

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue of the E-Newsletter has a little bit of everything for everyone from the deserving recognition of a leading authority of turfgrasses and turfgrass science, to an update on the U.S. National Arboretum's *Grass Roots Initiative*.

We have a story regarding Project Evergreen's new and exciting initiative—"Healthy Turf. Healthy Kids," as well as addressing the opportunity for members to sponsor an Extension Specialist, so they can receive *Turf News* magazine and other timely information. The cost is minimal and beneficial for everyone.

If you have an interesting story, an upcoming event, perhaps a thought, idea or comment, please contact us, we'd like to hear from you.

— Jim Novak



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DR. JAMES BEARD TO RECEIVE CSSA'S HIGHEST HONOR

Doug Karcher, CSSA C-5 Chair has announced that **Dr. James Beard** will be the honored recipient of the 2014 CSSA Presidential Award at their 2014 Annual Meeting, Nov. 2-5, in Long Beach, CA.

In announcing the award Karcher said, "Dr. Beard is the first dedicated turfgrass scientist to receive this award which is a substantial honor for our Turfgrass Science Division."

The CSSA Presidential Award is CSSA's most exclusive award, which is "given to persons who have influenced the science or practice of crop production so greatly that the impact of their efforts will be enduring on future science."

Dr. James B Beard is the world's leading authority on turfgrasses and turfgrass science. He spent most of his career in academia, first at Michigan State University, then at Texas A&M University, where he is currently professor emeritus of turfgrass science. He has pioneered investigations concerning turfgrass and the ecology of grass, and has published widely and lectured both throughout North America and internationally. Currently, he guides turfgrass research and education programs, especially internationally, while also instructing in turfgrass education through seminars, papers, manuals, and books. He has also served on many national committees.

He holds four degrees, has written and published prolifically, including more than 700 scientific papers and technical articles, as well as numerous books. He has lectured widely throughout North America and abroad, and has served as a technical advisor to turfgrass organizations in more than a dozen countries.



He has been the recipient of the Turfgrass Science Award and the Crop Science Research Award of the Crop Science Society of America. He was the first president of the International Turfgrass Society. He has been elected to the Board of Directors of CSSA, ASA, CAST, and ITS; and honored as a Fellow of CSSA, ASA, and AAAS.

Dr. Beard and Harriet J. Beard, his wife and long-time collaborator, have written numerous books and jointly received the Oberly Award of the American Library Association. He currently serves as President and Chief Scientist at the International Sports Turf Institute.

Of Dr. Beard, journalist Monroe Miller once wrote, "His name is arguably the most recognizable among turfgrass academics . . . not just in this country, but wherever turf meetings and conferences have been held."

A long-time supporter of Turfgrass Producers International Dr. Beard was elected an Honorary Member of TPI in 1975.

Our sincere congratulations to Dr. Beard for this well deserved recognition and for his tremendous and enthusiastic contribution to the turfgrass industry.

- Jim Novak



The Grass Roots Initiative: A Science-Based Focus on Turfgrass

Turfgrass has a major impact on our quality of life. The U.S. National Arboretum's **Grass Roots Initiative** is a four-year, in-depth look at the science behind this familiar, but often misunderstood, landscape plant.



GRASS ROOTS—Grand Opening Thursday, October 16 U.S. National Arboretum, Washington, D.C.

Grass Roots is a four year Initiative that will explore turfgrass and the turfgrass industry unlike any program in history. The host of Grass Roots is the U.S. National Arboretum, a USDA-ARS research and education facility in Washington, DC.

The National Turfgrass Federation, Inc., a non-profit organization aligned with Grass Roots will explore the history, uses, benefits, value and issues of the turf industry, primarily through an outdoor turfgrass exhibit. In addition, programs, demonstrations and symposia, a web presence, and other medium will be used to explain and describe turf and the turf industry to the general public. USDA-ARS via cooperative agreement, is the main industry link to Grass Roots.



Grass Roots' Program Coordinator, Geoffrey Rinehart reports that more than 95% of the exhibit plant and hardscape materials have been installed and they look forward to finalizing and installing the interpretive signage and a few other finishing touches in the weeks ahead.

The 'Grass Roots' Grand Opening will officially open the exhibit and recognize sponsors that have made the exhibit possible.

The grand opening will take place at 3 p.m. on Thursday, October 16 at the U.S. National Arboretum. The official ceremony will be held at 5 p.m., followed by food and refreshments.



The soft light of late afternoon on the lawn display at the 'Grass Roots' exhibit. From right to left in the foreground are examples of 'Meyer' zoysiagrass, 'Tifway 419' bermudagrass, 'Sundancer' buffalograss, 'Raleigh' St. Augustinegrass, and 'Tifblair' centipedegrass. Beyond the Belgian block border in the background is the cool-season lawn area.

Almost all the sod needed for the exhibit has been installed. The few sections that need to be seeded, included the perennial ryegrass lawn area, small lawn areas for the fertilizer display. The perennial ryegrass turf seed demonstration will be planted after the 90 degree weather subsides.

Upon opening, the exhibit will feature 10 displays related to turfgrass benefits and functions. These include a golf display featuring a USGA green, a tee, and a fairway; a sports field featuring a comparison of natural grass and artificial surface; a lawn display featuring seven species of warm-season turf and six species of cool-season turf; a Kentucky bluegrass mowing "demonstration" area and information about proper mowing techniques; a "History of the Lawn" walk; a rain garden with grasses demonstrating grasses' ability to absorb water and filter nutrients; a display featuring USDA research on poverty oat grass (*Danthonia spicata*); a fertilizer display; an irrigation element showing common components of irrigation systems and an interactive irrigation pressure demonstration; and agricultural grass crop displays which will include a display of how perennial ryegrass is grown for seed production.

Turfgrass Producers International is proud to be a supporting sponsor of this educational initiative.

If you have any questions about the 'Grass Roots' Initiative, contact Geoffrey Rinehart' Grass Roots' Program Coordinator, U.S. National Arboretum at 202-245-5965 or via e-mail at geoffrey.rinehart@ars.usda.gov. Follow Grass Roots Initiative progress on Facebook: www.facebook.com/NTFGrassRootsInitiative and Twitter [@Grass_Roots_NTF](https://twitter.com/Grass_Roots_NTF)

LITTLE ROCK, WE HAVE A PROBLEM! ARMYWORMS MARCHING THROUGH ARKANSAS

Golf course superintendents, landscapers, homeowners and maybe even a few turfgrass producers in Arkansas may find themselves facing an unexpected invasion. The invaders? Armyworms.

A recent news report by Meredith Mitchel of KTHV-TV in Little Rock, Arkansas notified viewers that if they saw a brown lawn in their neighborhood, they might not want to blame the weather or a lazy homeowner. The culprit could be the armyworm.

She reports they look exactly like caterpillars and they can turn lawns from green to brown in a matter of days by eating the healthy blades of grass.

Golf course superintendent Don Armbrust at Pleasant Valley Country Club in Little Rock noticed a discoloration or what appeared to be drought-stress within the turfgrass area. He thought it was a strange considering the amount of rain the state received during the month of July. At the beginning of August, he discovered armyworms were eating away at the grass.

"With the cool, wet spring that we had it was definitely something we had to look out for and we ended up having to treat almost all the rough areas around the golf course."

The three-inch long insect has a history in Arkansas, but nothing to the scale of this year, where entomologist Gus Lorenz with the University of Arkansas Extension says the number of armyworms have reached record levels. Lorenz says a cooler and wetter summer has provided ideal conditions for the armyworms. Lorenz says they're capable of destroying half an acre in 48 hours.

"This year they started out in huge numbers and they just got bigger and bigger and now we're beginning to see this transition into people's yards."

Armyworm damage can look drought hit, but if you look closely you will see the worms eating away. That's how Armbrust says he knew he had a problem "The green vegetation is no longer there on the leaf-blade or the stem stalk of the plant."

Lorenz says armyworms can feed on any type of grass, but they especially like Bermuda Grass.

The problem can be treated with an insecticide, but homeowners should not treat until they have a problem.

To see KTHV-TV's full report go to:

<http://www.thv11.com/story/news/local/little-rock/2014/09/23/armyworms-attacking-grass-across-the-state/16118609/>

Armyworms march through Arkansas



Armyworms march through Arkansas



Screen captures from KTHV-TV news report.

FARM AUCTION

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28TH AT ZIM SOD FARMS IN ZIM, MINNESOTA

Auction
SOD FARM SELLOUT

TUES., OCT. 28
10:00 a.m.

Ford New Holland & Other Tractors
Trebro Harvester & Sod Equipment
Excavators & Forklifts
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ZIM SOD FARMS
Gary Blocker, Owner

Have sold our property and discontinuing business, so will sell the following at auction. Located from Virginia, MN, 18 miles S on Hwy. 7; OR, from Cotton, MN, on Hwy. 53, Arkola Rd. Co. 52 and W 5.6 miles to Hwy. 7 then N 7 miles, to 8735 Dibble Road, Zim, Minnesota 55738

Specific questions call Gary at 218-427-2252

Be on time not many small items! Tractors and larger items will start at 11:00 am. If you cannot attend and wish to bid online, go to www.reinhardtauctions.com hover over "Auctions" and click on "Bid Online" to register prior to auction day to bid from your computer (different terms apply).

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Project EverGreen Launches “Healthy Turf. Healthy Kids.”™ Initiative.

“Our goal is to ensure children have access to green space to play and exercise.” - Cindy Code

By Jeff Fenner—Partner B-Communications

Childhood obesity has doubled and adolescence obesity has quadrupled in the past 30 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. These startling statistics are due, in part, to a lack of physical activity that stems from the lack of recreational green spaces on which to play and exercise.

To turn the tables on this disturbing trend Project EverGreen is launching its “Healthy Turf. Healthy Kids.”™ Initiative. The initiative is done in collaboration with the Sports Turf Managers Association (www.stma.org) and the Turfgrass Water Conservation Alliance (www.tgwca.org).

Studies have confirmed there is significant value in having children spend time outdoors playing, and Project EverGreen’s “Healthy Turf. Healthy Kids.” initiative was created to restore and revitalize green spaces for kids to play, exercise and connect including sports fields and parks. Not only do yards, parks and sports fields promote a healthier lifestyle, they also contribute to economic growth, community development and improve the environment.

“This initiative underscores the core objectives Project EverGreen stands for which is to develop green spaces to help communities thrive,” says Cindy Code, executive

director of Project EverGreen. “Our goal is to ensure children have access to green space to play and exercise.”

Project EverGreen is launching the “Healthy Turf. Healthy Kids.” initiative in its hometown of Cleveland with the revitalization of the soccer field behind the Michael J. Zone Recreation Center on city’s near west side that is used by neighborhood youth and adult sports teams.

The project involves aerating, fertilizing, and overseeding the playing surface as well as removing rocks and bricks embedded in the soil. Local contractors, led by Weed Man Cleveland, will oversee the renovation work that also is scheduled for completion by early October.

“Safe and healthy playing surfaces are vital for our kids’ enjoyment and development,” Code says. “Understanding the value and benefits of green spaces to our communities from an early age is crucial to the long-term sustainability of outdoor spaces.”

Plans call for additional “Healthy Turf. Healthy Kids.” projects in select cities across the United States in 2015.

To learn more about Project Evergreen visit their website at: <http://projectevergreen.org>



The Value-Added Benefit of Turfgrass Sod



PHOTO: Jim Novak

Home lawns, as well as turfgrass on sports fields, may be seeded, vegetatively planted with stolons, rhizomes or plugs, or sodded. Turfgrass sod has the advantage of providing instant ground cover and, following a short period for root establishment, is ready for use.

As a seeded or vegetatively propagated sod farm field develops into a finished product for transport and sale, the professional grower has influence on the quality of the turfgrass in ways that are often difficult for the home gardener and landscape horticulturist to achieve through direct on site seeding. Thus, there is value-added to the turfgrass sod commodity as it develops from seed that costs the sower of seed at home, time and money to realize.

— Dr. Eliot C. Roberts

As featured in

GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

LEADING THE ONLINE REVOLUTION IN COURSE MANAGEMENT

TPI raises money for The Lawn Institute

[Industry News](#) — Jim Novak TPI

Tricycle race, live auction help support turf research and education.

Turfgrass Producers International preceded their 2014 Field Day with a Preview Jubilee that provided attendees an opportunity to get a personal tour of Johnson Farms in Deerfield, NJ prior to the actual Field Day scheduled the following day. In addition to seeing an impressive farming operation that covers over 1600 acres with quality nursery stock such as trees, perennials, shrubs and ornamental grasses, they also saw 800 acres of premium turfgrass sod. But what really made the Jubilee especially memorable were a few activities that helped raise money for **The Lawn Institute** to support turfgrass research and education.



The Lawn Institute's first tricycle race saw seven competitive teams sponsored by Barenbrug USA, Bucyrus Equipment Company, Grassland Oregon, Kesmac Brouwer, Trebro Manufacturing, Trimax Mowing Systems and Turf Merchants, Inc., compete to raise money for the foundation. Many thought the race would be a hit but the competitive spirit of the 42 riders (six per team) and the excitement of on-

lookers who entered a 50/50 raffle and cheered their team on exceeded everyone's expectations. The crowd pleasing competition saw onlookers cheering their teams and helped to raise nearly \$5,000 for the foundation.

A Live Auction followed the trike race and generous sponsorship support raised an additional \$20,000 for the foundation. John Owens of Kesmac Brouwer served as the auctioneer as bidding commenced on assorted items that included a prized collectable J.I. Case 300 Tractor (1956-58), a Columbia Heritage Lawn Mower, a two-day Duck Hunting Trip in Missouri and a three-day snowmobiling trip through West Yellowstone, Montana. All the tricycles featured in the tricycle race were donated by sponsoring companies for the auction.

The Lawn Institute was created in 1955 to assist in and encourage the improvement of lawns and sports turf through research and education. TLI monitors, interprets and reports on the latest advances in turfgrass research, landscape horticulture, and agronomic science. TLI also funds research conducted by some of the world's most respected turfgrass scientists and institutions.



Sponsoring an Extension Specialist is Good PR and it's Good Business!

Have you considered providing TPI membership to a Turfgrass Extension Specialist in your area?

ONLY \$55

The contribution Turfgrass Extension Specialists make to our industry can't be overstated. They are a tremendous resource of information. They speak in behalf of our industry. They provide invaluable insight into on-going research, timely information and identify existing opportunities.

The cost for a TPI member to sponsor a Turfgrass Extension Specialist is only \$55 a year per individual. That's not much when you consider your sponsorship will enable the recipient of your choosing to receive issues of *Turf News* magazine, the Business Management Newsletter and other important information distributed by TPI.

When you sponsor a Turfgrass Extensions Specialists they will receive a letter from TPI acknowledging your support of their efforts and the benefits they can expect as a result of your generosity.

Sponsoring a Turfgrass Extension Specialist is good for our industry, it's good for TPI and it's good for your business.

For more information contact the TPI office at 847-649-5555 or 800-405-8873. TPI will send a personal letter to the individual you sponsor and acknowledge your gift membership.

"TO ME, A LUSH CARPET OF PINE NEEDLES OR SPONGY GRASS IS MORE WELCOME THAN THE MOST LUXURIOUS PERSIAN CARPET."

– Helen Keller



At the tender age of eight months TPI's Executive Director, Melanie Stanton appears to have had an affection for natural grass.

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Ostfold Gress AS

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<http://www.ostfoldferdigplen.no/>

Welcome to Østfold Grass— The leading producer of ready lawn!

We have supplied finished lawns throughout Norway for over 20 years, from Mandal in the south to Alta in the north. In addition, we guarantee top quality finished lawn and short delivery time. As the leading producer of ready lawn we dare to claim that with us the grass is always a bit greener!

General:

Østfold Grass is a finished lawn of versatile quality turf, that provides an excellent, low-growing and green appearance. The grass is easy to maintain, durable and free of weeds. The grass looks outstanding the day it is installed, and with good care and management it will continue to maintain a great appearance for years to come. It's light weight, easy to install and sets up quickly, making our finished lawn the first choice of professional landscape gardeners and landscape contractors. It's perfect for places where one sets strict requirements for appearance, durability, and where you want to have a low maintenance regime.

Sports Grass:

In addition to being the largest in Norway in supplying grass to individuals Østfold's Grass and Sports Grøntanlegg have become specialists in the manufacture and laying of sports grass.

We can tailor a solution to suit your needs so you get the best possible results. We can supply different sports with different grass seed mixtures as required that are best for your site.

We have our own production of green and fairway. We can supply different species by the standard of the rest of the field.

All our production is sown and harvested on a sand-based growth medium. This makes the job very easy if you need to replace or add a new green on a golf course. Call us for a friendly conversation. We have the perfect solution for your natural turf to shine!



Owner Johnny Trandem proudly walks his field, a blend comprised of 60% bluegrass (*Poa pratensis* L.) and 40 % Red fescue (*Festuca rubra*). It's 18 months old from planting to harvesting. He reports they mow the grass at a height of two-inches.



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Since 2004



“Artificial turf is a virtually maintenance-free product.” - Crowley's Concepts

Crowley's Concepts - Landscape Design & Development <http://www.crowleysclippers.com/About-Artificial-Turf-Medford-MA>

Dr. Arron Patton, Associate Professor/ Turfgrass Extension Specialist, Purdue University Dept. of Agronomy, along with many others, has challenged the suggestion by anyone that artificial turf is maintenance free.

“It is a myth that synthetic fields require less maintenance than natural turfgrass fields or to say that artificial turf fields are maintenance free.

“Synthetic fields require 1) additional infill, 2) irrigation because of unacceptably high temperatures on warm-sunny days, 3) chemical disinfectants, 4) sprays to reduce static cling and odors, 5) drainage repair and maintenance, 6) erasing and repainting temporary lines, and 7) removing organic matter accumulation.”

In a presentation by the Michigan State University, Certified Sports Turf Manager, it was cited that the typical annual maintenance costs of their artificial turf fields ranged from \$13,720-\$39,220, while the typical annual maintenance costs of their natural turf fields had a similar range of \$8,133-\$48,960 *.

- Dr. Arron Patton

* Fouty, Amy. “A Sport Field Manager’s Perspective: Synthetic Turf Considerations, Maintenance Costs and Concerns” May 11, 2005 presentation at the Synthetic Turf Infill Seminar, Detroit, Michigan. Reviewed by Lynn Brakeman in “Experts Spell Out True Cost of Synthetic Turf Maintenance.” Athletic Turf News, May 24, 2005.

<http://turf.uark.edu/turfhelp/archives/021109.html>

Okay, okay, so it’s not entirely maintenance-free. But is anything really maintenance free? Well anyway, might we interest you in our great maintenance program or our wide assortment of equipment to maintain your not quite so maintenance-free synthetic field?

The following is an actual maintenance program and /or service program recommended by a contractor who specializes in maintaining maintenance-free artificial fields:

- Regular Maintenance
- Magnetic Cleaning
- Deep Vacuum Cleaning
- De-compaction
- Fiber Grooming
- Cleansers and Disinfectants
- Surface Protectants
- Adding Infill
- Seam Repair
- Emergency Repairs
- Skin Clay Removal Baseball/Softball Fields
- Flood and Run-off Mitigation
- Painting Lines, Logos, and Removal
- Gmax, Lead, and Other Tests
- Total Refurbishment and Renovation
- Information Management and Storage
- Independent 3rd Party Diagnostics, Testing, and Consultation For New and Replacement Fields

Or you can purchase assorted maintenance equipment for your maintenance-free field:

- Sweeper/cleaner
- Brush/broom
- Tines for decompacting
- Tow behind magnet
- A sprayer to knock down/static cling
- Backpack blower and/or pull-behind big blower
- Walk painter if lines are not inlaid and paint remover
- Sewing/patching glue kit
- Assorted snow blowers
- Irrigation system or other way to apply water
- Extra turf and crumb rubber
- Vacuum/ShopVac
- Adhesive glue, gum remover, utility knife, needle and thread, etc.
- Sand for sub-base low spots
- Tractor
- Utility vehicle and cart
- Etc., etc., etc., etc., etc.

- Jim Novak

TurfSide-UP



YOU WON'T BELIEVE THIS BUT . . .

"We knew something was wrong when we didn't smell that sweet fragrance of freshly cut grass."

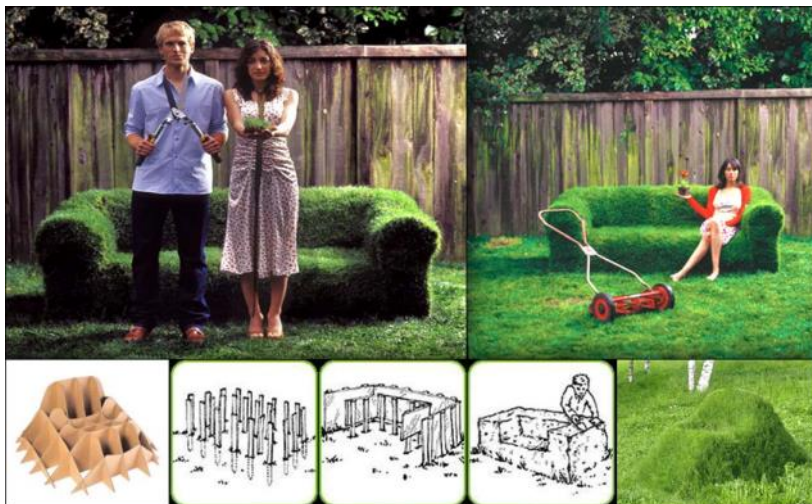
This supposedly happened at an unidentified high school somewhere in the state of Maryland. It seems someone started to mow the school's playing field only to realize after a few passes that they were cutting an artificial turf field.

Who was the culprit? No one in the media seems to know for sure; perhaps it was a newly contracted landscaper, a first-time landscaping crew, or maybe an incredibly absent-minded and somewhat vision impaired field maintenance man.

The print media picked up this story (including the Washington Post) but to date no one has identified the specific school or the guilty party.

- Jim Novak

DO IT YOURSELF GRASS SOFA



Artist/architect Greg Tate in California has taken the concept of sod sculpture and has placed function over form, creating sod sofas! He came up with the idea of sprouting a couch, creating literal lawn furniture! And he's been kind enough to share his idea with the world, publishing instructions for how to make a D-I-Y couch that's covered in clover. It's pretty simple: basically, just use temporary forms, pack the mud into whatever shape you want, then cover it in chicken wire and rolls of sod. How easy is that?

- Figure the dirt you need by multiplying the dimensions of the couch you plan to make (Height x Width x Depth = Volume of Earth).
- Next, locate a suitable spot. Placement is key: There'll be no moving once you've begun. Clear the area of grass and weeds until you have a level swath of dirt, then use a stick to sketch the shape of the couch into the dirt with a stick.
- Drive the wood stakes into the ground along the perimeter of your sofa-shaped sketch, every 18" or so, to a depth of about 12". These will secure the form.
- Attach waferboard to the stakes to create the walls of the form (see illustration). Use a handsaw to trim the waferboard to size. Drive in a nail every 4" along each stake to secure the boards.
- Start shoveling dirt into the form. Here's where things get messy. Once a foot of dirt is in place, water lightly and compress by stomping around on top of it.
- Once the basic shape is in place and secure, carefully remove the form works.
- Mold the shape to your liking. Remove any loose debris and sprinkle the sofa and other areas you'll be sodding with a healthy layer of fertilizer and gypsite. Water lightly.
- For extra support, lay strips of poultry netting over the arms and back.
- Lay the sod. Press down the edges to create a smooth surface clear to the ground. Stagger the rows so the seams don't fall in a line, and use chopsticks or planting stakes to keep them in place over the wire.
- During the next few weeks, water your sofa often, soaking it thoroughly. Once the sod has taken root, remove the chopsticks or planting stakes. Trim as needed.

Our thanks to **Nancy Aerni** of Turf Merchants for bringing this story to our attention.

Oklahoma Sod Field Days

October 3rd and 4th OSPA
Oklahoma Sod Field Days

Richard Stunkard's Tulsa Grass and Sod Farms

For more information contact:

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Phone: (918) 299-7743

Mailing Address:

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Tulsa OK, 74137



INTRODUCING THE NEW DR. HENRY W. INDYK SCHOLARSHIP



The Dr. Henry W. Indyk Scholarship was established by The Lawn Institute (TLI) Board of Trustees in 2006 as a way to honor a founding father of Turfgrass Producers International (TPI) and to help to mitigate the rising costs of college and post-graduate education.

The scholarship is available to all Class A and B TPI members, their family members, their employees and their employees' family members who are pursuing higher education (an associate, bachelor, masters or doctorate degree). TLI will provide a scholarship valued up to \$10,000 (US). This includes an initial award of \$2,500, renewable up to three times, pending certain criteria.

Please visit TheLawnInstitute.org for complete details on the NEW scholarship program.

Applications are now being accepted through January 15, 2015
[CLICK HERE](#) to download the 2015 Dr. Henry W. Indyk Scholarship application!



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Greening-Up California Lawns During the Drought



Water restrictions and a severe drought have taken a toll on California lawns. But some entrepreneurs see it as an opportunity to offer homeowners a short term and temporary solution to browning lawns that have gone dormant. The solution? Lawn painting.

The Sacramento Bee reports that contractors are using nontoxic, emerald-hued paints to transform lawns that appear dead and turning them into visually appealing carpets of green.

The Bee reported that on a recent July afternoon, David Bartlett, owner of Xtreme Green Grass, stood on the yellowing grass of a residential home, a backpack sprayer on his back, and proceeded to walk slowly back and forth dousing the grass in a natural, pigment-based paint.

Contributing writer, Claudia Buck reported that Bartlett started painting lawns three years ago, but this summer his business has tripled, going from 10 yards a month to a couple a day.

"People that have brown yards are obviously concerned about water, or they are afraid to get a \$500 fine, otherwise they would water their yard," Bartlett said. "I'm cheaper than a fine."

Bartlett, 36, paints lawns for homeowners who are tired of brown yards as well as people who are selling their home and want to increase its curb appeal, he said. Based in Sacramento, Bartlett said he gets lawn-painting jobs from customers as far away as San Francisco and Redding.

Lawn painting, isn't new, reported Buck, she says it's been used for years by golf courses, hotel resorts and athletic fields.



Buck contacted The Lawn Institute to see what TLI's position was on painting lawns. "While drab, dreary lawns are unsightly, they aren't necessarily a sign that a lawn is dead. During a drought or the cold seasons, "It's a natural process for grass to go into dormancy," said Jim Novak, spokesman for The Lawn Institute, a research arm of Turfgrass Producers International in East Dundee, Ill. "When a lawn goes brown, it's basically going to sleep; it's a very natural cycle. When it gets irrigated again, it will rejuvenate, but until then, for homeowners who are concerned about the cosmetic color of their grass, hiring a professional lawn painter is perfectly fine," Novak said, "as long as it's not 'some fly-by-night' operation that's doing something detrimental to the grass or the environment."

For homeowners who can't bear their browning lawns, lawn painting offers a temporary solution. Homeowner Todd Sternzon has hired a contractor several times to paint his front yard grass. "I've tried to maintain my lawn as best I can with the two days of water a week that we've been allotted, but it's definitely taken a toll. You get some brown spots and patchy spots," he said. For about \$120 every four months, painting his lawn costs less than a fertilizer service, Sternzon said, and the results are immediate. "It doesn't have a fake look," Sternzon said, "but you can tell something's been done because it is so green overnight. The neighbors keep teasing me that I'm going to get a fine from the water company just because my lawn looks so good."

Watching the Grass Grow

The environmental benefits of a healthy lawn are often taken for granted and so too are the men and women who grow turfgrass.

By Jim Novak

The National Turfgrass Research Initiative (NTRI) states, "Millions of acres of turfgrass on home lawns, commercial landscapes, roadsides, parks, athletic fields, golf courses and sod farms improve our quality of life by providing open space, recreational and business opportunities, enhanced property values, and the conservation of important natural resources. With its above-ground network of leaves, shoots, and stems and an extensive fibrous root system below, turfgrass removes dust and dirt from the air, reduces soil erosion, filters water, and produces a safe playing surface for children, adults, and athletes. In addition, scientific research has shown that hospital patients recover faster when beautiful landscapes are in view. Therefore, turfgrass not only enhances the value and beauty of our lives but also contributes to improvements in our physical and mental health."

They go on to state, "The turfgrass industry consists of many diverse groups including millions of homeowners, athletic field managers, lawn care operators, golf course superintendents, architects, developers and owners, landscape designers and contractors, seed and sod producers, parks and grounds superintendents, roadside and vegetation managers and cemetery managers."

"Turfgrass beautifies tens of millions of home lawns, provides safe playing surfaces on over 700,000 athletic fields, outdoor recreation for nearly 26 million golfers on over 17,000 golf courses and economic opportunities for tens of thousands of seed and sod producers, lawn care operators and landscapers. In addition, turfgrasses provide safety and dust control along millions of miles of highways and thousands of airport runways."

"Turfgrasses beautify our parks and landscapes. They are part of a larger "green industry" that improves the physical and mental health of Americans, particularly in crowded urban and suburban areas. Finally, turfgrasses provide environmental protection and enhancement by purifying and protecting our water, soil and air wherever they are grown. Turfgrasses truly touch each and every American in some way every day!"

Few people realize that well maintained turfgrass lawns have many attributes that are not only appealing and desirable they also benefit our environment. Howard Siegrist, Extension Educator, Ohio State University once remarked, "No other living groundcover is as durable as turfgrass."

And it's not just the durability of turfgrass, or the way it looks that enriches the communities in which we live, it's the often overlooked environmental benefits. There are approximately 2,200 turfgrass producers across the United States and perhaps as many if not more around the world. An uninformed onlooker might suggest they're just turfgrass producers, but that would be a gross understatement.

Consider these facts:

- The 8.5 million grass plants in a healthy 10,000-square-foot lawn absorb 6,000 gallons of rainwater.
- An average golf course of 150 acres can absorb 12 million gallons of water during a 3-inch rainfall.
- Every 2.5 acres of golf course turf sequesters about one ton of carbon from the air per year.
- Earthworm populations of 200 to 300 earthworms per square yard are common in turfgrass lawns. They increase the amount of macrospore space within the soil, which results in increased soil water infiltration rates and water-retention capacity.
- U.S. lawns remove 5 percent of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.
- Turfgrass traps more than 12 million tons of dust and dirt annually. Trapped particles also include allergens such as plant pollen.
- A 2500-square-foot lawn produces enough oxygen for a family of four.
- Eight average-size lawns have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air conditioning.

NOTE: This article is going to be distributed nationally by Home Improvement Time



Dawn breaks as harvesting of turfgrass sod begins. An automated harvester cuts, rolls and pallets the turf as a forklift follows for loading on a truck. PHOTOS: Jim Novak