Spring 2015

ON THE TURF™

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FLORIDA CHAPTERS OF THE STMA

INAUGURAL ISSUE

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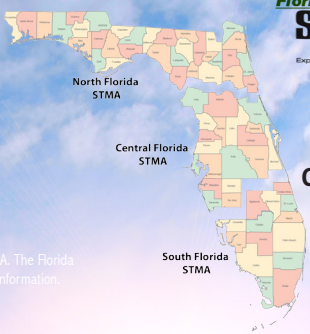

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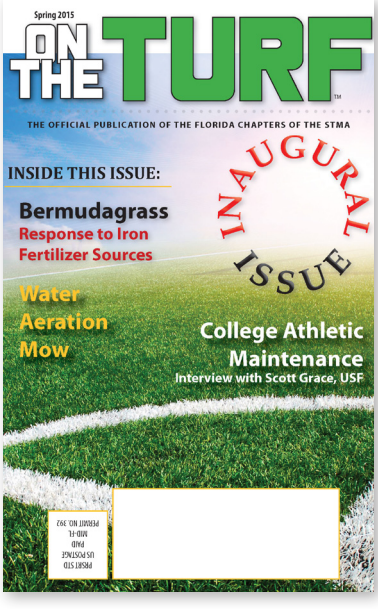
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
CFSTMA



Hello everyone. As President of the Central Florida Chapter let me say welcome to the first edition of the new Florida Sports Turf Managers Magazine, *On the Turf.*

If you are reading this, it's because you are or were a member in one of the three great STMA chapters here in the state of Florida.

When I took over the President's position of the CFSTMA , I started a newsletter for our chapter. With the help of the board and members, we produced a pretty good newsletter, if I say so myself. However, I thought we could do better. We as a board understand that, **"The key to our success all depends on the success of our members"** and we truly believe it!

Hence, with the support of the CFSTMA board and the interest from the North and South chapters the planning began on this huge project. The vision of one person with the support of so many others has brought you a magazine that is directly geared to the sports turf manager.

I know you are probably thinking, "not another magazine". But, I encourage you to give it a try. *On the Turf* was created to give us the latest and most

up to date information available to successfully manage sports turf. I want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to those of you that put in a lot of hard work to see this publication come to fruition. It was a team effort and our success is on the pages that follow.

I am now going to take the CFSTMA vision one step further and say, **"That the key to the success of this magazine is linked to how well it helps you to succeed in what you do".**

With that being said, I need to ask for everyone's help and input. If you are a commercial member, we need for you to please consider advertising. In addition, if you have an interest in writing an article or have an article that we can publish, please let us know.

Professional members, let us know what you would like to read about. You are out there every day doing this work: what will help you the most?

Comments or suggestions can be emailed to: CentralFloridaSTMA@gmail.com.

I better close now; this is supposed to be a welcome letter not an article…LOL

Dale Croft, President
Central Florida STMA

CHAPTER NEWS

Hello CFSTMA Turfers. First, let me say Happy New Year to all! Your board of directors would like to wish you a great year and may all of your dreams about new equipment or a cure for your turf weeds come true in 2015.

I want to take a moment to thank Ritchie Anderson and the team at Steinbrenner Field for all of their time and support in making our chapter meeting a huge success. We had almost 50 members attend, which was great. We all ate very well thanks to Harrell's Fertilizer (Dave) and Wesco Turf (Bill). I need to say another thank you to those of you who helped with the Toys for Tots Drive.

I must say that these toys were very much needed. I was able to visit the warehouse, an old box store, and I was surprised by the lack of toys that were actually there. But, we did our part! Again, thank you for your support.

We also had two Board positions filled since both Chris Irvine and George Lawson decided to retire from their positions. The new V.P. for Professional Members is Joe Gasparini who works for Orange County and the new V.P. for Commercial Members is Bill Johnson with Wesco Turf. We also re-elected Mark Miller as Secretary, Zach Johnson as Treasurer and I was re-elected as President for another term.

The final item of note is a change in the Chapter by-laws. We agreed to change all Board positions to a two-year term so that they match the Commercial V.P. position. This will allow for the person currently holding that position to run again if the Chapter is satisfied with their work and if the individual would like to run again.

On a final note, I am very excited about our newest venture, *ON THE TURF* magazine, and encourage all of our members to spread the word when you are out and about on the turf! ●

Dale Croft, CFSTMA

OF HIRING

By Mark Miller, Athletics Manager
City of Apopka

First and foremost, welcome to the inaugural publication of the Florida STMA magazine. What a great opportunity to network and read about issues concerning our local industry. With your input, suggestions and comments we want to truly make this your publication. So... as the *Sound of Music* reminds us ... we must start from the very beginning... for it's a very good place to start.

To have great fields it takes very talented individuals, a great deal of time and yes, a bountiful pocketful of funds. But even with endless time and limitless money without dedicated professionals your facility will not sing in harmony to promote those sports programs.

We all want to have the best staff possible. We are always looking ahead on those new budgets which may bring you additional staff, but if not - things may come up where you need to replace staff or even have the opportunity to help interview staff for other areas. Either way, how do you know you are getting the best? By far one of the most important elements is to provide an exceptional well thought out job description. Possibly your Human Resources Department has a required set of standards, questions, forms or maybe you have developed your own, or maybe... you just wing it. There are some great sites to get excellent turf industry questions. One really good source is from the March 2014 *Sports Turf Magazine* by Bill Griffith "Hiring the Right Person" (http://read.dmtmag/com/i/266752). I highly suggest you read what Bill notes as very important directional questions.

In addition, to obtain quality staff it takes what they call the ABC's of hiring. These are some very simple concepts that will provide a positive process in hiring the elite for our organization. I have developed 30 questions we generally use. However,

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(ABC continued)
the focus of them all should be the same: to identify the ABC's. **A is for Attitude.** I even have a sign in my office which reads, "Attitude is Everything - Pick a Good One". Hard if not impossible to train attitude, you can always train for the job but the individual has to start with a positive outlook.

B is for Which Benefit do they bring to the table. It can be education, experience, strong individual team player or fresh ideas. Just make sure the candidate's benefit fits the need for your organization. **C is for Communication.** Will they fit in, are they confident not cocky, offer camaraderie, a voice that has ears and eyes to help build and not break down.

A well written job description paired with a quality set of questions will help bring out the ABC's in individuals. In interviewing we should balance and recognize areas where education is fantastic and experience is great, but a born dedicated individual can be the one who leads the chorus to the wonderful sound of music.

"Attitude is Everything - Pick a Good One".

Using these simple ABC's may help you narrow down and find just the right person for your next hire.

Silent (not talk) and Listen (to hear) each have the same letters, so here's a thought... "to be silent may be the best answer for the question already heard." ●

Bermudagrass
Response to Iron Fertilizer Sources

By Dr. Travis Shaddox
Postdoctoral Research Associate
Environmental Horticulture
University of Florida

Nutrient applications are a regular part of our responsibilities as turfgrass managers, and the majority of granular fertilizers applied to sport turf contain iron (Fe) as secondary nutrient. While Fe is commonly deficient and serves a role in the plant that promotes greening, rarely have I observed a turf response to Fe when blended in a granular fertilizer. Yes, I said that. I have never observed a turf response to granular iron that can be solely and undeniably credited to the Fe component of a granular blended fertilizer containing nitrogen. Moreover, in my experience, I have observed more disadvantages to blending Fe in granular fertilizer due to its ability to stain surfaces such as concrete. While some turf studies investigating iron do exist, very few studies have investigated the influence of iron sources on turf response and growth.

In the summer of 2014, we designed a study at the University of Florida to determine the turf response to granular iron sources. The study was conducted in the city of Jay, FL on Tifgrand bermudagrass using treatments specifically chosen to reflect products that are commonly blended and applied to bermudagrass in Florida. Treatments included an untreated control, liquid iron sulfate control, iron sulfate, iron sucrate, iron humate, iron chelate (5% EDTA), and iron oxide. Each treatment was applied at 20 lbs. of Fe per acre which is the approximate amount of Fe one would apply from a fertilizer containing 6% Fe applied at 300 lbs. per acre. To be consistent, both iron chelate and foliar iron sulfate were applied at the same 20 lb. rate despite the common rate of these products being substantially

(continued pg. 10)

(Bermudagrass continued)
lower. Variables measured in each field study included visual assessment of turf quality, normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI), which objectively measures nature green color, and turf growth. Turf quality and NDVI were measured beginning on the day of initiation and repeated every two days for six weeks. In addition, each iron source was subjected to a rapid laboratory extraction procedure which provided an estimation of the amount of soluble Fe from each product.

Results and Discussion

Iron chelate released 300% more Fe than guaranteed by the product's label *(Fig. 1.)*. The iron chelate label guarantees 5% chelated iron, not 5% iron. In other words, the product actually contains approximately three times more iron than the amount guaranteed by the label, however, only 5% is guaranteed as chelated. Iron sulfate released 100% of its Fe as we would expect since the product is essentially entirely soluble. Of the Fe supplied by iron humate, approximately 35% released. Lastly, iron sucrate and oxide released similar amounts with 4% and 0.5% released, respectively. When discussing iron oxide, you have likely heard it compared to a rusty car bumper, but we have never had clear evidence as to exactly how much Fe releases. According to these results, less than 1% Fe would release from iron oxide during a growing season. Tifgrand quality was equivalent between Fe sources until 16 days after initiation *(Fig. 2)*. At that point, foliar applied Fe increased turf quality above all other treatments. Additionally, iron chelate increased quality above untreated turf while all other iron sources produced no increase in turf quality. These results indicate that the form of iron is as important as the source. In other words, iron sulfate produced a measurable response but primarily in the liquid form. Why is this? Granular iron must enter the soil solution prior to being taken up by the plant. In Florida, the soil solution pH tends to remain near 7.0. Consequently, any iron supplied in a granular form will rapidly oxidize to an unavailable form. In contrast, liquid Fe sources have an opportunity for foliar uptake prior to any soil interaction the results of which are seen in our observations.

Our NDVI measurements tell a similar story *(Fig. 3)*. Because NDVI is measured using an optical reflectance sensor, it is an objective measurement of 'green' and it has been strongly correlated to turf quality. The only treatment that enhanced greening above the untreated control was foliar iron sulfate. We observed

iron chelate and iron humate to enhance greening but not enough to differentiate them from the untreated control.

Turfgrass growth was unaffected by iron sources *(Fig. 4)*. Iron is required for the synthesis of chlorophyll pigment, is a component of various proteins, and is an important electron transfer agent. These functions indirectly contribute to turf growth and, thus, increased clipping yields from Fe applications are rarely observed.

Summary

So what does all this mean and why should this be important to you? As we continue to refine our management practices, consideration should be given to any practice that is shown to be ineffective particularly when those practices involve nutrient applications. While Fe applications are of no environmental concern, they do cost you money. I certainly do not recommend eliminating Fe from your program. However, I do recommend that each of us consider the value of transferring funds used to purchase granular iron to a form of Fe which has been shown to produce the desired 'greening' response. To confirm our findings and determine Fe response among differing turfgrasses, we intend to repeat this study during summer 2015. Results from the upcoming study will be available in the fall. ●

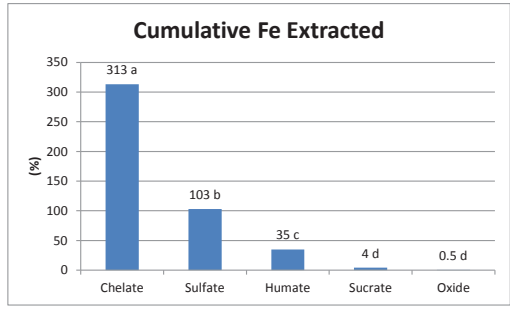


Figure 1. Cumulative Fe released during the accelerated laboratory extraction.

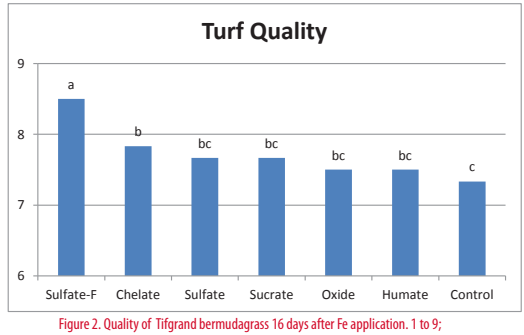


Figure 2. Quality of Tifgrand bermudagrass 16 days after Fe application. 1 to 9; where 1=dormant/dead, 9=pristine, 6= minimum acceptable.

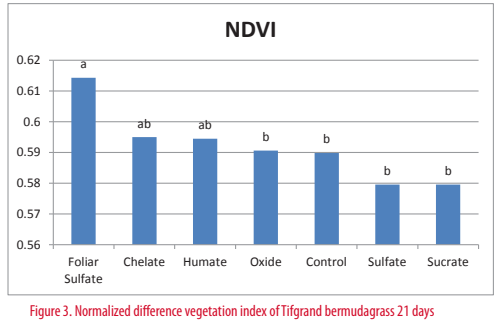


Figure 3. Normalized difference vegetation index of Tifgrand bermudagrass 21 days after Fe application.

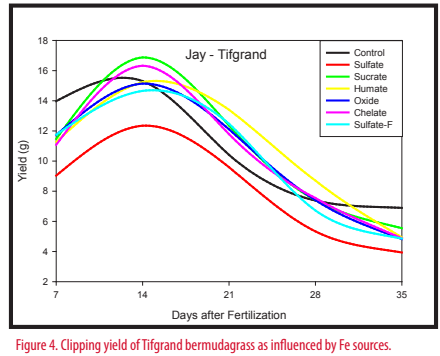


Figure 4. Clipping yield of Tifgrand bermudagrass as influenced by Fe sources.

Professional
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Zachary M. Johnson

I am an Operations Manager with Sarasota County Parks and Recreation's Athletic Maintenance Division. In this role, my team of 11 and myself are responsible for all irrigation, renovation/construction, contract oversight, and the design and implementation of cultural and chemical programs for 113 athletic fields at 22 different complexes.

I have been involved in the Sports Turf industry for seven years, five in field maintenance and two in field construction and renovation.

I obtained my BAS in Turfgrass and Golf Course Management from Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College in Tifton, GA.

I have spent time working for Bacon County Recreation Department in Alma, GA, as a part time laborer; Florida State University in Tallahassee as a member of the Athletic Grounds Maintenance staff; J&D Turf - Sports Field Construction/Renovation/Maintenance in Fishers, IN as a field technician, and currently with Sarasota County Parks and Recreation in Sarasota as an Operations Manager.

When I am not on a ball field, I enjoy spending time with my fiance, Miranda, and my "best friend", a black lab named DC. I am an avid outdoors man that loves both hunting and fishing, with a passion for chasing wild turkeys all spring long.

I have been an active member of the STMA National Chapter for five years and am happy to have found a local chapter that is as active as the CFSTMA. I am constantly striving to increase my knowledge and skills related to personnel, turf, and field management. The CFSTMA events have given me the opportunity to network and further my capabilities in the Sports Turf industry. ●

Commercial

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Bill Johnson

I am originally from Illinois. I was raised on a farm in the northern part of the state. I graduated high school in 1969, and went to college at Western Illinois University. I majored in Agronomy. After graduation in 1973, I went to work for a company called Farm Supply (FS) and sold fertilizer and chemicals. After that, I became the operations manager over the company.

Cold winters and snow do not agree with me, so in 1980, I moved to Florida. My first job in the turf industry was with a company called Perf-A-Lawn (PAL). PAL is a lawn spraying company, and after three years, I received my C.O. license in lawn and ornamental. In 1989, Westco Turf was interviewing for a government or Sports Field and Grounds (SF&G) salesman and I have been working with Wesco Turf ever since.

My territory is west-central Florida, from Hillsborough County up to Sumter and Citrus county.

My wife, Patty, also works at Wesco Turf. She runs the customer service (parts) division. My step-daughter Tiffany and my son-in-law John also work at Wesco Turf. I guess you could say our family bleeds red. ●

It has been said and more than once this organization is all about the members. This column is a great opportunity to introduce members from all three chapters and get to know them on a different level.

To submit profiles, please send them to ontheturf@crgnet.net. Maximum word count is 300.

College Athletic Field Maintenance

An Interview with Scott Grace

By George Lawson

College Sports Turf Management has some requirements that may vary from other areas of Sports Turf Management (high school, recreational or professional sports). College Sports Turf Managers work with multiple sports, played at a highly competitive level, and a schedule that includes both daytime and nighttime activity.

Scott Grace is the **University of South Florida's Sports Turf Manager.** Scott is a CFSTMA and STMA member. Scott is a graduate of Purdue University where he earned a Bachelor of Turf Science degree. Prior to his current position, Scott worked at Purdue University's Golf Course and USF's Golf Course.

USF is part of Florida's State University System and is a Division 1 School with over 47,000 undergraduates. They participate in the American Athletic Conference.

Scott has been at USF for 14 years. In June of 2010 USF began construction on a $33.5M upgrade to their athletic fields and facilities. During construction, Scott coordinated many details as well as the grow in. New construction included Baseball, Softball, Soccer, and Football practice fields.

Football practice fields consist of two Natural turf and one Artificial turf.

Besides managing all USF competition and practice fields, Scott is also responsible for the Track & Field venue, Tennis Courts, and extensive Landscape areas around the athletic complex.

Scott shared his answers regarding a few basic questions about managing a college athletic facility:

Q. How many acres of turf do you maintain?

A. 14 Acres of sports fields, 12 acres of Celebration Bermudagrass common areas and an additional 20 acres of landscaping and bahiagrass.

Q. How many folks are on your crew?

A. Myself, an assistant, a spray tech, 6 grounds keepers, and an equipment tech.

Q. What is the size and nature of your irrigation system?

A. During the construction project we upgraded our old pumps to two Watertronic pump stations with a combined capacity of 1000gpm. Sections of our mainline are 30 plus years old. We recently upgraded all of our irrigation clocks to the Toro Sentinel Water Management System.

Q. What are some of the challenges of maintaining play and practice fields in a D1 college environment?

A. Sometimes you have to juggle the needs of several simultaneous sports, especially in the Spring. Also, there is a need to work with staggering crew work shifts when there are night games.

Q. Since your natural playing fields are Celebration bermudagrass, would you please share some of your experiences with regard to cultural practices, nutrition, etc. as compared to 419 bermudagrass?

A. We were having an issue with what is referred to as "tufting" due to the turf canopy being incredibly dense. I have found with regular verticutting during the growing season and a monthly growth regulator application, the "tufting" is reduced significantly.

Q. Since you added an artificial turf football practice field, what new challenges has that brought to you?

A. Artificial turf still needs quite a bit of maintenance, we have to groom it to keep the filaments standing vertical, we have to redistribute base fill material as it migrates from activity, plus we have to vac/sweep debris that comes on to the field. Also, at times we have to cut and repair, and reglue areas, and in some cases repair the ground below the artificial turf surface.

Q. What advice would you give someone considering a Sports Turf Management career in a college environment?

A. A great career if you like all sports and being outside. Additionally, you should enjoy working closely with the coaches. There is a need to achieve a balance between maintenance practices and the coach's preferred playing conditions. ●

MANAGING THESE THREE BASIC FUNCTIONS

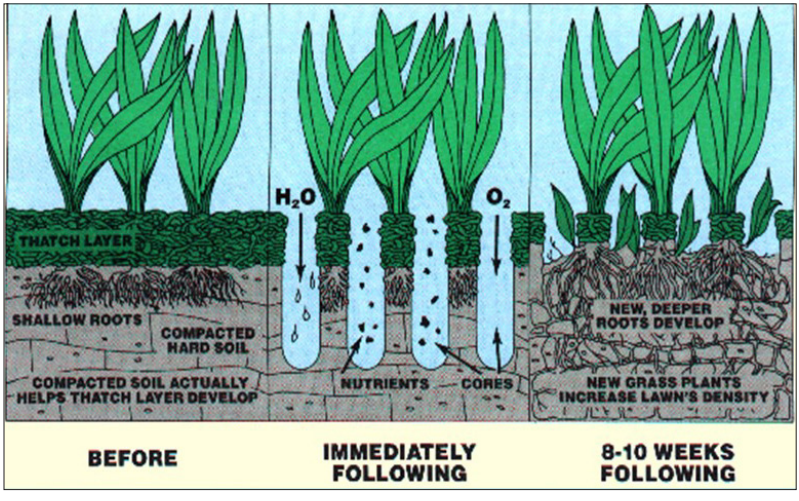
PROPERLY CAN MAKE OR BREAK AN ATHLETIC FIELD

By J.W. Stamps, Jr. CSFM
President, JSM Services, Inc.

WATER - The life fluid for you and me and the grass we try to grow to provide the best playable surface. Do we water the grass or do we really water the soil under the grass? The soil is what absorbs the water and stores it for the grass roots to use. So, to understand proper watering we must understand the soil that we water, which the grass lives on and in. Understanding the soil also plays an important role in the drainage of the field. A golf course architect, Bobby Weed, once told me "you have to be able to put water on and take water off". This statement rings very true in our role as Athletic Field Managers. The field is there to play on, not there to grow grass on. So, soil that may grow superior grass (high in organics) may be a bad soil to support grass on an athletic field, especially after a rain event. This is where the sand based athletic field comes in to play. Sand can be great for drainage but not so great on holding nutrients or its water holding capacity. So, get to know your soil and understand the water requirements of the grass and how your soil contributes to the overall playing surface. Understand the percolation rate of your soil and the water holding capacity. Remember Bermudagrass is a very drought tolerant grass and too much water is one of its biggest enemies

(promotes fungus, mold, root rot). So, dig a hole in your field and look at the soil and the grass roots in the soil. Dig in the nice thick and in the thin areas of your fields and examine what's under the grass.

AERATION – We are not just growing grass, but growing grass to play on. As the field gets used it takes a beating. A great way to understand compaction is to view a fairway crosswalk at a golf tournament on Thursday and then look at the same crosswalk on Sunday. It's night and day with just the three to four days of traffic walking across the fairway. We have to remember the grass plant is comprised of about 80% water by weight. The cell structure of the plant gets crushed and the plant has to grow back before the grass area can recover with new leaf blades. To promote continued growth we must aerate and open up the soil so air and water can get into and out of the soil profile. Any type of aeration is better than no aeration. But deep tine aeration may be the best for athletic fields as it shatters the soil and creates fissures in the soil profile with less field disturbance as traditional core aeration. When we do aerate (traditional coring) we need to remember we may be only pulling a core every 3-4 inches so with 144 sq inches in a square foot 12-16, 3/4" holes per SF is only affecting about 5%-8% of the area. So, frequent aeration needs to be done; heavy use fields (soccer, football) can be aerated monthly in growing months. Also spot aeration can be done; in high wear areas (coaches box, goal mouth, etc.) get to know your aerator and use it or risk losing the grass in the heavy traffic areas.



MOW - I believe this is the most important function we should and can do to help our fields. When you mow the grass you are harvesting the crop. Proper mowing improves the grass vigor

(continued pg. 18)

(Water continued)
and density. If you ever want a field to look better, mow more often. Try it for 30 days, you may like what you see.

It pains me to see our industry getting bamboozled into thinking rotary mowers cut grass. As Dr. James Beard, Turf Grass Godfather, replied to my question on the value of the new rotary deck mowers, "reel mowers have and will always be superior to any type of rotary mower". Rotary mowers RIP; reel mowers CUT like scissors cut. So, in these times of more prudent earth friendly environmental practices why have the major manufacturers gone away from fuel efficient ground-driven reel mowers. They CUT excellent and can easily last for 10 or more years with minimal maintenance (annual sharpening) and proper operation when paired with a midsize diesel tractor.

I will concede that mowing frequently (remove no more than 1/3 of the leaf blade) is always better than infrequent mowing with any type of mower. So, if you want your field to look and play better "mow better". ●

We are not just growing grass, but growing grass to play on.

On the Turf Tips from STMA

Here are a few tips from STMA on the care of your warm season turf (Bermudagrass). Please keep in mind that they are just tips and you will need to develop a plain that works in your climate.

March - May

Mowing

Recommended mowing heights is 1" - 2" and should not exceed the 2 inches. Mow as often as need be so that we are not removing more than 1/3rd of the leaf blade. As bermudagrass starts to green up mowing can take place as often as 2-3 times per week. Mowing early in the day to expose the plant to light also helps to aid in spring green up.

If you have overseeded with ryegrass reduce the mowing height of the ryegrass 2 weeks before the bermudagrass comes out of dormancy.

Mowing Direction is also very important, remember to change your mowing direction each time that you mow, this will help to promote upright growth and can help to

(continued pg. 20)

(Tips continued)
reduce wear from the equipment continually following the same pattern. Also if you have more than one person mowing on your crew make sure to right down the way you just mowed somewhere like a desk calendar and tell someone. This way if something happens then the next person will know which way to go.

Irrigation

The recommended amounts per week minus any rainfall is 1" - 1.5" per week. It is important to know the soil physical properties (water infiltration rate, compaction, soil texture, soil structure, infiltration, water holding capacity, and soil drainage) of your root zone to establish a successful irrigation program.

To establish a successful program the depth of the root zone must be known. Deep infrequent irrigation that wets the entire root zone generally 4 inches in depth leads to the healthiest turf. Always water at the first sign of wilt.

Fertilizer

For fields overseeded with ryegrass a .05lbs of N/100 sqft is recommended in March. For April and May .5 –1 lb. of soluble N/1000sqft.

A soil test should be conducted on a routine basis, every one (sand-based fields) to three years (native soils) is recommended. A soil test will analyze nutrient requirements, pH, phosphorus and potassium levels and will provide the best guide to fertilization to maintain or achieve a healthy field. Remember to check with your local extension agent for any black out days that may apply.

Cultivation

Bermudagrass fields should only be cultivated when they are actively growing. Dethatching or core cultivation should take place on bermudagrass after spring greening is completed. Some of the benefits for soil cultivation are:

- Physical penetration of the soil improves air, water and nutrient movement within the root zone.
- Correct or alleviates soil compaction. This is especially important for high traffic areas such as goal mouths. It may be necessary to cultivate these areas 6-8 times per year.
- Improve water infiltration
- Improve gaseous exchange between the soil and atmosphere.
- Reduces thatch.

Weeds

The best defense against weeds is by increasing density and vigor of Turfgrass to discourage weed competition.

- March - Postemergence control of winter annual and perennial weeds.

- Preemergence control of crabgrass, goosegrass and summer broadleaf weeds.
- April - Preemergence/ postemergence control of crabgrass, goosegrass and summer broadleaf weeds, grasses, sedges, broadleaf.
- May - Postemergence control of crabgrass, goosegrass and summer broadleaf weeds, grasses, sedges, broadleaf, annual and perennial broadleaf weeds.●

Florida Statewide Chapters
SportsTurf MANAGERS ASSOCIATION
Experts on the Field, Partners in the Game.

Florida STMA Chapter Application Form

Name: _____ Title: _____

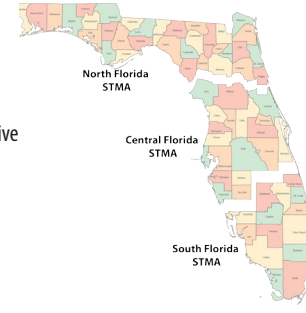
Employer: _____ _____Contact Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip: _____ Email : _____

If vendor, type of business: _____

Florida's STMA Chapters welcomes new members. We are a very inclusive organization and have a membership category for anyone interested in learning more about sports field management.



____ **$50 Sports Turf Manager** - If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining a sports field(s). This position is an eligible voting member and hold elective office.

____ **$35 Sports Turf Manager Associate** - If you are primarily responsible for managing or maintaining a sports field(s) and your organization already has a Florida STMA chapter member employed. The Associate(s) has the same benefits and privileges as the Sport Turf Manager. Dues are lower because of multiple members (groundskeepers, turf specialists, grounds maintenance, etc.).

____ **$50 Academic** - If you are in teaching, extension or research. This position is an eligible voting member in the Chapter and hold elective office.

____ **$75 Commercial** - If you work for a company engaged in a commercial enterprise providing services and/or products to the sports turf profession (consultants, architects, designers, contractors, management companies, distributors and manufacturers, etc.). This position is an eligible voting member and can hold elective office available to the commercial category.

____ **$50 Commercial Associate** - If you are the 2nd person (or more) from a commercial company. All Commercial Associates **must** first have a Florida STMA Chapter commercial member at their company before the lower dues category can be selected. This is a non-voting member and not eligible to hold office.

____ **$35 Affiliate** - If you are indirectly or on a part-time basis involved in the maintenance/management of sports field(s) (coaches, athletic directors, volunteers, or full-time students). This is a non-voting member and not eligible to hold office.

After being accepted for membership, members of any Florida Chapter have the same member benefits and privileges in all chapters except the right to vote and hold office.Voting rights and right to hold office are restricted to a member's home chapter, defined as the chapter to which member's dues are paid. Members may only claim Home Chapter membership in a single chapter.

☐ **North Florida**
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North Florida STMA and mail to
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1471 Capital Circle NW, Ste. 13
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☐ **Central Florida**
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1712 Lansdale Ave.
North Port, FL 34286

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