

mounds last year in his market area—all at no cost. The work was done to help build relationships and educate end users about new materials, equipment, and techniques. As the groundskeeping profession evolves, it is knowledgeable pros like Butter, with their solid baseball backgrounds, who lead the way. **ST**

Chris "Butter" Ball, 25, is a graduate of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro and a member of the Eastern North Carolina Turfgrass Association. He is currently involved in forming a new STMA chapter, known as the Piedmont Chapter, in Central and Western North Carolina.

Mel Lanford, a 30-year veteran of the groundskeeping industry, is the creator and host of the Ace of Diamonds Tour, sponsored in part by Diamond Pro Professional Groundskeeping Products, a division of TXI. Mel travels across the United States year-round presenting hands-on seminars, demonstrating the proper infield and sports turf maintenance materials, equipment and techniques to athletic field managers. For more information, visit www.diamondpro.com or call 800-228-2987.



Mel Lanford and Joey Simmons at mound building at Elm St. Park.



Father and son volunteer at Elm St. Park.

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Rain Bird website offers answers

Rain Bird Corporation has launched its enhanced website (www.rainbird.com) enabling user-friendly online access to quality solutions for all types of irrigation applications, says the company.

The site provides immediate access to detailed product specifications, replacement parts, and instruction manuals. In addition, visitors will have access to troubleshooting guides, tips on efficient irrigation, a dealer locator, an online store, a custom design service, and answers to the most frequently asked questions regarding irrigation.

"The site is now more comprehensive and easier to use than most printed materials," says Art Ludwick, vice president of Rain Bird. "We expect that it will be a great resource for professionals seeking helpful tips and solutions about irrigation products or installation issues. We want to assist our customers with



issues that can apply to any landscaping or agricultural project, from backyards to farms to golf courses to sports arenas and public parks."

Rutgers, Japan Tobacco want improved turfgrass

An agreement between Rutgers University and Japan Tobacco will enable Rutgers to develop and commercialize improved turfgrass varieties by using a pioneering plant transformation technology, announced Dr. William Meyer, head of the turfgrass breeding program at Rutgers.

The new technology was developed by Japan Tobacco and modified for use in turfgrass by Dr. Barbara Zilinskas, a plant scientist at the Center for Turfgrass Science and the Biotechnology Center for Agriculture and the Environment at Rutgers. The agreement will also enable the university to sublicense the Japan Tobacco technology, and Rutgers improvements, to research-oriented companies, for use in developing improved transgenic turfgrass varieties. These companies have access to proprietary genes and will use this technology to develop new varieties, which they then will market.

"Long term, we believe that transformation technology will enable us to solve some unsolved pest and disease problems," said Meyer.

The Japan Tobacco transformation technology known as PureIntro employs plasmids derived from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*, a bacterium that has the unique ability to insert a portion of its DNA into the cells of plants. For years, scientists thought that this bacterium could transform only dicots, a category of plants that includes soybeans, cotton and tobacco, but not monocots, a category that includes corn, rice or grasses. However, Japan Tobacco scientists found a way to employ *Agrobacterium* in monocots. A Rutgers team led by Dr. Zilinskas has successfully applied PureIntro to turfgrasses.

The Center for Turfgrass Science at Rutgers is a leading developer of turfgrass in the United States and is headed by Dr. Bruce Clarke, director, and Meyer.

LA Clippers and AT&T donate Sport Court game court to help kids

According to a report from the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Education, adolescents are more likely to be active if they have convenient access to play spaces and sports equipment. However, there are children in the Los Angeles area that

have no convenient and safe place to play. That is why Sport Court, Inc. and Sport Court of Los Angeles are supplying four full size courts for AT&T Wireless P.L.A.Y. Safe program.

The Los Angeles Clippers P.L.A.Y. (Playgrounds for Local Active Youth), sponsored by AT&T Wireless, strives to build safe playgrounds and help refurbish basketball courts and hold clinics for children in the Los Angeles area. Each court will be made of the Sport Court Sport Deck IV (SD IV) tiles.

"We are really excited to be a part of this event," says Dale Hendrickson of Sport Court of Southern California. "Sports can be very beneficial for the kids in these areas. Not only does it give them a healthy alternative to trouble, but by playing sports kids build self-esteem and team play, to be a part of this is like helping build those kid's futures."

Chipco launches online product training

The Chipco Professional Products group of Aventis E.S. has launched Chipco Academy, a free online product training program for turfgrass professionals. End-user training on fungicide, herbicide, insecticide, and PGR use is available at www.aventischipco.com.



Each Academy training program consists of information on target pests, product chemistries, benefits, and application procedures. After reviewing the info presented, participants can take an online quiz, then if they complete it successfully, they receive a certificate and a gift from Chipco.



Glenmac Inc, Jamestown, ND, has purchased assets and marketing rights to the Cherrington Corp. line of beach and surface cleaning equipment, and will market the line under its affiliate corporation, Harley Enterprises, Inc. For information call 800-437-9779.

Chapter regional conference calls spark idea flow

The leaders of STMA's 23 affiliated Chapters and of many of the groups in the process of forming Chapters joined together to share ideas between March 26 and April 2. Abby McNeal, CSFM, Chair of the Chapter Relations Committee, and Dave Rulli, STMA Board Member Liaison to this Committee, have developed a nationwide network, grouping the Chapters within six regions, with a Regional Contact established for each region.

Regional Contacts are: Dan Douglas, Region 1; Boyd Montgomery, CSFM, Region 2; Connie Rudolph, CSFM, Region 3; Bill Marbet, Region 4; Tom McAfee, Region 5; and Bill Murphy, Region 6. Suz Trusty serves as the STMA Headquarters Chapter Contact.

The Chapters and forming Chapters within each Region meet in the spring and again in the fall by Conference Call with the Regional Contact, Abby, Dave, and Suz. This provides a forum for discussion of problems and a sharing of information and ideas. It's the second year for these Conference Calls. They were developed as a means of continuing the interaction between Chapters developed in the annual Chapter Officers Training and Idea Exchange Session (COTS) held in conjunction with the STMA Annual Conference in January each year.

Both the COTS gathering and the Regional Conference Calls are funded by the generous support of STMA Chapter Sponsors: Gold Level, John Deere; and Silver Level, Alpine Services, Inc; Hunter Industries, Stabilizer Solutions, and Syngenta.

Chapter leaders discuss ideas for trade shows, vendor field day exhibits, and equipment demonstrations; programs for seminars, field days and seminars on wheels; methods for developing better newsletters and websites; organizational ideas; and many other topics that fit the needs of those

involved. It's a networking bonanza!

During these spring calls, Abby and Dave also reported on the Chapter-related segments of the STMA Strategic Plan, including the progress made to date, and the initiatives to be undertaken in the future.

For example, one initiative from 2001, the STMA Speakers Bureau, has moved from an idea to a reality. Those interested in serving as a speaker at the Chapter, Regional and/or National levels are invited to fill out the form as posted on the STMA Website, or contact STMA Headquarters for a printed copy of the form. The information gathered will be compiled for use in program planning by Chapters, State and Regional Turfgrass Program Committees, other groups seeking sports turf related speakers, and the STMA Headquarters.

STMA Chapters are definitely in Action! Just check out the events listed below, or for even more detail, go to the STMA Website: www.sportsturfmanager.com. On the website, you'll find a master listing for Chapters, along with links to each chapter's STMA WebPages and, where Chapters have their own Websites, links to those as well.

STMA members report that the networking component of their participation in their Chapter and in the National (International) organization is one of the greatest resources they have. It's the best forum for sharing information, tracking down answers to tricky questions, solving difficult problems, and hundreds of other areas of support. Working together, sports turf managers are raising the level of professionalism throughout the industry, always striving to provide the best sports surfaces for all levels of play.

ST

STMA Chapter News

Tennessee Valley Sports Turf Managers Association (TVSTMA): TVSTMA will hold an event on May 23 at the Franklin Road Academy in Nashville. Other upcoming TVSTMA Events are as follows: June 12: All Day Vendor Show in Jasper, TN; June 25: Joint meeting with Tennessee Turfgrass Association at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville; and July 18: Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, TN.

For information on the TVSTMA Chapter, or upcoming events, call Bill Marbet, Southern Athletic Fields, Inc., at 931-380-0023 or 800-837-8062.

MO-KAN Sports Turf Managers Association: The MO-Kan Chapter will hold a Summer Turf Management Field Day from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM on June 19 at a Blue Valley School District location to be announced. This event will focus on all aspects of Bermudagrass establishment and maintenance on sand

base and native soil fields and will contain a laser grading session which will include the mathematics of dual slope laser grading, laser grader setup and the opportunity for you to operate a grader blade with laser controls.

For information on the MO-KAN STMA Chapter, or upcoming events, call Jody Gill at 913-239-4121; Gary Custis at 816-460-6215, or Mike Green at 913-208-6158.

Minnesota Chapter STMA: The Minnesota Chapter is planning a spring workshop for May 14 at Bethel College and Seminary. More details will be announced soon.

For information on the Minnesota Chapter, or upcoming events, contact Jeff Hintz, Bethel College & Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota at tel. 651-638-6075 or e-mail: j-hintz@bethel.edu.

Florida Chapter #1: The Florida Chapter will hold

a Sports Equipment Field Day and Demonstration at Parkland on May 14. The educational focus is on preventive maintenance for irrigation systems and equipment.

For information on the Florida Chapter, or pending activities, call John Mascaro at 954-341-3115.

Sports Turf Managers Association of Arizona: The Arizona Chapter will meet on May 16 at the Tucson Parks and Recreation Hi-Corbett Field for morning educational sessions and a tour. The afternoon session will include a tour of the Karsten Turf Facility. The Chapter's Second Annual Golf Tournament will be held on June 7 at Sanctuary Golf Course at Westworld. For tournament information, contact Scott Yakel at 602-315-6500 or Brian Johnson at 480-965-3890. The Turf in the Pines educational seminar will take place on June 14. Contact Felip Garcia at 928-774-2868.

STMA Chapter News

For information on the chapter, or upcoming events, contact Bill Murphy, at e-mail: bmurphy@ci.scottsdale.az.us or tel. 480-312-7956.

Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO/STMA): Beacon Ballfields, in association with the Keystone Athletic Field Managers Organization (KAFMO), is conducting two field maintenance seminars in Pennsylvania. The first will be held on Tuesday, May 21, at Delaware Valley College in Doylestown. The second is scheduled for June 5 at Cranberry High School in Seneca. Both seminars will feature former Baltimore Orioles head groundskeeper, Paul Zwaska, who is now general manager for Beacon. Topics in the seminar are designed to educate groundskeepers, coaches, and facility managers with the emphasis placed on field maintenance materials, equipment, and maintenance practices. The day-long seminar consists of a morning classroom session followed by an early afternoon on-field session.

For more information on these seminars call Beacon Ballfields at 800-747-5985. For information on the KAFMO/STMA Chapter or other upcoming events, contact Dan Douglas, Reading Phillies Baseball Club, at tel. 610-375-8469, ext. 212; or e-mail to: kafmo@aol.com.

Ohio Sports Turf Managers Association (OSTMA): The OSTMA chapter will hold a spring workshop in the Cleveland area with Baldwin Wallace College and the Akron Aeros on May 22. Check the website for more details and a registration form.

The OSTMA will host a summer workshop with the Toledo Mudhens on June 26 at the brand new 5/3rd Field in downtown Toledo. Educational sessions will be conducted by Jeff Limburg, head sports field manager, and the OSTMA. The MISTMA Chapter also has been invited to participate. Tickets will be available so attendees can catch the ballgame following the workshop.

For information on the OSTMA Chapter, or upcoming events, call OSTMA Headquarters at 740-452-4541 or Boyd Montgomery at 419-885-1982; or visit the chapter's website at www.glstma.org.

Iowa Sports Turf Managers Association: The Iowa Chapter will hold a Softball Workshop at the Burlington Regional Rec Plex on May 22. A New Construction and Renovation Workshop is scheduled for June 25 at Grinnell College.

For information on the Iowa Chapter, or upcoming activities, contact Lori Westrum of The Turf Office at tel. 515-232-8222, or fax 515-232-8228, or e-mail: Lori@iowaturfgrass.org.

Midwest Chapter STMA: The Midwest Chapter will hold a "Back to Basics" Baseball/Softball Maintenance Clinic in early June. This will include a hands-on workshop covering mound construction, infield maintenance, turf care, water removal techniques, and equipment demonstration. The location and date will be announced soon. The Chapters Tour on Wheels will be held in late August.

For information on the Midwest Chapter, or pend-

ing activities, visit the Chapter's website, <http://mestma.org/>, or call Libby Baker at 847-263-7603 or email Bake60ft6in@aol.com.

Colorado Sports Turf Managers Association: The Colorado Chapter is planning a Baseball/Softball Seminar at the City of Westminster on June 5. Also in the planning stages is a Summer Workshop covering soccer/football/baseball/softball maintenance. This event will be held at the City of Aurora.

For information on the Colorado Chapter, or upcoming activities, visit the Chapter's website, www.CSTMA.org, or call the CSTMA Chapter Hotline at 303-346-8954.



Michigan Sports Turf Managers Association (MiSTMA): The Michigan Chapter's annual meeting will be held June 20 at Okemos High School. MISTMA also will join the Ohio Chapter for a summer workshop with the Toledo Mudhens on June 26 at the brand new 5/3rd Field in downtown Toledo. The MSU/MTF/MiSTMA field day will be hosted by the MTF at Michigan State University on August 13. This event will team sports turf managers and business managers with a focus on the business end of maintaining sports fields.

For information on the Chapter or pending events, email Amy Fouty, University of Michigan, at fouty@umich.edu, or go to www.mistma.org to visit the chapter's new website.

Southern California Chapter: For information on the Southern California Chapter, or pending activities, call Ron Kirkpatrick at 858-453-1755.

Northern California Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Nor-Cal Chapter, or pending events, call Janet Gift at 530-758-4200.

The Greater LA Basin Chapter of the Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Chapter or pending events, call Steve Dugas, California State University-Fullerton, at 714-278-3929 or email sdugas@fullerton.edu.

Gateway Chapter Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Gateway Chapter, or upcoming events, call Mike Krone, Missouri Baptist College, 314-392-2328 or email krone@mobap.edu.

Indiana Chapter: For information on the Indiana

Chapter, or pending activities, call Terry Updike, B & B Fertilizer, at 219-356-8424.

Nebraska Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Nebraska Chapter, or upcoming events, call Gregg Bostelman, City of Grand Island, at 308-385-5426.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey: For information on the New Jersey Chapter, or upcoming events, call Fred Castenschiold at 908-722-9830; or call Eleanora Murfitt, at 908-236-9118; e-mail to SFMANJCHAPTER@netscape.net.

Mid-Atlantic Athletic Field Managers Organization (MAFMO Chapter STMA): For information on the MAFMO Chapter, or pending activities, call the Hotline at 410-290-5652.

North Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the North Texas Chapter, or pending activities, contact Scott Piecha at 817-831-4505 or sspiecha@aol.com or Rene Asprion at 972-647-3393, or visit the website at www.ntstma.org.

South Texas Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the South Texas Chapter, or upcoming events, call Craig Potts, Texas A & M University, at tel. 979-458-8841, or e-mail: CPotts@athletics.tamu.edu.

Virginia Sports Turf Managers Association: For information on the Virginia Chapter, or upcoming events, contact: Chapter Vice President, Randy Buchanan, County of Henrico Recreation and Parks, via e-mail: buc06@co.henrico.va.us or at tel. 804-261-8213.

Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association: For more information on the Wisconsin Chapter, or other pending events, call Richard Miller at 608-756-1150.

Chapters on the Grow

Pacific Northwest: For information on the chapter forming in the Washington/Oregon area, contact in Washington, Jay Warnick at 425-893-5130 or JayW@Seahawks.com or in Oregon, Mike Wagner at 541-346-5436 or MWagner@Oregon.UOregon.edu.

Georgia: For information, contact Lori Turek at 770-928-1580 or gastma@earthlink.net.

Kentucky: For information, contact Tom Nielsen at TNielsen@batsbaseball.com or Aaron Boggs at AVBoggs@netscape.net.

Las Vegas: For information on the chapter developing in Las Vegas, contact Rod Smith, Grounds Manager/Cashman Center at e-mail: rms@lvca.com or at tel. 702-386-7140.

New York: For information on the chapter forming in Central New York, contact Kevin Meredith, National Soccer Hall of Fame, at e-mail: Kevin@wpc.com or at tel. 607-432-2953.

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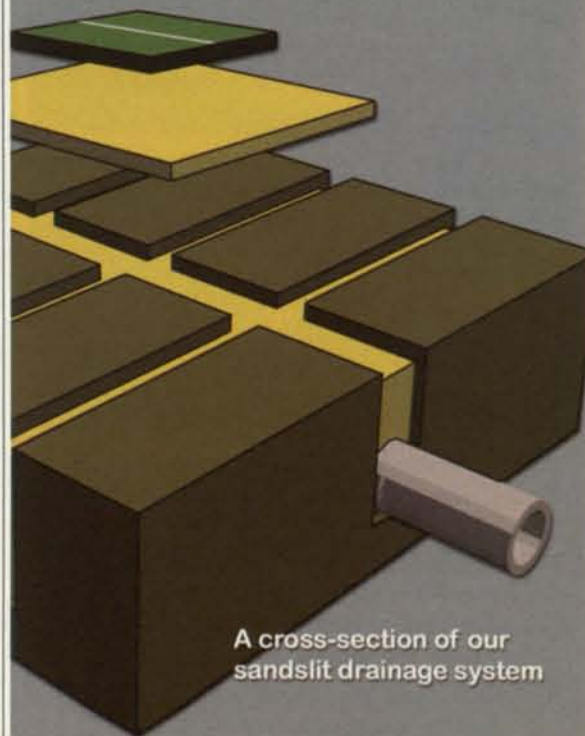
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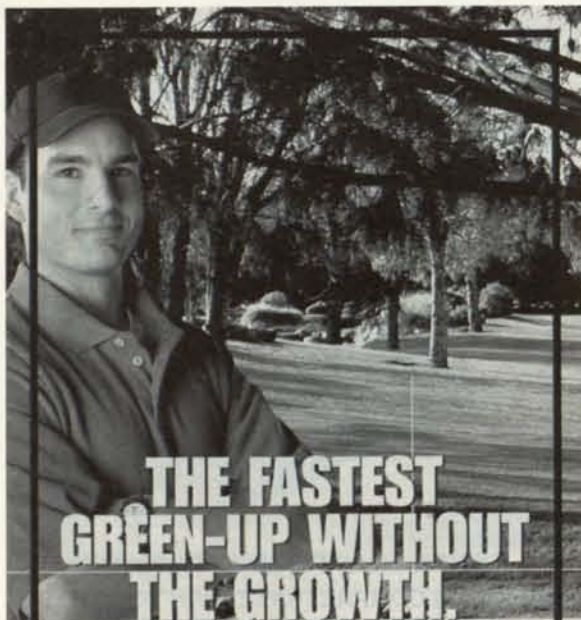
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Cutting heights

I have noticed a lot of variations in the height of mowing the soccer, football, adult softball, and youth ball diamonds. I am wondering if there is a desired height for these facilities. Currently we keep everything at 3 inches and we have no problem with late season "browning" and our players seem to like the extra cushion in the outfields. I was wondering if we lower the blades, will we cut back on our maintenance costs?

City of Wilmington, OH

I was about to comment about your high mowing height, and then I noticed your fields are in Ohio. Not that Ohio fields should be higher than anywhere else, only that you are most likely growing a cool-season grass. Our warm-season grasses (mostly bermudagrasses) are typically maintained a lot lower than fescues, bluegrasses, and ryegrasses.

Your question brought up several good points about mowing height that I would like to address. First, should different field types and different levels of play require different mowing heights? Second, if fields are mowed lower, will that result in lower maintenance costs?

Let me address the first question using part of your statement. If the "players seem to like the extra cushion" then perhaps you have found a good mowing height. One of the most difficult tasks as a field manager is to get to the point where everyone is happy with the field's condition. Often we change our practices to meet the demands of the field's users. If everyone is happy with the field with your normal level of maintenance then you have accomplished a great feat.

An argument can be made that some sports benefit from a lower mowing height than others do. For instance, with soccer the field surface can impact the speed of the game and the accuracy of the passes. A shorter mowing height usually transfers into a quicker, more direct roll of the soccer ball. The University of Florida's soccer coach talks about "playing the ball to the feet" when they play on dense, closely mowed bermudagrass versus "playing the ball in the air" when they play at northern schools with taller-cut cool-season grasses that have a bunch growth habit. I know our soccer team probably plays within a given season on fields mowed anywhere from 1/2 inch to 3 inches. To me that means that different levels of play probably do not justify different mowing heights, just reasonable mowing heights.

Can't mow away bad hops

Football, lacrosse, baseball and softball do not depend on the field surface as much

as soccer for ball response. It could be argued that bad hops for baseball and softball may influence the outcome of a game, but mowing height alone will not produce or eliminate bad hops. The turf and good judgment can dictate the mowing height. To strengthen that opinion, most surveys I have read have indicated that players (and coaches) could not generally differentiate moderate differences in cutting heights.

Now to address the second question. From an academic perspective, the lower you mow it, generally the more frequently it should be mowed. The basic recommendation is to mow no more than 1/3 of the plant with each mowing. So, if you have a lower

mowing height, it will generally require a reduced interval between mowings, which may not fit in with a reduction in maintenance cost. Generally, the higher the height of cut, the less damage you see following use, and the more cushion. Realize that cushion is as much a result of soil conditions (compaction and soil moisture mainly) as grass height.

There is another reason to vary mowing height—turf recovery. Some managers like to let the grass grow a little higher during the off-season to allow the grass to fill weak areas. Before the season begins, they slowly lower the mowing height to the desired playing height.

On the other hand, some turf managers feel by letting the grass grow tall, you reduce the lower leaves on the plant, reducing density. By keeping the grass at the in-season height the grass is conditioned to perform at that height. From my perspective the choice between those two theories depends on the desired in-season height. Turf can be mowed below an optimum height for special events, but must be allowed to recover if you want your turf to last through the season.

Lastly, let me provide a more specific answer to your question. Your 3-inch height is probably on the upper end of the suggested mowing range. In my limited association with northern athletic field grasses, I would probably suggest a little lower mowing height during the season (say 2 inches) and perhaps the 3-inch height during the more stressful summer months. The 2 inch height gives a "cleaner" look and should not have a significant impact on browning, wear, etc. and should fit well with each of the sports field types you mentioned.



Have Questions?

Send them to Grady Miller at the University of Florida, PO Box 110670, Gainesville, FL 32611, or email gmliller@mail.ifas.ufl.edu. Or, send them to Dave Minner at Iowa State University, 106 Horticulture Hall, Ames, IA 50011, or email dminner@iastate.edu.

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