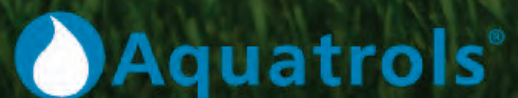


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### On the cover:

Tiger Park, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, won the 2012 College Softball Field of the Year Award from the Sports Turf Managers Association.



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## From the Sidelines



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## Turfgrass goes to Washington

**G**ROUND WAS BROKEN last month for a new exhibit at the US National Arboretum called “Grass Roots,” the centerpiece of a 4-year initiative that focuses on the environmental, economic, aesthetic, and recreational benefits of turfgrass in athletic fields, landscapes, and golf courses. Turfgrass scientist and professor Frank Rossi, PhD from Cornell University delivered the keynote address. No word yet whether Ted Cruz will try and defund the project.

The National Arboretum, operated by the Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service, and the National Turfgrass Federation have collaborated in developing this new public exhibit to highlight modern uses of turfgrass. The exhibit is “committed to helping citizens, including national decision-makers, understand new and emerging science underlying our nation’s beautiful lawns, athletic fields and gardens,” according to National Arboretum Director Dr. Colien Hefferan.

The project will feature a website accompanying the exhibit, professional and scientific symposia, and homeowner-focused workshops and demonstrations, directed to audiences ranging from children to policymakers, to showcase the value of turf to the environment and the importance of research to continue to leverage that value.

According to Dr. Hefferan, the interactive outdoor exhibit will highlight the results of turfgrass research and communicate that managed turf landscapes are essential in conserving soils, retaining and filtering water, offering a venue for socialization and recreation and enhancing the aesthetics of a property. The exhibit will be thematically linked over the nearly 450 acres of the National Arboretum by displays and gardens. For more info see <http://www.usna.usda.gov>.

STMA members Michael Sullenberger and Jimmy Rodgers, CSFM, were at the ceremony; their comments here are courtesy of STMA’s new public relations firm, Buffalo Communications:

“This exhibit will benefit STMA members because the organization will do a great job of getting out information about the Grass Roots Exhibit to our membership and updates as they occur over the next four years,” Sullenberger said.

“Anytime you have a spotlight on the science of our industry happening now in Washington, D.C., only good things can happen, not only for the association but for the industry of turfgrass,” Rodgers said.

Sullenberger added, “Without the STMA, I wouldn’t be in the field that I’m in today. I grew up working on a sod farm and that was my hobby. Now, my hobby is my dream job and the association has helped develop it.”

“STMA was the first professional organization I joined in 1996. It was the only place that I knew of where I could sit around and talk about something I was really passionate about with other people who were doing the same thing in other points of the country,” Rodgers said. ■

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# President's Message

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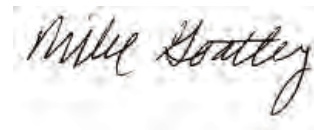
**T**HERE ARE LOTS OF IMPORTANT INITIATIVES underway within STMA, with a particular focus for your Board being on enhanced recognition by the public at large about the jobs and importance of sports turf managers. Our goal is to apply this recognition to ALL sports turf managers, and not just those at our most visible venues, although these facilities will certainly be featured because of their levels of maintenance and the expectations associated with the playability and performance of these sports surfaces. For those coming to Conference in January, you will see our new "Spotlight On" video, a short, professionally produced video clip that will soon be airing nationwide on public broadcasting stations.

The Board also just had its first meeting with our new public relations firm (Buffalo Communications) that will lead us in the development and implementation of new PR strategies. If you are in San Antonio, you will have a chance to meet the representatives from BC that will lead these efforts, and they want you to introduce yourself and tell them more about what you do and why you do it. Read more about this initiative inside this issue on page 43. Whether you speak to them in person in Texas or contact them directly by a call or e-mail, they wish to hear about any sports turf-related story of personal interest that you can share. Please help them help us!

The turfgrass industry lost four pioneers in the past few months with the passings of Charlie Wilson, Dr. Jim Watson, Dr. Joe Duich, and Dr. AJ Powell, Jr. Let me share a little more about my mentor and dear friend, AJ, because for better or worse, he is responsible for my being in this business. AJ was a longtime supporter and educator of STMA and devoted a large part of his career as Kentucky's Extension Turfgrass Specialist to improving the quality and safety of sports fields across the transition zone. Although retired from UK, he remained active in STMA and was serving as Chair of our Standards and Criteria Committee and president of the KySTMA chapter when he passed. If you attended one of his presentations, you left knowing more than when you arrived, and you were entertained by one of this industry's best story tellers.

Bart Prather, sports turf manager at Mississippi State University, sent me a text that I was pleased to share with AJ's wife, Janie, and children Julie and Jeff: "Even though I never had the privilege of having Dr. Powell teach me a class in person, I felt like he instructed me many times over by having you lead class, Dr. G." I will never be as effective as AJ, but his legacy as a communicator will carry on with me as I continue to share with my students and audiences a little bit of the wit and wisdom that I gleaned from Dr. Powell.

I wish you the very best for the holidays and leave you with a favorite seasonal phrase of mine delivered by Linus Van Pelt... "And on earth, peace and good will toward men." ■



# SPORTS TURF PROFESSIONALS: what do you want for Christmas?

*Editor's note: For fun we asked a swath of professionals working in the sports turf industry what they would like for Christmas that they could use in their jobs. Here are the anonymous responses:*

## Dear Santa,

What I want for Christmas is no *Poa annua*, no summer patch, and perfect weather (timely rains, bluebird sky game days, and no wind when I need to spray). Yup, that's all I want for Christmas.

My two main wishes are for more growth mats for ryegrass establishment (reason being cost) and two more full-time employees for our ever-expanding responsibilities around campus.

That is an easy one: a Toro Sand Pro Edger attachment. They are awesome!

Ha...sure. I would ask for no PFP's (Pitchers Fielding Practice).

Hands down—a new boss.

I have to be generic and vague by asking for a larger budget! What kid doesn't want money for Christmas? I can then use it for whatever expenses come my way!

One thing I would like for Christmas is to re-crown/re-grade the stadium field.

If I could get one thing it would be \$10,000 to add to my materials budget. It would help me get a few more needed things to bump my field up to the next level.

A 60-inch Renovator with a seed box from 1st Products.

For Christmas, I want my very own tractor with a 3 point hitch.

I want Jolly ol' Saint Nick to drop more funding in the overall budget to give the staff a well deserve raise and toys to make the job more efficient and environmentally friendly.

I would like an open ended checkbook so that no matter the price, I could have the ability to buy or do anything to my athletic fields.

Man, I would like a few cute and agreeable little elves to come and live in my office

and, at night while I am home sleeping, tame my out-of-control email for me!

I would like a plate compactor and a 5 gang reel mower.

I look forward to relaxing and spending time with family and friends at Christmas. And: fields that have better soil structure, density, and porosity (not as high clay content); an irrigation system properly designed to ensure 100% coverage; more pay to seasonal staff.

All I want for Christmas is for people outside the industry to understand that we as turf professionals do more than just mow grass and paint lines.

We would love to have a 10,000 sq ft. auxiliary field for speed and agility training!

I'm asking Santa Claus for a raise. I've had enough of furloughs and added expectations.

I would like to have Santa to remove the plastic form my football game field and replace it with natural grass.

Much needed rest/mental break from work.

I would like a glycol heating system please.

I am sure when I interned my boss said the same thing, but I wish for an intern who is eager to learn, one who can communicate properly, one who doesn't complain about the hard work, and isn't afraid to leave their parents or significant other for 3 1/2 months. And of course we all deserve a raise, right? ■





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# Phosphorus availability in turfgrass rootzones after organic and synthetic N fertilizer apps

**O**RGANIC FERTILIZERS have increased in popularity over the past 10 years due to the belief they are more environmentally sound to use than synthetic fertilizers. Most fertilizers derived from organic materials contain phosphorus as well as nitrogen, so use may be affected in states that legislate the application of P to lawns. States are considering exempting organic fertilizers from their zero-P legislation, as Wisconsin did, because it is thought that P from organic sources is less likely to be lost in leachate or runoff.

Fertilizers are applied on turfgrasses as needed based on N form and content. Many organic fertilizers contain as much P as N in their formulations, and therefore similar amounts of P and N are applied with each application. Soil tests in native soil and a fairway sand and peat mix used in the Pacific Northwest showed that organic fertilizers applied at rates to provide adequate N for acceptable turf increased soil Bray-1 P levels from 16 to 18 mg/kg to 23 to 66 mg/kg within 3 years. Oxalate extractable Fe, Al, and P was determined for all treatments in both soils and used to calculate phosphorus saturation (PSI). PSI values from sand treated with one organic fertilizer source were significantly higher than measured in other treatments, indicating future risk of P loss with repeated applications of this organic fertilizer.

Because of concerns about phosphorus effects on eutrophication of surface waters, local and/or state governments New Jersey, Maine, Florida, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Washington have adopted restrictions on residential use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers. Urban and suburban lawns pose a specific concern for potential P loss, because managed turfgrass often abuts imper-

meable surfaces such as sidewalks, driveways, and curbs, which provide a direct conduit for P transport to storm drains and surface water.

Increased recycling of organic waste streams into organic slow-release fertilizers has led to increased availability and popularity of these materials. Many homeowners and professional landscapers use these natural organic slow-release fertilizers to limit the loss of nutrients from lawns through leaching and runoff.

Some phosphorus-restriction legislation is considering exempting organic fertilizers based on the premise that risk of P loss is reduced with these materials. However, many natural organic-based fertilizers (particularly manures and municipal biosolids) supply an excess of P when applied at rates to meet plant N needs. When high-P organic fertilizers are applied repeatedly, excess P accumulates in soil, potentially increasing the risk of runoff and leaching loss.

The risk of loss of P from natural organic sources depends on the availability as well as the concentration of P in those

sources. Although P from organic sources is generally less available to leaching and runoff than synthetic P sources, P availability varies widely by source. Biosolids P tends to be less available than manure P, but even among biosolids sources P availability can vary widely.

Understanding the effect of repeated applications of natural organic lawn fertilizers on soil test P can provide guidance for the suitability of these materials in P sensitive areas. If P availability is low enough in organic fertilizers, it could be possible to use them without increasing the risk of water quality degradation. Evidence shows that the risk of soluble P loss occurs at much higher soil test levels than those needed for agronomic sufficiency.

Researchers have proposed alternative soil tests to assess environmental risks, such as phosphorus saturation (PSI), dissolved P index, or water extractable P. No environmental soil P test is widely recognized and in common use.

Agronomic tests also have some value as environmental indicators. Another factor is the effectiveness of P fertilizers in changing

▼ **Table 1.** Fertilizer products applied to soil and sand root zones at WSU-Puyallup, RL Goss Research Facility in Puyallup, WA, 2008-2011.

Fertilizer product	Rate	Fertilizer formula	Ingredients
Organic 6-7-0	1×	6-7-0 <sup>a</sup>	Biosolids, 75% insoluble N
Organic 6-7-0	1.5×	6-7-0	Biosolids, 75% insoluble N
Organic 8-3-5	1×	8-3-5	Feather, meat, blood, fish, poultry and bone meals, 90% insoluble N
Organic 8-3-5	1.5×	8-3-5	Feather, meat, blood, fish, poultry and bone meals, 90% insoluble N
PCSCU 20-5-10	1×	20-5-10	Proforma, 60% of N as PCSCU, mono-ammonium phosphate, potassium sulfate

<sup>a</sup> Organic 6-7-0 was originally labeled as 5-4-0, but analysis from 2008-2010 showed that it consistently contained 6% N and >7% P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>. The label was changed to 6-7-0 to reflect that analysis in 2010.