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The Lawn Institute reaches out to drought weary Californians on live TV broadcasts.



Screen capture of Cody Stark, co-host of “Good Day Sacramento” interviewing Melanie Stanton, Executive Director of The Lawn Institute during KMAX TV—The CW31 broadcast.



Screen capture of Stanton with KCRA TV's Deirdre Fitzpatrick during a segment titled, “Tips to keep your lawn green during a drought”.

Melanie Stanton, Executive Director of The Lawn Institute, appeared live on morning television programs in Sacramento, California on August 23 and 24. During the broadcasts Stanton provided viewers with tips for maintaining natural grass lawns during periods of drought and shared the environmental benefits that turfgrass provides.

Our thanks to Harmony Turfgrass (Harmony Outdoor Brands) who facilitated this opportunity and is sponsoring the appearances.



Mike Pope, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer for Harmony Outdoor Brands said, “The Harmony team thinks it’s vital that turfgrass producers share tips with homeowners about efficient, effective lawn care programs and the benefits that natural grass provides.

“We are proud to help The Lawn Institute spread that message at the epicenter of the extraordinary drought events happening in California.”

Stanton appeared on Sunday’s “Good Day Weekend” segment on Channel 31, KMAX UPN and on Channel 3, KCRA NBC. Both stations reach the Sacramento, Stockton and Modesto, CA markets.

Segments can be viewed at:



<http://www.kcra.com/news/tips-to-keep-your-lawn-green-in-a-drought/34884112>



<http://gooddaysacramento.cbslocal.com/video/category/spoken-word-good-day/3284619-the-lawn-institute/>

TPI Goes to Washington

“Day On The Hill”

Washington, D.C.

July 19-21, 2015



U.S. Capital under renovation. Photo by D. Ramey Logan

TPI's Executive Director, Melanie Stanton was among attendees for the “Day on the Hill” that was coordinated by the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP). This annual effort provides NALP members and other green industry organizations such as TPI with an opportunity to set up appointments with their congressional representatives to address issues impacting grass and the landscaping industry and discuss issues that are vital to the future of the industry and to make sure our voice is heard on Capitol Hill.

Stanton was joined by TPI members, Doug Lechluder of Laytonsville Landscaping in Maryland and Mark Weekley of Chantilly Turf Farm in Virginia. They met with the staff of Senator Dick Durman (D-IL) who sits on the committees for energy and environment and they met with staff members of Senator Mark Kirk (R-IL). Among topics discussed, immigration issues and legislation on EPA restrictions on waterways, etc.

The NALP also points out that Legislative Days is an opportunity for landscape and lawn care industry professionals to increase their knowledge about legislative issues that affect their businesses and to participate directly in the political process.

Included among key Legislative Day Issues were:

- Comprehensive Immigration Reform
- The H-2B Program
- Seasonal Employee Healthcare
- Waters of the United States

NALP provided participants with Position Topics for discussion including the following:

SUBJECT: The H-2B Program

BACKGROUND:

Landscape service companies are stewards of the environment, helping local communities to enhance and maintain the health and beauty of their green spaces. These companies also provide U.S. jobs and contribute to the local and national economy. Landscape companies will continue to grow and add jobs provided they have access to a functioning seasonal H-2B program.

The H-2B program provides an opportunity for seasonal businesses to operate at a greater capacity, retain their full-time workers and contribute to their local economies. Seasonal workers help support many upstream and downstream jobs. Every one H-2B worker is estimated to create and sustain 4.64 American jobs.

Unfortunately, the program's annual 66,000 cap (33,000 for each half of the fiscal year) is not adequate to meet the demands of a growing economy. The cap for the first half of fiscal year 2015 was reached on January 26. The second-half cap was reached on March 26, leaving many seasonal employers shut out of the program with no access to legal seasonal laborers. The National Association of Landscape Professionals urges Congress to re-instate an expired provision of the law that would exempt from the cap H-2B workers who participated in the program during one of the previous three fiscal years, obeyed the law, and complied with all past visa terms. Without this cap relief, many companies are looking at closing their businesses, laying off American workers, or turning away customers.

The H-2B program is extremely costly and complicated, yet employers turn to the program because it is the only way they are able to hire legal seasonal workers. The program requires employers to undertake extensive recruitment of American workers, gain approval from four government agencies, and pay a premium wage. Two new regulations issued April 29 by the Departments of Homeland Security and Labor, however, have made the program even more expensive and burdensome, but employers continue to look to the program because they have no other option.

The comprehensive program rule is virtually identical to a 2012 final H-2B program rule that has been blocked by a federal court since its release. Both the new interim final rule and the enjoined 2012 program rule require employers to hire any qualified U.S. worker up to 21 days before the H-2B worker is scheduled to begin, even though the employer may have already offered the job to the H-2B worker, assisted with the visa process and paid transportation, housing and other associated fees.

The rule also shortens the duration of seasonal visas and requires employers to pay transportation and subsistence costs for H-2B and U.S. workers. In addition, the rules include provisions that require employers to pay workers with “corresponding employment” duties similar wages, even though some of those employees may have additional supervisory responsibilities.

The new wage rule is similar to a 2013 interim final wage rule that the program has been operating under since April 2013; but the new rule includes much greater limitations on the use of wage surveys. Because wage surveys often provide a more accurate representation of wages for a given occupation in a given geographic area, many employers

have used wage surveys to determine fair and appropriate wages for seasonal jobs. The Department of Labor reviews and approves these surveys as part of the foreign labor certification process.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Please pass an H-2B returning worker exemption and eliminate new burdensome Department of Labor wage and program requirements through appropriations or any other appropriate legislation.

For more information, contact Tom Delaney, National Association of Landscape Professionals director of government affairs, at tom@landscapeprofessionals.org or 800-395-2522.

SUBJECT: Clean Water Act: Waters of the United States Rule

Support H.R.1732, “The Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015” and S. 1140, “The Federal Water Quality Protection Act of 2015”

BACKGROUND:

National Association of Landscape Professionals members help homeowners and businesses maintain their lawns and landscapes and take pride in their communities. Pesticides are an important tool in maintaining green spaces and protecting people and property from pests, such as ticks and rodents, which can carry disease. They are also used to control weeds that can exacerbate allergies. Unfortunately, the use of these beneficial products may be limited under the May 27, 2015, Clean Water Act: Waters of the United States regulation issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). The rule could also restrict the ability of landscape professionals to install trees, grass, and other plants that play a vital role in reducing runoff and erosion, filtering groundwater, and sequestering carbon dioxide.

The new rule will greatly expand the scope of waters subject to the Clean Water Act (CWA) regulation well beyond the law’s intent. Under the rule, permits may be required for activities such as removing debris and vegetation from a ditch, applying pesticides, building a fence or pond, or be required by cities when discharging pollutants. Permitting can be a costly and time-consuming process that requires small businesses to hire attorneys and environmental consultants. In addition, the future development potential of certain land may be affected, which could diminish its value. Businesses also could be subjected to litigation under citizen suit provisions of the CWA.

The proposed definition includes a number of terms that are subject to interpretation, such as “adjacent,” “riparian area” and “floodplain.” For the first time, “tributary” is defined and includes bodies of water such as man-made and natural ditches. “Other waters” also may be subject to the jurisdiction of the CWA on a case-by-case basis if there is a “significant nexus” to traditional navigable water.

The expanded jurisdiction may result in significant added legal and regulatory costs for businesses. The new designations will create confusion for lawn care and landscape professionals, and make it more difficult for them to maintain their customers’ property.

The National Association of Landscape Professionals supports the “Federal Water Quality Protection Act” (S. 1140) and the “Regulatory Integrity Protection Act” (H.R. 1732). S. 1140 directs EPA and the Corps to issue a revised rule based on certain Congressional principles. Similarly, HR 1732 halts the rulemaking and requires the agencies to develop a new rule only after meaningful dialogue and consultation with state and local governments and other affected stakeholders, including small businesses.

The rule would regulate man-made water features on private property

- The rule would expand the scope of waters subject to National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for application of EPA-registered products used to control algae, weeds, mosquitoes, and other pests in many natural and man-made residential community lakes, ponds, and fountains.
- Under rule, Clean Water Act Section 404 (wetlands dredge and fill) permits could be required to install trees, plants, and other landscape features on private property that are deemed to be in a floodplain or include Waters of the United States.

Additional NALP position topics can be viewed at: <https://www.landscapeprofessionals.org/nalp/advocacy/position-statements.aspx>

UPDATE: Clean Water Act: Waters of the United States Rule

Support H.R.1732, "The Regulatory Integrity Protection Act of 2015" and S. 1140, "The Federal Water Quality Protection Act of 2015"

August 28, 2015

When Melanie Stanton, Mark Weekley and Doug Lechliden visited the Senate offices of Mark Kirk and Dick Durbin in July, they left literature with staffers in both offices encouraging the Senators to support the Federal Clean Water Protection Act. The following is a current update on this sensitive issue.



UPDATE — as reported 8/28/15 Federal Judge Blocks Clean Water Rule

Late yesterday, a federal judge in North Dakota blocked implementation of EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' final Clean Water Rule, which was slated to take effect today. EPA has suggested that the injunction will only impact 13 states. Our lawyers are examining the court order, but our preliminary read of the order suggests it applies to all 50 states.

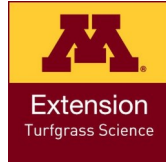
In issuing a preliminary injunction against the rule, Judge Ralph Erickson of the District Court for the District of North Dakota found the 13 states that brought the lawsuit would likely be harmed without court intervention.

Following the ruling, EPA said in a statement the injunction only impacts the thirteen states that filed for it: Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. EPA said the rule will take effect today for all other states and the Agency is evaluating the court order.

In the meantime, we are continuing to vigorously push for relief from Congress. Thanks to everyone who took the time to call their Senator's district office yesterday in support of Federal Clean Water Protection Act (S.1140). We are continuing to encourage the Senate to pass this legislation. The House passed similar legislation earlier this year.

Several other Waters of the United States (WOTUS) related lawsuits by states and industry groups are pending in other jurisdictions. To read the news article, [CLICK HERE](#).

Editor: Allison Donaghy
adonaghy@pestfacts.org



University Of Minnesota Researcher Pushes For Drought-Resistant Grasses On Campus

WCCO TV in Minneapolis reports, “Drought isn’t just a concern in California, other states have seen conditions reach a concerning level. Sam Bauer, a turfgrass expert at the University of Minnesota envisions an extreme makeover at the University. He’s hoping to eventually replace all 200 acres of campus grass with drought-resistant grass.



“With our typical species like blue grass or rye grass, you might be using 30 million gallons or more to maintain that in a year,” said Bauer. So to cut way down on water usage, Bauer is putting his stock in fescues. Namely, “tall fescue grass.” Tall fescues look similar to Kentucky Blue Grass, which is what you see on most Minnesota lawns, but the University recommends tall fescues because of their deeper root system.

“Tall fescue has a bigger reservoir to draw water from thanks to that deeper root system,” said Bauer.

WCCO reported that you can already find the grass growing on parts of campus. In fact, Bauer said last summer, patches of tall fescues only needed to be watered once. Tall fescue grass seed has only been on the market for about three years, but it’s quickly gaining popularity.

“If you went to these tall fescues, maybe you would be watering them once a month,” Bauer said. “So there’s big potential there to save 30,000 gallons in a month.” And Bauer thinks a drought-ridden state like California could benefit from the type of grass they grow in the lab, especially in Northern California.

At the university’s turfgrass research center, fescues have been put through an extreme test. An automated rain-out shelter imitates a drought. And it keeps water off the grass for weeks, yet fescues remain green.

Even “fine fescue grass,” which is a combination of five grasses mixed together, is becoming the grass of choice at many Minnesota golf courses. Fine fescue has a shorter root system, but they don’t require much water in order to thrive. “These fine fescues can really provide firm and fast conditions,” Bauer said. “That’s what we are seeing at a lot of our major golf tournaments, which are now being held on fine fescues.” They’re also becoming more available to property owners. Three years ago there weren’t any fine fescue sod farms in Minnesota. Now there are five.



Bauer said you may pay more for fescue seed, but you’ll save money and your lawn down the road. “I would say you can certainly reduce your usage to a half, to even a quarter, of what you are currently working with,” Bauer said. He stated the U of M currently has 50 different turfgrass studies going on at the research center. He said within five years there will be at least two new types of grass seed that will require even less water than fescues.



<http://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2015/06/08/u-of-m-researcher-pushes-for-drought-resistant-grasses-on-campus/>

As artificial turf grows, producers of natural grass wince . . . or do they?

[Total Landscape Care](#) - LAWN MAINTENANCE

By: [David Rountree](#)



Tobey Wagner, owner and president of Sod Solutions.

With Mother Nature in his corner – not to mention a cheering section comprising nine out of 10 Americans, according to a recent Harris Poll – you’d think Tobey Wagner would be content to ignore any limited gains in market share enjoyed by the U.S. synthetic turf industry.

You’d be wrong about that: The owner and president of Sod Solutions is anything but sanguine about artificial grass, which Wagner clearly sees as

a pox on humankind. “I can’t think of a more harmful thing that we could do to our environment than using synthetics,” he says. “The only reason synthetic turf is used at all is just a lack of education about the reality of it.”

Based in Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, [Sod Solutions](#) is a developer and marketer of turf grasses. Its founder talks about synthetic grass like someone who competes against it and Wagner markets natural turf with the same competitive urgency.



Victor Lanfranco, co-owner of Synthetic Grass Warehouse.

For Victor Lanfranco, co-owner of the nation’s largest distributor of artificial turf, [Synthetic Grass Warehouse](#) (SGW) in Anaheim, California, competing effectively means doing a sufficient job of explaining how much better artificial grass is today than it was 25 years ago. “The engineering – the technology – has come a long, long way,

“One of the things the healthiest cities in this country have in common is an abundance of natural landscaping.” - Tobey Wagner

“California is ground zero for synthetic grass, followed by Arizona and Texas, then Nevada and Colorado. Those states account for 80 percent of sales.” - Victor Lanfranco

especially in the last decade,” he says. “It’s now a widely accepted product for the landscape, not just athletic fields.”

SGW is 100-percent focused on the distribution of artificial turf – most of it from [TigerTurf](#), one of the industry’s top brands, which is owned by [TenCate](#) subsidiary [TenCate Grass](#) of Union City, Georgia, and the remainder from Dallas-based [Everlast Turf](#). SGW does offer a few accessory products such as chemical treatments for areas used by pets.

Lanfranco says SGW has achieved revenue increases of 15-20 percent a year for the past decade. “The drought (in California) may take us to 30 percent this year,” he says, insistent that the growth of the industry as a whole is obvious, notwithstanding the scarcity of publicly traded artificial-turf companies, which would be required to make key financial information public. And to be fair, the same limitation applies to the natural turf industry.

“Keeping up with demand is a challenge,” Lanfranco says, not for SGW alone but for all companies that make and sell synthetic turf.

In separate telephone interviews, Wagner and Lanfranco talked about their own businesses as well as the other’s. The subject was deliberately limited to landscaping for commercial, residential and governmental customers; in other words, athletic fields – a huge but different kind of business in many respects – were purposely excluded.

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As artificial turf grows, producers of natural grass wince (Cont'd)

Wagner, after graduating from Auburn University with a degree in mechanical engineering, worked his way into the turf industry, eventually starting Sod Solutions about 21 years ago. "Lots of people in the business see us as a marketing company," he says, "but we have horticulturalists and others in that area working with us every day. We're very involved in (the) development" of grasses. Sod Solutions' clients include turf-growing operations nationwide, with which it forms affiliation agreements. Wagner's company also has a sizable marketing arm that offers tools such as website design and management, helping to ensure turf growers are connected with buyers, he says.

"This is a business that requires knowing the people in our industry and knowing their work," says Wagner. He believes the marketing deliverables provided by his company are anything but a sideline; on the contrary, he sees business-to-business marketing as one of Sod Solutions' highest value-adds for its customers.

Wagner states flatly that he believes the synthetic turf market "has peaked" and he's confident Americans will continue to want natural grass in their landscapes. He may be wrong about any topping out of the artificial grass market, but he's almost certainly right about the country's attachment to its lawns. In a May 2015 Harris Poll sponsored by the [National Association of Landscape Professionals](#) (NALP), the trade association reported that nine out of 10 people surveyed said they would "prefer to live in a home surrounded by trees, grass and other living plants." Respondents also gave high marks to natural green spaces on corporate campuses and government sites.

Like NALP's membership, both Wagner and Lanfranco are aware the use of natural turf is an issue on which the [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) has chimed in years ago, in fact, through its voluntary [WaterSense](#) program – and in California and some other areas of the desert Southwest, no one disputes that water conservation is imperative. How could they? The 4-year-old drought there gives every indication of stretching into five.

Several people interviewed in the San Diego area during the last two days of July came around in different ways to saying Californians are simultaneously hopeful and apprehensive about the prospect of an [El Niño](#) late this year or early in 2016 – hopeful it will bring rain aplenty and especially mountain snow this winter, apprehensive about mudslides, flooding or lightning-ignited fires.



Photo courtesy of Sod Solutions

For Wagner, the case for natural grass is a slam dunk, yet he makes it as if he's standing on the floor of the U.S. Senate: "One of the things the healthiest cities in this country have in common is an abundance of natural landscaping," he says. "Are we going to go the route of plastic shrubs, plastic trees?"

Lanfranco, to be sure, is equally prepared to make the case for synthetic turf in landscapes. And as you'd expect, his arguments alternate between water conservation and reduced maintenance costs.

But make no mistake: He's also a salesman who believes in his product. Today, Lanfranco says, the quality and reliability of synthetic grass, coupled with the remarkable improvements in the aesthetics of the best products, have reached a level at which "it just makes sense," whether in commercial and residential applications or on school playgrounds, roadway medians and other government sites.

Lanfranco readily acknowledges that the artificial turf market in the United States is concentrated in the West. "California is ground zero for synthetic grass," he says, "followed by Arizona and Texas, then Nevada and Colorado. Those states account for 80 percent of sales," – again, in the landscaping part of the business.

And while he's all too aware of the competition from the natural turf industry, the success of his own has produced plenty of competition for SGW among distributors of artificial grass. When he started SGW 11 years ago, he says, "we were the only major distributor of synthetic grass in California. There's probably 40 today. You can buy it at Costco, Lowe's, Home Depot and of course that's bringing even more acceptance."

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As artificial turf grows, producers of natural grass wince (Cont'd)



Photo courtesy of TigerTurf



Photo courtesy of Sod Solutions

“We’ve seen research that says 50-to-80 percent of the water that’s put on grass isn’t needed. It isn’t just wasteful; it’s bad for the grass.” - Tobey Wagner

Lanfranco is candid about his industry’s dependence on the performance of installers – landscaping companies it doesn’t own. SGW’s marketing division offers workshops on proper installation. “Right now,” Lanfranco says, “we sell to about 3,500 installers nationwide. That’s an extremely important relationship. We bring in landscapers and show them how to install synthetic grass and how to market it.”

The artificial and natural turf industries’ indictments of each other’s products are long, detailed and not pretty. You can read them at their respective trade associations’ websites: the [Synthetic Turf Council](#) and [Turfgrass Producers International](#).

Lanfranco and Wagner can cite chapter and verse on that front. Among other charges, the natural turf industry points to the creation of “heat islands” wherever synthetic grass is applied and the necessity of using large quantities of water in an effort to cool it down. The artificial turf industry says natural grass uses an unsustainable amount of water, which isn’t getting any less expensive, and is bad for the environment because of the chemicals used to fertilize it and kill pests and diseases.

“You can have a beautiful green lawn without watering it,” Lanfranco says. “We’re proud of how much water has been saved.”

Nonsense, Wagner says, “although it’s true that people tend to use too much water on their lawns. We’ve seen research that says 50-to-80 percent of the water that’s put on grass isn’t needed. It isn’t just wasteful; it’s bad for the grass.”

With the exception of its use as a substitute for natural turf in areas of extreme drought – a practice he believes will do more harm than good in the long run – and “maybe in some Northern states where the temperatures are bitter cold,” Wagner maintains that artificial grass has no place in American landscapes.

“Can you imagine the heat in a place like Los Angeles as natural grass is pulled back?” he asks. “Besides, they could achieve 25-percent water savings simply by switching to warm-season grasses.”

The artificial turf industry has a very effective lobby, Wagner says, “and they’ve spent millions to project themselves – their product – as normal. It isn’t normal, but it is hugely profitable.”

For his part, Lanfranco isn’t concerned about the market for synthetic turf hitting a peak. He’s worried about filling orders. And even without verifiable data to prove it, there’s little doubt the demand for artificial grass is high and rising.

<http://www.totallandscapecare.com>

TPI would like to thank David Rountree, editor of Total Landscape Care for giving us permission to reprint this article in its entirety.



Little Lee Coombs has become a Facebook rockstar. With nearly 5,600 hits and over 360 Likes, Shares and Comments this posting of Lee on TPI's Facebook page is by far the most successful TPI has ever posted.

FREE ADMITTANCE



The greatest playroom in the world has no age restrictions, no height restrictions, and you don't need an admittance ticket . . . it's called "OUTSIDE".

—Jim Novak



Lee Coombs, the grandson of John and Donna Coombs enjoys a playful moment on the grass at Coombs Sod Farm in Elmer, NJ. Our thanks to Lee's parents, John and Mary for letting us share this photo.

PHOTO BY: Mary Coombs

BLEC Joins the Redexim Stable

Redexim, the parent company of Redexim North America, has reached an agreement to purchase the assets of BLEC Global Ltd of the United Kingdom. The deal includes the purchase of the BLEC name and means that the products will continue to be traded around the world under the name of BLEC.

Redexim will now be responsible for the full manufacturing and distribution of the current range of over 80 different BLEC machines throughout the world including the United States and Canada. Discussions are currently underway to set up dealer arrangements in the countries within which BLEC operates, more details will be forthcoming.

BLEC, founded in 1986, has developed a good reputation around the world for developing new innovative machinery that is well engineered, built for long life and reliability.

The company offers a wide range of specialized landscaping and turfcare machinery, both walk behind and tractor mounted models, to suit a varied range of requirements. BLEC products have been used by superintendents, sports turf managers, sod farms, and contractors around the world.

For more information about Redexim or Blec products, contact the Sales and Marketing Office at 636-825-8300 or visit www.Redexim.com



The purchase of Sod Atlanta marks Super-Sod's first expansion into Northwest Georgia



Earlier this year, Super-Sod, a division of Patten Seed Company, joined forces with their friends at Sod Atlanta in Cartersville, Georgia by finalizing the purchase of the entire sod farm. The purchase marks Super-Sod's first expansion into Northwest Georgia.

Located within the outer Atlanta suburbs and with over 550 acres of turfgrass in production, the farm was acquired to better meet the demand for turfgrass in the North Georgia and Tennessee regions and to bring Zeon Zoysia and other warm-season grass brands into Super-Sod's repertoire. Both warm-season (Zoysia, Bermuda) and cool-season (Tall Fescue) turfgrasses will continue to be grown at the purchased sod farm.

Ken and Josh Morrow, the father/son proprietors of Sod Atlanta, have run their company since 1985 with the same goals and principles as Super-Sod's Roquemore/Copeland family leadership. The similar business philosophies and mindsets led the principal families of the two companies into a long-time friendship, now solidified in partnership. The Morrows will move forward with Super-Sod in positions of management on the Sod Atlanta property.



WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? IT'S ONLY \$340 MILLION!

Lawn Rebate Under Scrutiny

The city doesn't want the Metropolitan Water District to release details of who got what, when and why.

News journalist Morgan Cook of the San Diego Union Tribune reported the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is suing the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) of Southern California to prevent release of information about the recipients of millions of dollars under the popular turf-replacement program.

Cook reported the city department filed the suit in Los Angeles Superior Court in early August, seeking to block release of the information to The San Diego Union-Tribune. The newspaper is seeking the names and addresses of people and businesses who have received checks through the program which was intended, as Cook put it, to encourage removal of water-hogging grass amid a historic drought.

According to the complaint, Los Angeles water customers may represent 20 percent of MWD's turf removal rebate recipients. Region wide, the MWD has issued \$340 million in cash rebates this year for people who agreed to tear out their lawns.

The money, which comes from the water agencies MWD supplies — and ultimately, those agencies' ratepayers — was used up in several weeks as people rushed to collect rebates up to \$2 per square foot of grass removed.

Back in May, the Union-Tribune requested, under the California Public Records Act, information about rebate awards, including names and addresses of recipients, dollar amounts, turf to be replaced and more.

The agency first withheld personal information from the records. The newspaper argued that it is in the public's best interests to know who is getting public money, and to allow monitoring so as to ensure the program is not being abused or mismanaged.

Water agencies and media outlets have questioned aspects of the program and pointed out potential weaknesses. Concerns include a lack of assurances that grass removed now won't be replanted later, and/or gaps in accounting measures to prevent gifts of public funds.

High temps on artificial turf lead to a sticky problem – **MELTING.**

So, I guess running around the field in my bare feet is out of the question, huh, Coach?

The Dallas Morning News reported that the first day of official high school football in the state of Texas saw farenheit temperatures of 106-degrees (41°C) in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. It was reportedly a new record.

The paper also reported the excessive heat didn't exactly make one high school's artificial turf football field ideal for playing on, especially when cleats began to melt. "Synthetic fields tend to get much hotter than natural grass during the summer. In fact, synthetic turf can sometimes reach temperatures more than 50°F (10°C) hotter than what natural grass would experience", according to the Morning News report.

They also wrote that "In perfect conditions, fake turf can get hot enough to cook meat." Although we're not sure that statement is accurate, it does create an interesting image.

The paper reported that melting shoes is rare, but according to Allen High School head coach Tom Westerberg, in Allen, Texas, it isn't unheard of.



Photo by Mike Harrison as posted on <https://twitter.com/EgleDoc>

"[We've] played in some hot games where a few shoes got a little melted," said Westerberg to the Morning News. He suggested to the reporter that it might have just been a single bad shoe causing the hub-bub.

Hub-bub or not the Dallas Morning Star reported that based on a [study by Pennsylvania State University](#), synthetic turf is generally 35°F to 55°F hotter than natural grass. That would peg the playing field at Allen High School at around 135°F to 155°F (57°C to 68°C).

Texas style BBQ anyone?

- Jim Novak

TurfSide-UP



SOMETHING'S **BURNING**

SCHOOL HIRES A VOLCANOLOGIST TO PHOTOGRAPH FOOTBALL GAME

When it was predicted that field surface temperatures could soar to over 155°F on the artificial turf at Hub-Bub High School in Burnum, Texas the school administrator R.U. Fryin asked a visiting volcanologist to shoot some photos.

Unfortunately the photo shoot was cancelled because the photographer's tripod melted along with his shoes. The photographer, Kindel N. Blisters, said he hadn't been on a surface that hot since he did a photo shoot of volcanic activity at Halemaumau Crater on Hawaii's Big Island.

—Jim Novak



Abby Wambach Wants Real Grass for Real Athletes

Women's World Cup Champion Team Co-Captain Joins RISE to Raise Awareness about the Benefits of Well Maintained Turfgrass

“There is nothing better than playing the sport I love on a real grass field.” – Abby Wambach

The 2015 Women's World Cup final match became the highest-rated and most-watched soccer game ever to air in the United States. Not only did it turn the world's attention to women's soccer, it also put a spotlight on a concern many people don't think about – playing on artificial turf.

For Abby Wambach, co-captain of the World Cup Champion U.S. Women's National Soccer Team, well-maintained grass under her soccer cleats isn't a luxury, it's a necessity for playing aggressively and reducing risk of injury. Wambach's appreciation for playing on grass has been front and center since the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) announced the games would be fielded on artificial turf in July 2014.

“There is nothing better than playing the sport I love on a real grass field,” said Wambach. “The ball moves quickly and I'm required to react fast and with precision. Real, well-maintained grass helps me anticipate the ball's movement and feel better about going all-out.”

Wambach's appreciation for playing on grass created a perfect partnership with RISE (Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment) to raise awareness about the value of real grass fields and the products and processes needed to care for them. As part of the partnership, Wambach conducted media interviews from New Jersey Red Bull Arena on July 29. Her voice helped carry RISE's messages to today's parents and tomorrow's next generation of soccer stars.

“Soccer is a great foundational sport, and I want kids to someday be able to experience everything I have,” said Wambach. “That all starts with a natural, healthy playing field.”

“The benefits of real turf playing surfaces bring to life the importance of healthy grass in all the places we live and play, which gives us the opportunity to show the value of

products used to maintain healthy turf,” said Karen Reardon, vice president of public affairs for RISE. “Abby's media interviews and the content shared through social media highlight her professional athlete's perspective, though the benefits she describes are well known to athletes, parents and communities across the country.”

During the interviews, Wambach told athletes and parents of athletes to think about the following elements before stepping on a playing field:

- 1. Natural turf is the optimal playing surface:** Natural turf provides athletes with an optimal playing surface – real grass. Practice and competition on natural grass creates softer, and up to 40 degrees cooler fields with less risk of knee and ankle injuries and skin abrasions.
- 2. Turf care is an integrated game plan:** The best playing fields showcase the results of an integrated pest management (IPM) approach to managing weeds, insects, and diseases that harm grass. Well maintained grass offers thick, reliable play; otherwise, grass can become patchy with weeds or dirt, creating tripping and other hazards.
- 3. Groundskeepers need a complete toolbox:** Professional groundskeepers and sports turf managers need access to effective pesticide and fertilizer products that help keep grass healthy. Turf managers use these products judiciously to solve or prevent specific problems.
- 4. Natural turf is personal:** Natural grass fields vary with region, soil type, weather patterns, field use, and more. The approach for all fields should be specific to those conditions to keep the field in great playing shape. With proper maintenance, natural grass fields do not have a fixed life and can be used for more than 20 years without replacement.

To learn more about RISE's work with Wambach, visit www.debugthemyths.com/naturalturf.com. You can also follow Debug the Myths on Facebook at www.facebook.com/debugthemyths and Twitter @DebugTheMyths.



John Cospers Announces Retirement as Executive Director of Turfgrass Producers of Texas

By Jim Novak

For thirteen years John Cospers was as much the face of Turfgrass Producers of Texas (TPT) as he was their Executive Director. If you went to an industry event or a regional turfgrass association meeting, more often than not, John would be there. His presence was almost always evident at TPI conferences, conventions and field days.

During his tenure with TPT he was highly visible and very much involved. At a time when it was being proposed that St. Augustine grass might be banned in San Antonio, John was instrumental in helping to get the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) to agree to do a two year drought study of 25 varieties of turfgrass to see how the grasses would withstand and recover from a 60 day drought. It was a coordinated effort with Dr. David Chalmers who was then with Texas A&M.

“He helped to solidify our group and make us realize we had to join together for a common good, thus keeping our businesses strong.”

David Doguet — Bladerunner Farms, Inc.

He was involved in the formation of the St. Augustine Research Group (SARG) for TPT; finalized a Joint Release Agreement with Sod Solutions for Celebration Bermuda which benefited TPT's general fund considerably, and he was instrumental in applying for and receiving Specialty Crop Funding through the Texas State Department of Agriculture that resulted in over a quarter of a million dollars to promote the benefits of turfgrass, create television ads, fund turfgrass research on fertility, weed control and insect management.



Whenever TPI asked John for his assistance, or requested information, he was always responsive. And whenever the favor was returned, he always expressed his sincere appreciation.

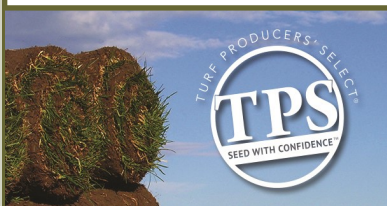
In a personal letter to TPI in which he announced his retirement and announced Brent Batchelor as his successor (see story on following page), he wrote, “I appreciate the support that Turfgrass Producers International has provided to me over the last thirteen years that I have served TPT.”

And in his last column for the PALLET, TPT's monthly newsletter he wrote, “Over the last thirteen years we [referring to his wife Diana] have met and worked with great people. It has been a joy to serve as your Executive Director.”

Our response to John is just as heartfelt; it has been our pleasure to work with him as a representative of TPT and of the turfgrass industry.

Perhaps David Doguet of Bladerunner Farms said it best when he commented, “John came along when the turfgrass industry was in a lot of turmoil. He helped to solidify our group and make us realize we had to join together for a common good, thus keeping our businesses strong. Great job John, you will be missed.”

John will be missed all right, but we suspect we're likely to see him browsing around at some industry-related social function in the not too distant the future.



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





Batchelor New Executive Director of Turfgrass Producers of Texas



Brent Batchelor has been chosen to be the next Executive Director of Turfgrass Producers of Texas succeeding retiring John Cosper.

A native of Damon, Texas, Batchelor is a graduate of Texas A&M and received his masters from University of Texas San Antonio. He has worked for

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension for 28 years.

Batchelor is not a stranger to TPT. He has been conducting their morning sessions at the TPT conferences since 2003. When asked why he was receptive to the position he replied, "Turf production is important to Matagorda County and the state of Texas. Promotion and the health of the turf industry is important to me. I have enjoyed working with John and doing my part for the annual meeting and look forward to serving in this new capacity.

Batchelor and Cosper worked together throughout the month of August so he could learn and become familiar with TPT's various programs.

TPI extends our sincere congratulations to Brent and we're looking forward to continuing our long and mutually beneficial relationship with TPT.

Batchelor's email address is tpt@txsod.com.



Now Accepting Applications for the Dr. Henry W. Indyk 2016 Scholarship

Available to Turfgrass Producers International Class A & B members, their families, their employees, and their employee's families who will be attending college or graduate school during the 2016-17 academic year.

Up to \$10,000 Awarded

**Application Deadline:
January 8, 2016**

Visit: TheLawnInstitute.org to download your scholarship application or contact The Lawn Institute at +1-847-649-5555

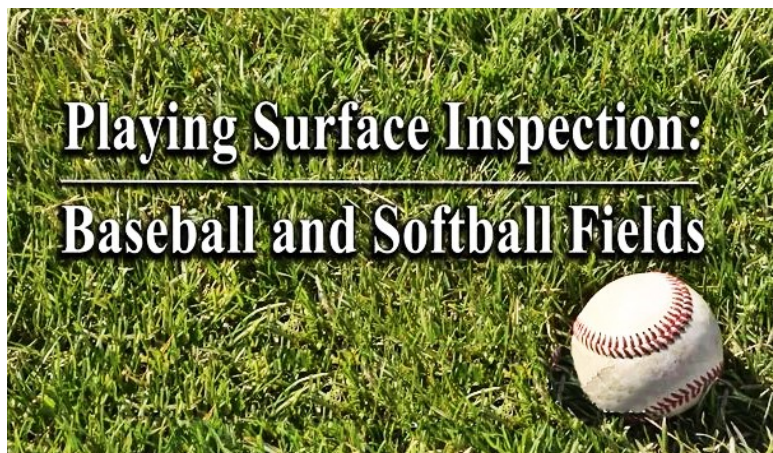


THANK YOU!

TPI's FACEBOOK PAGE EXCEEDS 750 LIKES

To visit the TPI Facebook page click on the graphic to the left or go to <https://www.facebook.com/TurfgrassProducersInternational>. You don't have to be a Facebook subscriber to visit the page. If you are already a Facebook subscriber, be sure to click **LIKE**.





The Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields Presents New Instructional Video

Short Film Provides Basics to Creating Safe, Playable Baseball, Softball Fields

(LAWRENCE, Kan.) – The Foundation for Safer Athletic Fields for Everyone (SAFE) – with the support from the [Sports Turf Managers Association \(STMA\)](#) – introduced its newest instructional video, providing the basics to creating safe and playable baseball and softball fields.

The complimentary video, titled [Baseball and Softball Field Inspection](#), highlights recommendations for sports turf managers when maintaining natural grass, artificial turf and constructed soil surfaces.

SAFE is the charitable arm of STMA, the professional association for 2,600 men and women who manage sports fields worldwide. Its instructional series, titled “Sports and Recreation Fields, Safety First,” released its first three videos in April: [Natural Grass Field Safety](#), [Synthetic Turf Field Safety](#) and [Sports Facility and Equipment Safety](#).

The video outreach program aims to increase awareness and educate parents, players, coaches and volunteers about athletic field management. The latest installment examines how to identify unsafe surfaces – including skinned areas – and offers best practices specific to baseball and softball fields.

“The SAFE Foundation and its Board of Trustees recognize the tremendous need in local communities for safer and more sustainable sports fields,” says Kim Heck, SAFE Executive Director. “Preparing and preserving baseball and softball fields can be challenging; it’s the responsibility of our organization to arm coaches, parents and players with the information needed to conduct a basic field evaluation before play begins.”

Helpful tips include how to inspect packed dirt areas for ideal moisture conditions, managing wear-and-tear near the bases and conducting proper care for warning track areas.

The Sports and Recreation Fields, Safety First videos are the beginning of a five-year campaign for SAFE to increase outreach, award scholarships, fund educational programs and create partnerships with community members and industry organizations.

Ross Kurcab, former Denver Broncos Turf Manager for over 30 years and owner of Championship Turf Systems, is featured in the SAFE videos. He is the first person to earn the designation as a Certified Sports Field Manager from STMA. Dedicated to improving sports surfaces and facilities nationwide, Kurcab is an ideal spokesperson for the SAFE videos.

For more information: www.safefields.org, 800.323.3875.

About SAFE

The SAFE Foundation was established in 2000 to fund research, educational programs and scholarships geared to the sports field profession. SAFE is a 501(c)3 and is the charitable arm of the organization of the Sports Turf Managers Association and works to enrich communities through championing safe, sustainable sports and recreation fields for all athletes.

About STMA

STMA is the not-for-profit, professional association for men and women who manage sports fields worldwide. Since 1981, the association and its 34 local chapters have been providing education, information and sharing practical knowledge in the art and science of sports field management. Its more than 2,600 members oversee sports fields and facilities at schools, colleges and universities, parks and recreational facilities, and professional sports stadiums.

For more information: www.stma.org, 800.323.3875.

Turfgrass Producers International
MARK YOUR CALENDAR AND PLAN TO ATTEND!

Join TPI in Texas for three full days of:

- ★ Turfgrass and Business Management Education
- ★ Research Reports
- ★ Exhibits
- ★ Peer-to-Peer Networking
- ★ Social Activities



TPI 2016

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE & FIELD DAY

HYATT REGENCY HOUSTON ★ HOUSTON, TEXAS ★ FEBRUARY 22-25, 2016

Field Day hosted by
All Seasons Turf Grass
located in Brookshire,



Texas. The Gavranovic family has been farming
in southeast Texas for over four generations
and has been in the sod business
for over 30 years. They look
forward to welcoming
you to their farm!



Visit www.TurfGrassSod.org for Conference Updates



MARK YOUR CALENDAR We've already marked ours!

TPI 2016 Field Day
Wednesday, February 24, 2016



Irene Gavranovic Sipes and her husband Scott of *All Seasons Turf Grass, Inc.* are excited to be hosting TPI's 2016 Field Day at their 380 acre Brookshire farm location just west of Houston, Texas.

The Gavranovic family has been farming in southeast Texas for over four generations and they have been in the sod business for over 30 years. Irene's parents, Willie and Gladys own nearby Horizon Turf Grass which, in partnership with other family-related properties, has 11 farms that grow 12 turfgrass varieties and over 3,000 acres in production.

The Gavranovic's and their entire staff take pride in having great products, outstanding customer service and a personal relationship with every customer they serve. The Brookshire location grows Tifway 419 Bermuda, Celebration Bermuda and popular Zoysia grass varieties.

As for the field day, *All Seasons Turf Grass* will be showcasing plenty of equipment, products and services. Equipment demonstrations and static displays will include harvesters, mowers, tractors, forklifts, tillers, installers, cultivators and a great deal more.

Agricultural technology college students from Japan visit Tuckahoe Turf Farms.



Allen Carter Jr. with two of several students from Japan who visited Tuckahoe Turf to see the scope of a turfgrass farm operation.

Tuckahoe Turf Farms welcomed touring students from the University of Tsukuba in Japan and gave them an opportunity to see planting, irrigation, harvesting and seed mixing during their visit. Farm Manager, Allen Carter Jr. reports that several of these students will be developing and building future ag equipment while others are interested in plant development.



The Lawn Institute Fundraising Opportunities

TPI's 2016 International Education Conference & Field Day



Bling Out Your Cowboy Hat

Looking for a great team-building exercise? Or a new way to flex your creative muscles? Decorate one of the cowboy hats that TLI provides and put it on display at the TPI conference registration desk: you could win a free hotel room for up to two nights at the TPI 2017 International Education Conference & Field Day in **Tampa, Florida!**

Here's how to enter:

Sponsor a hat*, supplied by TLI. TLI will have the hat shipped to you at least four weeks before the **Houston** conference to decorate as you wish: farm or company logos, "bling", LED lights...let your creativity run wild.

Bring the hat with you to the TPI 2016 International Education Conference & Field Day in Houston, Texas and display it in the registration area.

Encourage conference attendees to vote for your hat as the best in one of two categories: Most Creative Hat and Funniest Hat.

Obtain the most votes and win a free hotel room for up to two nights at the TPI 2017 International Education Conference & Field Day in **Tampa, Florida!**

*Hats will be donated to TLI for auction following the contest. Each hat sponsorship is \$350.

ROOTIN' TOOTIN' CLAY SHOOTIN'



Rootin' Tootin' Clay Shootin'

Support TLI and help to fund research and scholarships for the turfgrass production industry! Instead of The Lawn Institute Memorial Golf Tournament, TLI is offering the Rootin' Tootin' Clay Shootin' Tournament in 2016.

Station Sponsor: \$300

Includes a flag at the station with your farm or company logo and recognition as a sponsor in the onsite Pocket Program, distributed to all conference attendees.

Shell Pouch Sponsor: \$1,750

Includes your farm or company logo on a shell pouch, distributed to all tournament contestants to use during the sporting clay shoot and to keep as a souvenir. Recognition as a sponsor will also appear in the onsite Pocket Program, distributed to all conference attendees.

Breakfast: \$2,000

Includes a sign at breakfast with your farm or company logo and recognition as a sponsor in the onsite Pocket Program, distributed to all conference attendees.

Beverages (TBD)

Includes a sign at the beverage cart and recognition as a sponsor in the onsite Pocket Program, distributed to all conference attendees. Actual costs will be billed to the sponsor after the event.

Information about registering to participate in Rootin' Tootin' Clay Shootin' will be included in the TPI 2016 International Education Conference & Field Day Registration Brochure, or visit www.TurfGrassSod.org.

2016 Gun Raffle

The Lawn Institute is hosting a gun raffle and there are some terrific prizes! Purchase a raffle ticket and you'll have a chance of winning one or more of 10 fine guns.*

RAFFLE PRIZES	SPONSORED BY
Browning Citori 725 Over/Under Shot Gun	Trebro Manufacturing
Remington 1100 - 20 Gauge Shot Gun	Turf Merchants Inc.
Benellia Nova 12 Gauge Pump, Camo Pattern	Patten Seed/Super Sod
Henry Octagon Barrel - 45 Long Colt Repeating Rifle	Brouwer Kesmac
PSA M4 Style AR-15 w/30 round clip	Sod Solutions
Savage HRM 17 with scope & accutrigger; camo pattern	Pennington Seed
Magnum 44	Bucyrus Equipment
Ruger Vaquero 6" Barrel - Classic 6 shooter	The Turfgrass Group
Bersa Thunder 380 Pistol with pink grips	Texas Sod Leasing
Smith & Wesson M&P Sport 15 223/5.56 AR Style camo pattern	Texas Sod Leasing

* A VISA gift card equivalent to the stated market value of the gun can be substituted as a prize at the raffle winner's discretion.

Raffle tickets are \$25 each or five for \$100. Tickets are on sale through February 24, 2016 or while supplies lasts – no more than 1,000 tickets will be sold. Order your tickets at www.TheLawnInstitute.org or call The Lawn Institute at +1-847-649-5555.

Official Rules are posted on The Lawn Institute website. The winning tickets will be pulled on February 24, 2016 during the Bogey Nights** outing at the TPI International Education Conference & Field Day, Houston, Texas. **Winner need not be present to win.** Proceeds go to support The Lawn Institute scholarships and turfgrass research grants.

Helicopter Rides

Fly into the wild blue yonder...for 8-10 minutes. TLI is offering helicopter rides during the 2016 Field Day at All Seasons Grass, Inc. Only 36 spots are available and groups of three. Rides will be sold on a first-come, first-served basis for \$150 per person, sign-up begins at 9:30 am on February 24. Flight times between: 12:30—3:30. Sponsored by Horizon Turf Grass, Inc.



Bogey Nights **

Join us for a fun evening out at Houston's Topgolf. Anyone can play Topgolf, from aspiring pros to those who've never walked 18 holes. All you have to do is swing a club and try to hit your microchipped balls into dartboard-like targets. It's competitive. It's fun. And it's always better with a big group! Includes roundtrip transportation, dinner and 3 hours of play. Cost: \$118 per person.

** Information about registering to participate in Topgolf will be included in the TPI 2016 International Education Conference & Field Day Registration Brochure, or visit www.TurfGrassSod.org.



VANDALS BEWARE—Don't underestimate the power of Social Media

When vandals caused severe damage to turf at Tuckahoe Turf Farms in Hammonton, NJ, farm manager Allen Carter Jr. thought he would try something new, Carter posted photos on their Facebook page and asked followers for help in identifying the vandals. The events that transpired over the next few days illustrate how effective social media can be. It also showed the supportive heart of a community.

By Jim Novak

After Linda Bradley of Turf Mountain Sod notified the TPI office about how vandals had damaged turf at Tuckahoe Turf Farms in Hammonton, New Jersey we dropped a note to Tuckahoe's Farm Manager, Allen Carter Jr. to express our concerns. What we found especially disheartening was the fact that Tuckahoe Turf Farms has been a long time supporter of youth activities in the community. They continually support youth soccer on their fields and they have donated and installed sod at a local area high school in need of a new football playing field. Both stories had been reported in previous TPI E-Newsletters. We immediately received a thankful response from John in which he shared the following update with us:

Yes, it happens every so often. This time a great tire print was left and the tire is not a common one, as it is a bit pricey. So we decided to post photos on our Facebook page of the damage. And wow what a reaction. I won't go into all the comments, you can page thru them, but I will tell you that the post was shared over 300 times, was seen over 130,000 times and people clicked thru the photos almost 70,000 times. We also received close to 300 new likes to our page. All this in about 24 hours. Remarkable.

There was a fair going on in town and the local cop who is assigned to the High School said he was swamped with kids asking about the damage, how could they help, etc. We received messages from two individuals and the cop had info from one that all pointed to the vandal. We have been talking to the parents and will be having a meeting with them and their son in the next couple of days. The sad thing is, as you know, there is plenty of harvested areas that these kids could do this kind of stuff and we would not care.

ABC6 TV in Philadelphia picked up on the story. they flew a helicopter out to get an aerial shot, but by then we had repaired the field, so the reporter came out and did an interview. It was the 2nd lead story on the 5:00 pm news, it was played again at 11 pm that night, and repeated on Saturday morning and on their noon broadcast. That's the power of social media.

Thanks for the email
Allen Carter
Tuckahoe Turf Farms, Inc.

NEW JERSEY TURF FARM FRUSTRATED BY OFF-ROAD VANDALS TURNS TO FACEBOOK



Tuckahoe Turf Farms, Inc. added 3 new photos
July 14 at 11:38am

WANTED: Information on the vandals that continue to do this damage to our crop. If you have information that leads to the conviction of these vandals you will receive a nice cash reward. Message me thru Facebook. This has been going on for a couple of weeks and fair warning, if you are caught we will prosecute. We have reported the damage to the local police departments. The evidence is mounting.



To visit Tuckahoe Turf Farms Facebook page go to:
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Tuckahoe-Turf-Farms-Inc/346720381058?rf=146510258783719>

Thanks to John Carter Jr. for sharing this story. To see the ABC Action News story go to:
<http://6abc.com/news/nj-turf-farmers-frustrated-by-off-road-vandals/859745/>. Linda Bradley also told us that several years ago, Turf Mountain Sod used Facebook to catch vandals who had bragged on Facebook of their misdeeds. The police used social media to aid in their investigation and captured the vandals.



2015 HONORS & AWARDS

Turfgrass Producers International is now accepting nominations for TPI's 2015 Honors & Awards.

If you would like to nominate a deserving individual for consideration, visit TPI's website and complete a nomination form by clicking on the NOMINATE button on the right or go to: <http://www.turfgrassod.org/publisher/hot-topics/2015/5/5/do-you-know-of-a-deserving-individual-who-should-be-recognized-by-tpi>

Nominations are being accepted through 10/1/2015.



CLICK ON BUTTON
TO ACCESS NOMINATION FORMS

ARE YOUR EMPLOYEES RECEIVING THE TPI E-NEWSLETTER?



Are your employees or business associates receiving the TPI E-Newsletter? We hope so!

It's easy for them to sign up. They just have to go to <http://www.turfgrassod.org/> and enter their email address.

Encourage your employees to subscribe to the newsletter and have them LIKE us on Facebook. It's a great way to have them learn more about our industry, your business and your association.

New benefit for TPI Members



Helping you grow your business!



Save on all your printing needs with the TPI FedEx Office Discount.

Go to the TPI website at <http://www.turfgrassod.org/> and click on the "For Members" tab and the link — Member Benefits and Programs.

sign up

Sign Up & Save on all your printing needs with the TPI FedEx Office Discount. Turfgrass Producers International and FedEx Office announce a member discount agreement that's sure to be a big benefit for you and your business. Membership in TPI provides you FedEx Office quality and expertise for the business services you use most. TPI special rates apply to a wide range of printing services and products, including:

**Lawn Signs — Flyers
Signs/Banners — Pamphlets
Business Proposals
and much more!**





Graduate students get an inside look at the turfgrass industry at Chantilly Turf Farm



Mike Goatley, Ph.D.
Turfgrass Extension Specialist



Shawn Askew, Ph.D.
Turfgrass Weed Specialist



David McCall,
Turfgrass Pathologist

A tip of the hat to Dr. Mike Goatley, Dr. Shawn Askew, and David McCall who brought together the VA Tech Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences Senior Capstone Class for a two day Turf Industry Opportunity Days field trip.

The participating students are scheduled to graduate from Virginia Tech with turf majors or minors and Goatley and his colleagues viewed this event as an opportunity for the VT faculty to assess how prepared these young men and women really are for their first venture into the job market.

Goatley reported that most of the students had focused on one aspect of turfgrass management during their academic careers, and the faculty saw this as an opportunity to have the students meet and greet leaders from all segments of the Virginia turfgrass industry in hopes they would learn more about future career opportunities. Goatly stated that all of host presenters were asked to give the students as much insight into the 'non-agronomic' ways they can conduct themselves professionally and personally to gain success both on the job and in life.

The first stop was Chantilly Turf Farm in Aldie, VA where they met with owner Ray Weekley, his son Mark and various supporters/suppliers of Chantilly Turf. The students saw first-hand what is involved in sod production.

The Chantilly Turf Farm visit was followed by a meeting with President and VP of Game Day Inc. where the discussion focused on career opportunities in sports turf management. The students also visited a few nearby sports field sites that Game Day Inc. has installed and/or currently maintains.

The students also met with Bruce Sheppard of WeedMan Inc. to learn about career opportunities in professional lawn care.

On day two they visited Goose Creek Golf Club in Leesburg and met with Superintendent Jeff Berg where they learned about all aspects of golf turf maintenance. Afterwards they visited the Army/Navy Country Club in Fairfax to meet with VT turfgrass alum Jeff Clarke of Toro Inc. who gave the students an idea of his career path since graduating with a turf degree and how he has advanced in product sales following a career start in the golf turf industry. They also met with Army/Navy CC superintendent Carmen Gianinni.

How successful was the two day field trip? Judging by the testimonials that appear on the following page—very successful.



Ray Weekley (left) of Chantilly Turf Farms in Aldie, VA gave VT Turf Students a complete breakdown of sod production from seeding to harvest to sale.



VT Turf Students watch the Trebro Autostack sod harvester in action at Chantilly Turf Farm in Aldie, VA.



Rick Hardie with Jonathan Green Inc. addresses students as Ray Weekley looks on.

Cont'd on next page



Graduate students get an inside look —Cont'd

“Great learning experience with some of the best sod farmers in Virginia.”

“The amount of equipment needed to get from start to finish in sod production was impressive. The efficiency of the Chantilly team that operates all of this equipment is obviously critical to the business.”

- Kyle Dupper, Pilesgrove, NJ, double major in Agric Education and Turfgrass Management

“I really enjoyed watching the process of how turf gets to a marketable product. Everyone there was so knowledgeable and great to talk to.” - Christa Bush, Broad Run, VA, Horticulture/Landscape Contracting Major and Turfgrass minor

“Great insight into the whole process of sod production. Great learning experience with some of the best sod farmers in Virginia.” - Jordan Boothe, Mechanicsville, VA, Major: Agribusiness Management with a minor in Turfgrass Management

It was incredible to see the entire process of how a sod farm is run. Everyone we met was extremely nice and knowledgeable and that made our visit to Chantilly Turf that much more enjoyable.” - Kody Tingler, Mechanicsville, VA, Major: Hort and Landscape Contracting with a minor in turfgrass management



“I have a whole new appreciation for the sod that I have been laying on my sports fields.” - Ty Vaden, Mechanicsville, VA, Turfgrass Management major

“I’ve always understood the concept of a sod farm but never saw the process in the different stages like the Weekley’s showed. It opened my eyes to a whole different side of the turfgrass industry.”

- C.J. Buck, Suffolk, VA, Turfgrass Mgt Major and Hort minor



Scott Woodward of nearby Woodward Turf Farms offers his insight to visiting students.

“This trip was an experience I will always remember.” - Travis Roberson, Stuart, VA, Turfgrass Management major

“Concentrating my internships by working on a golf course, I never really thought about the complexity of sod production. During this visit, I was able to see the full operation from seed to sale. I did not realize the amount of work, science, and machinery that come together into producing high quality sod. I have a much better understanding of sod production.” - Lee Coppock, Charlottesville, VA, Turfgrass Management major

“The amount of work that goes into growing and harvesting a crop is quite astonishing.” - Ben Morrison, Rich Creek, VA, Turf Management major

“I was excited to have the opportunity to see the entire process as laid out for us by the Chantilly Turf crew. Mr. Weekley told us about how many different career paths there are to choose from in the turf industry... anything from sod farming to teaching, to equipment or seed sales.” - Landon Prever, Portsmouth, VA, Double major in Turfgrass Management and Hort/Landscape Contracting



FACTS ABOUT Grasscycling
 FREE FERTILIZER - FREE WATER - FREE COMPOST

REDUCE
Yard Waste
Fertilizer Costs
Fuel
Labor

REUSE
Water
Nutrients
Organic Content

RECYCLE
Grass clippings
put nutrients
back in the soil.

50%
Up to 50% of your lawns total fertilizer needs are supplied by clippings left on the lawn.*

75%
Grass clippings account for 75% of all needless yard waste.

80-85%
Grass clippings contain 80 to 85% water and decompose quickly.

1 TON
One U.S. ton of fresh grass clippings contain approximately 15 pounds of nitrogen, 2 pounds of phosphorus and 10 pounds of potassium — the three major nutrients for sustaining plant life.

50% SAVINGS
Grass clippings left on the lawn will save about 50 percent of your annual fertilizer costs.

1 TON
One ton of grass clippings contains more than 1,700 pounds of water.

SOURCES:
 The Lawn Institute
www.thelawninstitute.org/
 National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA)
www.parksandrecreation.org/2014/July/Grasscycling-Free-Fertilizer-Free-Water-and-Free-Compost/
 Joseph R. Heckman, Ph.D., Extension Specialist - Soil Fertility
 Cook Campus, Rutgers University
 Released: 10/2015

CORRECTION:

UPDATED INFOGRAPHIC GRASSCYCLING

Grass clippings can reduce fertilizer requirements by as much as 50%, not 25% as previously reported.

Our thanks to JOSEPH R. HECKMAN, Ph.D. Extension Specialist - Soil Fertility, Cook Campus, Rutgers University for sharing a peer reviewed study that showed recycled grass clippings can actually reduce lawn fertilizer requirements by as much as 50%.

Dr. Heckman also directed us to a research study conducted by Dr. Kelly Koop (Utah State) and Dr. Karl Guillard (University of Connecticut) titled, "Clipping Management and Nitrogen Fertilization of Turfgrass."

Koop and Guillard wrote: **"We found that N fertilization rates could be reduced 50% or more without decreasing turfgrass quality when clippings were returned. Overall, returning grass clippings was found to improve growth and quality of turfgrass while reducing N fertilization needs."**

Feel free to download this updated infographic and share it on your website, Facebook, page, etc.

Jim Novak



RMRTA HOSTS 62nd ANNUAL TURFGRASS CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW
 December 8 – 10, 2015
 Denver, Colorado

The Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association (RMRTA) will be celebrating its 62nd Annual Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Denver International Airport, Denver, CO.

Jerry Schemmel, Colorado Rockies Radio Voice, will be the Keynote Speaker and Dr. Joseph M. Vargas, Jr. from Michigan State University will bring "Joe's Greatest Hits" to the conference.

In addition, companies from throughout the country will display the latest products, services and technology available to the turfgrass industry.

The conference will feature local and national speakers discussing a variety of turf-related topics that apply to:

- Golf Courses
- Parks and Recreation
- Municipalities
- Sports Turf
- Cemeteries
- School Districts
- Sod Growers
- Lawn Care Maintenance
- Landscaping Firms

For more information, visit their website at www.rmrt.org.



LIVING LANDSCAPES MATTER



Yards provide a safe place for families to gather and for children and pets to play. But did you know these managed landscapes, including your lawn, also provide a host of environmental benefits?

“ Having a lawn and being a good environment steward are not mutually exclusive. Grass is a vital part of our living landscapes that contribute to our communities, our families and our health. ”

Kris Kiser,
President and CEO of the
Outdoor Power Equipment
Institute (OPEI)

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A LAWN?



FILTERS AND CAPTURES RUNOFF

Hardscapes, parking lots, driveways and roads turn rainwater into fast-moving, storm water runoff. Grass slows down and absorbs runoff, while also cleansing water of impurities and dust. Rainwater filtered through a healthy lawn can be 10 times less acidic than water running off a hard surface.¹



REDUCES HEAT

Grass dissipates the heat island effect caused by asphalt, concrete and other hardscapes. Lawns can be 31 degrees cooler than asphalt and 20 degrees cooler than bare soil.



IMPROVES AIR QUALITY

Grass also plays a vital role in capturing dust, smoke particles and other pollutants.² Without grass, these pollutants will remain in the air we breathe, resulting in more “code red” air quality days.



SEQUESTERS CARBON DIOXIDE

Lawns are the largest carbon sink in the U.S. They suck up and remove greenhouse gas carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Grass sequesters carbon so well, that it outweighs the carbon used for maintaining the lawn by as much as seven-fold.³



GENERATES OXYGEN

A turf area of 50' x 50' produces enough oxygen to meet the daily needs of a family of 4.⁴



SUPPORTS BIODIVERSITY

Grass, trees, shrubs and other plants provide food and habitat for birds and small mammals. Insects, spiders and worms live among the grass blades and below the surface, supporting wildlife.



CONTROLS SOIL EROSION

Grass controls erosion through its natural, dense and fibrous root system. Without grass, soil erodes into streams and lakes, muddying the waters and limits how sunlight penetrates the water. The nutrients and chemicals carried with soil can cause algae blooms, which steal oxygen from the water and kill fish.⁵

For more information, go to:
www.opei.org/stewardship/

1, 2 and 4 The Lawn Institute (<http://www.TheLawnInstitute.org>)
3 U.S. Department of Agriculture (<http://www.reeis.usda.gov/web/crisprojectpages/0223645-evaluation-of-turfgrasses-for-stress-tolerance-in-a-transition-zone-environment.html>)
5, Kansas Green Yards (<http://kansashaltheyyards.org/>)





OUTDOOR POWER EQUIPMENT
INSTITUTE

A message to Californians: Living Landscapes Matter:

You have options and so do others who are dealing with drought conditions.

Everyone realizes there is a drought, and that water must be conserved. However, there are options for managed landscapes. You don't have to rip out your lawn. You can keep your outdoor space for your kids and pets, and be drought responsible.

Deadening landscapes with rocks, mulch, pavers, hardscapes and plastic grass creates more environmental problems. *Living* landscapes help the drought and address a host of other environmental issues facing the West.

Homeowners with children and pets who want and need a working yard can still have a useful backyard space and be environmentally responsible. Below are resources to help you get started.

What are the benefits of a Living Landscape?

Given the severe drought conditions we are facing today, we should be aware of the benefits lawns bring to our environment including reducing heat, absorbing carbon dioxide, improving air quality, capturing and filtering rain-fall and runoff, controlling soil erosion and acting as a natural fire break. Please see below for the benefits of living landscapes.

[Reducing Heat](#)
[Absorbing Carbon Dioxide](#)
[Improving Air Quality](#)
[Filtering and Capturing Run-Off](#)
[Controlling Soil Erosion](#)
[Natural Fire Break](#)

How do I create a living landscape in drought conditions?

Creating a living landscape is about finding the right plants for the right climate. Most of the places where we live are no longer native environments – they're manmade environments. So we have to find those plants which are adaptive, that can survive in the world we've created, and provide the environmental benefits we need.

- *The right turfgrass.* Hundreds of varieties of turfgrass exist, and some of them are perfect for drought conditions. For instance, buffalo grass, when established requires very little water.

- *Mix native plants with adaptive plants and grasses.* We no longer live in a native environment. We live in cities and suburbs where we must incorporate plants into an area with a lot of concrete, asphalt, people, and traffic. You need both native plants and drought-resistant adaptive species that can survive in these conditions.

- *Evolve the lawn.* We need to incorporate pollinator plants for bees, butterflies, and humming birds. Even in the desert a host of plants exist that will flower.

- *Plant to slow and capture water.* Water sheets off hard surfaces, asphalt and other hardscapes in cities and suburbs. We need grass and plants that will slow down and capture this water.

- *Plant grasses that are traffic ready.* Buffalo grass and Bermuda grass are drought-tolerant options, but they also will survive foot traffic, children's play and pets.

- *Remember nature starts at your backdoor.* The outdoors starts at your backdoor. We want everyone to be a responsible environmental steward. Put the right plant in the right place, and use water wisely.

Is it OK to let my lawn go brown?

- *Brown is okay.* In drought challenged areas, we must get out of the mindset that all plants must stay green all the time. Grass will turn brown when it goes into dormancy. Turfgrass is incredibly resilient. It will spring back to green when rain comes back.

- *Grass cycles.* The "lush and plush" lawn is challenging to keep in a severe drought environment. Grass will grow in cycles, "turning on and off," based on the resources it receives. As water becomes less available, it will slow down, go dormant and turn brown. But it's not dead.

- *Did you know that too much water is actually bad for grass?* Grass gets lazy if you water it too much. Make grass work hard. Make grass work for its water. If watered too much, grass sends its roots horizontally, which makes it lazy. With little water, grass will send its roots deeper, vertically, seeking water. As a result of having to work harder, it will do a better job of sequestering carbon and releasing oxygen.

Visit the Outdoor Power Equipment website at <http://opei.org/stewardship/> for more helpful information.

HERE A DROP, THERE A DROP, EVERYWHERE A DROP, DROP.

What if we could collect and store rainwater; would it solve some of our water woes?

Have you ever wondered how much water falls during a rainstorm?

Using a 1-inch rainstorm as an example, the table below gives an example of how much water falls during a storm for various land areas.

Consider for a moment how much rainwater some cities may receive during a year. For example, Atlanta, Georgia averages about 45 inches (1143 mm) of precipitation per year; multiplying this by the 2.293 billion gallons shown in the table below as the number of gallons in 1 inch reveals that some 103.2 billion

gallons (391 billion liters) of water fall on Atlanta in an average year.

In a city the size of Atlanta, the per capita water use is about 110 gallons per day or 40,150 gallons per year. Thus, the water from a year's precipitation, if it could be collected and stored without evaporation loss, would supply the needs of about 2,574,000 people.

SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Water Science School
<http://water.usgs.gov/edu/earthrain.html>

Amount of water received when an inch of rain occurs

Area	Area (square miles)	Area (square kilometers)	Amount of water (gallons)	Amount of water (liters)
A 40x70 foot roof	.0001	.000257	1,743 gallons	6,601 liters
1 acre (.404 hectare) 1 mile = 640 acres	.00156	.004	27,154 gallons	102,789 liters
1 square mile	1	2.6	17.38 million gallons	65.78 million liters
Atlanta, Georgia	132.4	342.9	2.293 billion gallons	8.68 billion liters
United States	3,537,438	9,161,922	61,474 billion gallons	232,700 billion liters



“Crop Failure”

As featured in RESEARCH NEWSFLASH by Jacklin Seed by Simplot—September 2015. Our thanks to Dr. Doug Brede for permission to reprint this article.

by Doug Brede, Ph.D.

At first, 2015 started out like a normal crop year in the Pacific Northwest. But there were warning signs. Skiers complained of lack of snow on the slopes. Resorts closed after only a few weeks. Winter temperatures were so mild the ground never froze.

June and July brought record heat. Most seed fields were ready to harvest 2 to 3 weeks earlier than normal. Then came the bad news: Seed cleanouts were averaging well below 50%.

“Many people have been calling it a ‘crop failure,’” says Glenn Jacklin, production director for Jacklin Seed. “The last time I can remember such a devastating yield failure was in the late 1980’s. That failure prompted seed prices to nearly double and called for research at universities to try to find the cause.” Evidently the warm ocean temperatures and strong El Niño offshore caused grasses to miss their normal vernalization (cold treatment) that switches plants from vegetative to reproductive during the winter months. In addition, 100° temperatures during pollination caused pollen grains to dehydrate and die before they met their intended flower. Yields were off as much as 90%, depending upon species.



The number of wildfires burning between Portland and Vancouver in August 2015 as a direct result of the high temperatures and drought in the Northwest since January. The temperatures resulted in poor vernalization and pollination, culminating in an epic crop failure across grass seed and agronomic crops.

Grass seed was not the only casualty. Agronomic crops such as wheat were off 30%. But with the agronomic crops, many farmers carry crop insurance against failures. Crop insurance does not cover turfgrass seed crops. As a result of getting “stung” this year, some farmers will likely depart from grass seed production to the safety of insurance-protected agronomic crops in the future.

“Forecasters are calling for a “Godzilla El Niño” forming across the Pacific right now. They speculate that a normal El Niño caused the warm winter and hot summer in 2015. The new El Niño is reportedly much broader, with anticipated effects on the Northwest for 2016 such as reduced precipitation and higher temperatures.”

Damage wasn’t confined to field crops. USA Today reports that the freakishly hot, dry weather in the Northwest is responsible for killing millions of fish in the overheated waters of the region’s rivers and streams. “We’ve lost about 1.5 million juvenile fish this year due to drought conditions at our hatcheries,” Ron Warren of Washington State’s Department of Fish and Wildlife said in a statement. “This is unlike anything we’ve seen for some time.”

Here’s a quick rundown of the damage to grass seed crops:

Kentucky bluegrass yields were off across all botanical types. The low-end common types were off 20% in yield, while the elites were off 50 to 90% due to a lack of vernalization – the plants did not receive enough freezing winter weather. One field in Washington which has consistently yielded 1500 pounds per acre came in at 150 pounds. The lower yields seemed to be a combination of fewer seed heads and smaller seed. It didn’t matter whether the field was irrigated or not – moisture availability was not the issue.

Seed quality was also impacted. Germination rate of heat-impacted seed will be lower than normal. In addition, weeds such as alkali grass will be more prevalent in lots from 2015.

Creeping bentgrass is only now being cleaned and we don’t have good estimates across the species. But it looks like a 30% reduction in yield, mainly due to high temperatures during pollination. The pollen just dried out before it got to the flower. Carryover of seed from the 2014 crop is sparse on bentgrass.

Tall fescue yields are off 25%; ryegrass yields are off 25-30%. There was some carryover of tall fescue seed from 2014 which should help cushion the loss. In spite of that, fescue prices have already climbed over \$.20 a pound, possibly reacting to shortages in the other species. Seed produced in Madras or LaGrande, Oregon or Nez Perce, Idaho did not seem to have been affected. These areas are generally cooler and got sufficient vernalization and were spared the high temperatures during pollination.

On the news this morning, forecasters are calling for a “Godzilla El Niño” forming across the Pacific right now. They speculate that a normal El Niño caused the warm winter and hot summer in 2015. The new El Niño is reportedly much broader, with anticipated effects on the Northwest for 2016 such as reduced precipitation and higher temperatures.



The Lawn Institute reaches an estimated 2.2 MILLION* readers of Newsweek.com and Newsweek magazine.

As featured in [NEWSWEEK](#) article titled:

Grass That Doesn't Need Water Could Keep California Green

By Lina Zeldovich

And yet there are many benefits to surrounding one's home with patches of lush green. Lawns generate oxygen—a 50-square-foot area makes enough for a family of four, according to [The Lawn Institute](#), a nonprofit that funds grass research on behalf of turfgrass producers. They also trap dirt and dust particles and are carbon dioxide sinks, sequestering carbon from the atmosphere.

On hot days, turfgrass lowers surface temperatures, which is the underlying concept behind the trend of planting it on roofs. And of course people like lying, playing and picnicking on the green—and there's nothing wrong with that. It's just that we've been trying to create a perfect lawn with imperfect grass.

<http://www.newsweek.com/grass-doesnt-need-water-could-keep-california-green-366871>

* The analytics firm comScore placed newsweek.com at around 2.2 million monthly U.S. visitors as of July 2014.

NEW Yale University analysis finds artificial turf fields may contain cancer causing chemicals

Renee Chmiel, a reporter for News 8 WTNH in Connecticut reports that researchers at Yale University's Environment and Human Health program have released a report revealing chemicals used in synthetic turf fields and rubber tire mulch used as surfacing material in toddler playgrounds. According to the report, the study revealed nearly 100 chemicals were found in the 14 samples they analyzed. The study also revealed 11 carcinogens in the turf samples, as well as 20 known skin irritants.

"I knew there were heavy metals in them but I never expected 96 chemicals," said Nancy Alderman, President of Environment and Human Health, Inc. Alderman thinks artificial turf fields shouldn't be used and that kids are better off playing on the real thing. "People need to go back to grass," said Alderman. "Grass is the safest surface for students to play on and that's what we need to do."



To view Chmiel's WTNH report on go to:

<http://wtnh.com/2015/09/04/yale-university-analysis-finds-artificial-turf-fields-may-contain-cancer-causing-chemicals/>.



You can't make this stuff up!

Hello, I'd like to report several melted football fields. Did you ask how many? Right now we have five. (Silence) Hello! Hello! Is anybody there?

By Jim Novak

We previously reported one artificial sports field in Texas got so hot the shoes of football players melted. But in California the problem seems to have gotten even worse.

The Los Angeles Times reports that five high schools that installed so called "all-weather" sports fields have to replace their fields because the playing surfaces have melted. You read that right ... the surfaces have melted.

District officials of the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) reported that the tiny pellets used in forming the base of the synthetic surfaces melted in the extreme heat. It was further reported that the melted pellets created a clay-like substance that hardened.

Mark Hovatter, the chief facilities executive for LAUSD told the Times that the fields were supposed to last 8 to 10 years but the five high school fields in question have barely reached five years of use.

The schools that have been impacted include El Camino Real High School, Fairfax Senior High, Sotomayor High, Diego Rivera High and Washington Prep. The district is expected to spend between \$500,000 to \$800,000 to resolve the issue.



Those teams that can no longer play on their fields will have to find other options until repairs are done. The district is hoping the contractor will cover the cost. The Times reported that the materials for all five fields came from the same manufacturer, Changzhou Regalfill Rubber Co. based in China. The company reportedly could not be reached for comment.

So what exactly happened? Well, the crumb rubber typically used on synthetic fields wasn't the culprit, it was a product reported as TPE which is a type of plastic. TPE pellets were used in lieu of crumb rubber to save cost and they were supposed to withstand heat up to 180°F (82°C) but the Times reported the pellets melted at 140°F (60°C). A former football coach who once worked at one of the school's in question described one field as if it had a bunch of gum all over the place.

Not to worry though, the District has already made the decision to replace the problem fields with, believe it or not, synthetic turf! OUCH!

Melted cleats. CHECK! Melted fields. CHECK! WAIT! THERE'S STILL MORE! Blistered Flesh!

When a high school football coach disciplined players at Stratford High School in Connecticut and forced them to crawl on the artificial turf with their bare hands during an early September heat wave he failed to take into account that the temperature of the artificial turf field hovered around 150°F (65.5°C). Pictures soon circulated on Twitter showing one student-athlete's hand with a huge blister covering most of his palm caused by the extreme temperature of the turf against his bare skin. The school superintendent characterized the decision by the coach as a "judgement lapse."

Duh! - J. Novak

To see the complete news report go to: <http://wiat.com/2015/09/09/football-player-burns-hand-on-hot-turf-after-coachs-practice-punishment/>



Flesh burn and blistered peeling skin caused by hot artificial turf field.



NG Turf Supplied Zoysia Sod for New Whole Foods Educational Farm in Georgia



WHOLE KIDS®
FOUNDATION
EDUCATIONAL FARM
SOUTH REGION



By Taylor McGlamery — NG TURF

Usually, gardeners work hard to keep grass out of the garden, but not at the new Whole Foods Market educational farm in Roswell, GA. Beautiful Zeon® Zoysia sod from NG Turf is exactly what they needed to make the garden both beautiful and functional.

NG Turf in Whitesburg, GA, supplied 18 pallets of proprietary Zeon® Zoysia for the new Whole Kids Foundation educational farm at the Whole Foods Market regional office in Roswell, GA.

The educational farm is part of the Whole Kids Foundation, which has awarded over \$16 million in garden grants to schools across the United States and Canada.

Amanda Musilli, the Mission, Culture & Higher Purpose Coordinator for Whole Foods Market stated, "Installing Zeon® Zoysia between the planting beds and around the borders of this garden was perfect. Its bright green hue is strikingly beautiful against the dark rich soil of the planting beds. Plus, it is easy to maintain and has a soft, dense texture that just begs to be walked on with bare feet. The sod helps make our garden an even more inviting place to visit."

The Whole Foods Market Foundation seeks to teach kids to learn to love fresh, nutritious, whole foods through hands-on garden experiences and in-school salad bars.

In a unique installation, the Zoysia creates barefoot-soft walkways, adding beauty and functionality to the 1.5 acre garden.

"Zeon® Zoysia is a great choice for use in a busy garden like the one at Whole Foods," says NG Turf president, Aaron McWhorter, "It tolerates heavy foot traffic very well. It requires little watering, better allocating irrigated water to nurture the growing fruits and vegetables. In fact, our Zeon® is so hardy, it is the sod chosen for the 2016 Olympic golf course in Rio de Janeiro."

To learn more about this program, please visit their website: <http://www.wholekidsfoundation.org>.

About NG Turf

NG Turf is a family-owned and operated turfgrass grower with over 2,500 acres at six locations across Georgia. In addition to being long time members of TPI they are also members of the Urban Ag Council, the Georgia Green Industry Association, and certified by GCI (the Georgia Crop Improvement Association), their 10 proprietary varieties of sod include Zeon Zoysia, TifGrand and TifWay Bermuda, Rebel Supreme Fescue, and TifBlair Centipede. Founded in 1985, NG Turf has become Georgia's premier sod grower and supplier for landscape professionals, golf course developers and superintendents, athletic field managers, municipalities, and homeowners.

<http://www.ngturf.com>

