

THE FRONT OFFICE



sportsTURF

Finds Religion

Congratulations to Bellevue Baptist Church for taking home STMA's award for Softball Field of the year (see pg. 40). The victory should come as no surprise—the church had a pretty powerful benefactor in its corner.

In all seriousness, Director Robert Bodi and his staff have established an impressive standard with the Joy Christian Athletic Complex, and with all of their athletic facilities. They certainly deserve the recognition for a job well done.

I'd like to join STMA President Steve Guise in urging you to submit your facility to be considered for next year's Field of the Year Awards. Competition for these honors can be just as great as the competition that takes place on the field. The program can give your team an extra goal—one that takes hard work and dedication, but one that's certainly attainable. So who wants to step up to the plate?

Like the rigors of competition, every sports turf manager can relate to the problems of heavy wear and compaction. In this issue, Dr. Coleman Ward offers insight on how to assess and attack these problems (see pg. 28). For more information on the subject, refer to Steve and Suz Trusty's article, "Battling Compaction," in the March 1998 issue of *sportsTURF*.

In recent years, an inventive technique has offered a means of reducing compaction, while benefiting the environment in the process. The idea makes use of the millions of tires that are discarded every year, turning them into a topdressing material that has proven to be beneficial on heavily used turf. Instead of adding to our already crowded landfills, these tires find new life by protecting turfgrass from wear.

In an article printed in the November 1997 issue of *sportsTURF*, Rogers and Vanini explain, "The theory is that the crumb rubber particles introduced to the turf/soil system will increase turfgrass wear tolerance, reduce soil compaction, and subsequently reduce turf system inputs." Their study at Michigan State University put this theory to the test during the 1993 and 1994 seasons.

Results show this creative approach to compaction relief to be a very promising option. The rubber increased rebound in the test turf, and provided a softer, more resilient surface. It also increased the turf's surface temperature, which further improved playing conditions.

Another study conducted recently at Iowa State University supports these positive results. The April 1998 edition of *ISTMA Newsletter* reports, "results indicate that topdressing with rubber particles, when compared to a non-treated control, will result in significantly better quality, density, and percentage living turf cover of turfgrass."

Topdressing with recycled rubber is just one example of an environmentally sound maintenance practice. Michael Depew presents another in this month's Applicator's Log (see pg. 36). He introduces humates as a natural alternative to chemical field applications, citing the potential polluting effects of some of these products.

These strategies respond directly to growing concern for the environment in our communities. It's extremely important that we continue to develop these environmentally friendly techniques in our industry.

Steve Berens, Editor
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Tip o' the Month

Attack Compaction

On heavily used fields, calcined clay soil amendments can help eliminate long-term compaction by maintaining a high level of moisture and air migration through the soil.

The highly porous, extremely hard material holds essential moisture and nutrients that are normally leached out of the root zone. During dry periods, the calcined clay lifts this stored nourishment to thirsty roots.

These amendments create a loose, aerated environment to promote healthy growing conditions within turf. The pore spaces increase root density and depth, and promote vigorous development.

Calcined clay soil amendments are completely inorganic. The chemically inert particles retain their structure under extreme traffic and environmental conditions. They withstand both physical and chemical forces. The clay's high percolation and infiltration rates allow the root zone to be "flushed out," reducing toxin buildup.

In new field construction, calcined clay soil amendments can be used as part of the root zone mix. Rice University recently built a new practice field with a 90-percent sand / 10-percent calcined clay mixture.

On established fields, these products can be used to fill core holes following aeration. □

The information above was provided by Premier Environmental. For further information, call: (800) 829-0215, or submit your request in writing: P.O. Box 218469, Houston, TX 77218.

Have a tip you'd like to share? Send it to sportsTURF, 2101 S. Arlington Heights Rd., Ste. 150, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, or send an e-mail message to sberens@mail.aip.com.