



Surf and Turf

Last month, I had the chance to attend the Florida Turfgrass Association's 46th annual Conference and Show in Tampa, FL. Humidity was high and the turnout was low, but while exhibitors wished that the opposite was true, most agreed it was a worthwhile event.

Dubbed "Turf Web '98," the show sought to draw attention to the high-tech influences that are starting to take root in the turf industry. While it's true that sports turf managers spend most of their time away from the desk and in the field, the internet's influence on the green industry continues to grow.

Many sites on the World Wide Web focus directly on issues pertaining to the maintenance of athletic turf. Commercial sites introduce new products, while educational webpages detail current research that's being conducted at colleges and universities across the country. The opportunity to put such a wealth of information at your fingertips certainly justifies investing a few hours of your time to familiarize yourself with the Internet.

Turf Web '98 helped attendees to do just that with a seminar dealing with website searches. The Internet is a user-friendly system. Most of the time a click of the mouse will send you exactly where you want to go. The most difficult task is getting started.

SportsTURF's webpage is a great place to begin. In addition to providing an electronic version of the magazine's current issue, www.sportsturfonline.com features archives of past issues, useful product information, a forum for discussion of current issues, and access to several other industry magazines. Once you get your feet wet, you can surf the Web through our links to other green industry sites.

Turf Web '98 also showcased the work of researchers at the University of Florida-Gainesville, which will serve as the site for next year's conference. Faculty and students presented science-fair style exhibits of projects that are being sponsored, in part, by the Florida Turfgrass Association.

Among the more interesting studies was an evaluation of high-performance sports fields by Dr. Grady Miller. He's been working on the problem of field hardness, and is trying to pin down a quantitative method of evaluation. He worked with the Clegg Impact Soil Tester, and observed ball roll and deflection on two soccer fields.

Dr. Robert Dunn exhibited his 1998 Nematode Control Field Trials. The parasitic worms feed on the turfgrass plant's nutrients. They cause physiological changes that open the turf to other problems.

Dunn's research showed that no currently available product controls nematodes in established turf without causing visible injury. He told me that this problem is of particular interest to sports turf managers, due to the stress that athletic fields must withstand. Dunn called for more research and more product development to bring the problem under control.

Look for more information about University of Florida research projects on the Web: www.ifas.ufl.edu.

Steve Berens, Editor
(847) 427-3005

Tip o' the Month



Lip Buildup

by Floyd Perry

Progressive groundskeepers know that dragging, weather, players' actions, and the yearly addition of clay create extensive buildup of infield material along the grass edges. To bring this problem under control, groundskeepers either cut sod from the field, or they roll the lip after a heavy rain or double irrigation cycle.



Once the situation is manageable, several options can help reduce the annual reconstructive task.

High school and recreation fields are generally abused, so lip problems are going to be a regular problem. With help from some unique tools, a little high-volume water, and some off-season maintenance, we have a chance to prevent some potentially serious bad bounce problems — and the upset parents that go with them.

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Hydro washing the turf edge is extremely important, but two factors determine its plausibility. First, quick connections and one-inch hose volume must be available. Field downtime is also necessary, so that you can thoroughly clean inside and outside edges.



Power brooming tools reduce time allotments and they eliminate the need to wet down your clay surfaces.



Off-season wind barriers might prevent spring start-up maintenance headaches.

Floyd Perry is author of three books: *The Pictorial Guides to Quality Groundskeeping: I - Covering the Bases; II - There Ain't No Rules; and III - Maintain It Easy, Keep It Safe.* He also produces two videos: *The ABC's of Grounds Maintenance: Vol. 1, Softball;*

and *Vol. 2, Baseball.* For more information, call: (800) 227-9381, or visit his web site: <http://gms.simplenet.com>.


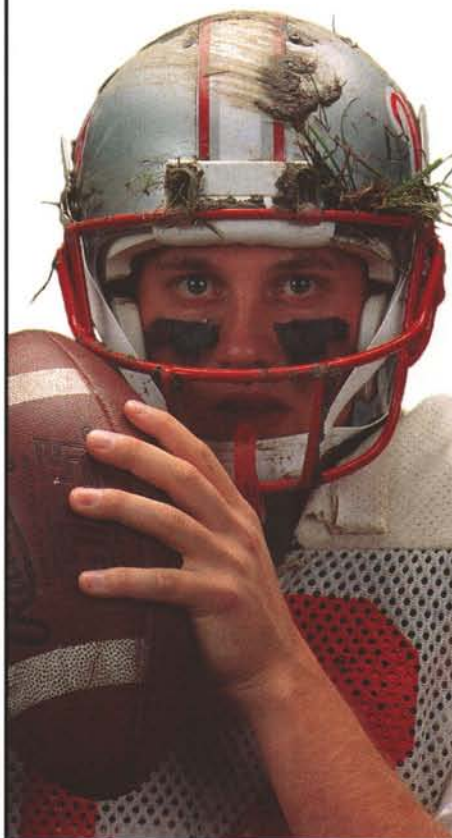
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