

Get Ready Y'all – STMA is coming to Austin!

By Patrick Allen, STMA Manager, Sales and Marketing

DIn January 2011, the 22nd Annual STMA Conference and Exhibition will be in Austin, TX for the first time. The majority of the events will be at the Austin Convention Center and the headquarters hotel is the Hilton Austin, which is adjacent to the Austin Convention Center. While Austin, the state capital of Texas, is the 15th largest city in the U.S. with more than 750,000 residents, and more than 1.5 million in the metro, the city is very compact, and there is much to do within walking distance of the Conference locations.

Three of Austin's famous entertainment districts are within a short walk of the Hilton Austin- Sixth Street, Warehouse/Downtown, and Red River. Five more—University of Texas, South Austin, South Congress, East Austin, and Market District[DASH HERE]are a short taxi ride away. These eight districts house the majority of Austin's more than 200 live music venues. These venues, plus the fact that the Dixie Chicks, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Willie Nelson, and many more musicians all got their start in Austin, have led to Austin formally being called the Live Music Capital of the World®.

In addition to music, Austin is the top filmmaking location in the state of Texas, and one of the top locations in the country according to *MovieMaker* Magazine. Both of these industries are featured at the internationally renowned South by Southwest Music, Movie, and Interactive Conference and Festival (SXSW), at which more than 250,000 visitors enjoy 10 days of concerts, trade shows, and festivals each March.

Austin is also a notoriously healthy and environmentally conscious city. It has been named one of the safest cities in America due to a very low violent crime rate by multiple sources, and the "Greenest City in America" by MSN, the "#1 College Town in America" by the Travel Channel, and the "City with the Best

People" by *Travel + Leisure* magazine. The city is home to the world headquarters of Whole Foods, Inc. and smoking is prohibited in most restaurants, bars, and music venues.

While its "greenness" significantly contributes to Austin's reputation as one of the best places to live in America according to *Forbes*, the city definitely pollutes. Don't worry about the environment though, it's just the mesquite! It also contributes to the waistline of its visitors as Austin is home to world famous barbeque joints Stubbs, Iron Works (adjacent to the Hilton Austin), Salt Lick, and County Line. Don't like barbeque? There are many other styles of food available throughout the city, including sushi, international, upscale, and Tex-Mex, another local flavor that shares top billing with barbeque.

Getting to Austin is easy, as Austin-Bergstrom International Airport services more than 250 commercial passenger flights per day and 38 locations non-stop. And with the average high temperature in January in the 60's, many STMA-ers will be hitting the links at one of the areas more than 25 area public and resort golf courses, including Barton Creek Resort and Spa, one of the premier golf resorts in the U.S.

As you can see, there is a lot going on in Austin. We didn't even mention the University of Texas, home to some 50,000 students, the vast amount of local attractions, Lake Travis, Lake Austin, Lady Bird Lake, Texas Hill Country, shopping, or the 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats that make their home under the Congress Avenue Bridge. Chiroptophobes (those who fear bats) the continent's largest urban bat population only calls the bridge home from April-November.

For more information on the STMA Conference and Exhibition, please visit www.STMA.org/conferences.

For more information on Austin, please visit its Convention and Visitors Bureau website at www.austintexas.org. ■

7 Years and Counting!

STMA recognizes the following members for their commitment to STMA during the previous seven years. Thank you for your support!

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Seattle will host Northwest Regional Conference and Exhibition in July

STMA, in partnership with four chapters from the Northwest, will be bringing national level education and an outdoor exhibition to Seattle July 21-22, 2010. The Intermountain, Northern California, Oregon, and Pacific Northwest chapters will be participating in this highly anticipated event. While focusing on Sports Turf Managers, STMA encourages attendance by members and crew alike, and will be providing education for all levels of sports turf experience. As a special treat, attendees will get a night at the ballpark, where the Seattle Mariners take on the Chicago White Sox July 21.

More than 14 hours of education is highlighted by nationally recognized sports turf authorities Drs. Andy McNitt, Dave Minner, Rob Golembiewski, and Ali Harivandi, who will be lending their expertise to presentations and/or panel discussions on natural turfgrass and synthetic turf. Behind the scenes tours of the facilities of the Seattle Seahawks (NFL), Seattle Mariners (MLB), and Seattle Sounders FC (MLS), and hands-on demonstrations on logo painting, synthetic paint removal, and repairing high traffic areas make up the interactive components of the event. Other education will be provided by local professional sports turf managers, builders, and architects with significant sports field experience.

According to Pam Sherratt, STMA Conference Education Chairman, "You will not find a better sports turf specific educational experience outside of the STMA Conference and Exposition held every January."

Registration costs for the 2-day event will be \$95 for a member of STMA National or one of the four participating chapters and \$125 for a non-member. This price will include 2 days of education, entrance to the exhibition, most meals, and the ticket to the game Wednesday evening. Online registration will be available, so keep checking back at www.STMA.org for the most up-to-date information regarding the event.

STMA has also negotiated reduced rates at two Seattle area hotels. The Sixth Avenue Inn is located in downtown Seattle and has a rate of \$89 per night plus tax, and is near Safeco Field and Qwest Field, where the majority of the event will be taking place. The Holiday Inn Seattle-Renton has a rate of \$94 per night plus tax, and is closer to Starfire Sports, where the exhibition will be held July 21. Please call the Sixth Avenue Inn at (206) 441-8300 or the Holiday Inn Seattle-Renton at (425) 226-7700 and tell either you are

with the Sports Turf Managers Association to receive these special rates.

Put July 21-22 on your schedule and start talking to your employer about making sure that you are able to attend this incredible educational opportunity. If you have any questions, please contact STMA at 800.323.3875 or STMAInfo@STMA.org.

Interested in exhibiting or sponsoring this event? Please contact Patrick Allen, STMA Manager of Sales and Marketing at 800.323.3875 or pallen@stma.org.

ABOUT THE FACILITIES

Qwest Field and Event Center is the home of the NFL's Seattle Seahawks and the Seattle Sounders Football Club of Major League Soccer. The facility also hosts major concerts, international soccer matches, and other events throughout the year. With more than 70% of the seats covered and amazing views of the surrounding Cascade Mountains and downtown Seattle, Qwest is one of the premier event facilities in the US.

Safeco Field is home to the Seattle Mariners and has a capacity of 47,116. Opened in 1999, Safeco features a one-of-a-kind retractable roof, which covers the field but doesn't enclose the stadium, preserving the open air environment. The grass is a custom blend of four strains of Kentucky bluegrass and two strains of perennial ryegrass, which is spider-webbed with 20-30 miles of heating pipe to bring the turf out of dormancy in time for the home opener each year.

Starfire Sports is the official administrative and training home of the Seattle Sounders FC. Located about 15 minutes from downtown Seattle in Tukwila, Starfire is a state-of-the-art sports complex featuring eight, lighted, all-weather, synthetic fields, including a 3,000 seat grandstand stadium field, four natural grass fields, and an 80,000 square foot Athletic Center.

The Virginia Mason Athletic Center (VMAC) is the training and practice home of the Seattle Seahawks. Located in Renton and completed in 2008, VMAC has three natural grass outdoor football fields and one indoor synthetic field. At more than 200,000 gross square feet, including more than 50,000 dedicated to training, the facility is the second largest training facility in the NFL. The land was formerly home to a coal tar refinery and creosote plant, since remediated, and enhances the environmental climate of Renton and its wetlands by civilizing and redeveloping the site. ■

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The SAFE Foundation (Foundation for Safer Athletic Environments)

shelves are bare! As the Foundation gears up for its annual auctions and raffles that it holds at the annual STMA conference, it is seeking your donations to help make it a success.

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Attendees love to bid on your stuff and the proceeds go directly to the Foundation, which funds scholarships and education. The Foundation raised nearly \$10,000 from the auction and raffles held during the conference in Orlando earlier this year. SAFE also awarded \$8,000 in January to the Student Challenge team winners from the conference and \$12,500 in scholarships during the fourth quarter of 2009.

As STMA's charity, SAFE strives to raise money from grants, donations, the SAFE/Jacobsen annual golf tournament and the auctions and raffles so it can turn around and make awards to deserving students and fund educational initiatives. Send all donations to STMA headquarters, 805 New Hampshire, Ste. E, Lawrence KS 66044. SAFE is in the midst of developing a far-reaching strategic plan and vision to guide it into its next decade of service. ■



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- Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association: www.cstma.org.
- Florida #1 Chapter (South): Main 954-263-7933; Secondary 954-782-2748
- Florida #2 Chapter (North): 850/580-4026.
- Florida #3 Chapter (Central): 863-665-5800
- Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: www.gatewaystma.org.
- Georgia Sports Turf Managers Association: www.gstma.org.
- Greater L.A. Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: www.stmalabasin.com.
- Illinois Chapter STMA: 847/263-7603.
- Intermountain Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: www.imstma.org.
- Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association: www.iowaturfgrass.org.
- Kentucky Sports Turf Managers Association: www.kystma.org.
- Keystone Athletic Field Managers Org. (KAFMO/STMA): www.kafmo.org.

- Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA): www.mistma.org.
- Mid Atlantic Sports Turf Managers Association (MASTMA) (formerly the Chesapeake Chapter STMA) Ph. 410-704-2197 www.mastma.org
- Minnesota Chapter STMA: www.mstma.com.
- MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association: www.mokanstma.com.
- Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association: 402/441-4425.
- New England STMA (NESTMA): www.nestma.org.
- Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: www.sfmanj.org.
- Sports Turf Managers of New York: www.stmony.org.
- North Carolina Chapter of STMA: www.ncsportsturf.org.
- Northern California STMA: www.norcalstma.org.
- Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): www.ostma.org.
- Oregon STMA Chapter: 503/953-9406
- Ozarks STMA: www.ozarksstma.org.

- Pacific Northwest Sports Turf Managers Association: www.pnwstma.org.
- Southern California Chapter: www.socialstma.com.
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- Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA): www.tvstma.com.
- Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: 866/897-8621.
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- STMA International Affiliate Organizations
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Fire ants



Last year we had fire ant mounds on our field and all around the grounds near our fields. I know they sting, but are these a turf pest? We got some complaints to our city managers about them last year so we tried our best to control them. Before last year, I do not remember seeing them much around our fields. Is there anything we can use to prevent them?

North Carolina

BY DR. GRADY MILLER
Professor, North
Carolina State University

Questions?

Send them to
Grady Miller at
North Carolina State University,
Box 7620, Raleigh, NC 27695-
7620, or email
grady_miller@ncsu.edu

Or, send your
question to
David Minner at
Iowa State University, 106
Horticulture Hall, Ames, IA 50011
or email
dminner@iastate.edu.

The red imported fire ant continues to move into North Carolina and surrounding transition zone states. It seems that with more movement of nursery stock and sod between states, combined with mild winters that fire ants may eventually find a home in every county in North Carolina.

Growing up in Louisiana and then living in Florida for years, I do not know what it is like to not have fire ants around. North Carolina's attempt to hold them back with quarantine areas does not seem to be working. So, the complaints due to that burning sting from fire ants are likely to get more prevalent.

The fire ant is not really a turf pest in the sense that they cause damage to the turfgrass plant. They build unsightly dome-shaped dirt mounds (called colonies) in the turf that may cause shading of low-mowed turf, but the more common complaint is the dulling of mower blades after hitting the mounds. Additionally, ants like to build their mounds in electrical equipment such as satellite irrigation boxes, often shorting circuits. It is also not very fun trying to repair their damage in irrigation or electrical boxes until they are removed.

The problem is their sting. The fire ants get a grip with their mouth and then sting from their abdomen, injecting a toxic venom that gives

that burning sensation. The sting is not as painful as a wasp sting, but it can still be deadly to highly sensitive individuals. For most adults it is a short term pain followed by an intense itching. The sting often results in a bump with a pustule and the itching may last for several days. There is also the issue of quantity. Because a 2-foot diameter mound contains about 100,000 ants, it is not uncommon to get numerous stings during a short encounter. No person ever wants to hear a small child cry out due to being covered in stinging fire ants. Complaints from parents will soon follow.

Over the years people have tried about every way imaginable to kill fire ants. I grew up hearing local farmers talk about all kinds of home concoctions and methods to attack fire ants—some of which were probably not very good for the environment and many constituted bad advice. I am no entomologist, but I have learned from hanging around with a few that there is no control methods that will permanently eliminate or prevent fire ants from an area. The strategies most often used include: broadcast pesticide-bait applications, individual mound treatment, or a combination of these two treatments.

Broadcast baiting is almost like putting out a preemergence product. The idea is to reduce fire ant populations early in the year. Products used include Advion, Amdro, Ascend, Affirm, Award, Justice, Distance, Esteem, etc. These contain either a slow acting toxicant or a product that interferes with reproduction. They are formulated with a food source carrier desirable to the ants. The workers carry the food source and toxicant/growth regulator back to the

colony and feed it to other ants. It may take several weeks to several months for these to be effective. Bates should be fresh, dry, and applied when ants are actively foraging to be most effective. They are easily applied using a broadcast spreader. Follow the directions on the label.

Individual mound treatments attempt to eliminate the colonies by treating the mounds directly. To eliminate the colony the queen(s) must be eliminated. This is time consuming and may be difficult as some mounds are not easily seen above the grass, while they go several feet down under the soil surface. But this can be a much quicker way to reduce populations of ants that are in high traffic areas when you want to quickly reduce the risk of them stinging people. Mound treatment products may be formulated to use as a drench, granule, dust, or aerosol. Products include Maxforce or Topchoice, Extinguish, Talstar, Orthene and others. In addition, some of the bait products can be used for mound treatment. Follow the directions on the label.

So best strategy is often to broadcast a pesticide-bait once or twice a year to reduce overall population and then target any nuisance mounds that appear, especially those that appear near high traffic areas or areas that people are likely to congregate. The mound treatments may need to continue throughout the year.

Fire ants spend a great deal of time searching for food. You can reduce ant foraging by eliminating food sources. Outdoor trash cans and dumpsters should be routinely emptied and cleaned. And lastly, remember, fire [ants] take no holiday. ■



Grant Trenbeath
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