RECYCLING LAWS TO IMPACT TURF INDUSTRY

It's often said that everyone is in favor of building more prisons as long as those prisons aren't located in their neighborhoods. The same is painfully true about landfills.

The United States is running out of acceptable places to dispose of its waste. In an effort to stretch the life of existing landfills, states have begun to implement laws limiting disposal of certain types of wastes. One particularly type that will have a sizeable impact on the golf and institutional turf industry is "green waste."

In a single growing season, turfgrasses can generate more than four feet of foliage. If you want proof, go to Oregon or Washington in late July and look at the fields of turfgrass grown for seed. You'll see thousands of acres of chest-high grass laden with seedheads bending in the wind.

Overall there are nearly three million acres of golf and sports turf in the U.S., including hundreds of thousands of acres of warm-season, vegetatively-propagated varieties. This doesn't include millions more acres of turf maintained for residential and industrial landscapes.

Our disposal problem stems from maintenance practices intended to provide maximum control over the quality of turf surfaces. Many superintendents and groundskeepers have grown accustomed to removing clippings on a regular basis. They reason that clippings disrupt play and complicate efforts to control thatch-related problems and weeds such as annual bluegrass. High thatch levels have been linked to increased incidence of diseases, reduced effectiveness of pesticides, and poor water infiltration.

For many of these reasons, clippings are now being removed from greens and fairways and sports fields. As a result, golf courses and large sports complexes have been identified as major producers of green waste. They have become the target of officials seeking to reduce the amount of debris ending up in landfills.

The question, according to industry forecasters, is not whether or not regulations will restrict or prohibit disposal of green waste in landfills, but rather when. Steps must be taken quickly so the industry will be prepared to handle its own wastes.

The question, according to industry forecasters, is not whether or not regulations will restrict or prohibit disposal of green waste in landfills, but rather when. Steps must be taken quickly so the industry will be prepared to handle its own wastes. Furthermore, current maintenance practices need to be reevaluated in terms of the waste they produce.

Mowing frequency, cultivation with aersors, and topdressing can all help manage thatch levels in aggressive, highly-maintained turf. The effectiveness of biostimulants for thatch decomposition needs to be researched thoroughly. Breeders have been busy evaluating varieties of turfgrasses which are lower growing, produce less thatch, and are more resistant to weed encroachment. By using these tools, the turf manager has the ability to recycle green waste without the inconveniences of handling and disposal.

If a golf course superintendent or groundskeeper decides that clipping removal is necessary at his or her facility, then methods to process or recycle waste will be needed. A few manufacturers have already begun to design equipment for this purpose.

We may see the return of composting as a larger, more sophisticated operation. Shredders, mixers, and aeration systems for composting may become standard pieces of turf maintenance equipment. Green waste processing may also present an opportunity for cooperation among turf facilities or a service provided by contractors.

Technology to reduce or recycle green waste will take years to implement. In the meantime, landfills across the country are reaching capacity and new sites are difficult to find. In some states, regulations already restrict the golf and sports turf industries from transporting their waste to landfills. How we deal with this problem will hopefully be discussed at turf conferences this winter.

Bud Shank
I read in your August 1990 Golf & sportsTURF issue of your concern for junior golf. I agree with many of your comments. But The P.G.A. of America and many golf professionals are doing much for this area.

Please review the enclosed information. It will advise you of what is being done at Penn State. I'll look forward to discussing these items with you.

Golf is a great game for character building and crosses all age, race, and gender gaps. It is fun and involves us thoroughly. Your children will have an enjoyable golf life. I would like to help that.

Bob Intrieri, P.G.A. Master Professional
Pennsylvania State University
Auxiliary Recreation Services
University Park, PA 16802

Since joining Penn State in 1984, Bob Intrieri has become a champion of Junior Golf by teaching the game to more than 600 youths each year, hosting golf camps and clinics, and establishing the Penn State Junior Championship. He can be reached at (814) 863-0254.

As usual, we at Golf House enjoyed your latest issue of Golf & sportsTURF. We could not agree with you more about the need for more course time being made available for junior golfers, both through existing clubs and new “affordable” public courses. I stress “affordable” because that is the thrust of the USGA effort to convince potential developers, public and private, that golf should be, as it is in Scotland, the home of golf—a game for the people.

Be assured that the USGA is not standing still on this subject. Through our Public Golf Department and Green Section Turfgrass Research, progress is being made. For more information about this you and your readers can contact the USGA at (201) 234-2300.

Regarding your editorial, I must point out it was the National Golf Foundation that came up with the slogan “One new course a day for 10 years to keep up with the demand.” The USGA is being specific about the type of courses needed, as I suggested earlier.

Also, junior golf is very much on our minds—why not give us a call?

Eric G. Shiel, Director of Public Golf
United States Golf Association
Far Hills, NJ

After ten years at USGA, Eric Shiel has returned to England to live. He grew up playing golf in Scotland, where as he states, golf is a game for the people. Nancy Baker at USGA has offered to answer questions about USGA’s efforts to promote public golf. She can be reached at (201) 234-2300.
AFFORDABLE
SUPERABSORBENT TECHNOLOGY HAS FINALLY ARRIVED
INTRODUCING

STOCKOSORB®

By Stockhausen

The STOCKOSORB 300 series superabsorbents are 100%
Potassium polyacrylate/polyacrylamide copolymers formulated specifically
for agricultural and horticultural applications.

- Reduces total water consumption
- Eliminates transplant shock
- Reduces leaching of nutrients

Enhances turf
- Reduces growing time
- Reduces moisture stress

Improves plant yields
- Produces aeration in soil
- Retains moisture

STOCKHAUSEN, Inc. 2408 Doyle St. Greensboro, N.C. 27406 1-800-334-0242
Call for the nearest Stockhausen distributor
Substance Abuse In The Workplace: OUR $100 BILLION NIGHTMARE

Crack is a highly-addictive form of cocaine.

The veteran landscape salesman was still writing a lot of business, but somehow he seemed to be losing that personal touch with his clients. He no longer followed through on complaints when something went wrong on the installation and maintenance jobs he sold. He was subject to sudden fits of temper that alienated fellow workers and customers alike.

It was clear to everyone that he didn’t seem to be himself. As a result, longtime clients were canceling because of problems on the job.

His mysterious behavior came to an end at a weekend party, among people whom none of his associates had ever met. There he died of a massive heart attack at the age of 39, although he had been in perfect health until the moment of death. The killer was cocaine.

The husky young climber was calling in sick one or two days a week. His health, once robust, seemed to be deserting him. When he did manage to go on a service call and prune a tree, his cuts were slipshod, and his behavior so erratic that the other crew members didn’t want to work with him. They also feared he’d fall and injure himself or them.

To maintain his costly pill habit, the climber began selling drugs to fellow employees. He was fired when caught selling “uppers” and “downers” to a new crew member, who turned out to be an undercover operative for an employment security firm.

At the landscape architect’s office, one of their best young designers was making frequent trips to the bathroom throughout the day, locking herself in for half an hour at a time. She was always sniffling, as if she had a cold that never went away. She was seldom seen without an inhaler in hand.

She became very edgy and couldn’t abide any criticism of her work, even from friends or supervisors who were trying to help her. She would fly into a temper tantrum and take every criticism personally. Her allies in the office soon abandoned her, leaving her on her own.

Denial, the curse of the drug addict, kept her from facing up to her substance abuse problem. So her designs continued their downhill spiral, and errors crept into them. To guard against this, she began repeating herself, copying old plans from her drawer. However, even these recycled designs were usually late. As a result, the office was
missing its deadlines and losing business. Cocaine again.

At the country club, the golf course superintendent was always taking off by himself to inspect some distant green. Despite all his inspection trips, the turf was malnourished and developing insect and disease problems. He was once seen buying cigarette papers at the club's gift and tobacco shop. You guessed it: "Reefer Madness," as they called that funny old movie about smoking pot. But it isn't so funny anymore.

Often he called in sick. His field crew, unsupervised, tried to make do as best they could, or just loafed. The club members soon began to complain about the condition of the greens, and some resigned. Yet the superintendent considered himself only a casual user of marijuana until the day the board dismissed him.

The international agriculture consultant's executive secretary was a brilliant young woman who had seemed on her way to the top. Then she began fouling up the boss's busy schedule. She would give her all kinds of excuses as to why key meetings were not properly arranged, lunch dates were mixed up, airline reservations were not made, and reports contained inexplicable but obvious errors.

Returning late from lunch, she often seemed giddy, and her speech was slurred. Cocaine, once the drug of choice of the elite, has reached all levels of society. Photos courtesy: Drug Enforcement Administration.

These employees are fictional, based on fact. Yet in truth their numbers are legion. Millions of them are hooked on drugs or alcohol, simultaneously victims and perpetrators of substance abuse on the job.

Most of them probably consider themselves to be only casual users of their substance of choice. However, these are the people who are facing your customers, whether in sales or supervisory capacities, or making purchases.

Chances are your crews contain some of these abusers, unknownst to you. They may be involved in any area of your business, causing irreparable damage to the credibility of your company and its reputation.

Worse yet, nobody can tell how much your particular company is losing because of poor workmanship, accidents, wasted time on the job, and entire working days lost to hangovers or illness caused by drugs or alcohol. They make your medical, liability, and workmen's compensation insurance rates soar. The damage list goes on and on.

The organizations that harbor such drug and alcohol abusers may be losing business, money, or employees as a direct result. Sometimes all three. At a minimum, the tragedy is twofold: Good people are ruining their own lives, and their employers are being hurt financially without ever knowing what hit them. Sometimes they learn too late.

Ask most of these employers whether substance abuse is a problem in their shop and they'll probably reply with confidence: "My people on drugs? Or drinking secretly? Or stealing and dealing to pay for narcotics? Never!"

We spoke to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, to private-sector experts who advise businesses on employee drug abuse, and to certain employers whose identity we will not reveal, because of the sensitivity of the subject. These employers now have model substance abuse control programs you may want to emulate. But it wasn't always that way. In the past, they never dreamed that workplace substance abuse robs American business of over $100 billion a year! Perhaps you didn't know that either, until today.

With this public-service article, which is appearing in all five of our publications, we join the ranks of those who are fighting this modern-day scourge of mind-altering chemicals, whether they be drugs or alcohol. If you haven't done so already, it's time for continued on page 16
you to join the fight, too. The future of your own business may depend on it.

Here are some devastating facts about employee substance abuse that have no hint of fiction about them. They’re all too true.

The abuse of illegal drugs, prescription drugs, look-alike drugs, synthetics, and alcohol on the job cost our nation’s economy over $100 billion in 1988 through lost productivity, accidents, health and medical expenses, and theft of property.

Fourteen out of every 100 employees abuse drugs on the job, and 60 percent of those drug abusers sell drugs to other employees, according to Bruce S. Wilkinson, president of Workplace Consultants, Inc., of Gretna, LA, loss prevention consultants to business and industry.

Wait! The worst is yet to come.

One out of every four drug abusers steals from his or her company to support these habits. At some companies, 40 percent of all post-accident urine drug screen samples have been positive for the presence of controlled substances—that is, illegal drugs.

All of these numbers are subject to change, and statistics are hard to come by. Fortunately, some of the figures have been revised downward, as more and more companies develop substance abuse prevention and control programs, according to Wilkinson.

Public education through schools and media, law enforcement, and federal drug interdiction campaigns have also played a part in lowering the totals, Wilkinson confirms. However, at those companies which have no substance abuse program at all, alcohol and illegal drugs in the workplace constitute crimes and accidents that are either happening or waiting to happen.

Those companies that include education components in their programs prior to the implementation of drug testing have registered significantly lower confirmed positive tests among the employee population, Wilkinson reveals. This is one of the few pieces of good news available at present in the nation’s increasingly desperate battle against illegal drug use.

“Let me give you these numbers,” he volunteers. “According to an American Management Association research report dated May 30, 1990, those employers who did not include a drug education awareness program prior to their drug testing found that 10.3 percent of their current employees tested positive for drugs. Those employees with both drug testing and education components reported positive tests in just 4.7 percent. That’s a good number! It shows that the concept of education, along with drug testing as a deterrent, is more effective in reducing substance abuse than just testing alone.”

Wilkinson continues, “There’s a slogan I always use when starting a drug education program for supervisors and management: ‘You’re trying to get rid of abuse and not people. However, you can only get rid of abuse if people think they’re going to get caught.’

“There’s got to be a deterrent,” he emphasizes. “When you conduct employee education programs, you must tell workers the health effects related to substance abuse. But you must also tell them the job consequences, as well as the type of enforcement activity that’s going to be utilized. If they believe that these consequences are significant, and that they may get caught, most substance abusers will stop utilizing these substances, in order to keep their job.”

This is Wilkinson’s philosophy: “It’s better to have education along with the testing, because you save more people. That’s the whole idea. The answer is not just to keep pushing these employees to other people. The answer is to get them off of drugs and alcohol, so that we don’t have these in the workplace. However, that has to be the employee’s choice. We can only give the employee options. He or she has to make the decision.”

Aside from avoiding the loss of people and profits, eliminating drugs from the workplace is good business for yet another reason, Wilkinson points out: The federal government has passed a law that requires employers to have a “drug-free workplace” if they receive a government contract for the procurement of property or services valued at $25,000 or more.

That’s not the only government edict on the subject. The Departments of Transportation and Defense are now requiring that contractors perform mandatory drug testing on any of their employees in safety/security-sensitive positions.

Under the Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1986, green industry truck drivers hauling lawn care chemicals must be tested for drug use as of December 21, 1989. This date applies to companies with 50 drivers or more. Companies with fewer drivers have until December 21, 1990 to comply. The law mandates that these drivers be tested for the presence of marijuana, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, and phencyclidine (PCP).

Whether or not your firm is big enough to be currently impacted by these regulations, the reason for their existence applies to companies of all sizes. For anyone except a dope dealer, drugs and business just don’t mix.

Many firms in the green industry, as in others, are responding to drug abuse with comprehensive policies and procedures, fortified by testing and training programs. The aim is to identify employees who transport alcoholic beverages or illegal and unauthorized drugs into the workplace, in order to use and/or sell them there. Many, if not most, of these programs bear a remarkable similarity to each other. At least the successful ones do.

Usually formulated with the help of trade groups or outside consultants who specialize in this area, such programs give the employer many tools with which to control worksite exposures. They learn how to keep alcohol, illegal drugs, and drug paraphernalia off the premises. They also gain increased enforcement capabilities.

The employer’s arsenal of weapons includes legal searches, urine drug testing, that does not abuse individual rights, and employee assistance programs for those drug and alcohol abusers who are willing to accept help and want to be drug-free. Such programs are frequently covered by health insurance.

Many workshops offered by chambers of commerce, industry associations, and private consultants aid employers in their efforts to combat the potential losses related to workplace substance abuse. These workshops show companies how to design and implement their programs in a reasonable and cost-effective manner.

Attendees generally receive information on how to identify employees with substance abuse problems, as well as guidance.
"We hired a personnel manager to help us. He wasn't an expert on drugs, but he soon became one! We implemented a program that can be summarized in a nutshell," the landscape contractor reveals.

"We will test all new hires for drugs. We will test anyone who is involved in an accident with damages over $250. An injury will mean an automatic drug test for all participants. And we will test for cause: If we suspect someone of being on drugs or alcohol and two supervisors think we should test him, we will. However, two supervisors must agree on the need for that test. One is not enough," the landscape contractor stresses.

They also implemented another feature: "We have an outside party whose phone number we give to the employees. Then, if they have a drug problem and want to get assistance, but don't want us to know about it, they can call this third party outside the company. He will get them into a program to treat their habit. Our medical insurance will pay for a portion of it, and our company will hold their job for them while they're gone. However, when they come back, if it's
being tested randomly to make sure they
scape contractor offers the following behav-
requirement is that they have to continue
known they had a drug problem, one re-
continued from page 17
changeable temperament: one minute high-
glassy look. Erratic work habits and
has a drug problem: "Dilation of the eyes—a
changes dramatically should always cause
Say the employee used to be very
prompt, and suddenly attendance falls off
That's some of the anecdotal evidence
Association With Substance Abuse
* Abrupt changes in work attendance,
quality of work, discipline.
* Unusual flare-ups or outbreaks of tem-
* Withdrawal from responsibility.
* General changes in overall attitude.
* Deterioration of physical appearance
and grooming.
* Wearing of sunglasses at inappropriate
times (to hide dilated or constricted pupils).
* Continual wearing of long-sleeved gar-
ments (to hide injection marks), particu-
larly in hot weather, or reluctance to wear
short-sleeved attire when appropriate.
* Association with known substance
abusers.
* Unusual borrowing of money from
friends, co-workers, or family members.
* Stealing small items from the work-
place.
* Secretive behavior regarding actions
or possessions. Poorly concealed attempts
to avoid attention and suspicion, such as
frequent trips to storage rooms, closets,
restrooms, or basements (to use drugs).
Another employer, a major power com-
pany that does extensive line clearance
work, offers the following contribution to
this article. This concise policy statement
on drugs and alcohol is distributed to all
employees as part of the company's com-
prehensive substance abuse control pro-
gram. Again, you may want to save it as the
possible model for a statement of your own,
should you have no program in effect at this
time.
It is the policy of the Company that:
* Employees are expected to report for
work and remain at work in a condition to
perform assigned duties free from the
effects of alcohol and drugs.
* Illegal drug activity on or off the job
will not be tolerated. Employees shall not
be involved with the unlawful use, posses-
sion, sale, or transfer of drugs or narcotics
in any manner. Alcohol use which could
tests for employees in particularly sensitive
jobs related to company security and per-
sonal safety, who have a whole list of rules
of their own.
There is a complex Employee Assistance
Program (EAP) for both disciplining
and/or assisting employees with substance
abuse problems, in hopes of salvaging these
employees instead of dismissing them out-
right. Employees who volunteer to enter
this program are given every cooperation
in helping them recover, as are those who
are referred to it by the company for cause.
For instance, this includes provision of sick
leave for those undergoing withdrawal
from alcohol or drugs.
However, compassion has its limits, and
they are stated in so many words. Included
in the implementation of company drug
policy is the following significant state-
ment, extending the program off the prem-
ises: "Off-the-job illegal selling, distributing
or manufacturing of drugs will normally
result in discharge."
While the company does not have a
formal educational program to warn its
employees of the dangers of drug and alco-
hol abuse, an informal procedure is in
place. A company spokesman explains, "We
have Monday morning safety meetings
where we have handouts on the subject.
These handouts teach supervisors what to
look for in the way of drug or alcohol abuse
among their people. For the employees,
there are brochures explaining what drugs
can do to their minds and bodies."
As this power company's drug abuse
program became known in the communi-
ties where it operates, a remarkable thing
happened. The company spokesman re-
vales, "At first 33 percent of people tested
as new hires came up positive. Now it's
down to five percent." In other words,
those who preferred to retain their drug
habits did not bother to apply. Nor were
they missed.
Another green industry employer has
a somewhat similar program. "We teach our
supervisors how to detect signs of drug or
alcohol abuse," he confides. "We inform
our employees that we have a testing pro-
gram."
The program involves tests for reason-
able cause. The spokesman explains, "If a
serious accident occurs, and if we have
reason to believe drugs or alcohol were
involved, we can ask for a test. Or if a
person shows signs of being under the
influence of alcohol or drugs and two or
more supervisors can qualify this, we can
insist on a test. However, we also allow the
employee to have a second sample and give
Marijuana is traditionally said to lead to
harder drugs.
What happens to employees who test positive? The spokesman says, "Prior to and even after a positive test, we allow them to go into a rehab [rehabilitation] program, either an outpatient program or the normal 28-day in-house program as a resident at a rehabilitation center. Both types of treatment are paid for through our comprehensive medical insurance program."

He adds, "We think we have a reasonable program—a good program. There is the threat of testing, but we also have the rehabilitation. We have had a substance abuse program in effect for many years, but we really went into it hard beginning May 1st of this year."

The spokesman explains, "We had employment drug testing of new hires before, but not a program of 'reasonable cause' till May 1st. We negotiated with the union successfully, and they bought it without any problem. We are a relatively rural company, and in a business that can be extremely hazardous for someone who is not up to par. So we encourage employees to come forward on a confidential basis and go into our rehab program. Many of them have done so, and we have been very successful with it."

Although $100 billion a year is a tremendous loss to the U.S. economy, dwelling on the financial costs of workplace substance abuse is not the whole story. To end this article without facing one final question would be to leave this report incomplete, but this is at their own cost."

What is startling about Vander Kooi's comments is the fact that he now has to figure the cost of employee substance abuse into his bidding programs! This means it has become deeply embedded in the bedrock of today's business world and the way we live now.

"Drug and alcohol abuse is very expensive to our industry in two major areas," Vander Kooi notes. "Number one, of course, is that it definitely raises workmen's compensation and other insurance costs. Secondly, it does lower production."

"If there are a couple of reasons why workplace substance abuse is so prevalent in our industry," Vander Kooi advises. "First, I've always said that this industry is a young person's industry, at least from the field standpoint. We usually employ people in their 20s, who are physically able to perform the kind of work we do. And obviously that's the time in life when they are more prone to some kind of drug abuse, whether it be alcohol or whatever."

"So there's a maturing factor involved: Hopefully, when they get a little bit older and more mature, they will grow out of that," Vander Kooi believes. "In the meantime, because we do have to use younger people in our industry, and because substance abuse is more prevalent among younger people than among mature people, drug and alcohol abuse will be harder to avoid."

"Secondly, I think we have a self-esteem problem among most of the people we hire as labor in this industry," Vander Kooi confides. "Too often, our industry is not looked at as a career. It's seen as 'something I have to do because I'm on the bottom of the labor chain.'"

"If we can raise both the career aspect of this industry and the esteem factor by letting these young people know that this is an honorable career, I think we can help eliminate some of the substance abuse problems," he asserts. "We have to show our people that their work in this industry is an important part of their life, so that they

It is arguably the most important query of all: Why do so many people in our society today abuse drugs and alcohol?

management consultant Charles Vander Kooi of Littleton, CO, whose seminars on competitive bidding and other business strategies have taken him around the world. Here is what Vander Kooi, a long-time green industry observer and a part-time minister, has to say. It is based on his own personal experiences in counseling drug and alcohol abusers from all walks of life, as well as seeing the financial toll their problems have inflicted on businesses around the country.
Substance Abuse
continued from page 19
people’s self-image. And I think that can
lower the incidence of drug and alcohol
abuse in the workplace."

Getting down to the basic question of
why there is an epidemic of substance
abuse all over America, not just in the green
industry, brought some further comments
from Vander Kooi.

“I believe there are several reasons,” he
suggests. “I think we’ve become a very
materialistic society, and a very humanistic
society. Humanism is the concept that we
are an end to ourselves, and that we can
ultimately make ourselves perfect. We
strive for perfection. And when we fail, we
feel very badly about ourselves. That con-
tributes to our low self-esteem.

“If I expect myself to be perfect and can’t
accept the fact that I’m not, yet I’m not
perfect, that’s when I’m vulnerable and may
get high, trying to forget my failures with
substance abuse.

“I believe we should place our focus
more away from the materialistic side of
life, recognize that human failure and
human error are a part of life, and focus
more on the spiritual side of life,” says
Vander Kooi.

If he is correct, it means that substance
abuse, which has afflicted every single level
of American society, is really not a matter
of external economic circumstances, but of
the human heart. It also means that money
is not the only answer to the discontent and
low self-esteem that breeds such abuse.

It is not very difficult to facilitate job
recognition with encouragement. A little
human kindness to our employees and each
other, a little recognition of the best in
people, and a willingness to forgive their
failures, is very simple medicine. It may
never take the place of a professional drug
abuse program, but it might eventually
make such programs less necessary in the
first place. And it costs a lot less. Basically
it’s free.

It is ironic that America, still the wealthi-
est of nations, is the world’s greatest con-
sumer of illegal drugs such as heroin,
cocaine, and marijuana. We seem to be
awakening to the dangers of alcohol, but
that war is also far from won. If simple
caring can help remove the underlying
causes of substance abuse, it just possibly
might go a long way toward healing this
great national plague that has poisoned
American business and our whole society.

We’ll never know unless we give it a try.

---

Fall Fertilization

Use Par Ex® Turf Fertilizers contain-
ing IBDU® slow release nitrogen for
superior quality turf this fall and earlier
greening next spring.

Exclusive IBDU® slow release nitrogen is
not dependent on microbial activity
and it is formulated to meet your regional
nutritional requirements.

For more information contact: Vigoro Industries, Inc. • P.O. Box 512 • Winter Haven, FL 33882
(813) 294-2567

Par Ex® and IBDU® are registered trademarks of Vigoro Industries, Inc.