



#### May 18-19

University of California-Davis Extension course: "Sports Turfgrass Management for Professionals," Alameda, Calif. Phone: (800) 752-0881 or (530) 757-8899.

#### June 3-6

The 48th annual International Design Conference in Aspen (IDCA), Aspen, Colo. Theme: "It's not about sports - it's about design." Contact IDCA: (970) 925-2257.

#### June 15-16

The Environmental Horticulture Integrated Pest Management Conference, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, Calif. Contact Bob Rice: (805) 756-2830.

#### July 16-18

Turfgrass Producers International Summer Convention & Field Days, Sheraton Hotel, Tysons Corner, Va. Contact TPI: (800) 405-8873; or Tom Ford: (847) 705-9898.

#### July 25-27

International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment Expo, Kentucky Expo Center, Louisville, Ky. Phone: (800) 558-8767 or (502) 562-1962.

## CORRECTION

In last month's STMA Message, Kent Kurtz's name appears as Ken Kurtz due to an editorial oversight. I apologize to Mr. Kurtz, and to Stephen Guise for the error. Also, the March Front Office names Iowa City as the crash site of U.A. flight 232. The disaster and subsequent rescue effort occurred in Sioux City, Iowa. Again, I apologize for the mistake.



## More Mischief to Come

**G**rowing up in the Midwest, I had never even heard of El Niño before this year when the media flooded the airwaves with information on the phenomenon. To me, it appeared to be the invention of some upstart meteorologist who was looking for a convenient explanation for every weather anomaly we were experiencing.

Of course, readers on the West Coast should be quite familiar with El Niño already. As I have discovered, it affects the world's weather patterns every two or three years, and throws things completely out of whack every 15 years or so. It creates droughts in some areas of the world, and causes heavier than normal rains in others.

The Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction Studies (COAPS) describes El Niño as the periodic warming of waters in the Pacific Ocean: "The phenomenon known as El Niño has been observed as early as the 1600's off the coast of Peru. At varying intervals, anomalistically warm waters off the Peruvian coast appeared around Christmas and were dubbed El Niño for the Christ child."

COAPS recalls the last major El Niño event, which occurred in 1982-83. It was dubbed "Mother of All Los Niños," and its storms wreaked havoc on the West Coast. But that system pales in comparison to the El Niño that continues to dominate the weather reports this year.

Adam Glenn of ABCNEWS.com is calling this year's El Niño "the worst this century." There may not be much relief in sight either; the phenomenon is expected to continue to exert a strong influence on weather patterns throughout the spring.

According to Alexander Higgins of the Associated Press, when the phenomenon does dissipate, conditions generally return to normal. But there is a possibility that a reverse pattern can form. "La Niña," a pool of colder-than-normal water in the Pacific can form in its place. It completely reverses the pattern of extreme weather, and brings heavy rains to areas that were dry and drought to areas that were soaked with rain.

Weather forecasters may be excited by new tools that allow them to predict and describe the El Niño phenomenon, but we are still going to get hit just as hard by the intense storm systems it creates. The best defense a sports turf manager can have is a good humor about the whole thing, and a quick response to any disaster nature throws our way.

Incidentally, we finally did get a taste of the "Child's" mischief here in the Midwest last month. El Niño pounded Chicago with a snowstorm that I won't soon forget.

Steve Berens, Editor