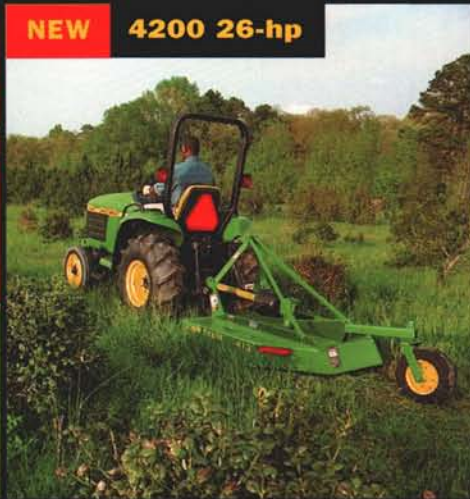


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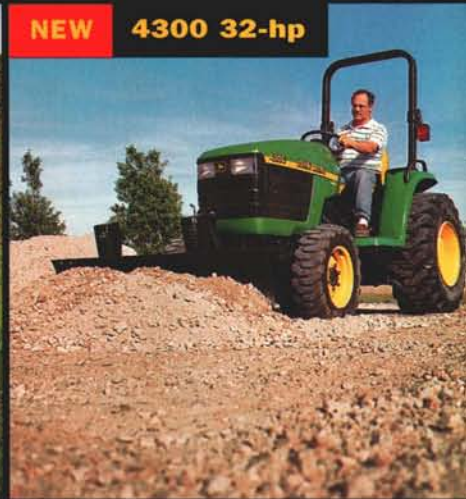
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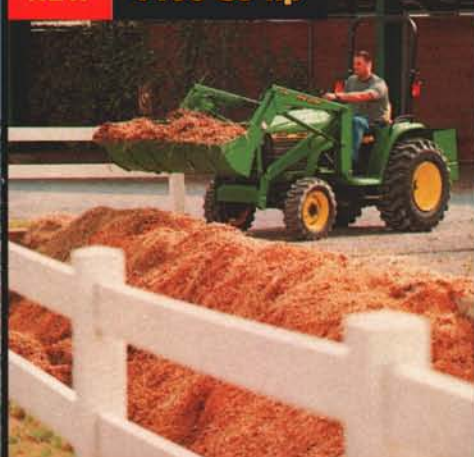
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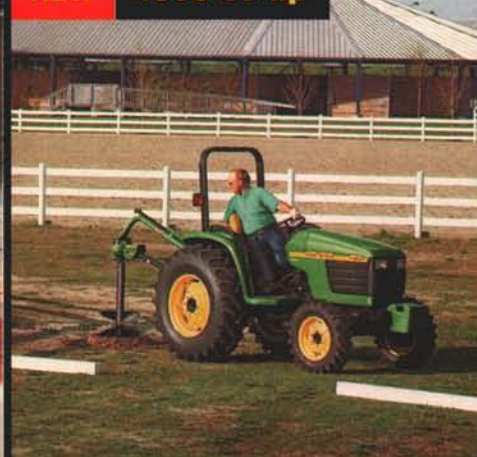


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VOLUME 14, NUMBER 8

AUGUST 1998

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Boulder's Pleasant View Sports Complex earned top honors as STMA's 1997 College Soccer Field of the Year.

Courtesy: Abby McNeal

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Let's Lead the Way

In July's Front Office, I urged you to support development of environmentally friendly techniques in the green industry, and to incorporate available technology into your own programs. Sports turf managers are charged with the task of safeguarding their grounds, while protecting the athletes that use them at the same time. Natural solutions to maintenance problems help accomplish both goals.

Composting is a good place to start, and it's relatively easy to work a program into your existing maintenance system. On *The Compost Resource Page*, Chris Palmarini reports, "Yard and food wastes make up approximately 30 percent of the waste stream in the United States." Unfortunately, landfill structures lack the mechanisms that encourage these materials to decompose.

Landfills cut off the supply of oxygen needed to breakdown organic materials. The anaerobic environment this creates actually slows the process of decay. These giant mounds of waste may hide the problem from view, but they do more harm than good in the process.

Palmarini goes on to say, "Composting most [yard and food] waste streams would reduce the amount of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) requiring disposal by almost one fourth." This would greatly reduce the pressure we're putting on our landfills — they're really being pushed to their limits as things stand.

Essentially, these massive piles of garbage are nothing more than giant compost heaps themselves. But by composting standards, they're very poorly managed.

Successful composting requires careful attention and specific procedures. However, the methods are not difficult, and they're certainly not overly time consuming. If you incorporate a composting program into your regular maintenance routine, you'll find that the rewards will greatly outweigh your efforts.

Composting produces several positive side effects that can directly influence the efficiency and effectiveness of your program. Digital Visions Consulting lists several of these benefits on their website: www.Digitalseed.com.

A successful composting program will produce a nutrient-rich end product that can be applied to fields to stimulate growth, improve disease resistance, and increase drought tolerance. The organic material can act as a soil amendment or fertilizer, and it won't cost you a dime to create it — I know that many of you are feeling the squeeze of a tight budget right now.

As a soil amendment, composted material can improve both soil structure and soil chemistry. In clay soil, it binds to the tiny particles to open the soil to air and water. It also helps sand-based soil, filling the gaps between large sand particles to help the soil retain water. Further, composted matter bonds to micronutrients, such as iron, copper, manganese, and zinc, and increases their availability in the soil.

With all of the positive aspects of composting, it's amazing that these programs remain the exception rather than the rule. More and more office-based businesses are catching on to the benefits of recycling, and are incorporating programs into their operating systems. Is the green industry going to sit still while these businesses lead the fight to clean up the environment from air-conditioned offices?

Steve Berens, Editor
(847) 427-3005

Tip o' the Month



The Turf Tear-Out Problem

by Floyd Perry

Whether your field hosts under-12 Little League games or professional-level events, turf wear-out in front of the pitcher's mound is the number one eyesore. It can also be a serious liability problem.

Let's evaluate and attempt to solve this problem, or at least alleviate some concerns. As progressive groundskeepers, we all know that "turf grows by the inch, and is killed by the foot." Let's avoid some of the foot traffic with innovative maintenance ideas.

The Arizona Diamond Backs cut out a path from the mound to the home plate area at this recreational



complex. They have maintained a level of consistency of turf and clay, and have removed a constant maintenance concern.

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August 31-September 4

Floyd Perry's Groundskeepers Management Academy, Kissimmee, FL. (800) 227-9381.

September 15

Clemson University's Turfgrass Field Day, Clemson, SC, 9:00 am. Contact Landon Miller: (864) 656-4966, Bert McCarty: (864) 656-0120, or Ted Whitwell: (864) 656-4971.

September 16-19

Florida Turfgrass Association's (FTGA) 46th annual Conference and Show (TurfWeb '98), Tampa Convention Center, Tampa, FL. Contact FTGA: (800) 882-6721, or (407) 856-5767.

September 27-October 1

Floyd Perry's Groundskeepers Management Academy, Salt Lake City, UT. (800) 227-9381.

September 30

Virginia Tech's Hampton Roads Agricultural Research and Extension Center's (HRAREC) 23rd annual Field Day, Virginia Beach, VA, 10:00 am-5:00 pm. Contact Dr. Bonnie Appleton, HRAREC: (757) 363-3906.

October 5-December 11

Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management School (two 10-week sessions), Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ. Contact Susan Wohl: (732) 932-9271.

1999

January 13-17

Sports Turf Managers Association's (STMA) 10th annual Conference & Exhibition, Mesa, AZ. Contact STMA: (800) 323-3875, or (712) 366-2669.

STMA MESSAGE

Sports
Turf
Managers Association



There's Growth in this here Organization

You can simply ride on the shirttails of the STMA as part of the tremendous growth our organization is experiencing, or you can really get involved. You'll find that you can personally grow and create opportunities for your own development within this organization.

I have found the later to be true from personal experience. The STMA has been the framework for my sports turf career over the past 10 years. The more I've gotten involved with this organization, the more I've learned and have been able to share in its development.

This month's issue features the accomplishments of another individual whose successful career has been framed by the STMA. Abby McNeal is turfgrass manager of Pleasant View Sports Complex in Boulder, CO, STMA's 1997 College Soccer Field of the Year.

Abby has been actively involved in CSTMA since 1992, and in STMA since 1993. She was introduced to the organization while still a student at Colorado State University, as the two-time recipient of the Colorado Chapter's Scholarship. She later received the National STMA Scholarship in 1993. Today, she serves as President of the Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association.

Those of us who have had the opportunity to get to know Abby during this period know that she is worthy of these honors. We're very proud of her, and we're grateful for her dedication, hard work, and commitment to STMA and the sports turf industry. I anticipate that Abby's career within our association will continue, and will include further involvement at the national level. Abby, thanks for all you do for our organization, and for creating better and safer sports fields for your local community.

At a recent STMA Board meeting, the issue of ethics was brought to the discussion. It was noted that STMA had previously established a code of ethics, and that the code needed to be resurrected, examined, and refined so that it could be reinstated.

There are times when our job presents tasks that move us to question the ethical implications of our actions. This could mean altering conditions to provide what may be considered a home field advantage, or it may involve attempts to control an unwanted agent, be it a weed or a competitor.

At these times, we stand at a crossroads, and we must take a 'gut check.' We, as professional sports turf managers or commercial affiliates, must do what is right, ethical, and morally correct as individuals, as professionals, and as members of a respected organization.

Is this not the core of what it is to be a professional? Is this not the obligation of each and every member of our organization? Is this not the true meaning of sports — to compete on a fair and level playing surface? Let the best man or woman win!

I ask you all to think about your obligation to our industry, and to provide playing surfaces that are consistent and fair. Once you have made a commitment to ethics in every area of your career, pride, satisfaction, and recognition will be yours.

Stephen Guise, STMA President
(714) 704-0403

Pleasant View Sports Complex

STMA's College Soccer Field of the Year

by Bob Tracinski

Rising to the peaks is nothing new for Abby McNeal. She has based her career in Boulder, CO, in the foothills of the mighty Rocky Mountains. She excelled at Colorado State University in the landscape horticulture program, and chose a concentration in turfgrass management. She did so well that she earned the Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association scholarship twice, and the national STMA scholarship in 1993.

After completing her BS degree in 1994, McNeal maintained an active role in STMA. She currently serves as President of the Colorado Chapter, and continues to maintain a standard of excellence in her work at Pleasant View Sports Complex. Once again, McNeal's efforts have earned her top honors, as the STMA has named Pleasant View its 1997 College Soccer Field of the Year.

McNeal is Turfgrass Manager of the facility. She says, "Pleasant View Sports Complex is state of the art. Owned and operated by the City of Boulder, the 54-acre complex features 30 acres of sand-based fields, including the award-winning field used by the University of Colorado's women's soccer team."

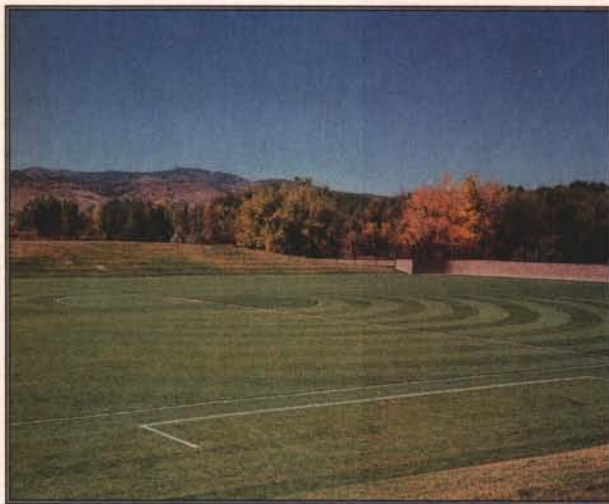
Construction of the original 21 acres of fields began early in 1994, and the initial seeding was completed that fall. These fields opened for play in August 1995. The complex added an additional nine acres of fields between

"All 30 acres of playing fields have a three-inch layer of pea gravel with an Eljen sub-drainage system," explains McNeal. "It's a rockless French drain that uses four-inch plastic perforated drain pipe placed in a herringbone pattern 25 feet on center. At least that's how the 'as-builts' are presented. Actual layout of the original 21 acres is about 75 percent true to the 'as-builts'. We've been remapping the field's underground system as it's discovered."

"The drainage layer is covered by an eight-inch layer of sand-based media. On the award-winning field and the other fields in the first construction, that mix is 90-percent sand and 10-percent Dakota Sedge Peat. The nine acres of new fields are 100-percent sand. The sand is from a local source and meets the specifications for golf course greens construction."

One and a half acres of turf and landscape border the fields, and the facility includes a paved parking area that accommodates 415 cars. The only

building on the property is a combination restroom facility/small office and storage compound. There's also a fenced, graveled, outdoor equipment storage area adjacent to the compound.



Beautifully set in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, Pleasant View Sports Complex, Boulder, CO, earned top honors as STMA's College Soccer Field of the Year. Courtesy: Abby McNeal

fall 1996 and summer 1997. In-house crews installed the sub-drainage and irrigation system, and RBI completed the final grading and seeding. Crews completed construction in time to meet the deadline for a June 1998 tournament.

McNeal says, "We have an MRI 5000F irrigation system with a 50-station Motorola controller. We use Toro 2001 heads in the sand-based turf areas, and Toro Super 700 and pop-up heads cover the surrounding turf and landscape areas. The drip system irrigates the 45 tree-filled islands in the parking lot.

"For full-circle coverage at 100-percent of the evapotranspiration (ET) rate, field irrigation takes 3-1/2 hours with each part-circle head running for five minutes, and each full-circle head for 10 minutes. The five- and 10-minute timing makes it easier to calculate the amount of water put down and to adjust zones for additional irrigation. It takes another 1-1/2 hours of irrigation for the outside landscaping.

"To shift high-traffic wear, we alternate the field orientation during the year. In the spring, we lay out nine fields (one rugby and eight soccer) in an east to west grid. In the fall, we go to eight fields (one rugby and seven soccer) in a north to south grid. Because of this, few of the irrigation zones are consistent with field layout.

"The city water mainline runs around the facility on the bordering edges. Our irrigation system is looped



Turfgrass Manager Abby McNeal currently serves as president of the Colorado STMA. *Courtesy: Ray Fidler*

with two points of connection and no pump. Quick couplers are spaced along this mainline, so we could have up to 300 feet of hose to drag to spot

water sections of the fields. With the city water system, we have pressure fluctuations depending on the demands on the system. So we can have problems achieving head-to-head coverage, resulting in donuts of dry spots eight to 10 feet around the heads. The donuts require what my boss calls 'foot watering.' You put your foot on the sprinkler head to force the water into the dry spot. It's faster and less labor-intensive than dragging the hoses. We work with different nozzle configurations to improve coverage. Trouble spots also receive extra aeration, slit seeding, and topdressing."

The complex is not fenced in and has no windbreaks. Heat and desiccation put added strain on the irrigation system.

McNeal says, "Play and practices fill the fields regularly, but unauthorized use still occurs. Rules and regulations are posted, but the size of the complex makes enforcement difficult. There's a gate at the parking lot entrance that is closed when the facility is not open. But the other three sides are exposed, and two are

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bordered by community roads, so people can just park and walk in. These unauthorized users are the least respectful of the facility and cause the greatest damage. To discourage unauthorized use, we remove soccer goals in the summer, resetting them only for scheduled play. Goals are removed and stored at the close of fall play. Vandalism, though not severe, is an on-going problem with the unfenced complex."

McNeal was hired in April 1995. At that time the facility had fields, but no office, restrooms, or equipment. Her boss is Dave Brown, golf course superintendent for the City of Boulder. Before Abby came on board, he handled both the course and the complex. Brown still does the purchasing, and he combines the needs of both facilities for cost savings. He coordinates special project needs with other city personnel.

Ray Fidler is classified as a part-time maintenance staff member. He and McNeal developed maintenance

methods that put most procedures in the one-person or two-person category. Their commitment, flexibility, and



Taken four months into the spring season, this picture illustrates the excellent condition of Pleasant View's fields. Courtesy: Abby McNeal

mutual respect help them manage the workload.

A seasonal, part-time worker helps in the summer. McNeal and Fidler concentrate their efforts on the fields and work their way to the outer turf and landscape. The third person tack-

les such tasks as weeding flower beds and pruning shrubbery. McNeal and Fidler focus additional maintenance on the high-traffic areas: goal mouths, penalty areas, sidelines, field centers, and spots needing repair.

Always on the lookout for better techniques, they're experimenting with Crown III Crushed Rubber. They've been topdressing a 1/8-in. layer of the recycled material in three different goal mouths and along three different sidelines on the established turf. They mix Zeopro in their divot mix to speed germination and establishment, and they add Primo to the line paint to slow upward turf growth and extend the painting interval from 10 to 14 days.

A polymer-coated, slow-release fertilizer with a one-to-one ratio of nitrogen and potassium generally carries the complex for 12 weeks following mid-June application. Soil tests at least three times a year help identify fertility problems and allow McNeal to fine-tune the program to counteract them.

Continued on pg. 14



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