf course superintendents throughout Michigan. It's another example of how industries have come to trust and rely on MSU for research solutions to meet their needs."

Emily Merewitz, AgBioResearch scientist, said there is a great need for research facilities, such as this growth chamber, to support research on extreme weather tolerance of cool-surface turfgrass species.

"A low-temperature growth chamber can imitate harsh winter conditions in a controlled setting so that researchers can investigate topics such as ice damage, cold acclimation and de-acclimation, and other issues related to winterkill damage year-round."

Based on this research the MSU Turfgrass team and the MTF hope to identify ways in which superintendents can minimize winterkill injury in the future.



Western Canada Turfgrass Association Launches First Green 'Links as Labs' Program

TRANSFORMING GOLF COURSES INTO CLASSROOMS

The Western Canada Turfgrass Association (WCTA), in partnership with the First Green Foundation, is launching the first program in Canada that brings environmental education to grade school students using golf courses as environmental learning labs.

The inaugural event, hosted by Golf Course Superintendent Dave Kennedy and Assistant Pete Rodrigues, took place May 5, 2014 at the Vancouver Golf Club, host of the 2012 CN Canadian Women's Open. Heidi Gawehns, Grade 8 teacher from Pitt River Middle School, led her students in the very first, 'First Green' event held in Canada.

First Green is an innovative environmental education outreach program using golf courses as environmental learning labs. First Green coordinates outdoor learning labs at golf courses that allow students to perform hands-on experiments and tests, all within the focus of their schools' environmental science and/or environmental horticulture curricula. In these outdoor labs, students test water quality, collect soil samples, identify plants, do math activities and work with local issues such as stream-bed or owl-nest restoration.

Started in 1997 in Bellevue, Washington, over 15,000 students have participated in First Green field trips. Each field trip reaches an estimated 230 people with environmental and golf messages (due to students sharing with friends and families and teachers sharing with colleagues).

The program is made possible by a \$155,750 STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) grant by the United States Golf Association



(USGA) for 2014. The grant is funded by the USGA's partnership with Chevron, designed to encourage students in science, technology, engineering and math disciplines (STEM) through the world of golf. Ongoing support is received from the Washington State Golf Association, Pacific Northwest Golf Association, golf clubs and individual donors.

<http://thefirstgreen.org/-introduction-to-first-green>

"Kids are our future. They are going to be the future of golf, and First Green will tell them how the golf courses are built and maintained." – Steve Bader, Pacific Northwest Golf Association Representative

"Getting the kids out here and watching the superintendents that love their golf courses, and love growing grass, and what they do, and seeing the interaction with the kids, and seeing these kids with their work sheets, filling them out, asking questions, you can just see the enthusiasm and it doesn't get old."
– Troy Andrew, WSGA & PNGA Executive Director

Media contact:
Jerry Rousseau, Executive Director



SEED WITH CONFIDENCE

Because your business depends on the purest seed varieties,
our business is dedicated to them.

