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SportsTurf

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STMA is the non-profit association for the men and women who manage athletic fields and facilities. The association has a very strict privacy policy and does not sell or give out its members' contact information.

SportsTurf

PAGE 12: AUSTIN, TEXAS – long considered one of the most influential music cities in America – plays host to the 22nd Annual Sports Turf Managers Association Conference and Exhibition, January 11-15, 2011.

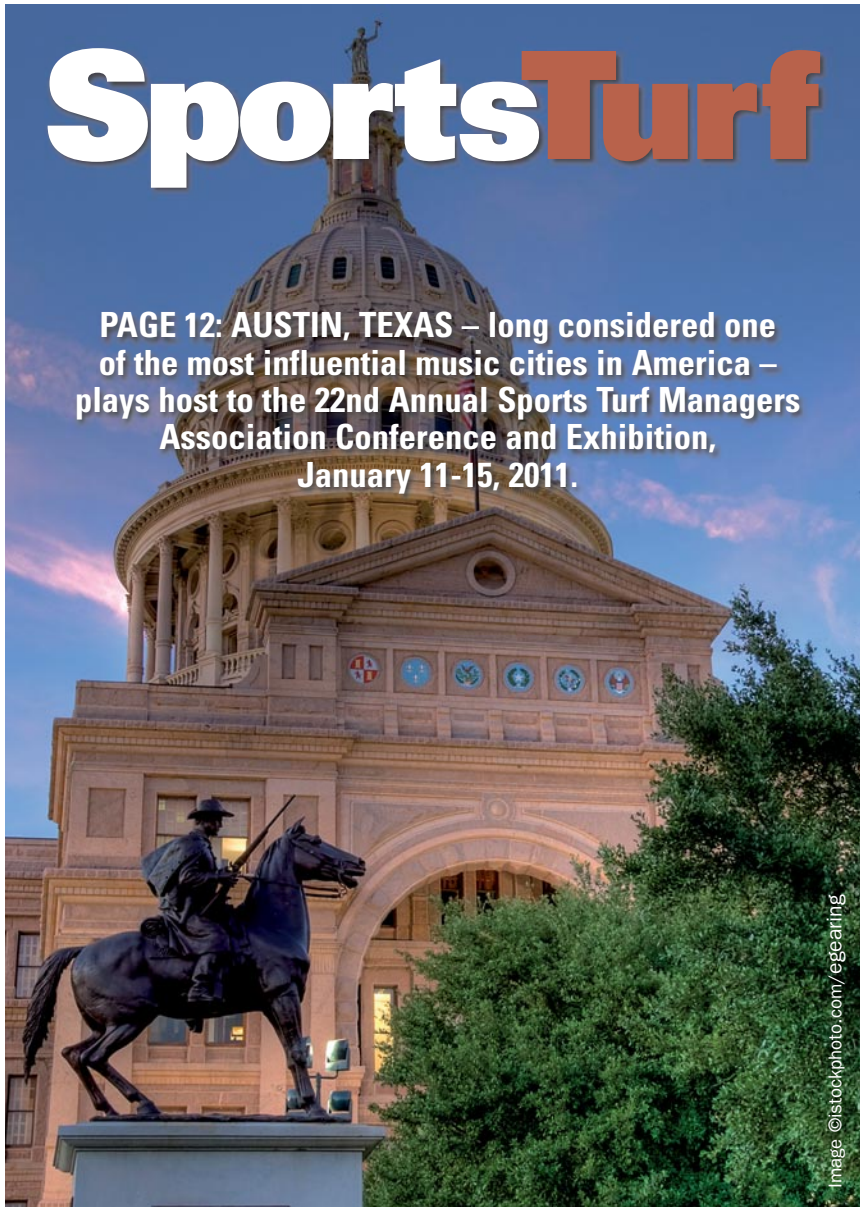


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Image provided by Austin Convention & Visitors Bureau



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On the cover: The Texas State Capitol in Austin, host city for the 23rd Annual Sports Turf Managers Association's Conference and Exhibition, January 12-15, 2011.

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From the Sidelines



Eric Schroder
Editor

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Sustainability & biological turf fertility products

Turf managers are increasingly incorporating biological products into their turf fertility programs to improve plant health and appearance as well as to complement their environmentally sustainable practices, according to a recent survey conducted on behalf of LebanonTurf. Survey respondents were asked to consider biologicals as products based on a wide range of living organisms, including microbes, bacteria, mycorrhizae, seaplant extracts and hormones, that are added to a fertilizer prill or delivered as stand alone products.

According to survey respondents, 51% currently use biological products as part of their normal turf fertility program; 45% said they expect to increase their use of biologicals in the next 2 years. Sixty-six percent use biologicals as a complement to traditional fertilizer products, while 31% said they are experimenting with these types of products. Less than 1% said they use biologicals exclusively.

Ninety percent said they consider biological products either essential (30%) or moderately important (60%) to their fertility programs. In addition to improved plant health and appearance (53%) and environmental friendliness (35%), 12% indicated "cost-effectiveness when compared to traditional fertilizers" as an "important" benefit of bionutrition.

Ninety-five percent of those responding said they were either very satisfied (31%) or mostly satisfied (64%) with the results they achieved with biological products.

At a bionutrition conference in late September that LebanonTurf sponsored and I attended, Roch Gaussoin, professor of agronomy and extension turfgrass specialist from the University of Nebraska, said, "Bionutritionals benefit turf and the environment while helping end-users save money. In our tests, we have seen the opportunity to reduce fertilizer application rates by up to 30% over granular or dry fertilizers with no change in performance.

Gaussoin said most academics dismissed these products early on but his research shows that they can generate an equivalent response in plants at lower inputs.

"[Biological products] are not widely accepted in the academic community," said Gaussoin. "One reason is that microorganisms are not well understood though after water they are the next most significant factor in plant health. Bionutrition is enhancing beneficial organisms in the soil to facilitate nutrient availability and uptake. For example, nitrogen is naturally in soil waiting to be released and microbial-based products enable that nitrogen to release."

From my corner of the world, it appears that as more turf managers focus on sustainability practices, we are likely to see increased use of what one presenter called "biofertility" products. It might be wise to ask your peers if they are changing practices and/or products, as well as make sure you check out what's available at the trade show portions of January's STMA Conference in Austin.

Department of We Messed Up

We should have credited Marti Vocke of Graff's Turf Farms in Colorado for the photo on page 18 of last month's issue as well as one that appeared on page 37 in our February 2010 issue. Thanks for your magnanimity, Marti.

SportsTurf

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President's Message

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Tools available to help justify STMA Conference attendance

STMA takes pride in developing relevant and affordable education for members. The Annual Conference and Exhibition is our primary event for comprehensive education. Included in this issue on page 12 is the program for our 2011 conference. Take a few minutes to review all that is being offered. The subcommittees that worked on it—conference education, tours, exhibition and student challenge—are to be commended for creating an excellent conference and trade show.

In addition to the panels, sessions, and classroom-taught education, the conference offers interactive learning. New this year are roundtable sessions where you can talk with speakers and ask your urgent questions. We designed this time as a reception, too, so that you can relax and mingle with your STMA family of peers.

Be sure to go online for helpful resources. You can get information about the Return On Investment of attending the conference, and other strategies to help you get approval to go to Austin. Be sure to promote the low cost of airline flights. Another strong selling point of Austin is the reduced time you spend on a plane and away from work. Austin is truly a central destination for all of our US members.

Did you know that this year is STMA's 30th anniversary? To commemorate, we've asked a group of venerable members to sit on a panel. Hear from them about "how it was" when they started their careers. You'll be able to ask questions and be amazed about how far this profession has come in such a short time.

Another important component of the conference happens after the conference when you return home. I promise that you will be ready to apply what you've learned, and earn the opportunity to attend our 2012 conference in Long Beach. To help you communicate the value you received by attending, we have created a customizable trip report. It is online, and in the conference brochure. Much of it is already filled in. You just need to add a few bullets, and it will be ready to present to your employer.

I am excited about the education and excited to be in Austin. It is the first time STMA will be in this city. Registrations are coming in steadily, and the conference is on track to be a very well attended event.

Another STMA activity that I hope will have excellent participation is the 2011 election process. Your ballots will be arriving via US mail later this month, and the slate will be filled with superb candidates. I encourage you to learn about them and to cast your vote. You have the opportunity to define STMA's future with your vote.

As the holiday season approaches, it is a signal that the year is coming to a close. This is a good time to reflect on the positive impacts that you have made in your corner of the world. Fields are safer, the environment is protected and the fans are happy. Well done!

Have a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends.

Using Tenacity for *Poa annua* control

MOST FIELD MANAGERS deal with *Poa annua* annually. Some have chosen to embrace it, but most have declared a war that will never end. Like most things in this world, new technologies become available all the time. The most recent chemical control for *Poa annua* control labeled for sports turf managers is mesotrione with the common name Tenacity. Tenacity just became available in the spring of this year for athletic fields. The following information

is how the three of us used Tenacity in slightly different ways to help with the never ending fight against *Poa annua*.

TIM VANLOO, CSFM, Iowa State

At Iowa State University we used Tenacity on Jack Trice Stadium and Johnny Majors practice football facility, both sand-based fields. I worked with Syngenta's territory manager, Luke Dant, to come up with a plan. Knowing that Tenacity has post and pre-emergent capabilities, we formulated

The areas in Johnny Majors that still have *Poa* were 1-2 feet in diameter. Now those spots have been reduced greatly and have some desired grasses growing inside the spots.



a plan that we thought could use both of the chemical's attributes to our advantage. Tenacity has a limit of 16oz/acre/year.

Luke and I decided to make four applications at a 4oz/acre rate on 10-day intervals starting the first week of May. Applying in this matter would give me 50-60 days of pre-emergent control in the spring while controlling the *Poa annua* that was in the fields already. Using Tenacity also allowed me to re-seed the worn areas from the previous playing season. I was able to germinate Kentucky bluegrass during the applications without any problems.

We were able to get complete control in Jack Trice stadium and greatly reduce the amount of *Poa annua* in the practice field. The *Poa annua* spots that were in the stadium were very small in size. The areas in Johnny Majors that still have *Poa* were 1-2 feet in diameter. Now those spots have been reduced greatly and have some desired grasses growing inside the spots. I think that Tenacity applied in the spring of 2011 should take out most of the remaining. Tenacity had no affect on Kentucky bluegrass color or growth during the applications. Tenacity did turn perennial rye grass off color during the applications, but did not kill it. Once the applications were complete the perennial ryegrass came back to normal color. Tenacity also killed clover and other broadleaf weeds that were present in the practice field.

For the spring of 2011, I plan on doing the same plan except I am going to shorten my intervals to 7 days. I think this

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One thing I was told is that as the plant dies it will turn white in color. I did see my weeds turn white but I couldn't see the *Poa* turn white. As far as I can tell it just melted away and the bluegrass took over.

will help eradicate the *Poa annua* that is still there and give adequate pre-emergent control.

**ERIC ADKINS, CSFM,
Toyota Park, Chicago**

After years of trying to get rid of *Poa annua* my efforts just weren't good enough. I have tried all kinds of products to slow the growth rate, limit seed head production and outright kill it. There has been some success in my efforts but nothing as good as using Tenacity.

Here at TOYOTA PARK there are two grass fields both 100,000 square feet in size. So I decided to make a guinea pig out of the practice field, which has more *Poa annua* than the game field. I consulted with others that have used Tenacity and bought a gallon. After I got over the shock of the price, \$760 a gallon, I made my first of five applications. I carefully measured out 2 ounces of product and made my first application on August 6 and my last application on August 24. My total use of product was 10 ounces at roughly six dollars per ounce for a grand total of \$60. That's very inexpensive in my book to eliminate *Poa annua*. As of October 1 my practice field is *Poa* free for the first time since the sod was laid in October 2006.

I would mention that it may not be the best timing to use herbicides in the middle of August, but in my case I didn't see any harm to the desirable bluegrass or the ryegrasses. Tenacity for me was very safe to use during the hot summer months. Another thing that Tenacity did was to wipeout all my weeds, dandelions, plantain, clover, and crabgrass too. I plan on doing this again in mid to late spring next year, just to clean up any *Poa annua* that may be there or that has germinated in the spring.

One thing I was told is that as the plant dies it will turn white in color. I did see my weeds turn white but I couldn't see the *Poa* turn white. As far as I can tell it just melted away and the bluegrass took over. Being that we did this to the practice field, our normal routine is to fill the divots daily. In doing that I think if there were any problems areas of *Poa annua* dying we handled them with our normal daily divoting. I plan on doing a late fall application on the game field starting sometime in early October. I think as a turf manager I can finally control *Poa annua* cost effectively and without harming any of the desirable grass.

AMY FOUTY, CSFM, Michigan State

We have battled for many years, like most in our