

SportsField

MANAGEMENT

April 2024

Vol. 40 No. 4

The Official Publication of the Sports Field Management Association

Proper Plant Selection and Care **18** | New Plants **22**
College and University Turfgrass Programs: BYU **26** | Mowers **30**

Schools & Parks Baseball FOY

**Providence Catholic HS in New Lenox, Illinois
earns top honors for Tom Dedin Field**



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Embracing the battery revolution

Kress Commercial's 8-Minute CyberSystem leads the transformation of the lawn care industry

The lawn care industry is undergoing a revolutionary transformation. Hundreds of municipalities have banned various types of gas-powered lawn equipment, and the industry as a whole is facing increasing pressure to make gas-powered commercial equipment obsolete. Your customers – businesses, facilities, municipalities and homeowners – are demanding quieter, greener alternatives. Now that alternative can also save you money.

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- Farnsworth Group

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Visit kress.com to learn more about how the 8-Minute CyberSystem is shaping the future of commercial landscaping.

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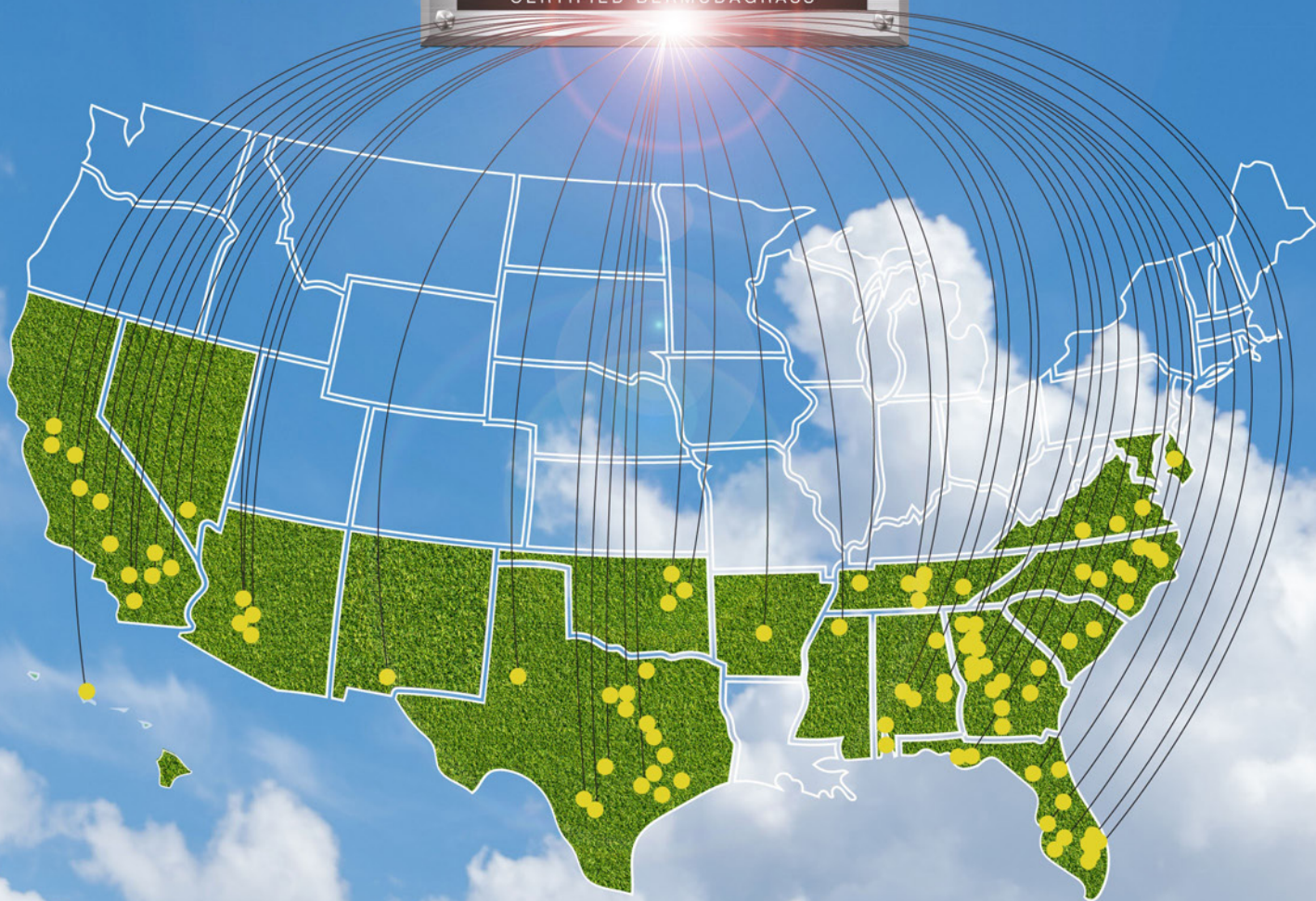
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Editor's Note



John Kmitta

Associate Publisher /
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The SFMA's new mentorship program, and my conversations with Alpha Jones, CSFM, have me thinking a lot lately about mentorship and what it means to be mentee or mentor.

For many of us, our earliest mentors are parents, grandparents or other family members. My parents were 40 when I was born. Being that I was born in the 1970s, both of my parents were born during the Great Depression. My dad — the only child of working-class Chicago parents — served in the United States Army and worked in sales from the late 1950s onward (think *Mad Men*). My mother hailed from a large farm family in rural Illinois, and is still one of the hardest workers I have ever known. No doubt influenced by their own backgrounds and experiences, they instilled in me and my older brothers a strong work ethic and family values.

My next set of mentors came in the form of teachers. When I graduated high school, I was torn between pursuing a career as an artist and comic-book illustrator or as a writer/journalist. Undecided and taking classes in art, writing and journalism during my first year of college, I was influenced toward a career in journalism by two different teachers. One was a published author of fiction and nonfiction, while the other was an established journalist and film critic. Both saw something in my work, and took the time to meet with me and help me to hone my skills.

The author once gave our class an example of what he felt was a well-written paper. To me, the language seemed overly flowery, but I tried to match that style because I thought it would score high. Instead, he gave me a "C" on my next paper, but met with me after class and told me that writing style — while it worked for the author of the example — is clearly not me. He said, "Write what you know, and write it in your own voice. People will see through it otherwise."

In my professional career, one of my biggest mentors was an editor named John Hughes. He took time most days to review my work, discuss changes, challenge me to think and ensure my adherence to the stylebook. I still carry those lessons with me in every article I write and every issue I edit.

While I am still learning from others, I am also a mentor. Whether to my own children or to younger work colleagues, I try to take what I have learned from others and pass it along. For me, being a mentor isn't about doling out wisdom as though I have all the answers; but rather being someone who leads by example and who others know they can turn to for advice and support.

Mentor or mentee, be a good listener no matter your role in the relationship. And remember to always be you — people will see through it otherwise. **SFM**

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Editor's note: Throughout 2024, members of the SFMA Board of Directors will be providing editorial content in lieu of the President's Message by Sun Roeslein, CSFM. These diverse perspectives will offer additional and unique insight into SFMA and industry initiatives.



Chase Straw, Ph.D.

SFMA Academic Director

Chase.Straw@ag.tamu.edu

My name is Chase Straw, and I am an assistant professor of turfgrass management and physiology at Texas A&M University. Additionally, I serve on the SFMA Board of Directors as the academic director and chair the SFMA Education Committee.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our presenters at the 2024 SFMA Conference and Exhibition in Daytona Beach. The conference featured a diverse range of topics, including renovation and construction, hybrid turf and professional development. The feedback we received has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are eager to maintain this momentum as we head into the 2025 SFMA Conference in Palm Springs, California.

By the time this issue of *SportsField Management* reaches you, the call for 2025 conference presentation proposals will have concluded, and the Education Committee will be in the process of reviewing them. Our goal is to offer a broad spectrum of topics that encompass research and technology; pest control; synthetic and hybrid surfaces; professional and career development; diversity, equity and inclusion; and sustainability and best management practices.

The Education Committee meets almost every month to discuss strategies for simplifying the

presentation proposal submission process and ensuring that all proposals are given a fair review. This year, we are introducing chapter involvement in the review process for proposals. The SFMA Education Committee will be collaborating with individual chapters to select a representative who will assist in scoring and ranking the submitted proposals. We believe this approach will not only allow chapters to contribute to the educational content at the national show but also enhance the proposal scoring system.

For those who have never submitted a proposal or spoken at our conference, I highly encourage you to consider it in the future. We are continuously in search of intriguing or unique case studies. Feedback indicates that attendees appreciate learning about real-world scenarios across all levels of our industry.

Organizing the educational content for the conference is a challenging task, and I am profoundly thankful for the members of the Education Committee and others who offer their valuable insights. Feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns (Chase.Straw@ag.tamu.edu). I assure you that we are committed to providing an exceptional educational experience at the 2025 conference. **SFM**

SFMA introduces communications coordinator

Madison Davis has joined the SFMA staff as communications coordinator. Davis comes to SFMA with four years of executing communications, social media and public relations strategies for a variety of organizations. She studied engineering at the University of Virginia; however, when she took a position in public relations, she knew she had found her calling.



"I love to contribute to a team, help shape organizations' messaging, and connect audiences to important causes," said Davis.

SFMA is excited to have Davis join the team. She can be reached at mdavis@sportsfieldmanagement.org or 800-323-3875.

2024 conference education sessions

2024 SFMA Conference education sessions were recorded and are available for purchase. If you were a full conference registrant, access instructions were emailed to you. If you were not able to attend the conference and would like to purchase sessions, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/knowledge-center/>.



Photo by Mark Skalny, courtesy of SFMA.

The full conference package is \$149. Single sessions are available for \$20 each. Each session was audio recorded and synchronized with PowerPoint presentations. All sessions are accessible on portable devices such as smart phones and tablets.

Plan now for SFMA awards applications

Start planning now for SFMA awards:

■ **Field of the Year:** SFMA recognizes superior field management through the Field of the Year program. The awards are given in football, baseball, softball, soccer and sporting grounds in three categories: professional level, college and university level, and schools and parks level. In addition to filling out an application, up to 30 photos detailing certain aspects of the field maintenance practices are required. Winners are notified of their award in November and are recognized during the SFMA annual conference in January.

■ **Innovative Award:** This award is presented to one or more exhibitors who have introduced an innovative product, service or technology that enhances the sports field manager's effectiveness or makes the field surface safer. The winner or winners are judged by a panel of sports field managers and are announced during the first day of SFMA's trade show, held during its annual conference.

■ **Founders Awards:** SFMA's four founders — George Toma, Dick Ericson, Dr. William Daniel and Harry Gill — each have an award named after them. The criterion for each award differs; the intent is to recognize the individual characteristics of these men in each winner.



Photo by Mark Skalny, courtesy of SFMA.

These surprise awards are announced during the SFMA Awards Banquet, held on the last day of the SFMA annual conference.

SAFE scholarships and grants

The SAFE Foundation scholarships and grants program will open for applications in July. Although the deadline to submit is October 15, now is the time to begin assembling the information for your application.

- SAFE Turfgrass Scholarships are awards given to students who are pursuing turfgrass management or post-graduate research. Several of these are in Dr. James Watson's name and are funded by The Toro Company.

- The Paul Zwaska Scholarship promotes diversity within the profession and recognizes and encourages full-time students pursuing a career in the sports field management profession. This scholarship is funded by Beacon Athletics.

- SAFE awards a non-turfgrass scholarship in honor of a legendary supporter of SFMA and SAFE, and dedicated family man. The Darian Daily Legacy Scholarship is awarded to dependents of members who are pursuing a field of academic study outside the turfgrass industry.

- Pioneer Athletics funds the Leo Goertz Membership Grants. These are awarded to sports field managers or crew members who are not currently members of SFMA.

- The Gary Vanden Berg Internship Grant is named in honor of Gary Vanden Berg, CSFM, for his contributions to the industry in promoting internships. Students who have interned are eligible to submit post-internship to augment their internship wages.

- The Terry Mellor Continuing Education Grant provides funding for an SFMA chapter member to attend the SFMA annual conference. This grant is made possible through the support of Turface Athletics.

For more information on SAFE and the scholarships and grants, visit www.safefields.org.

SFMA partners with iCEV for turfgrass certification program

SFMA partnered with iCEV to provide an opportunity for individuals to participate in the Turfgrass Science Certification program, available fall of 2024. This program will be available to everyone including high school students, teachers, college students and individuals already in the turfgrass industry wanting to enhance their influence and skillset. The curriculum can be used as training/onboarding for a team, to develop summer interns and new employees or for classroom teachers to support their students. Teachers also qualify to receive a free pilot to try the program in the classroom.

Participants will master the fundamental competencies required to be successful in the industry. Participants will also be able to add this certification to their resume to attract potential employers and begin a fulfilling career in sports field management. The certification encompasses various areas of the industry including K-12, parks and recreation facilities, golf courses, colleges and universities and professional sports. The tested industry standards are as follows:

- Benefits of turfgrass
- Turfgrass anatomy, identification and adaptations
- Turfgrass environment
- Turfgrass cultural practices
- Playing surface preparation

Letters of support are required for the program to be recognized at the state level for certification. More information about the requirements for letters of support can be found at <https://www.icevonline.com/certification-support>.

Members may also fill out a survey to support the certification at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/3W7Y58K>.

For more information about the Turfgrass Science Certification, please visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/turfgrass-science-certification/>.



Mark your calendars for the 2025 SFMA Conference & Exhibition

SFMA is thrilled to be hosting its 36th Annual Conference & Exhibition in beautiful Palm Springs, California.

- "Call for Presentations" is currently open and is set to close on April 6. Visit the SFMA website for the link to submit your presentation.

- Hotels will open mid-summer, so watch your emails for information regarding opening dates and booking information.

- There is still room on the trade show floor! Visit the conference page on the SFMA website to learn more about booking a booth. **SFM**



TOM DEDIN FIELD

NEW LENOX, ILLINOIS

The Field of the Year Awards program is made possible by the support of sponsors Carolina Green Corp., Precision Laboratories, John Deere and World Class Athletics.



The dedication of our head coach, Mark Smith, inspires me and keeps me on top of things. He prepares the field before every game. Part of that is due to lack of help, but the other part is the pride he has in the baseball program and the facility. I am also happy to see the field win Field of the Year because of its namesake; Tom Dedin started the baseball program here at Providence Catholic, and we are lucky enough to have him visit us a couple times a year. All sports field managers put in a ton of time and show their commitment to their profession, such as the time spent after practice or games aerifying, raking out dirt, washing lips, fertilizing

or mowing wondering if it is worth it. You are usually alone working behind the scenes. Not too many people realize what you do to have a quality field. You work your tail off, sometimes just to get one compliment. Even if all they do is carry bags of conditioner for me or be on the hose crew pregame, the players are proud to say they play on an honored field. For me, winning Field of the Year is the best fist bump or high five. I love taking care of this field. There is no better start to the day than being at the field at 6 a.m. and seeing the sprinklers running in front of the sunrise.

— Scott Heren, head groundskeeper



Level and category of submission: Schools & Parks Baseball

Field manager: Scott Heren

Title: Head groundskeeper

Education: Degrees in Horticulture and Business

Experience: I started my turf career as a golf course superintendent for roughly 15 years. I then came to a private high school, Providence Catholic, and was their groundskeeper for 12 years. This included eight athletic fields including a football field converted to turf. This also included the 70-acre surrounding campus. I then went to North Central College in Naperville, Ill., for four years, which featured a turf football field and natural grass baseball and softball fields. I have since returned to Providence Catholic, where I have been the last two and a half years.

Original construction: 1976

Turfgrass: Perennial rye, Kentucky bluegrass

Overseed: In season I use a Triple Play blend of straight perennial rye. When I aerify and rehab, I use a 50/50 blend of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial rye. Rates vary depending on wear and tear.

Rootzone: Clay

Drainage System: 4" perforated tile in foul territory


SportsField Management (SFM): Congratulations on the Field of the Year win. What are you most proud of with this win, and/or what do you think stands out most about the winning field?

Scott Heren: I am most proud of the field itself. I think of the fields I grew up playing on and how we had to pick rocks and weeds out of our dirt field before every practice or game. We had to put up a snow fence every year for our outfield. When we went to an away game, we marveled that they had a grass infield. Now to come full circle, it is a privilege to work on this field. Other grounds guys will get this, but it is a fun challenge.

SFM: What attracted you to a career in sports field management, and what has been your career path through the industry?

Heren: I earned a bachelor's degree in Business and got a job in a bank. After working indoors for only three months, I ran screaming. I went back to get my associates degree in Horticulture. I then interned at






- Nick McKenna -
Texas A&M Assistant Athletic Director, Sports Fields

"It's got a beautiful vibrant green color, fine leaf texture, good density and from the first day it went down on the ground, our players and coaches, they loved it."

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Dwight Country Club where I got to know a great friend to this day — Dennis Buck, course superintendent. From there, I went onto a private 9-hole course for 13 years, was an outside supervisor at a casino, and then on to Providence Catholic High School. That is where I started to enjoy sports turf care.

SFM: Who were your mentors in the industry and/or what is the best piece of advice you have received?

Heren: Like I stated, Dennis Buck, longtime golf course superintendent at Dwight Country Club. I worked for him off and on for about three years. He helped me in so many areas of golf course care and operation, including the technical and the common-sense approaches to managing a course. He did this with a sense of humor, which just eases everything when learning. The best piece of advice I have received came from him — “Show up and show up on time.” Simple, but true.





SFM: What were the biggest challenges you have faced with the winning field, and how have you approached those challenges?

Heren: Traffic, traffic, traffic. With our season starting with games in mid-March, the weather in northern Illinois is a lot of fun. Why isn't my field thawed yet, it is 40 degrees out? We also host a week-long camp in June, which draws approximately 225 campers. Travel ball all summer after the high school season just beats the field to death. Our head coach, Mark Smith, HOF, appreciates the wear and tear from the summer, and allows me four to five weeks in early fall to rehab. That is a treasured time to get my work done.

SFM: Please tell us about your crew, and anything else you would like us to know about your organization and the fields/facilities that you manage?

Heren: We have a local company do some dirt work for us, but essentially it is Coach Smith and me. He is not only a great help on the field, but a better help off the field. He always has my back with any issues — from dads throwing batting practice without consent to teams just “borrowing” the field. Having Coach Smith and me as the only caretakers is good and bad. I can control what gets done, but also if it doesn’t get done, I know where to find me. In addition to Tom Dedin Field, Providence has two softball fields, two soccer fields, an artificial turf football field, a lower-level baseball field and a 75-acre campus that are in my care. **SFM**



JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



CAN YOU IDENTIFY THIS TURFGRASS PROBLEM?

PROBLEM:

Blackish-brown area and depressions

TURFGRASS AREA:

Stadium football field

LOCATION:

Golden, Colorado

TURFGRASS VARIETY:

Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass

Answer on page 33

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

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Choose Wisely



Proper plant selection and care of flowers and shrubs

If sun/heat relief is needed for players and spectators, a shade tree might be a good answer. All photos by John C. Fech.

By John C. Fech

Chances are good that taking care of tulips, periwinkle and crabapples isn't the highest priority on the sports field manager's to-do list on any given day. However, in addition to athletic fields, many field managers are tasked with care of the campus grounds or parks facilities.

So, if your hair is on fire with Poa, anthracnose and grubs, the tendency is to inwardly say, "Who cares about trees, flowers and shrubs?" However, making good choices up front before planting, and spending a little time making sure that these plants are attractive and in good shape will ensure that their management details can be crossed off the list — providing focused attention to various turf issues instead.

SITE ASSESSMENT AND ANALYSIS

Choosing wisely starts with a good understanding of the site itself and its suitability for ornamentals. Any landscape, regardless of function, can be improved through site assessment and site analysis. Though more helpful when conducted before installation of plant materials, considering all aspects of the site is truly an underutilized and immensely advantageous process.

What's an assessment and an analysis of the site? An assessment is a snapshot of the status of each plant — the raw information. An analysis is the companion piece — the diagnosis, value judgment and recommendation for the individual specimens as they exist on the day of the inspection.

The main function of the assessment is to make specific notes and document various observations about the condition of the plants, such as “poor growth this year,” “decay in trunk” and “overgrowing the sidewalk.” It helps the process of keeping each field or group of plants surrounding a building separate so that they don’t get mixed up with other fields or groups. A clipboard and notebook paper or iPad/tablet work really well for assessments.

After assessing/documenting, it’s time to determine what caused the malady or concern and decide how serious it is. For example, a shrub might be struggling because when the soil near the crown is probed the blade of the screwdriver or metal stake is muddy when it is pulled out, leading to an effort to find the source of the possible overwatering. The note of “pale leaves and stunted growth” could lead to a suggestion of auditing the nearby sprinkler system, looking for leaks, incorrect runtimes and overspray. Digging a hole to look at the roots would also be a possible action step.

The process of assessment and analysis can seem to be negative or downright depressing, yet it’s really an opportunity to replace moderately or severely disease-susceptible or poorly sited specimens. After all, if a plant dies from root rot, it creates a void in the landscape that must be filled with better-adapted plant material. Consulting with a landscape designer, landscape architect, ISA Certified Arborist or local land grant university extension professional will provide valuable information throughout this process.



Perennials and groundcovers – especially if planted in drifts or masses – can be good replacements for narrow strips of turf.



Hitting the sweet spot of proper spacing will result in good establishment without breaking the budget.

WHAT'S NEEDED?

Choosing wisely also begs the question of what is needed around sports fields or on the campus grounds. Non-turf plants can provide quite a variety of functional and aesthetic benefits, often identifying possible solutions through general groups of plant materials. General groups provide the sweet spot between the “everything is on the table” and “ultra-specific” when choosing plants. They also allow for a good match-up, considering soil type, sun exposure, disease pressure, size allotment and adjoining hardscape. Avoid choosing a particular plant until all of these have been fully considered.

If sun/heat relief is needed for players and spectators, a shade tree might be a good answer. Refreshment stands and bleachers are often well utilized when the space is welcoming instead of one that requires the squinting of eyes and the use of a fan to create a breeze.

If the need is to reduce mowing, groundcovers might be a good choice. They’re available in a variety of colors, heights and textures in addition to evergreen and deciduous. Some out-of-play areas can be converted to no-maintenance zones with wildflowers or no-mow fescues that replace fine turfgrasses such as bermuda and Kentucky bluegrass.

If the area tends to be monochromatic, spring and summer flowering bulbs with a good bloom sequence in mind can provide near-season-long color. Other plants such as coneflowers and shrub roses can also provide desirable visual appeal.



Slopes present several challenges. Groundcovers, shrubs and perennials often reduce the maintenance required for these spaces.

If narrow strips of turf are present, the choice might be to replace them with perennials in these locations. Perennials usually tolerate the heat island effect that tends to be present with narrow strips, and they don't need to be aerated, mowed or overseeded; they usually require less fertilizer and water as well.

Slopes always present a challenge for spaces with turfgrass. Replacing it with plants that don't require mowing adds a big safety improvement. A choice such as a groundcover, shrub or perennial doesn't mean that the slope is a no-maintenance space, just that it has been reduced. These plants still need monitoring to be sure that soil moisture, weeding and other needs are being taken care of.

RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE

One of the most used phrases in the green industry over the past 10 to 20 years is "right plant, right place" (RPRP), and for good reason. It's rock-solid, straight-as-an-arrow, right-on-track guidance. Perhaps the best part of RPRP is that it encourages field managers and landscapers to use a full array of considerations when choosing plants. These RPRP components are just as important as sun/shade preference and eventual height:

- **Width** — The other side of eventual height is width. It's commonly overlooked, especially with hedges, small trees and plants installed near hardscapes.
- **Disease resistance** — Disease resistance equals low maintenance and low cost, which is especially desirable for ornamentals at a sports facility.
- **Level of maintenance** — High maintenance can be tolerated in high-visibility areas, but other areas can be planted for low maintenance.
- **Soil moisture and pH** — Choosing plants adapted to various soil components is critical.
- **Blooming sequence** — It's great to have something blooming at all times and just takes a little planning.
- **Leaf color and texture** — Green leaves in spring, summer and fall offer two-for-the-price-of-one benefits.
- **Growth habit** — Columnar, spreading, pyramidal, etc.
- **Native choices** — Chances are good that if it's native, it's going to survive.
- **Hardiness zones** — Cold and heat zones sometimes change; choosing wisely takes this into account.
- **Slope** — Mowing can be tough on a slope; perhaps groundcovers or low-growing shrubs are a better choice.
- **Flower/fruit/fragrance** — Butterflies are always welcome, but bees can be a real problem, especially for fans and players that are allergic.
- **Color** — Always a "wow" factor, a 2-3 color scheme is welcome in the sports turf and campus landscape.
- **Safety** — Landscape debris droppage can be a hindrance and photosynthesis limitation in other situations.

CHOOSE LOCAL OR NATIONAL?

Is it best to choose ornamental plants on a national or local basis? The answer is neither; it's both. The bottom line is the performance of the plant at your facility. National information and marketing sources can help identify species that have appeal and have been selected based on favorable ratings in the RPRP categories, but they must be locally validated with testing and recommendations for plant materials

by local horticulturists and from local/regional information sources. Selected sources of plant material information:

- All America Selections
- All America Rose Selections
- Proven Winners
- University websites
- Local botanic gardens and arboreturns

Once you find a specific plant that shows promise, use an illustrator tool such as Google Images or Yahoo Image Search to help determine if the features are the ones you're looking for. For example, if you've heard of 'Mohican' viburnums, simply go to the image site and type in "Mohican viburnums" in the search box, and voila, hundreds of photos of (you guessed it) *Viburnum lantana*, spp. 'Mohican' will appear.

After information has been gathered from these sources, contact or visit your nearest public botanic garden or arboretum. It's one thing to see a plant on a web page or in a catalog; it's quite another to see it/touch it/smell it in person.

DEVELOP A PLANT PALETTE

As choices are made, evaluated and adjusted, it's important to create a localized list of go-to plants — sometimes called a plant palette. Such a list can be created and organized in many ways, but for the purpose of a sports field or campus grounds, perhaps the best approach is to start with light requirements, then fill each subcategory with 10-25 plant species choices in each. For example:

Full sun

- Small trees
- Large shrubs
- Small shrubs
- Groundcovers
- Perennials
- Annuals

Light shade

- Small trees
- Large shrubs
- Small shrubs
- Groundcovers
- Perennials
- Annuals

Medium shade

- Small trees
- Large shrubs
- Small shrubs
- Groundcovers
- Perennials
- Annuals

Heavy shade

- Small trees
- Large shrubs
- Small shrubs
- Groundcovers
- Perennials
- Annuals

Don't stop with five choices for each category or your facility may end up with too many of too few species. This will best serve as a handy guide for choosing plants when you don't have much time to make your choice.

PROPER SPACING

Spacing is commonly ignored, but can be primarily responsible for the eventual health and success of an ornamental planting for several reasons. Plants spaced too close together are likely to crowd each other, compete for water and nutrients and create a dense canopy that encourages the development of foliar diseases. Plants spaced too far apart often lack the visual appeal necessary to create an aesthetically pleasing mass.

Proper spacing is also influential in terms of the budget. Because it's tempting to conveniently forget that small plants grow into big ones, planting for immediate appeal not only creates competition, but it also causes the sports field manager to spend more money on plants than they needed. The proven approach is to read the plant care tag, understand the spacing recommendations and then believe them — or at least use some restraint when the temptation for closer spacing rears its ugly head. Using plant spacing discipline is the key to success when choosing the number of plants to buy and how close together to install them. **SFM**

John C. Fech is a horticulturist with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Certified Arborist with the International Society of Arboriculture. The author of two books and more than 400 popular and trade journal articles, he focuses his time on teaching effective landscape maintenance techniques, water conservation, diagnosing turf and ornamental problems, and encouraging effective bilingual communication in the green industry.

New Plants

The following are new plants that merit consideration for your landscapes and landscape beds.

ALL-AMERICA SELECTIONS

All-America Selections (AAS) is a respected non-profit plant trialing organization that announced six new AAS Winners available for the 2024 season. All AAS Winners are trialed throughout North America by professional, independent, volunteer judges who grow new, never-before-sold entries next to comparisons that are considered best-in-class.

CELOSIA PLUMOSA BURNING EMBERS

AAS SEED ANNUAL WINNER

National Winner

Burning Embers is a new celosia bred for its gorgeous bronze foliage with dark pink veins that contrast nicely with the vibrant pink flower plumes. Plants are well branched and produce more flowers over a longer bloom time. Numerous AAS Judges commented that this entry had the largest and longest lasting flowers of all the celosia varieties they trialed. Plus, Burning Embers does very well in both heat and humidity while remaining completely covered with blooms that withstood the test of time. Bred by Clover Seed Company. Distributed by Sakata Seed (<https://sakataornamentals.com/>).



GERANIUM INTERSPECIFIC BIG EEZE PINK BATIK

AAS NON-SEED ANNUAL WINNER

National Winner

The Big Eeze geranium series is known for its superior container performance, medium vigor, and heat tolerance. The newest addition to the series, Pink Batik, is sure to impress with its unique coloration and minimal



maintenance requirements. Batiking is known for being a labor-intensive way to produce beautiful colorations on fabric, but this new geranium is a super "Eeze" way to get stunning petal colors on a very floriferous plant with very little effort needed. Bred by Dummen Orange (<https://na.dummenorange.com>).

IMPATIENS INTERSPECIFIC SOLARSCAPE XL PINK JEWEL

AAS SEED ANNUAL WINNER

National Winner

Solarscape seed-propagated impatiens provide unbeatable color in full or partial-sun garden areas. Durable Solarscape outperformed the comparison varieties with vibrant pink satiny blooms that covered the mounded plants non-stop all season, adding a bright



and pleasing tropical appeal to the garden. Solarscape XL Pink Jewel has superior disease resistance, especially to the dreaded impatiens downy mildew. Looks great when massed in beds and borders and since it was trialed in both containers and in-ground, we know it does well in both. Bred by PanAmerican Seed (<http://www.panamseed.com/>).

MARIGOLD SIAM GOLD

AAS SEED ANNUAL WINNER

National Winner

Named for a former country located halfway across the world, Siam Gold has beautiful, mounded foliage that produces globe-like, fully double golden flowers all season long. The large flowers are held on top of sturdy stems and above the foliage for full color visibility, making a striking focal point. Blooms were very tight and held up all summer long. The uniformity of the plant gives a neat, tidy appearance. Siam Gold is excellent for cut flowers, but no staking is needed. Bred by Thai Home Seeds (<http://www.thaihomeseeds.com/>).



PETCHOA, ENVIVA PINK

AAS NON-SEED ORNAMENTAL WINNER

National Winner

AAS Judges were wowed by the well-controlled mounding plant habit of EnViva Pink over the entire season. The bright pink flower with a yellow throat is very eye catching. The flowers have a nice iridescent shimmer that toughed it out even when conditions got tough, like an irrigation system failure. All season long, EnViva stayed in glorious color even during the heat of the summer. Bred by Selecta One North America (www.selectanorthamerica.com).



PETUNIA SURESHOT WHITE

AAS NON-SEED ORNAMENTAL WINNER

Regional Winner: Great Lakes and West/Northwest

The versatile SureShot petunias can withstand any bizarre weather conditions. Whether you plant them in garden beds, containers or hanging baskets, these beauties will thrive, come rain or shine, heat or cold. Their vibrant white blooms cover the plants, attracting bees and other pollinators to their lightly fragrant blossoms. SureShots are sure to turn heads with their stunning display of color. Bred by Ball FloraPlant (www.ballfloraplant.com).



VERBENA TENUISECTA SWEETHEART KISSES

AAS ORNAMENTAL

FROM SEED WINNER

National Winner

This low-growing wonder, praised by AAS judges for its vibrant red, rose, pink and a hint of white blooms, adds instant charm to any garden. Delicate, airy foliage (tenuisecta means "thinly cut") forms a soft cushion, setting the stage for an explosion of color that lasts all season long. Sweetheart Kisses thrives in sun-drenched days and dry spells. Plant this versatile plant in the ground, let it grow as a stunning groundcover, or fill your containers with its cheerful blooms. And the best part? Sweetheart Kisses is a breeze to grow! Start from seed and in just 55 days, landscape beds will be buzzing with butterflies and bees, all drawn to its irresistible nectar. Bred by Applewood Seed Company (<https://www.applewoodseed.com>).



FIRST EDITIONS**FIRST EDITIONS ECLIPSE BIGLEAF HYDRANGEA****HYDRANGEA MACROPHYLLA 'BAILMACSEVEN'****PP34,544, US PATENT PENDING**

Eclipse is the first true dark-leaf *Hydrangea macrophylla* on the market. Its intense, dark-purple foliage holds its color, even in warm climates. The striking foliage, paired with gorgeous dark-purple or cranberry-colored blooms, will make a big impact. Eclipse is a grower-friendly plant that offers excellent mildew and Cercospora resistance, and is a standout in the landscape.

**Hardiness Zone:** 5-9**AHS Heat Zone:** 9**Height:** 3-5'**Width:** 3-5'**Exposure:** Morning Sun, Dappled Afternoon Shade**Shape:** Mounded*firsteditionsplants.com***FIRST EDITIONS HONEYCOMB NINEBARK****PHYSOCARPUS OPULIFOLIUS 'ZLENORA' PP34,624**

Large, vibrant, chartreuse leaves hold their color all season long, even in full sun. Honeycomb-shaped white flowers appear in spring and contrast nicely with the foliage, which turns shades of gold in the fall. Honeycomb can be easily shaped with pruning or left to grow naturally.



This ninebark grows nicely in containers and is just as attractive in the landscape. The medium size makes for a beautiful hedge or color block along a fence line.

Hardiness Zone: 3-7**AHS Heat Zone:** 7**Height:** 4-6'**Width:** 5-7'**Exposure:** Full Sun to Part Shade**Shape:** Upright, Arching*firsteditionsplants.com***FIRST EDITIONS LUCKY LEU LEUCOTHOE****LEUCOTHOE AXILLARIS 'BAILCOTHOE'**

With the species native to the Southeastern United States, Lucky Leu is a well-rounded, low-maintenance landscape shrub that performs well in both sun and shade. It maintains its shape beautifully and requires very little pruning. New growth has a peach-orange tint accented with small white flowers in spring with the foliage evolving into medium green.

**Hardiness Zone:** 6-9**AHS Heat Zone:** 9**Height:** 3-5'**Width:** 3-5'**Exposure:** Full Sun to Part Shade**Shape:** Mounded*firsteditionsplants.com***FIRST EDITIONS QUEEN BEE CHASTETREE****VITEX AGNUS-CASTUS 'BAILTEXTHREE' PP35,259**

Long-lasting blooms and improved flower power make this shrub a true standout. Vibrant lavender flowers appear in mid-June and continue throughout the summer. The first round of flowers encourages a strong rebloom, which is ideal for scheduling production cycles. Queen Bee exhibits impressive drought, heat and cold tolerance compared to similar varieties. With its larger size, this pollinator magnet creates a beautiful and colorful hedge or focal point.

Hardiness Zone: 6-9**AHS Heat Zone:** 9**Height:** 6'**Width:** 7-9'**Exposure:** Full Sun**Shape:** Rounded*firsteditionsplants.com*

TERRA NOVA NURSERIES

AGASTACHE 'PINK PEARL'

Agastache 'Pink Pearl' showcases a mid-sized, full and compact mound of large flower spikes with a unique, light-pink color. Dense blooms cover the entire plant, appearing in two tones with deeper-colored flower buds. Hardiness zones for 'Pink Pearl' are 6-10. www.terravanurseries.com.



GEUM TEMPO 'CORAL'

Geum Tempo 'Coral' is an exciting addition to the popular Tempo series with an abundance of bright, coral-red flowers. This deciduous perennial displays a fast, clumping and mounding growth habit and is most active in spring. The variety's hardiness zones are 5-9. www.terravanurseries.com.



PENSTEMON DAKOTA 'BURGUNDY'

Penstemon Dakota 'Burgundy' features glossy, purple-black leaves with lavender to violet flowers, which are



loved by hummingbirds and pollinators. This tough and hardy perennial blooms July and August, and its hardiness zones are 3-8. www.terravanurseries.com.

PENSTEMON DAKOTA 'VERDE'

Penstemon Dakota 'Verde' is a compact plant with fresh and glossy green leaves and showy, lavender to violet flowers blooming in July and August. Dakota 'Verde' is deer-resistant and a strong hummingbird attractor. Its hardiness zones are 3-8. www.terravanurseries.com.



SEDUM 'PEACH PEARLS'

Sedum 'Peach Pearls' is loved for its burgundy leaves and rose gold flowers. This variety requires minimal water usage and is ideal for mixed beds, borders, rock gardens or containers. 'Peach Pearls' has a fast and mounding growth habit and grows in hardiness zones 4-9. **SFM**



College and University Turfgrass Programs

Brigham Young University



The Plant & Landscape Systems program at Brigham Young University (BYU) is one of the top landscape-related degrees available and is accredited by the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP).

"We also offer a minor in Business Management or Environmental Science," said Bryan Hopkins, Ph.D., professor of Plant & Wildlife Sciences at BYU. "Students take a wide variety of landscape management classes, including turfgrass management, soil science, urban soil and water management. They also take multiple pest management classes, among others."

Students gain hands-on experience through BYU Grounds, internships and extracurricular activities. Networking is an important focus in the program and students meet top professionals at career fairs and national events.

The Landscape Management Club, National Collegiate Landscape Competition and many shared classes connect students with each other and their professors in a powerful way. Upon graduating, students are ready for the best employment positions and graduate programs with the skills needed to appreciate, create and manage beautiful landscapes.





According to Hopkins, the program averages 150 undergraduate students, with most pursuing careers in general landscape management and maintenance.

“We remind them that the number one type of landscape plant that they will be dealing with is turfgrass,” he said. “We do have students who go into turfgrass-specific careers, including sports field management and golf course management.”

Hopkins said that approximately 65% of BYU students who graduate with a BYU Plant & Landscape Systems degree pursue landscape maintenance, while 10% pursue careers in landscape design and construction, 5% each in sports field management and golf course management, and the remaining 15% entering other fields.

“Our students have won first place five out of the last six years for the NALP’s National Collegiate Landscape Competition (NCLC),” Hopkins added. “As such, there’s a very high demand for our students.”

Most BYU Plant & Landscape Systems students do industry internships, and all students also have opportunities to take part in research.

“We also have a lot of what we call experiential learning, which involves everything from study abroad to service opportunities,” said Hopkins. “We have an outstanding student-led club, as well as many leadership opportunities. For study abroad, we usually offer four trips per year. This year we are going to Europe, Africa, Central America and Australia.”

Said Hopkins of the BYU students, “They are wonderful. They’re good human beings, and I love working with them.”

For more information about Brigham Young University and the Plant & Landscape Systems major, visit <https://pws.byu.edu/undergraduate/nalp>. **SFM**





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The Standard is the Standard

By Alpha Jones, CSFM

With the launch of the new SFMA mentorship program, helping someone find their way in the green industry, learn something new about themselves or increase their network have been trending topics during the first quarter of 2024. The program has several participants in the early going and more are welcome.

Mentoring and coaching can overlap. Mike Tomlin, head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers (of whom I am a longtime fan of both him and the team), is known for combining the two roles. I do not know Coach T personally — and my admiration of him is from afar — but my respect lies within his publicized intention to mentor and coach his players not just in the game of football, but as men in the game of life.

I recently had the opportunity to mentor someone who is not part of the green industry, but who was looking for help understanding how to confront the challenges of life. In our conversation, the mentee described an upcoming challenge which involved an admissions test score that they had hopes of successfully completing.

Without realizing it, this person stated several times the minimum score necessary to “pass the test,” as though reaching the minimum was their goal. They did not possess foresight nor understand the benefit of striving for more. As our conversation progressed, it became clear that this person’s current environment offered no encouragement or motivation to pursue more than just getting by. They frequently asked why they are stuck where they are; answer, because the minimum to get by was their standard.

Coach Tomlin is famous for offering quotes, often called “Tomlinisms,” to get the message across to his players and coaching staff. I offered one of his most famous quotes to my mentee — “The standard is the standard.”

Tomlin uses this phrase to create a mindset that, regardless of circumstances, everyone is to meet or exceed the high expectation of excellence. Many players, when leaving the Steelers organization, have been quoted as saying that Tomlin’s approach — and that phrase in particular — raised their work ethic and the standards they set for themselves.

Through further discussion with my mentee, the details of the scoring system showed that the organization recognizes a higher score as a greater

success; thus, a higher score presents more opportunity within the organization. So, we agreed that the standard is the standard; and their new standard would be earning a score significantly greater than the minimum passing score — yet still achievable. Their standard is now the standard of meeting or exceeding their own expectation of excellence rather than the minimum score communicated by the organization. This would affirm for them that they are capable of more than just enough to get by.

Mike Tomlin’s philosophy works for the individual or for the entire team because it sets an expectation where the challenge is to meet or exceed it. Is there an expectation in your workplace for the quality of work produced, the amount of effort or the commitment to getting things done? Whether you are the leader of your department, a member of the crew or even working your first internship, the quality of the work you produce and accept from others on your team is your standard. Can you or someone articulate that expectation to your team? Does the work the team produces match the quality and vision of what is expected?

Author Napoleon Hill is credited with stating, “Whatever my mind can conceive and believe, it can achieve.” The standard is not set by when we show up or how hard we work; it starts with our mindset. Can we conceive, form or devise a plan that produces a desired goal? If we believe in it and accept it as true, then we can achieve it.

The standard we set for ourselves will show in the work we produce, our work ethic, our commitment to success and how we carry ourselves. It is reflected to others, and how we are perceived factors into our standard and how it is received. So, it is important to say what the standard is, act on that standard and believe in the standard; because the standard is the standard. **SFM**



Alpha Jones, CSFM, is director of field operations for the Fayetteville Woodpeckers, MiLB affiliate of the Houston Astros. He serves on the SFMA Board of Directors as Secretary-Treasurer.

For more information about the SFMA mentorship program, visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PWBXF5C>

Mowers

ALTOZ TRX

The Altoz TRX is ideal for sports field and grounds management due to its track system and deck design for cut quality, especially on slopes or wet terrain. The track design offers traction and stability, providing the operator a safer way to mow technical terrain and cut where other equipment cannot (or cannot cut safely). Tracks distribute weight evenly, minimizing ground pressure and reducing the risk of soil compaction — crucial for maintaining pristine sports surfaces. The torsional axle, large track footprint and TorqFlex front suspension follow the contour of the ground, bridge over rough terrain and reduce operator fatigue. A deck wing accessory increases the deck width by 24% and allows the operator to cut closer to water features, under fences and beneath trees — reducing the need to string trim.



BOBCAT ZT7000

The Bobcat ZT7000 zero-turn mower boasts transport speeds up to 19 mph and mowing speeds up to 13 mph. With features like a heavy-duty drive system, industry-leading cutting technology and powerful engine options, operators achieve major commercial-grade power every time. The Hydro-Gear ZT-5400 hydrostatic transaxle drive system features a 2-speed foot pedal and delivers maximum output and torque. With two engine options and up to 38.5 horsepower, the ZT7000 delivers power and pro-grade performance. The AirFX zero-turn mower cutting deck features a patented deep, bullnose design that increases vacuum, lifting grass up to the cutting

blade for a superior quality of cut and a better-protected cutting deck.



CUB CADET PRO Z 960S EFI SUREPATH

The Cub Cadet PRO Z 960S EFI SurePath is a semi-autonomous mower with GPS technology combined with exclusive four-wheel steering, making perfect auto-turns with the push of a button. This helps to achieve perfect stripes, guided by GPS for straight lines and accuracy. This model is also equipped with a 38.5-hp. Kawasaki FX1000v (999cc) EFI engine; 16cc Hydro-Gear 5400 transmission; air-ride seat; and 60-inch triple-7-gauge fabricated-steel cutting deck with top, bottom and side reinforcements.



EXMARK LAZER Z V-SERIES

Pair Exmark's Lazer Z zero-turn mower with the state-of-the-art HyperCell power system and you get the new Lazer Z V-Series. With up to seven hours of runtime per charge, it runs all day, giving professionals an edge when dealing with noise ordinances or zero-engine-exhaust mandates.

- Powertrain: 10 HyperCell batteries — 23.4 kWh total.
- Patent-pending battery and Battery Management System (BMS): Enables Lazer Z V-Series to run for up to seven hours between charges, even in tough conditions.

- Deck: 60-inch Electric Series 4.

- Speed: Up to 10.0 mph.

- Adapt technology: Make quick deck rake adjustments without tools to optimize cut quality and performance in wet, overgrown, or lush conditions or stemmy grasses/weeds.

- Easy to maintain: Electric cutting deck eliminates all belt-related maintenance.



FERRIS SRS Z3X

The Ferris SRS Z3X Soft Ride stand-on mower delivers superior traction and performance married with productivity. The 72-inch deck size and top speed of 12 miles per hour will make quick work of big fields, while the suspension platform system optimizes operator comfort and is adjustable for a wide range of weights. The unit's pivoting front axle allows for steeper inclines. The Z3X features Ferris' redesigned iCD+ cutting system for a premium cut, maximum vacuum and clipping ejection to keep fields and grounds looking their best. A lawn striping kit is sold as an extra attachment.



GRASSHOPPER FRONTMOUNT MODEL 900D 1.3L

The Grasshopper FrontMount Model 900D 1.3L is equipped with a Tier 4 Final-compliant, fuel-efficient and powerful 1.3L MaxTorque diesel engine that requires no power-robbing after-treatment systems. The 900D 1.3L uses a second-generation G3 hydrostatic pump-and-wheel-motor system with a single serpentine belt for smooth zero-turn maneuverability. This FrontMount mower delivers a better ride and better cut quality at faster mowing speeds due to balanced weight distribution among six wheels for a lighter footprint on the turf. Available with PTO-driven, 5.5-inch-deep DuraMax cutting decks in 61- and 72-inch widths. A number of PowerVac collection systems, turf renovation and snow removal implements are available to make the 900D 1.3L a year-round grounds maintenance system.



HONDA HRC216HDA

The Honda HRC216HDA self-propelled commercial lawn mower is a premium offering for professionals. With reduced weight for better maneuverability, and rugged, durable construction, the Honda HRC216K3HDA incorporates a host of advanced technologies. "Easy Start, Easy Stop" allows the user to save time by starting the engine while standing behind the mower; the flywheel brake safety system stops the engine and blades when the user lets go of the brake lever on the handle. The fuel-efficient Honda GXV160 commercial engine is the source of powerful, quiet operation. The exclusive Honda MicroCut Twin Blade System offers four cutting surfaces

to produce finer clippings. A rugged 21-inch steel deck with front axle and bumper protection provides structural stability and durability.



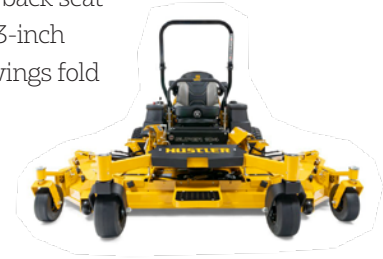
HUSQVARNA CEORA

Level up on the playing field with Husqvarna's Ceora autonomous mowing solution. Able to cut up to six acres per 24-hour period, Ceora provides a cost-efficient sustainable approach to field management. Ceora features Husqvarna EPOS, satellite-based technology that enables it to work within virtual boundaries, allowing users to define cutting heights and patterns, create work and stay-out zones and operation schedules. Ceora is perfect for sports fields as the absence of boundary wires eliminates potential line breakages due to aerating or turf repair and frees up time for other tasks. Ceora can operate day or night, in any weather from smart phone direction, all the while not disturbing local businesses or residences. Husqvarna's new Lease and Service Plus offering expands on a traditional lease by including preventative maintenance, wear and tear repairs, and more in one monthly payment.



HUSTLER SUPER 104

Hustler's Super 104 can easily handle acres of work. This unit offers a 104-inch width of cut, zero-turn precision and up to 11 mph speed, making it a class unto itself. The Super 104 is equipped with Hustler's exclusive HyperDrive Hydro System with industrial-grade pumps and high-torque wheel motors, 3-gallon reservoir, oil cooler and hot oil shuttle. It also offers a high-back seat with adjustable armrests and 3-inch suspension travel range. The wings fold to 80-inch transport width fits most trailers helping to make it easy to transport from job to job.



JACOBSEN SLF1 ELITE

Jacobsen's SLF1 ELiTE super-light, five-reel lithium mower features the benefits of a proven ELiTE lithium drivetrain, helping sports field managers decrease carbon emissions, remove hydraulic oil from their machinery and reduce noise. Silent cutting and minimal vibration mean operators can cut at any time of day or night with less fatigue and greater productivity. The SLF 1ELiTE attains 5.5+ hours of operation with each charge, keeping it on the job longer. Re-power the SLF1 ELiTE overnight with its on-board charger, simply plugging it in at the end of the day so it's ready for the next. Jake's most advanced on-board monitoring system ensures product uptime, lockable speed and frequency of clip controls. Practical convenience is at the forefront of the SLF1 ELiTE with virtually maintenance-free, next-gen components. Specialized agile cutting units allow the SLF1 to cut in undulations, and its hydraulic-free design rounds off a proven and powerful machine.



Continued on page 34

JOHN MASCARO'S PHOTO QUIZ



ANSWER

From page 17

The cause of the blackish-brown area and depressions near the hash marks on this stadium football field might surprise you. A player was injured during one of the county's high school football games, and an ambulance pulled onto the field to tend to the injuries. As the player was evaluated, the hot exhaust from the ambulance's tailpipe blew down on the turf, causing this blackish-brown spot. Thankfully, the injured player was checked out and released in good health. The following day, the turfgrass turned brown-to-straw colored in the area when the exhaust had blown down on the turf. The crew aerified the field in the area where the heavy ambulance's tire tracks depressions were left after driving across the sand-based field. The heat-damaged area from the exhaust recovered on its own after about 10 days.

Photo submitted by SFMA President Sun Roesslein, CFSM, sports stadium manager at the North Area Athletic Complex for Jeffco Schools in Golden, Colorado.

John Mascaro is president of Turf-Tec International

If you would like to submit a photograph for John Mascaro's Photo Quiz, please send a high-resolution digital photo to John Mascaro via email at john@turf-tec.com. If your photograph is selected, you will receive full credit. All photos submitted will become property of *SportsField Management* magazine and the Sports Field Management Association.



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Continued from page 32

JOHN DEERE 6700A E-CUT

The John Deere 6700A E-Cut hybrid fairway mower with electric-reel drive has the capability to mow, verticut and scalp. The 6700A is the first three-wheel stance fairway mower on the market available with 7-inch reels and electric reel drive, enabling enhanced adjustability and reduced emissions. When mowing at a reduced engine rpm, operators will experience up to 30% fuel savings and noise pollution is reduced. By electrifying the reel circuit, the 6700A model promotes a 90% reduction in hydraulic leak opportunities. An advanced LoadMatch system with a smart alternator prioritizes cut quality in tough conditions.



KIOTI ZXD SERIES

The Kioti ZXD Series diesel zero-turn mowers are built to make quick work of any acreage. The ZXD Series is equipped with a 24.8-horsepower Kioti three-cylinder diesel engine. The direct-drive transaxles, shaft-driven deck, and heavy-duty mower frame deliver enhanced performance even in demanding conditions. Operators can work in comfort all day long due to the ergonomically friendly pedal-operated deck lift and rubber-isolated three-inch suspension seat. For better serviceability, the ZXD Series features easy-to-reach dipsticks and fluid-fill ports via a floorboard access panel, flip-forward seat, and removable engine shroud.



Other features include travel speeds over 11 miles per hour, the choice between a 61- or 72-inch cutting deck, good hill holding, a 17-gallon fuel tank and smooth drivability.

KUBOTA F3710 FRONT-MOUNT MOWER

The F3710 replaced the F3990 in Kubota's F Series of commercial front-mount mowers and is equipped with a 36.9-hp. Kubota Common Rail System diesel engine for fast, powerful and efficient job performance. Available with both side-discharge and rear-discharge pro-commercial mower decks in 60 inches and 72 inches, the F3710's high lifting capacity provides the versatility to handle an array of implements like a grass catcher, snow blower, rotary sweeper and debris blower, and is compatible with all implements currently available for Kubota mowers. An LCD digital panel comes standard on the F3710 and provides operators with vital information like Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF) level, engine speed, remaining fuel, water temperature and hour meter. A deluxe high-back seat with four separate adjustments for weight control, lumbar support, back angle and arm rests helps keep operators comfortable and productive all day long.



RC MOWERS AUTONOMOUS MOWING ROBOTS

With RC Mowers autonomous mowing robots, crews can reduce the number of employees needed for mowing jobs. RC Mowers' autonomous mowing robots allow a single operator to do the same work as a crew of three. The autonomous mowing robots were designed and built by the RC Mowers robotics team, led by experts who developed the U.S. military's weapons guidance systems, experts who developed U.S. DOD autonomous vehicles, as well as leading experts in aviation safety. The proprietary

RC Mowers Success System includes implementation guidance, on-site training, ongoing data analysis, communication tools, service and more.



STIHL RZA 700 SERIES

The Stihl RZA 700 Series battery zero-turn mowers are the perfect addition to a professional fleet, offering ideal productivity and comfort. The Stihl RZA 748, Stihl RZA 752 and Stihl RZA 760 professional models have a built-in 24 kWh battery for all-day commercial use at 16 mph. Plus, a runtime up to eight hours means it can mow up to 21 acres in a day's work, and the fast charge time of approximately four hours. With evolving OPE gas regulations, professional can experience all the eco-friendly benefits of battery, such as reduced noise, no exhaust emissions, and zero fuel, allowing them to operate in towns, school districts, and other entities that have adopted zero-exhaust-emissions equipment regulations.



TORO GROUNDSMASTER E3200

The all-new Groundsmaster e3200 gives turf maintenance crews a powerful battery-powered out-front rotary mower option. The advanced electric drivetrain, powered by Toro's proprietary HyperCell technology, provides quiet, emissions-free operation. Eleven lithium-ion batteries power the mower, and operators can add up to six more for more demanding applications. Toro's proprietary Battery Management System helps provide all-day runtimes and quick-charging capabilities, plus it enhances the reliability and longevity of the batteries. The reserve power mode

allows the operator to set parameters, ensuring enough battery power to return to the recharging station. Smart controls optimize power consumption by continuously and efficiently providing ample cutting power without bogging the blades down. The new Groundsmaster e3200 shares the same rugged chassis, 60-inch high-strength steel mowing deck, impact bumpers and operating controls as the diesel-powered model.

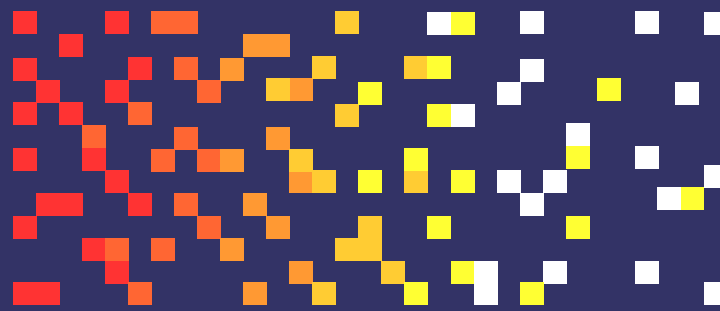
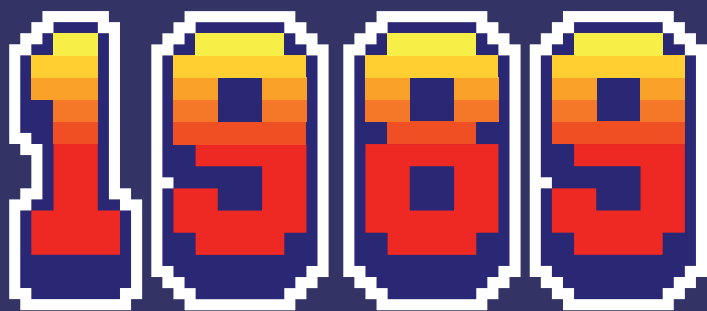


YAKTA ZERO-TURN MOWERS

Yakta announced full-scale production of its range of zero-turn mowers including the YXR 710, YXR 610 and YXR 410 (with the YXR 910 soon to follow). These mowers boast strong I-beam caster arm construction and 7-gauge steel decks, as well as a 5-year or 2,000-hour warranty, covering everything except for batteries, blades and tires. Highlights of the YXR series include:

- The YXR 710 with a 30.5-hp. Kawasaki FX781V EVO EFI engine, 16-gallon fuel capacity and hitch receiver.
- The YXR 610, offering up to 10-mph mowing speed, with a hitch receiver and a choice between a 24-hp. Kawasaki FT730V or a 27-hp. Briggs CXi engine.
- The YXR 410, with a hitch plate, up to 9-mph mowing speed and heavy-duty ZT-3800 Hydro-Gear transaxles, powered by a 23-hp. Kawasaki FR691V or a 25-hp. Briggs CXi engine. **SFM**





In this retrospective, we examine historic issues of *SportsTurf* magazine, predecessor to *SportsField Management* magazine. This month, we take a look at 1989 via the pages of *SportsTurf*.

SportsTurf continued its heavy coverage of golf during 1989 with half of the issue covers that year being devoted to golf-course-management-related cover stories. But there were still plenty of articles focused on sports field management. Some of the highlights are as follows:

The January issue kicked off with coverage of field preparations for Super Bowl XXIII in Miami. Joe Robbie Stadium had been selected as the site for the game when the stadium was nothing more than a set of architectural drawings. The article delved into early challenges of the new field and the efforts to get it ready for the NFL's biggest event.

The main sports field focus of the February 1989 issue was sports field drainage, while the March issue examined the impact of drought and stress on weed control.

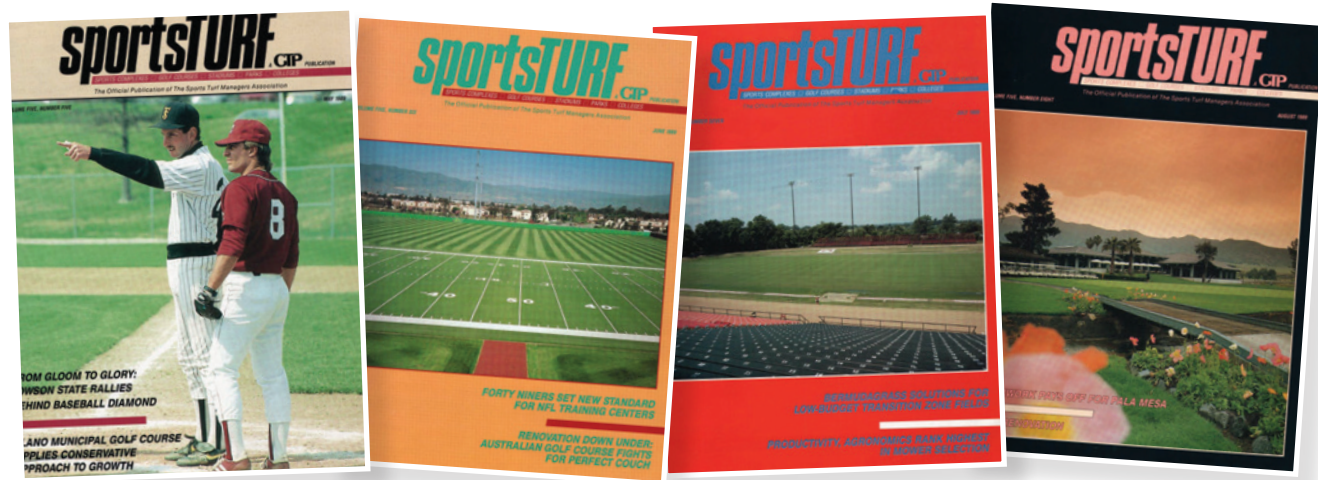
The April issue of *SportsTurf* shared how sports field managers in the Chicago and Milwaukee areas came together to help each other battle the impact of the previous summer's heat and drought. Greg Petry, superintendent of parks for Waukegan, Illinois, and Mike Schiller, park superintendent for Glenview, Illinois, worked with Harry

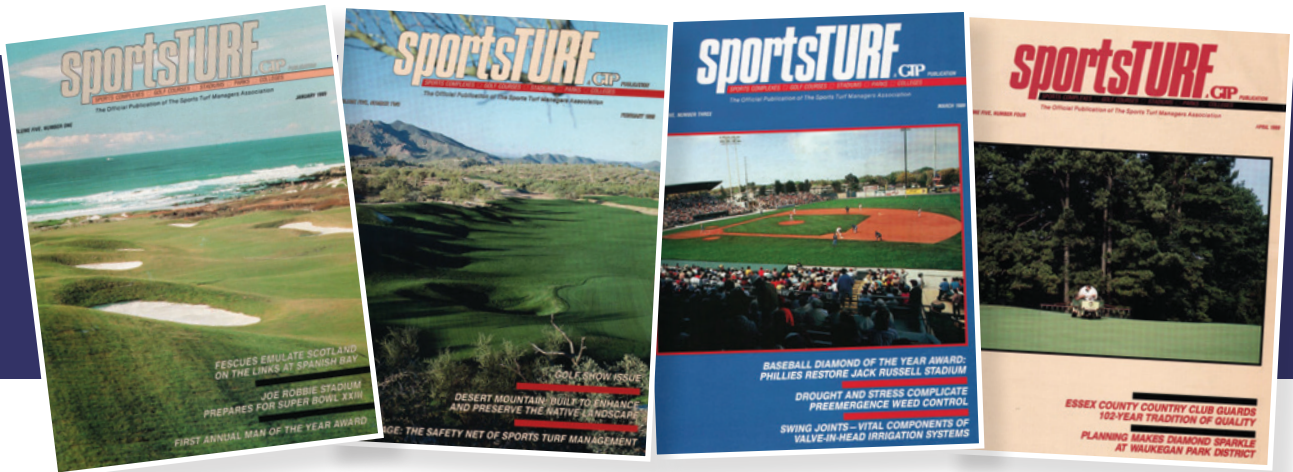
Gill, superintendent of grounds for the Milwaukee Brewers, and Ken Mrock, superintendent of grounds for the Chicago Bears, to share insights with each other — as well as other area professionals — into handling field renovation, game preparation, and especially heat and drought.

The May issue outlined how the athletic fields at Towson State University went from being deemed unsafe for play to award-winning playing surfaces. The effort started at the top — with the president of the university — and was an ongoing process through increased funds and improved strategies.

"I think universities today have to make a commitment to proper turf care if their athletic facilities are to remain safe and in use," said Joe Ardolino, assistant athletic director at Towson State University. "Our dark days are over, and we intend to keep it that way."

What was then a state-of-the-art training facility for the San Francisco 49ers was the highlight of the June 1989 issue of *SportsTurf*. The Marie P. DeBartolo Sports Centre included a two-story main building, a maintenance building, one artificial turf field and two natural turf fields. The main building featured executive offices, a swimming pool, audio/visual center, cafeteria, weight room and lockers.





In retrospect, the most interesting piece in the July 1989 issue was an article titled “Field of Dreams’ was fleeting project.”

According to the article, “The Proturf Division of Pacific Sod in Camarillo, Calif., is accustomed to unusual requests from movie producers. But last summer, when Gordon Productions asked the company’s Neil Beeson if he could build an authentic-looking professional baseball diamond in the middle of an Iowa cornfield for ‘Field of Dreams,’ he thought he had heard it all.”

“The schedule was tight,” said Beeson. “We had to complete the project over the Fourth of July to meet the producer’s schedule. That gave us only seven days to build a baseball diamond out of a cornfield.”

The article goes on to describe the field and lighting installation, as well as the 10-day film production schedule on the site. The article concludes with details of removal of the field.

“It would have made a great Little League field,” said Beeson. “But the property line runs right down the middle of the field and the farmers were anxious to plant corn there again the following spring.”

The article stated, “The bluegrass has been turned under, the lights have been removed, and the farmers of Dyersville must watch the movie to see their short-lived baseball field. No doubt they’ll be telling the story about night baseball in the middle of their corn fields for years to come”

Little did they know at the time that the field would soon reopen, and people would come to the movie site — or that Major League Baseball would “go the distance” three decades later and build an MLB-ready field for the Field of Dreams games in 2021 and 2022.

September 1989 saw *SportsTurf* focus on turf horse racing tracks, while the October issue once again looked at Joe Robbie Stadium in Miami, and its post-Super Bowl event load and management. 1989 wrapped up with golf-heavy content and a December buyers guide. **SFM**

All content for this section is pulled from the SportsTurf/SportsField Management archives, an ongoing cooperative project of EPG Brand Acceleration, SFMA and the Michigan State University Libraries (<https://sturf.lib.msu.edu/index.html>).



The following are photos and posts pulled from industry social media feeds during the past month.

Scan the QR code for links to all of our feeds and connect with us.



@cwalsh0014

Blankets vs. No blankets in NE Ohio on February 27th.



@woosoxgrounds

Taking advantage of some nice weather by getting our bullpens gauged and ready to go.



@asugcb



@Illini_Turf

@cody223

Game is over. But there's a game tomorrow, so that means there's work to do. But these moments, alone on the ballfield. Soothing and wonderful. The sun peeking through the trees during the last gasps of the sunset. The lights shining down as you ride round and round on the infield machine. It's a happy place, a warm blanket of comfort. Baseball season is a grind, but it's my grind. Every season is a journey all its own. And it's full of moments no one else sees, and that's what makes it special.

**@Maritzamows**

MLS is Back. Grass is Green. This Southern Girl is COLD.

**@miamiturf305**

Finally done with high school games and events. It's go time for opening day. Removed all of the old calcine and double scarified to try and remove the crushed calcine layer on top of the DuraEdge infield mix. After a heavy water we wait to till and grade tomorrow.



@eric_harshman_cgm

Another great productive week on both the Main Campus @pbauniversity & at the Athletics Complex. Glad to help out & spend time with the dedicated teams that are managing these sites.



@ryan_woodley

@theugroundscrew

It's pretty cool feeling when former players give you call with questions on how to do things on their field. Or when other coaches want to chat it up before the game. I just love everything about this business and very happy to be a part of it. Looking forward to what the future holds rather than that's at Upstate or somewhere else. Thank you all for allowing me to sit under your learning tree and pick little things up here and there from a ton of people in my 17 years. If you or someone you know is looking for a great profession to get into you can't go wrong with the Sports Turf world.



@UMDGroundsCrew

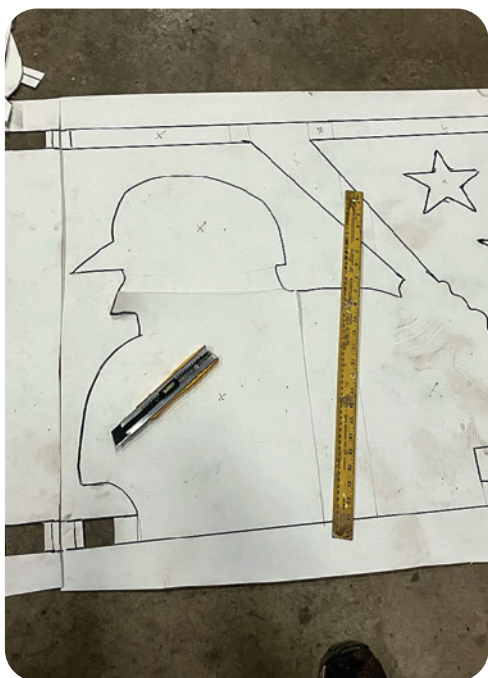
@thegma_

In a first for football, 13 pioneering females have come together to prepare the pitch ahead of the @barclayswsl Arsenal v Tottenham match.



@ironpigsgroundscrew

A little arts and crafts work today, as we were busy making hard stencils for a field logo to be used in the not too distant future.



@glabsfma

Thank you Dodgers Grounds Staff for hosting our SFMA GLAB chapter event. Special thanks to our sponsor @nutrenagsolutions. Thank you to all of our members who joined us. We'll see you at our next event.



STEC to distribute Landmaster Industry Pro UTVs

STEC announced a partnership with Landmaster to offer Landmaster's Industry Pro commercial utility vehicles to the distributor's growing line of equipment. Built for commercial, industrial and rental applications, the Industry Pro brand includes gas-powered and lithium-powered utility vehicles. The UTVs are designed, engineered, welded and shipped out of Landmaster's Indiana manufacturing facility to ensure prompt product delivery times.

The 4x4 vehicles include standard options that satisfy key safety protocols, including four-wheel disc brakes, three-point seatbelt, ROPS-certified rollover protective cages, front bumper, back-up alarm, horn, strobe light, taillights and 15- or 24-mph speed options.



Turfco T3200 spreader sprayer

Turfco's new T3200 spreader sprayer is designed with minimal maintenance in mind. With numerous operator-friendly and time-saving features, the T3200 establishes a new benchmark for versatility.

As the largest-capacity applicator that fits through a 36-inch gate, the T3200 saves more time between refills and provides access to tighter spaces normally only reached by dragging hoses. Add on the T-Flex15 tank, and operators have enough liquid capacity to cover up to 140,000 square feet between fills, as well as the versatility to spray two liquids simultaneously or independently.

User-friendly operation, hands-free speed control, and steering wheel design make it easy for new or seasonal staff to quickly become proficient operators, saving time on training.

The T3200's pivoting front axle and innovative steering system ensure agility and enhanced control on uneven terrain, eliminating turf tearing and enabling precise alignment for



each pass. With an on-demand electric pump and low maintenance requirements, operators can remain in the field and focused on their tasks.

Enhanced front wheels with greaseable roller bearings provide durability, while a large access panel simplifies servicing. Additionally, the inclusion of a USB charging port enables operators to charge devices and utilize various applications, enhancing versatility and convenience.

Exmark Vertex X-Series, E-Series stand-on mowers

Exmark introduced two new products to its stand-on mower lineup with the Vertex X-Series and compact Vertex E-Series. The new models join Exmark's existing Vertex S-Series and electric Vertex V-Series.

Exmark Director of Marketing, Jamie Briggs, said the new machines expand the Vertex line, with a complete range of models in cut widths from 32- to 72-inches.

The Vertex X-Series features an available 72-inch UltraCut Series 6 cutting deck that enables users to mow more than 7 acres per hour. Plus, with the same formed and welded tubular steel frame and heavy-duty 15-inch caster wheels and tires as Exmark's premier Lazer Z zero-turn riding mowers, Vertex X-Series models provide commercial durability.

With Kawasaki FX1000 engines, Vertex X-Series delivers the power to finish jobs faster. In addition to the 72-inch model, Exmark also offers Vertex X-Series with 52- or 60-inch cutting decks. The wide, stable design of the Vertex X-Series features 24-inch drive tires for increased traction, reduced turf compaction and increased ride quality. The operator-focused control center optimizes operator control and comfort, with a bolstered operator pad and suspended operator platform that's located low and centered between the rear wheels.

Exmark's new Vertex E-Series compact stand-on mower is available with 32- or 36-inch UltraCut Series 3 cutting decks. Powered by an electric start, twin-cylinder Kawasaki FS600V commercial engine, Vertex E-Series models use HydroGear pumps and Parker wheel motors to



deliver ground speeds of up to 7.5 mph forward. The dual-action controls provide quick, responsive control in any conditions; and the single-point cut height adjustment system quickly and accurately sets deck height from 1.0- to 4.5-inches, in .25-inch increments.

Buffalo Turbine Cyclone Mega debris blower

Buffalo Turbine released the redesigned Cyclone Mega tow-behind debris blower. The Cyclone Mega features a high-speed nozzle rotational assembly, allowing the operator to change direction without losing ground.



Additional features include:

- 40-hp. EFI engine
- 12-function wireless remote providing start/stop, nozzle and throttle control with instant idle function
- Heavy-duty frame construction
- Direct drive turbine
- Wireless 360-degree nozzle rotation
- Auto nozzle positioning
- Various nozzle options
- Quick and easy adjustable hitch
- Bolt-on trailer package allows for easy conversion to a skid-mount configuration

Pursell PurMidas fertilizer

Pursell Agri-Tech's PurMidas controlled-release fertilizer is specially designed for turf, and delivers a 7:1 ratio of N to S for optimum growth, aesthetics and performance.

Formulated as a homogeneous granular fertilizer, PurMidas delivers uniform amounts of nitrogen, available from multiple sources including urea and ammoniacal, and sulfate sulfur on each particle to prevent nutrient segregation, thus enhancing the consistency of spreading without noticeable striping and irregular growth patterns.

PurMidas ensures an optimal supply of nitrogen that is critical for chlorophyll and protein formation for stimulating growth and building strong turf. The soluble sulfur component of PurMidas is readily available for uptake to maximize green-up and enhance plant stress tolerance.

Pursell's patented coating technology offers users the flexibility to adjust coating weights and tailor

nutrient release rates to meet nutrient demand and soil temperatures of any region. It also protects granule integrity, eliminates risk of lock-off, minimizes nutrient loss and significantly reduces environmental impact.

K-Rain Manufacturing rotary nozzles

K-Rain Manufacturing released its enhanced line of rotary nozzles with 90°-210° and 210°-270° arc ranges.

"We took the best and made it better," said Josh Carmichael, K-Rain engineering manager. "The new 90°-210° and 210°-270° rotary nozzles provide an optimized pattern with precise edge accuracy. And the radius ranges have increased: 8'-15', 16'-20' and 20'-28' for better coverage."

K-Rain's rotary nozzle series is a full line of adjustable, fixed and specialty nozzles.



Kawasaki Ridge UTV

Kawasaki took the wraps off its latest creation — the 2024-25 Kawasaki Ridge UTV. The manufacturer designed this sport-utility vehicle for off-road enthusiasts who use their UTVs for work and recreation.

A 999cc DOHC, a 4-valve-per-cylinder powerplant moves the Ridge. Its configuration boasts a bore and stroke of 73.4 x 59.0mm. This setup translates to 92 hp. and 65.6 foot pounds of torque. According to Kawasaki, the engine is "exceptionally quiet," which customers in this segment seem to appreciate as it allows for easier conversations in the cab. The engine is complemented by a continuously variable transmission (CVT) designed for low-speed performance. **SFM**



All-female grounds crew makes history at North London derby

An all-female grounds team prepared the pitch at Emirates Stadium for Arsenal vs Tottenham in the Women's Super League on March 3, marking a significant milestone for women's sports and the role of women in making sport possible.

Ahead of International Women's Day, a sold-out crowd of over 60,000 fans flooded into the Emirates Stadium to watch the game, making it the highest attendance of a women's domestic football match in the UK. It was also the most-attended sports fixture in London that weekend, including Premier League games, putting the grounds management industry firmly in the spotlight, highlighting the vital role of grounds staff.

In the months leading up to the match, the Women's Super League and Women in Football, both sponsored by Barclays, collaborated with the Grounds Management Association (GMA), the leading membership organization representing grounds personnel in the UK, and Arsenal Football Club to help 13 female grounds professionals make history as the first all-female grounds team to prepare a Women's Super League match.

The trailblazing group of women prepared the Emirates Stadium pitch ahead of the North London derby with the aim of encouraging young girls and boys to consider a career in grounds management.

Despite an uplift of women playing sport across all levels, however, only 2% of the grounds management sector, which is responsible for maintaining the nation's pitches, is female.

"Grounds staff are essential in making sport possible, and, without them, we simply wouldn't have the pitches we need for our nation's enjoyment of sport," said Geoff Webb, CEO of GMA. "We're delighted to see some exceptional examples of women working in the sector celebrated at a such an important fixture in the Barclays Women's Super League calendar and we hope their example encourages more people to consider careers in grounds management."



The 13 women involved were from different venues across a variety of sporting and educational facilities and were led by Tara Sandford, groundsperson at Arsenal Football Club, who said, "Being a part of the first all-women grounds team to prepare a Barclays Women's Super League match has been hugely exciting for me on both a personal and professional level."

"The consistent level of support we have seen for our women's team this season shows how much the game continues to grow, and it's important that we harness this to encourage more girls to pursue a career in football," Sandford added. "I hope our all-female grounds team showcases the different opportunities that exist within football and inspires more women to get into the game."

The team included:

- Alexia Doughty, apprentice groundsperson at Stratford Sports Club.
- Beth Gibbs, groundsperson at Wellington School and GMA Young Board member.
- Bobbie Murphy, apprentice groundsperson at Arsenal Football Club.
- Carlie Lambert, apprentice groundsperson for Worcestershire County Cricket Club.
- Emily Geach, volunteer groundsperson at Boconnoc Cricket Club and Tormarton Cricket Club.
- Georgie Grimes, groundsperson for The FA at St George's Park.
- Jasmine Nicholls, groundsperson for Yorkshire County Cricket Club.
- Liddy Ford, groundsperson for The FA at St George's Park and GMA Young Board member.
- Meg Lay, groundsperson at Lord's, Marylebone Cricket Club and GMA Young Board member.
- Phoebe Taylorson, apprentice groundsperson at Middlesbrough Football Club.
- Rachel Hunter-Worrall, groundsperson at Queen Ethelburga's School in York.
- Tara Sandford, groundsperson at Arsenal Football Club.
- Zibby Parker, part-time groundsperson at Ipswich Town FC and Essex County Cricket Club.

"The Women's Professional Game and Football Association are very proud to be a part of this showcase event, bringing some of the brightest talents working within our industry and beyond deservedly to the fore," said Nikki Doucet, CEO of the Barclays Women's Super League and Barclays Women's Championship.

"To see a team of thirteen experienced and talented women prepare the iconic Emirates Stadium pitch in front of hundreds of thousands of spectators and viewers across the UK, was a highly significant moment in the GMA and grounds management industry's history," said GMA Director of Communications Jennifer Carter.

Added Vinai Venkatesham, Arsenal's chief executive, "This is a celebration of what's been achieved for women in sport, but also serves as a reminder of the work we need to do together to ensure more young girls are encouraged to break into the game. It's important we continue to build on these moments to inspire the next generation and accelerate the sustainable growth of the game."

— Article provided by GMA.

Peppers wins Musser Award of Excellence

The Musser International Turfgrass Foundation selected John Peppers, Ph.D., as its 2024 Award of Excellence recipient.

The award is given to outstanding Ph.D. candidates who, in the final phase of their graduate studies, demonstrated overall excellence throughout their doctoral program in turfgrass research.



Peppers received his B.S. in turfgrass science and M.S. degree in turfgrass weed science at Auburn University under Dr. Scott McElroy. His research at Auburn focused around potential turfgrass uses with pinoxaden (Manuscript herbicide). He went on to earn a Ph.D. in plant pathology, physiology and weed science with a concentration in turfgrass weed science from Virginia Tech (VT) under Dr. Shawn Askew.

While at VT, he worked as a graduate research assistant, as well as the field trial manager for Dr. Askew's lab. His dissertation was titled, "Evaluation of novel techniques to control annual grasses in intensively managed turfgrass systems." His Ph.D. research centered around the implementation of herbicidal programs and application technologies for annual bluegrass, crabgrass and goosegrass control on and around golf course putting greens.

Peppers has already published 14 peer-reviewed research papers from his M.S. and Ph.D. projects, and has five more currently in draft or under review on the topic of turfgrass weed science. He is an author of more than 50 scientific abstracts and has given approximately 60 research presentations nationally

and internationally. He plans to focus his career on providing practical, research-based solutions for turfgrass managers.

"I am extremely honored to receive the Musser Award of Excellence," said Peppers. "I have long admired many of the previous winners as these are some of the biggest names in turfgrass research. I am humbled to be mentioned among such a prestigious group. This achievement would not have been possible without the constant support of my wife Cynthia, my family, my fellow graduate students, and Drs. Shawn Askew and Scott McElroy."

Turf Surface Athletics announces All-Star Distributor Awards winners

Turf Surface Athletics recognized the winners of its All-Star Distributor Awards. The awards were delivered at various events.

The **Grand Slam Growth Award**, which goes to the highest volume growth in each of their five regions, went to Corbin Turf, WS Connelly, Advanced Turf Solutions (ATS), BWI and SiteOne.

The **Ace Award**, which honors individual growth, went to Chris Ball, Ewing; Derik Cataldi, W.S. Connelly/Landscape Supply; Brian Winka, ATS; Glenn Lucas, SiteOne; and Brad Garrison, Ewing.

The **Grit Award** is all about endurance and steady growth, and is awarded to a second-third tier distributor. This year's winners were Atlanta Athletics; Seedway LLC; AgriTurf, Inc; Mattox Services; and Sierra Pacific Turf Co. Inc.

The **Elite Team Award** highlighted the highest growth from a single company nationally, won this year by ATS (pictured).

The **Legacy Award**, awarded to one distributor leader who exemplifies Turf Surface loyalty, went to Frank Lopez of SiteOne.

"It's important to recognize people on your team who help you achieve success," said Jason Lovell of Profile Products, manufacturer of Turf Surface. "Like an all-star athlete, these distributors and individuals have gone above and beyond, with passion and hard work, and they deserve the spotlight." **SFM**



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The Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) is the recognized leader in championing the sports field industry and its professionals.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

SFMA has specific membership categories for every professional in the sports field management industry.

- **Sports field manager:** If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining sports fields.
- **Sports field manager associate:** If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining a sports field(s) and your organization already has an SFMA sports field manager member employed.
- **Affiliate:** If you are indirectly or on a part-time basis involved in the maintenance/management of sports fields (coaches, athletic directors, volunteers, etc.).
- **Academic:** If you are in teaching, extension or research.
- **Student:** If you are a full-time student.
- **Commercial:** If you work for a company engaged in a commercial enterprise providing services and/or products to the sports field management profession (consultants, architects, designers, contractors, management companies, distributors and manufacturers, etc.).
- **Commercial associate:** If you are the second person (or more) from a commercial company (must first have an SFMA commercial member at their company before this lower-dues category can be selected).
- **Retired:** If you are retired and no longer seeking full-time employment within the scope of activities of any SFMA membership category, and have been a member for a minimum of five years, you may become a non-voting member of SFMA and are not eligible to hold elective office.

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- A network of peers who share their best practices.
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- Access to the Member's Only section of *sportsfieldmanagement.org*, which has a real-time membership directory and hundreds of technical educational resources.
- Access to Michigan State's Turfgrass Information File, a resource for up-to-date technical information.
- Ability to enter your field in the nationally recognized Field of the Year awards program.
- Opportunity to become a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM) and to have your facility certified as environmentally responsible.
- Significant savings on registration to SFMA's annual and regional conferences, and discounts to other organizations' education.
- Opportunity to participate in volunteer leadership positions.
- Opportunity to join one of SFMA's affiliated chapters for a strong local network. (Each chapter sets its own local dues.)
- Purchase SFMA branded apparel.
- *SportsField Management Magazine* each month.
- The ability to apply for scholarships (students only).
- Discounted exhibitor booth at the annual conference (commercial members only).

For more information, visit <https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/why-join-stma/> **SFM**

JULY 9-11

NATIONAL SPORTS SAFETY AND SECURITY CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

JW Marriott Phoenix Desert Ridge Resort & Spa
Phoenix, Arizona

<https://ncs4.usm.edu/events/annual-conference/>

OCTOBER 8-10

NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Atlanta, Georgia

<https://conference.nrpa.org/>

OCTOBER 15-18

EQUIP EXPO

Kentucky Exposition Center
Louisville, Ky

<https://www.equipexposition.com/>

OCTOBER 15-18

PROFESSIONAL GROUNDS MANAGEMENT SOCIETY SCHOOL OF GROUNDS MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Louisville, Ky (held in conjunction with Equip Expo)

<https://pgms.org/page/AnnualConference>

OCTOBER 28-30

SYNTHETIC TURF COUNCIL ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sheraton Downtown Phoenix

Phoenix, Arizona

<https://www.syntheticurfCouncil.org/>



NOVEMBER 3-6

ELEVATE (NALP)

Charlotte, North Carolina

<https://www.landscapeprofessionals.org/ELEVATE>

NOVEMBER 4-8

IRRIGATION SHOW AND EDUCATION WEEK

Long Beach Convention and Entertainment Center

Long Beach, California

<https://irrigation.org/IA>

NOVEMBER 7-9

TCI EXPO

Baltimore Convention Center

Baltimore, Maryland

<https://treecareindustryassociation.org/>

NOVEMBER 20-23

ATHLETIC BUSINESS SHOW

New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

New Orleans, Louisiana

<https://www.abshow.com/>

DECEMBER 2-6

AMERICAN SPORTS BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

TECHNICAL MEETING

Orlando, Florida

<https://sportsbuilders.org/page/UpcomingEvents>

JANUARY 12-16, 2025

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CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION

Palm Springs, California

<https://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org/conference/>



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A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a grey and black zip-up hoodie and large black headphones, is lying on his back on a green grassy field. He is smiling and has his hands behind his head. A black smartphone is floating in the air above his head. The background is a vibrant green grass field.



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Timing: Soil Cultivation in Spring

Q: How soon can we start an aeration program in spring?

A: This will depend on the type of field and the rationale behind the aeration program.

Soil aeration, also known as soil cultivation, is primarily carried out on native soil fields to improve vertical air and water movement into the rootzone (O₂ in, CO₂ out), and alleviate soil compaction. Soil compaction (bulk density) is improved if soil is removed (e.g., during hollow core aerification) or if the soil is heaved and fractured (e.g., vertidrain or shatter tine).

The beneficial effects of aeration on soil compaction are greatly increased if coupled with a topdressing program aimed at improving the soil texture. Additional advantages of aeration include improved seed, pesticide and fertilizer placement; dilution and increased degradation of thatch; and promotion of root growth, leading to better water and nutrient uptake by turfgrass roots. On sand-based fields, the primary objective of aeration is to eliminate and dilute surface organic matter, supplemented by a sand topdressing regimen, while also realizing the aforementioned benefits.

It is important to acknowledge certain challenges associated with aeration. Some types of aeration equipment may cause substantial surface disturbance, potentially impacting play, and cause turf damage by uprooting crowns and desiccating roots. The extent of these drawbacks varies depending on the turf's stress level and the degree of ground cover on the field. A densely covered field undergoing aeration on a mild day is less susceptible to adverse effects compared to a sparsely covered field under hot, windy conditions.

As a general guideline, aeration is most effective under conditions where the turf is not experiencing heat or drought stress, the soil is not frozen, and the soil moisture content is optimal, neither overly wet nor excessively dry.

Cool-season turfgrass species exhibit vigorous, healthy root growth in cool soils. Root development precedes shoot growth in spring and thrives in soil temperatures between 50 and 65 degrees F (10-18° C). By this rationale, it should be okay to aerate in early spring if the grass has broken dormancy and is able to actively grow and recover from the task. Many facilities start their aeration programs in late March or early April and depending on local conditions and how early their playing season starts.

Most aeration programs include a monthly or bi-monthly aeration in spring and fall, with little or no aeration carried out in July and August.

Since the goal of surviving hot and dry summers depends on grasses having a robust root system, it's imperative that all action is taken in spring to maximize roots leading into the playing season. Aeration plays a part in that by relieving soil compaction and opening vertical drainage channels, allowing for oxygen to enter the soil. Remember that grass roots grow in air spaces, not water. The improved soil conditions also allow fibrous roots to take up nitrogen fertilizer and water.

Avoid aerating when soil temperatures are above 80 degrees F (26° C), because cool-season grasses have already lost a significant number of roots due to summer heat stress. Cool-season grasses will lose ~50% of their root mass over the summer, and those roots do not grow back until the cooler fall weather arrives.

Attention must also be given to soil disturbance and weed encroachment. As previously stated, aeration operations cause soil disturbance. If the soil is disturbed, weed seeds in the soil bank might be brought up to the surface and spread.

Additionally, germination of some weed species could be triggered by the disturbance. It is best to avoid aeration during peak germination periods of prevalent and problematic weed species; or use equipment that causes little disruption, such as pencil tines. For example, if *Poa annua* is a major concern, avoid major soil disturbance during its peak germination in the fall. If you are concerned about aerating in spring because of annual weeds like crabgrass, research has shown that you can apply a preemergence herbicide and then aerate - the aeration does not break the barrier. **SFM**



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Questions?

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