

Maintained turfgrass reduces carbon footprint



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Earlier this year the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) asked an independent environmental and energy expert to conduct a study to assess the carbon intake and net carbon benefit of managed U.S. turfgrasses, including residential lawns, golf courses, parks, commercial landscaping, and greenbelts as well as athletic fields.

Dr. Ron Sahu's work showed that responsibly managed turfgrass stores significant amounts of carbon. In fact, he concluded that healthy turfgrass can capture up to four times more carbon from the air than is produced by the engines of today's mowers. The full report is available at www.opei.org/carbonreport.

The report assesses the carbon benefit of well-managed turfgrasses that are cut regularly and at the appropriate height, fed with nutrients, such as grass clippings, watered in a responsible way, and not disturbed at the rootzone. The largest amount of carbon intake occurs with the recycling of nitrogen contained in grass clippings; meaning, leave clippings on the ground to break down and recycle.

"We were unsure about the study's outcome, but existing data shows that a net carbon benefit exists from well-managed turfgrass, such as the typical American lawn," says Dr. Sahu. "When you take care of your lawn and promote a healthy root system, your lawn acts as a carbon sink, pulling and storing away carbon." Dr. Sahu has more than 17 years of experience in environmental, mechanical, and chemical engineering and teaches numerous courses in several Southern California universities.

"It turns out that you can reduce your carbon footprint right in your own backyard," says Kris Kiser, vice president, public affairs for OPEI. "Mowing grass and pruning shrubs and trees keeps plants in a growing state. This, in turn, ensures they are actively pulling carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, from the air."

SportsTurf Archive to go Online

The search process for articles (current and previous) in this magazine will be much simpler and more comprehensive in the future. STMA's partner, Michigan State's TGIF, will be digitizing all past issues of the magazine and including them in the TGIF searchable database. STMA sports turf managers have complimentary access to TGIF through their membership in STMA. Collecting the copyright permissions is underway, and STMA hopes to have the digitization completed this fall.

Thank you to all sponsors

Over the years this space has neglected to recognize some important people in the sports turf industry—the STMA Commercial member companies that sponsor many of the association's activities (not to mention advertising in this magazine!). Beyond specific, live events at the annual Conference, these sponsorships include the Field of the Year Award program and local chapter support. And in case you didn't know, a percentage of every dollar spent on advertising in this magazine goes directly to the STMA's coffers. Thank you!

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