

from the sidelines

What's in a name?

"Strict measures need to be implemented to ensure SOD does not become established in Michigan, or if it is already established (which I suspect is the case) to contain its spread as much as possible."

According to Turfgrass Producers International (TPI), the "Law of Unintended Consequences" kicked in when the magazine *The Landsculptor* featured an article written by Dr. David L. Roberts from Michigan State titled, "Sudden Oak Death - A Disease We Don't Want." Within the article the acronym SOD was used as an abbreviation for Sudden Oak Death. The consequences of that acronym become apparent as you read the above excerpt.

"Sod" or "SOD" is not something we need to have associated with the green industry the way "Chernobyl" is to the clean air industry, or perhaps how "Barry Bonds" is to clear consciences. (My apologies for that shot but Henry Aaron was a boyhood hero and I'd like to see him keep the HR record.)

In fairness to Dr. Roberts, it should be noted that he did not create the acronym SOD for Sudden Oak Death. The acronym has been in use and is still being used by an alarming number of sources from within the U.S. Department of Agriculture on down to county and state agencies, special task forces, university researchers, extension agents, and even nurseries.

Here are some other examples from Jim Novak at TPI:

"The presence of these fungi generally indicates an advanced stage of the disease, though they are present on many other trees that are not suffering from SOD."

"It should therefore not be assumed that all dying oaks have SOD. The impact of SOD must be considered in the context of all of the factors affecting tree health."

"The U.S. Department of Agriculture has adopted an interim federal quarantine to prevent the artificial (i.e., human-assisted) spread of SOD to other parts of the U.S."

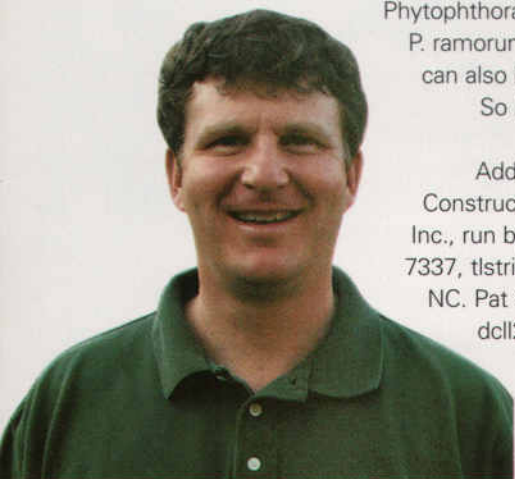
"Unfortunately, the use of SOD as an acronym for Sudden Oak Death may have an unintentional yet detrimental impact on turfgrass sod producers," says Novak. "In reading the above excerpts from numerous sources one can easily see how well intentioned information could be misinterpreted when taken out of context."

Novak encourages everyone in the green industry to give serious consideration to the discontinuation of the acronym SOD in reporting or identifying Sudden Oak Death.

Phytophthora ramorum is the proper scientific genus and species name. P. ramorum or Ramorum leaf blight and dieback are other names that can also be used.

So let's all "lay some slack" on SOD.

Addendum: Two companies we should have had in our Field Construction Company listing last month are Athletic Construction, Inc., run by Tony Strickland, CSFM, out of Oakwood, GA, 770-532-7337, tstrickland@charter.net; and Field Builders, Inc., out of Charlotte, NC. Pat O'Connor's company can be reached at 704-400-6757 or dcll2003@aol.com. We regret not listing these last issue.



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