

EVENTS

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

21-24 National Institute on Park and Grounds Management Annual Educational Conference, Reno, NV. Contact: NIPGM, P.O. Box 1936, Appleton, WI 54913, (414) 733-2301.

NOVEMBER

5 Environmental Issues Facing the Turfgrass Industry, Guelph Turfgrass Institute Third Annual Symposium, Royal Canadian Legion, Guelph, Ontario. Contact: Mira Soni, Div. of Continuing Education, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada, N1G 2W1, (519) 824-4120.

12-14 Penn State Golf Turf Conference, Keller Conference Center, University Park, PA. Contact: Dr. Joseph Duich, Dept. of Agronomy, 119 Tyson Bldg., University Park, PA 16802, (814) 865-9853.

13-16 New York Turf and Grounds Exposition, Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association, P.O. Box 612, Latham, NY 12110, (518)783-1229.

28-30 Golf Course Europe '90, Parc des Expositions du Bourget, Paris, France. Contact: Expoconsult, Industrieweg 54, Postbus 200, 3600 AE Maarssen, Holland. Telephone: 03465 73777, Fax: 03465 73811.

DECEMBER

3-6 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo '90, Trump Taj Mahal, Atlantic City, NJ. Contact: Dr. Henry Indyk, Crop Science Dept., P.O. Box 231, Cook College, New Brunswick, NJ 08903, (201) 932-9453.

4-5 Southern Grounds & Turf Maintenance Exhibition, Myrtle Beach Convention Center, Myrtle Beach, SC. Contact: South Carolina State Board for Technical Education, 111 Executive Center Dr., Columbia, SC 29210, (803) 737-9356.

4-6 North Central Turfgrass Exposition, Ramada Renaissance Hotel and Prairie Convention Center, Springfield, IL. Contact: Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, (312) 644-0828.

4-5 Rocky Mountain Turf Conference, Holiday Inn Denver I-70 East, Denver, CO. Contact: Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association, P.O. Box 903, Parker, CO 80134, (303) 688-2268.

Send announcements on your events two months in advance to editor, *Golf & SportsTURF*, P.O. Box 8420, Van Nuys, CA 91409. Fax: (818) 781-8517.

THE FRONT OFFICE

OPINION PAGE

RECYCLING LAWS TO IMPACT TURF INDUSTRY



It's often said that everyone is in favor of building more prisons as long as those prisons aren't located in their neighborhoods. The same is painfully true about landfills.

The United States is running out of acceptable places to dispose of its waste. In an effort to stretch the life of existing landfills, states have begun to implement laws limiting disposal of certain types of wastes. One particularly type that will have a sizeable impact on the golf and institutional turf industry is "green waste."

In a single growing season, turfgrasses can generate more than four feet of foliage. If you want proof, go to Oregon or Washington in late July and look at the fields of turfgrass grown for seed. You'll see thousands of acres of chest-high grass laden with seedheads bending in the wind.

Overall there are nearly three million acres of golf and sports turf in the U.S., including hundreds of thousands of acres of warm-season, vegetatively-propagated varieties. This doesn't include millions more acres of turf maintained for residential and industrial landscapes.

Our disposal problem stems from maintenance practices intended to provide maximum control over the quality of turf surfaces. Many superintendents and groundskeepers have grown accustomed to removing clippings on a regular basis. They reason that clippings disrupt play and complicate efforts to control thatch-related problems and weeds such as annual bluegrass. High thatch levels have been linked to increased incidence of diseases, reduced effectiveness of pesticides, and poor water infiltration.

For many of these reasons, clippings are now being removed from greens and fairways and sports fields. As a result, golf courses and large sports complexes have been identified as major producers of green waste. They have become the target of officials seeking to reduce the amount of debris ending up in landfills.

The question, according to industry forecasters, is not whether or not regulations will restrict or prohibit disposal of green waste in landfills, but rather when. Steps must be taken quickly so the industry will be prepared to handle its own wastes. Furthermore, current maintenance practices need to be reevaluated in terms of the waste they produce.

Mowing frequency, cultivation with aerators, and topdressing can all help manage thatch levels in aggressive, highly-maintained turf. The effectiveness of biostimulants for thatch decomposition needs to be researched thoroughly. Breeders have been busy evaluating varieties of turfgrasses which are lower growing, produce less thatch, and are more resistant to weed encroachment. By using these tools, the turf manager has the ability to recycle green waste without the inconveniences of handling and disposal.

If a golf course superintendent or groundskeeper decides that clipping removal is necessary at his or her facility, then methods to process or recycle waste will be needed. A few manufacturers have already begun to design equipment for this purpose.

We may see the return of composting as a larger, more sophisticated operation. Shredders, mixers, and aeration systems for composting may become standard pieces of turf maintenance equipment. Green waste processing may also present an opportunity for cooperation among turf facilities or a service provided by contractors.

Technology to reduce or recycle green waste will take years to implement. In the meantime, landfills across the country are reaching capacity and new sites are difficult to find. In some states, regulations already restrict the golf and sports turf industries from transporting their waste to landfills. How we deal with this problem will hopefully be discussed at turf conferences this winter.

Bruce Shank