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TURF DIGEST



September/October 2019
VOL. 37 / NO. 7



FTGA's 67th Conference & Show

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(Continued on page 6)



President's Message

By Dr. Ian Rodriguez, FTGA President

Reach Out

Thanks to all attendees, sponsors, exhibitors and educators for making August's FTGA Conference & Show at ChampionsGate a great event. Special thanks go out to Dr. Laurie Trenholm for organizing an outstanding educational lineup. This year's sessions focusing on the timely themes of water quality and product safety were very well received. In my former position, I had become quite practiced at speaking to customer concerns over glyphosate since 2015, yet I was surprised to learn about some additional factors that I had never considered before. Having to bring in extra chairs for the individual and panel sessions on Wednesday morning said a lot about the overall quality of the program. I look forward to seeing you all again in September 2020 when we return to World Golf Village Renaissance St. Augustine Resort.

Also noted at the Conference & Show, the FTGA has partnered with the Florida GCSA to retain the services of The Southern Group to monitor and advise us on any potential legislative issues that may affect our industry. Their most recent update has already included news from both legislative and executive branches of the state government regarding the protection of water resources and other related items that can impact our industry down the road, a number of which could even be considered positive. We will be providing periodic updates in coming issues.

In this issue, Mac Carraway, executive director of EREF, gives us another advocacy update. While the ordinance meetings may not come as often as they did a few years ago, those who falsely paint our industry as the "bad guys" are still out there firing away at us. As we all know, the red tides of 2018 gave them plenty of opportunities to push their agenda and, unfortunately, we lost some ground this year. Although the science is still strongly on our side, anyone who has been to a few of these meetings can attest to the fact that emotion too often carries the day.

I believe our biggest weakness is that we're easy to pick on because the vast majority of the industry are not active members of organizations like the FTGA and have little to no idea of the efforts described above. We're barely scratching the surface. We need to let them know what they are missing. So talk to your industry peers about joining. Bring someone to a regional FTGA Turf Seminar in 2020 so they can see, first-hand, the quality of those events. Keep a few of our brochures handy to help explain how the FTGA can work for someone who might not know exactly what we do. Even archrival competitors must be on the same team when it comes to this. The more faces we can put on our industry and show that it is actually made up of people, the better. Eventually, the point that folks who happen to make a living in the turfgrass industry *also live and raise their families here* and, therefore, sincerely want to do all they can to protect natural resources to the best of their abilities, might get through. 🌱

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(Continued from page 4)

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From the Executive Director

By Heather Russo, Executive Director

Unseen Member Benefits

This year, the association has been busy working behind the scenes performing unseen work that our members may not know about. They may not realize all the ways the association has been advocating on their behalf.

Your membership benefits include:

- **Education and Networking:** Discounted pricing on turf seminars and annual conference.
- **Publications:** *Florida Turf Digest*, the FTGA's official publication, keeps you abreast of current industry research and news. Opt-in e-News blasts for late-breaking news.
- **Reference:** The annual *Member Directory and Industry Guide*, the definitive guide to fellow turfgrass professionals, features contact information on individual and company members.
- **New Member Benefit:** The first, newly added FTGA Legacy Scholarship for a member's child who is attending a trade school or college was awarded to Cory Ketchum during the annual conference—congratulations Cory.
- **New Member Benefit:** The FTGA has retained The Southern Group, an experienced lobbying firm, to advocate on behalf of the industry's interests.

Recently, the FTGA and the Florida GCSA partnered together with The Southern Group lobbying firm for the benefit of our members. Both boards felt the importance of hiring a lobbying firm as a unified group, as we have a greater voice than we would have as separate associations working independently. Our lobbyist, David Shepp, introduced himself and the firm during the annual conference and stressed that the firm will act as the industry's on-the-ground eyes and ears to learn what is happening at the state level. In future issues of the *Florida Turf Digest*, The Southern Group will provide an update on what they are working on for us. See page 21.

Earlier this year, we held the first inaugural Turfgrass Day in Tallahassee. The Southern Group has made several appointments to visit with key officials. The goal was to introduce our industry and address our needs, since there is a new commissioner of agriculture.

The FTGA is one of many agricultural associations coming together to protect our state's water. Together Florida was formed in November 2018 to develop a comprehensive approach to address red tide and algae in our waters.

The FTGA Board of Directors and staff are continually working to make the association better for you. Changes to come next year: The *Florida Turf Digest* will be published on a quarterly basis to be more aligned with other state trade associations. The magazine page count will be increased by eight pages, which will provide more net content. Additionally, discussions are underway to restructure the annual conference.

MEMBERSHIP SEASON IS APPROACHING

We are in Q3, and most companies are starting to work on next year budgets. I encourage you to budget your membership renewal with the association. In November, you will receive a renewal notice for the 2020 membership. Your member dues help to fund the lobbying firm, assist staff and directors to attend industry meetings, publish the magazine, and continue to help support the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation in funding research and awarding student scholarships. ♻️

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Alex Briley*
A Better Plumber Inc.

Vera Gasparini*
TurfCare Supply Corp

Loren Moulder
Enviro Granulation

Shawn Sheridan
NAS Jacksonville

Keith Vinson*
Babcock Turf

Joey Figurella
Noble Turf

Steve Kelly
The Scotts Company

Andrew Perry
Buy Sod Inc.

Todd Six
Brightview Golf
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FTGA's 67th Conference & Show

BREAKING NEWS GALORE



The 67th Florida Turfgrass Association Conference & Show moved to Central Florida to the beautiful Omni ChampionsGate in ChampionsGate, Florida, a short drive from Disney. This year, there were no hurricane scares. We had to deal with only a little drizzle, which didn't serve to dampen anyone's spirits. The big news at this year's C&S can be summed up with two words: breaking news.

But first, our sincere thanks go out to Dr. Laurie Trenholm, who put together an informative and engaging educational program. A huge thank-you to our presenting sponsors, conference sponsors and exhibitors. And thank you to our attendees for taking the time out of your busy schedule to spend a few days learning and networking. You made the Conference & Show a great success.

Finally, a comment that was repeated many times at the C&S, "I have never seen a conference run as smoothly as this one." Tip of the hat to Marcia, Eileen, and the Conference & Show Committee.



Heather Russo, FTGA, and Bill Rayside, Harrell's LLC.

Thanks to our Presenting Sponsors:



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HOT OFF THE PRESS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[CHAMPIONSGATE, Fla., October 2019] For many attendees, it was their first time to hear from Dr. Kevin Kenworthy and his panel on the latest cultivar from the University of Florida, 'CitraBlue™'. The new St. Augustinegrass variety has exceptional characteristics including the potential to reduce water use, reduce mowing frequency, improved tolerance to shade, etc., and not the least of which is its dense, bluegreen habit. CitraBlue is already in production and is anticipated to be available for sale in early 2020.

For others, it was their introduction to 'ProVista', another new St. Augustinegrass cultivar. ProVista, introduced by The Scotts Company, is currently on the market.

At the All-Attendee Lunch, we heard from David Shepp, the new lobbyist from The Southern Group, retained jointly by the FTGA and the Florida GCSA to help further industry causes in the areas of nutrition, fertilization, and water quality. We now have professionals looking out for our industry's interests who are adept at navigating the minefields laid by extremists. See page 21 for further details.

This year's keynote and guest speaker was Dr. Brandon Horvath, University of Tennessee, who put a new twist on engaging customers and management by using customer feedback for maximum benefit. The twist was using big data to compile and make sense of what is learned to improve golfers' games. Improved games lead to happy customers.

The glyphosate discussion on Wednesday was, by far, the most popular session. It was a standing-room-only crowd until extra chairs could be secured. Attendees walked away with an arsenal of facts to counter myths surrounding the chemical.

###



FTGA's 67th Conference & Show



MONDAY

12

AUGUST

"I enjoyed the FTGA Sports Turf Tour as we visited the ESPN Disney Wide World of Sports at Walt Disney World Resort and saw their stadium field as well as quite a few of their other fields. We learned about their challenges as well as their successes. The second stop was the Orlando City Soccer Club stadium where we also were able to go directly onto the field and hear from their Sports Turf Manager speak about their challenges and successes as well as their maintenance practices. It was a fun and informative day.

Besides the tour, it is always great to catch up with longtime friends, meet new ones and network. The educational sessions I attended were also very informative."

~ John Mascaro



Monday was a full day, starting with the CORE CEU Workshop; two golf tournaments, the 18-Hole Scramble Tournament held at the National Course at Omni ChampionsGate and the 18-Hole Individual Stroke Tournament at Lake Nona's championship golf course; and the Sports Landscape Tour, which visited the ESPN Disney Wide World of Sports at Walt Disney World Resort site followed by a stop at the Orlando City Soccer Club.

The day ended with the Opening Reception, where attendees enjoyed remarks by this year's surprise speaker, Wreath of Grass recipient, Jack Harrell Jr. Another highlight of the event was the presentation of prizes to the Golf Tournament winners.

Congratulations to this year's Individual winner, Seth Strickland, and to the Scramble winners below.



Scramble Winners

Winning Teams:

FIRST PLACE—63

Addison King
Jordan Brees
Stephen Massie
Chester Vanderberg

SECOND PLACE—64

Bill Kistler
Bob Jacoby
Mark Henderson
Bobby Ellis
Ethan Caldwell

THIRD PLACE—64

William Iddings
Josh Weaver
Jimmy White
Tom Wiegele

Closest to the Pin Winners:

Closest to the Pin #5—Tom Wiegele
Closest to the Pin #10—Larry Hanks
Closest to the Pin #12—Willy Sezna
Closest to the Pin #15—John Reilly



Seth Strickland, Individual 1st place winner.

A special thank you to Betsy McGill, executive director, Florida Turfgrass Producers, for selling 50/50 raffle tickets for the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation during the Conference & Show, especially during the Opening Reception. Betsy is always one of the first to help when it comes to industry promotion.

"I have never seen a conference run as smoothly as this one."
~ Many conference attendees

TUESDAY
13
AUGUST



FTGA's past presidents gather for the Past Presidents' Breakfast.



"Dr. Brandon Horvath gave an interesting look into the history of the lawnmower. He also explained how women were the initial groundskeepers of their respective households before the second World War."
~ Laurie Bland

Tuesday began bright and early with the Past Presidents' Breakfast. Attendees gathered for the Industry Networking & Continental Breakfast. Exhibitors and attendees were able to mingle in a relaxed atmosphere, and Carraway Consulting provided an extra enticement to keep attendees at the event. Many thanks to Mac Carraway and his company for the generous donation of a \$1,000 door prize to lucky winner, FTGA member, Shaun O'Brien, A. Duda & Sons.

In addition to awards ceremonies for the Wreath of Grass recipient and the scholarship recipients at the All-Attendee Lunch, as mentioned previously, David Shepp introduced himself to attendees and provided a brief legislative update. Keynote speakers, Dr. Jay Ferrell, University of Florida; and Dr. Brandon Horvath, University of Tennessee, each made a presentation.

The afternoon was full of education options in Golf Course Management, Athletic Field Management, and Landscape and Sod Management. The sessions covered water quality, diagnosis and management of disease, weed and disease management, integrated pest management, alternatives to glyphosate and more.

The day ended with the Corn Boil and Raffle, the FTGA's signature networking and "let your hair down" event, a night of fun and fellowship. This year, the 50/50 Showdown Raffle raised \$3,200 for the FTRF. Laurie Bland and her son, the youngest winner, collected \$300 for his birthday. Congratulations to all the 50/50 winners.

Congratulations to the corn hole winners: First place went to Glenn Smith and Renze Berg, and the runner-up team was Mike Giddens and Kevin Wasilewski.



David Shepp,
The Southern
Group



Laurie Bland and son, Terry. He was the youngest winner to collect \$300 for his birthday. Congratulations to all the 50/50 winners.



Erin Wilder presents the Sod Solutions Florida Sports Field of the Year Award to Orlando City Head Groundskeeper Matt Bruderek.





A sincere thanks to Golf Agronomics for their generous contribution to the FTGA. L-R: Mark Henderson, Bobby Ellis, Chris Leahy present a check to Heather Russo and Andy Jorgensen.

WEDNESDAY

14

AUGUST



Wednesday began with the Annual Meeting Breakfast. The 2019-2020 FTGA Executive Committee and new board members were installed at the meeting.

Executive Committee

- President – Ian Rodriguez, Ph.D.
- Vice President – Eric A. Brown, Ph.D.
- Secretary/Treasurer – Laurie Bland
- Immediate Past President – Andrew Jorgensen

New Directors

- Cal Leggett
- Pat Marsh

The C&S ended on a high educational note with several sessions including one of the most-attended panel discussions ever—a glyphosate update discussing fact versus fiction and fearmongering.

Thanks again to everyone involved for an outstanding 67th Conference & Show. 🌱

"I really liked the update regarding the cancer risk of Roundup. Excellent facts by the scientific community instead of fear mongering from greedy lawyers."
~ Bobby Ellis



Dr. Frank Wong, Bayer



Brian Armstrong, SWFWMD



Thanks to our Amazing Sponsors:

Jack Harrell Jr. Honored with the Wreath of Grass Award



Jack Harrell Jr. (left) presented with Wreath of Grass Award by President Andy Jorgensen.

Florida Turfgrass Association member and Chief Executive Officer of Harrell's LLC Jack Harrell Jr. was honored with the Florida Turfgrass Association's highest award, the Wreath of Grass, during the association's 67th Annual Conference & Show at the Omni ChampionsGate Resort on August 13, 2019.

The coveted Wreath of Grass award pays tribute to individuals who have shown outstanding service to the Florida Turfgrass Association and to the turfgrass industry.

As CEO of Harrell's LLC, Jack Harrell Jr. has continually shown commitment toward the Florida Turfgrass Association and the turfgrass industry through ongoing financial support, providing continuing education to industry members and representing the entire industry on its behalf via government relations work. Through Harrell's Core Values, Harrell's is instrumental in building a successful company that values employees, vendors and customers alike.

Andrew Jorgensen, president of the FTGA, says "Jack has always been front and center providing support for any issue that a customer, an employee, an association or a community may be facing. Because of Jack's vision, Harrell's has become the No. 1 provider of solutions to the turfgrass industry. It is an honor to award Jack for his commitment."

Jack Harrell Jr. joins an esteemed list of recipients that dates to the inaugural award in 1960, including his father, Jack Harrell Sr., who received the award in 1999.

"It's an honor to receive this award due to many factors. First, the prestigious list of those that have

won this award before me. Second, from a sentimental standpoint, receiving the same award as my father. Third, the Wreath of Grass is the first award I remember someone being presented when I entered this industry 41 years ago." says Jack.

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Jack Harrell Jr. (center) with the Harrell's team.

Meet the FTRF Scholarship Recipients



Pablo Agustin Boeri, University of Florida, Receives the Col. Frank Ward Memorial Scholarship for \$1,500

Pablo Agustin Boeri is a two-time Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation scholarship recipient. He is working toward his Ph.D. at the University of Florida under the supervision of Dr. J. Bryan Unruh.

“My Ph.D. project will be focused on quantifying the ecosystem services of turfgrass. There is an increasing need for scientific evidence of the environmental impacts of turfgrass and landscape plants. This project will provide scientific information about factors like groundwater recharge, nutrient fate, temperature abatement, carbon dynamics, and further environmental concerns. In the absence of such knowledge, the development of effective strategies to help decrease environmental impacts in urban settings will likely remain difficult,” says Pablo.

Last year, Pablo published “Biology and Management of the Bermudagrass Mite, *Eriophyes cynodoniensis*” on the UF Extension site. He says, “Currently, an undergraduate intern under my direction is working on a survey to quantify the importance of this pest. Further, I presented the results from my research at the Crop Science Society of America Annual Conference (2018) and the International Forage and Turfgrass Conference (2019),” Pablo adds. He has submitted a request to present his research on the results of his drought tolerance studies on the new turf type bahiagrass lines at this year’s Crop Science Society of America’s international annual meeting.”

After completing his Ph.D., Pablo’s objective is to become a faculty member at a prestigious university where he can continue as a research and Extension specialist supporting the turfgrass industry.”



Jamie Buhlman, University of Florida, Receives Bill Entwistle Sr. Scholarship for \$1,000

Jamie Buhlman is currently enrolled in the University of Florida, where she earned her undergraduate degree and is now working toward a master’s degree in agronomy, working with turfgrass. She is receiving her second Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation scholarship this year.

While studying for her bachelor’s degree, Jamie worked in several labs and departments within the UF system. She has germinated seedling embryos in lab petri dishes, screened for new cultivars in research trials, visited sod farms with thousands of acres of turf across Florida and helped with residential sod installations. “In each of these areas, I’ve been able to interact with the people and places that make up the Florida turfgrass industry and become a part of that industry myself,” she says.

“For my master’s project, I am working directly with sod producers to collect samples of ‘Floratam’ and ‘Bitterblue’ St. Augustinegrass, analyze them using molecular markers and test them for the presence of sugarcane mosaic virus (SCMV). The study will help to determine the current state of the Floratam cultivar, which makes up the majority of St. Augustinegrass grown and sold in Florida. It will help to set parameters to define the Bitterblue cultivar, one of the oldest cultivars produced in Florida. Finally, it will help sod farms verify that they are producing SCMV-free grass to the industry. This is especially important as the virus has been identified as a component in a potentially devastating St. Augustinegrass disease. This project has wide-reaching effects, and I believe it will help to benefit both those directly involved in the project and the market as a whole.

“As a recipient of an FTRF scholarship, it helps to serve as a formal recognition of the work I have put forth thus far in the turfgrass industry as I continue to advance in my career and education. I am greatly honored to be a recipient of this scholarship,” Jamie added.



Cory Ketchum, University of Florida, Receives Ralph White Scholarship for \$500 and FTGA Legacy Scholarship for \$500

Cory Ketchum is a three-time Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation scholarship recipient. This year he has been awarded the Florida Turfgrass Legacy Scholarship in addition to an FTRF scholarship. He decided on a career in turfgrass research while attending Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida, and is using his scholarship to finish his undergraduate work at the University of Florida. After concluding his education, Cory hopes to work for a turfgrass research company.

After Cory discovered his interest in turf studies, the move to UF solidified that interest in turfgrass into a passion for the field. “I changed my major to turfgrass science, a decision that completely changed my life and helped me find continual momentum, seemingly for the first time since my senior year of high school. I am now staring at the possibility of attending graduate school,” he says.

A strong work ethic and sense of adventure have allowed Cory to take chances. He says, “I’m willing to jump into difficult situations. Because of the knowledge I have gained, I have been working with breeding cool-season grasses such as rye grasses used to overseed southern golf courses.

“With the help provided through the scholarships awarded by the FTRF, my goal of a career in the industry is more attainable, and it will make life universally better for my family and me. My goal is to make an impact in this wonderful industry not only through my education but also through my drive to give back to the industry in the future,” Cory says.



Mark Kann, University of Florida, Receives Ralph White Scholarship for \$1,000

For the third year in a row, Mark Kann was awarded a Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation scholarship. He is currently enrolled in the University of Florida working toward his master’s degree while he is a full-time UF employee conducting research vital to the golf and turfgrass industries under the supervision of Dr. J. Bryan Unruh.

“It is my hope that my research will have a significant impact on how education programs concerning best management practices are operated in the future. By examining the current Florida GCSA’s Golf BMP Certification Program, I am looking at ways to improve the program and find ways to better increase participation

and make the program more available throughout the industry. Through my research, I hope to better enable golf course superintendents with the necessary knowledge and tools to further implement BMPs on Florida golf courses,” says Mark.

“Receiving FTRF Scholarships helps me to complete one of my long-term goals. Obtaining my master’s degree has been a difficult journey but one that is well worth the time and effort,” he adds.

Mark has enjoyed many of the opportunities along the journey. He says, “I have been able to present my research at several field days and conferences and receive feedback from my peers. I have especially enjoyed teaching students at the University of Florida as a graduate teaching assistant. There is no greater joy than sharing your knowledge and experiences with others, knowing that some of the words you pass along to them may have an impact in their lives or careers.”

Emily Tharp, University of Florida, Receives the Ralph White Scholarship for \$1,000

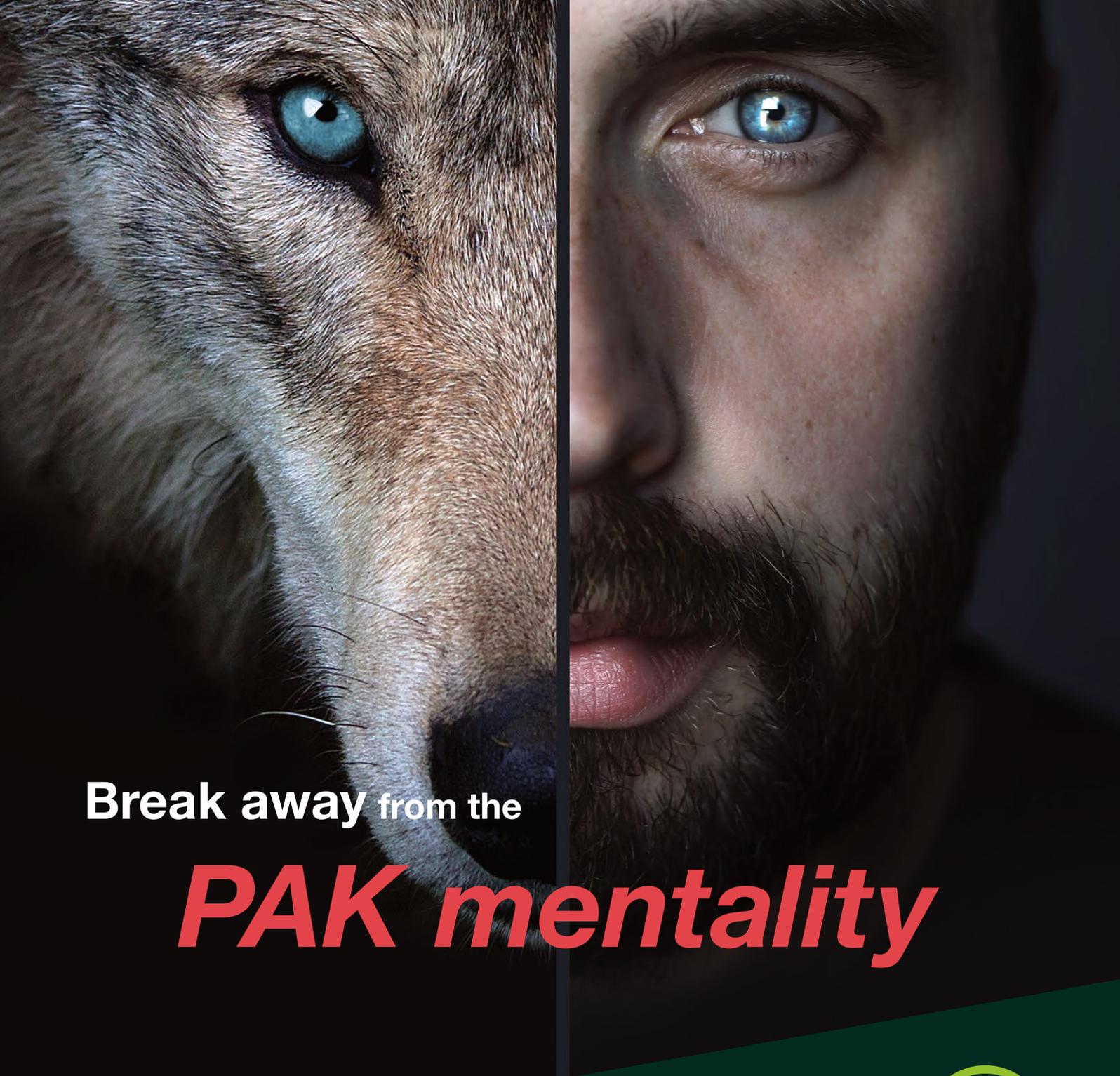
Emily Tharp was awarded the Ralph White Scholarship for \$1,000 from the Florida Turfgrass Research Foundation. She is working toward her master’s degree at the University of Florida. Currently, she is working as a graduate research assistant with Dr. Jason Kruse, and she plans to pursue a career in academia so she can share her passion toward turfgrass with students.

A love of the outdoors and an appreciation of turf gained through athletics is what originally drew Emily to the study of turf. She sums up her continuing interest as, “Working with turf allows me to work both indoors and outdoors and allows me to use both my body and my brain, a perfect combination for my future career.”

Emily received her undergraduate degree from the University of Florida. While attending UF, she served as a maintenance intern with Yellowstone Landscape during the summer of 2017. “I gained extensive experience managing and maintaining turf in high-end residential communities and public roadways,” she says.

In January 2018, Emily began working under Dr. Kruse as a turfgrass research assistant. That summer, she was acting lab manager and oversaw all projects under him. In January 2019, she became a graduate research assistant working on a multi-location trial to better understand new bermudagrass cultivars.

After receiving her master’s degree, Emily looks forward to pursuing an out-of-state Ph.D. with the possibility of returning to Florida after completing her doctorate. In terms of her career goals, Emily says, “I feel most called to education. I have a passion for education and believe that I would be most happy teaching students about turf.” 🌱



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Wildlife On The Golf Course



Florida Golf Courses Provide Wildlife Haven in the Face of Urban Sprawl

By **Dr. Bonnie Wells**, *University of Florida*

Introduction

It's estimated that the population of Florida will reach 33.7 million people by 2020 with even more development likely to sprawl into the state's agricultural and natural lands. With urban sprawl proliferating, Florida land is shrinking, and it seems houses and development are growing faster than oranges and turfgrass. And, taking a major hit from urban sprawl are wildlife. The diverse habitats across Florida, from the Panhandle down to the Keys, are home to an impressive amount of wildlife—from black bears, butterflies, deer, to panthers and bobcats, armadillos and turtles and, of course, alligators, to the water birds along the riverbanks and shorelines of Florida's magnificent coasts. They need a place for shelter, food and water, and golf courses are becoming havens for wildlife in the face of urban sprawl. If managed carefully, golf courses can represent a compatible land for the state's native wildlife and help preserve the biodiversity of Florida's quickly shrinking lands.

So Why Are Golf Course Ecosystems Good Habitat for Wildlife?

Golf courses are managed in a way that combines well-mowed turf with trees and abundant natural areas that provide a diverse environment that is attractive to many types of wildlife. Most courses are designed in a way that preserves a good amount of out-of-play areas that can be suitable for conservation areas. In addition, the high densities of golf courses that occur in Florida can create a network of complimentary and connecting natural patches. It also is notable that golf courses tend to be permanent landscapes in the midst of urban sprawl because they are less likely to get bulldozed.

Benefits of Wildlife on Golf Courses

Increasing wildlife has many aesthetic, recreational, economic, ecological, social and educational benefits.

Wildlife-friendly landscaping is filled with flowering and fruiting plants that provide pleasant aesthetics and food for wildlife. When incorporated into turfgrass-dominated areas, they add a level of privacy and solitude, while these visually appealing features can induce a sense of relaxation and contentment for golfers.

Ample natural areas along the course, or in out-of-play areas, can provide many additional recreational activities for golfers, such as bird watching and wildlife photography.

Managing a course to improve wildlife habitats can also provide additional benefits, such as improved air and water quality, increased soil moisture, reduced erosion and, in turn, reduced course maintenance costs.



Wildlife also serve important ecological services that benefit the environment and people. Birds disperse seeds while bats eat many mosquitos, nearly 3,000 per bat per night. In fact, insect pest populations on golf courses, such as mole crickets, have been decreased by birds and other wildlife.

And not to forget, but there are educational benefits from improving wildlife habitats on golf courses. These habitats can serve as outdoor classrooms for golfers and their families. Visitors to the course can learn to identify native plants and animal species. Additionally, they see how human and environmental needs can coexist and be balanced. Opportunities for education will also provide positive public relations exposure, improving the image of the golf course.

How to Improve Wildlife Habit on Golf Courses

Adequate shelter, nesting sites, food and water are essential for wildlife habitats. To improve wildlife habitat, course designers should consider maintaining larger out-of-play areas, landscape with native trees and vegetation, encourage wetland areas and minimize chemical applications. Several programs that encourage and certify wildlife conservation efforts have been established, such as the United States Golf Association's Wildlife Links grants and Audubon International's Cooperative Sanctuary Program (<https://auduboninternational.org/acsp>). Having the Audubon International seal of approval on a course has shown to increase greens fees on average of about \$15.

Identify Existing Resident Wildlife

The first step in efforts to increase wildlife conservation on golf courses is to survey and identify the wildlife that are already present on the course. It is important to note both native and invasive species as well as identify any potential endangered species. Surveys should be conducted throughout the year to take into account seasonal variability. Contact the local University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension office for help identifying local plants and animals.

Formulate a Comprehensive Plan of Action

Next, it's time to develop a plan of action. The areas that have the basics for wildlife survival, such as adequate space, food, shelter and water, should be the focus. Management plans should outline goals and strategies and include plans for co-management of wildlife habitat and course maintenance as well as water conservation and quality. Make sure plans include public outreach and education efforts.

Take Advantage of Existing Natural Amenities

Protecting and enhancing native wildlife and resident wildlife are essential, and taking advantage of existing natural features of the course is an easy way to begin implementing a plan. Undisturbed natural or enhanced native grasses alongside a fairway, native tree stands, and maintaining unnoticed wetland habitats in out-of-play areas can enhance wildlife easily without compromising the game.



Resident sandhill crane at an open nest at Viera East Golf Club's Hole 7 in Brevard County.



Protecting the sandhill crane nesting area at Viera East Golf Club.



Sandhill crane mother and chick.

Photos courtesy of Scott Eberly, golf course superintendent, Viera East Golf Club.

Establish Wildlife Corridors

Corridors that connect patches of wildlife habitat that are separated by human activities are important, as it allows safe travels while foraging for food. Corridors should be located in a safe location away from roads and other paths and will ideally be at least 30 yards wide. It is extremely important that corridors are alongside water sources or banks of ponds, as the moist soils are conducive to lush vegetation and food sources for birds and other wildlife.

Focus on Out-of-Play Areas

Do you have visually unappealing areas—maybe spots hard to maintain because of drainage issues? Perhaps it's time to enhance the naturalization of these areas. These could include locations or areas between fairways, under tree canopies, within the rough or in bordering forested areas. Consider using these areas to enhance pollinator habitat with native landscaping or bird nesting sites. Landscaping should be designed in vertical layers in a varying height of vegetation. Native plants, especially fruit bearing ones, are the best choices for food sources. Linking together smaller natural areas can provide corridors for wildlife and significantly increase your wildlife conservation efforts. Dead trees can be left in out-of-play areas for wildlife nesting sites.

Increase Bird Nesting Sites

Determine the bird species population on the course, noting the ones that are resident and ones you would like to attract. Determine what type of habitat the wanted birds require and begin making the modification to attract those species. Nesting boxes are an easy way to attract and support many bird species, especially where natural

cavities are lacking. Wood or nesting boxes made from natural materials are best and should be positioned as to be protected from human activity.

Practice Integrated Pest Management

Turfgrass pests on the course can be controlled most adequately with integrated pest management strategies instead of routine, blanket applications of pesticides. Pesticides should only be applied after regular scouting and monitoring of the area dictates it is needed. If needed, careful consideration should be given to timing of applications to protect wildlife, and spot treatment employed where appropriate.

Engage the Public

Wildlife conservation opportunities and initiatives should be communicated with golfers. Improving wildlife habitat on a course is an excellent way to engage the public with outreach activities and show the positive environmental impacts a course is making. Golfers will be choosing these courses as their place to get outdoors and have a peaceful reconnection with nature. Your local UF/IFAS Extension office can help you implement natural resource education and outreach activities on your course as well as with any other topics mentioned in this article. Visit this map to find county UF/IFAS Extension offices: <http://sfyl.ifas.ufl.edu/find-your-local-office>. 🌱

Dr. Bonnie Wells serves as a commercial agent for UF/IFAS Extension in Brevard County. She has a doctorate in plant medicine.



EREF Update

Environmental Research & Education Foundation

ADVOCACY UPDATE

By **Mac Carraway**, Contract Executive Director,
Environmental Research & Education Foundation (EREF)

The last few months, while relatively quiet on the advocacy front, have been invested in looking at what is likely to be coming at the industry over the next weeks and months. Specifically, the lead-up to the 2020 legislative session in Tallahassee always primes our adversaries to look for opportunities to impose additional restrictions and limitations on our traditional business models—typically in the form of fertilizer restrictions (i.e., bans and blackout periods), restrictive landscape ordinances (i.e., reducing landscape footprints, restricting plant selections, etc.) as well as general outreach through their social media platforms and other means to vilify plants, turf and fertilizer.

While none of this should be a tremendous surprise to us; at some level, we all continue to find it difficult to understand how lawns, landscapes, sports fields and golf courses became a bad thing to these folks. As an observer of these matters for over twenty years, I can offer a little bit in the way of explanation, which may also help to understand what it is going to take to make progress against these anti-greenspace efforts.

The unfortunate success of activist efforts lies primarily in their ability to sustain their message across many media



This is what we're up against. They show up en masse.

and communication outlets on a continual basis. A short way of saying this is “If you say something repeatedly without it being disputed, it becomes believable,”—it becomes the conventional wisdom.

How many times have you been talking with someone outside the industry when they bemoan fertilizer contributions causing red tide or algae blooms? How many times have you heard that summer fertilizer applications just run off into rivers and streams? How many times have you heard that lawns are insatiable and unnatural water guzzlers? If you are like me, you have heard it plenty of times.

Most of the people who say those things are not stupid or evil; they are just grossly misinformed. And many of them are genuinely afraid for the environment. This is not an accident.

A few years ago, I attended a meeting at the Manatee County League of Women Voters at which the Sierra Club was providing a general update of their platform on urban fertilizer. During their comments, their representative said her job was “to scare people and make trouble.” These comments were accompanied by staged images of people dumping their garbage over their neighbor’s fence, etc.,



all in an effort to portray greenspaces as an exporter of pollution. Sadly, there was no science involved, and even more sadly, the attendees believed it.

Tactics like these are not hidden by any means—just think back to the recent elections. Also, anyone attending one of the many ordinance hearings around the state has heard endless variations on this theme. Sprinkle in the obligatory comment that those in the industry are only in it for the money—in other words that they don't care about the environment—and you have a complete justification for their legislative demands: blackouts, restrictions and the like.

When you have an opportunity to respond to comments like those mentioned, it is important to do so thoughtfully and patiently. That certainly doesn't mean you can't be passionate about your views. It just means that we can always take a professional approach—promoting our training, the clear weight of peer-reviewed science and the obvious failures of local governments to address the much larger issues of failed stormwater systems, septic tanks and the all-too-frequent discharges of raw sewage they try to sweep under the rug. It is clear that local governments have historically been some of the largest polluters in Florida. For decades, they dumped treated wastewater effluent directly into local streams, rivers and estuaries with impunity, often only changing their habits when forced to do so by the United States Environmental Protection Agency or the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Cleaning up their own houses costs money, which takes unpopular tax increases and the commensurate impact on re-election prospects. It is much easier to blame someone else than go to all that trouble.

It is clear that local governments have historically been some of the largest polluters in Florida.

The single best defense we have is the lack of evidence that what we do causes harm. The almost universal reporting by local governments of sampling data referring to “total nitrogen” completely misses the point that nitrogen comes from dozens of sources. The specific markers for fertilizer are never tested directly, either before or after these ordinances. It is a purposeful effort to confuse the public that all or most harmful nitrogen comes from fertilizer. And that is simply not true. Overcoming the nonstop barrage of misinformation and emotionalization of this issue is not easy, and it is not going to get any easier. As an industry, we have definitely been doing better to coordinate our messages, to get the turfgrass professional in front of more people and to demonstrate our decades-long commitment to best management practices that produce beautiful lawns and landscapes to promote a crystal clear environmental and human health benefits.

But we need to do more—much more. Efforts to support significantly increased lobbying efforts at the state level are underway through our trade associations. At the local county and city levels, we need to conduct our “public relations” campaign more vigorously. That starts with one-on-one opportunities with your neighbors, friends, associates and especially your elected officials. Let them hear from you often about the good things you are doing, the habitat you create and support, the training you receive, and your love for and commitment to Florida's ecosystems. They will remember those interactions with you more than you may realize.

As always, thank you for all you do for Florida and for your ongoing support. 🌱

Introducing

THE SOUTHERN GROUP

By **David A. Shepp**, *The Southern Group*



This summer, the Florida Turfgrass Association and the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association teamed up to hire The Southern Group to represent their combined interests before the Florida Legislature and state agencies. Seth McKeel and I are thrilled to work with these

two great organizations, and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you all to The Southern Group.

Entering our 20th year as Florida’s preeminent lobbying firm, The Southern Group consists of 26 lobbyists operating out of six offices around the state. With offices located in Florida’s major population and political centers—Jacksonville, Key Largo, Miami, Orlando, Tallahassee and Tampa—we are able to cast a broad net and cover a lot of ground at all times. Seth and I both live in Lakeland and are based in the Tampa office.

At The Southern Group, our job is to advocate on your behalf before the Florida Legislature and the executive branch so you can focus on your expertise—providing the highest quality turf to Florida’s residents and commercial operations.

Politics is all about relationships and trust. We have worked diligently for many years to build strong relationships with the leadership and decision makers in the Florida House and Senate. These deep ties enable us to work closely with the legislators and legislative staff, who make the policy decisions that can impact the way you do business.

**STRONG ADVOCACY
ALSO DEPENDS UPON
ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT
OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP.**

Our goals for the FTGA focus on removing regulatory barriers and promoting best management practices as well as fighting off onerous nutrient and water regulations that can adversely impact the turf industry. In the legislative arena, we will monitor all legislation that is introduced relating to water, nutrient and fertilizer policy.

On the executive side, we work closely with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Governor Ron DeSantis. The governor has taken a strong position on protecting Florida’s environment. Our goal is to advocate for your strong and continued environmental stewardship efforts while ensuring that any proposed regulations are not detrimental to your industry.

Strong advocacy also depends upon active involvement of your membership. During the 2019 legislative session, we put together the inaugural Florida Turfgrass Day on the Hill. This was a great opportunity for members of both associations to meet with the legislative leaders to introduce themselves, discuss their issues and begin to build those critical relationships. We strongly encourage you to participate during the 2020 Day on the Hill. This is a great opportunity to engage and to be a positive influence on the process.

The legislative process for 2020 begins in earnest this month. Committee meetings for the House and Senate

begin the week of September 16 and will occur each month leading up to the start of the session in mid-January. The session will run for 60 days, between January 14 and March 13.

There is a lot of work to be done, but together we can accomplish great things for your industry and the future of our great state. Again, thank you for the opportunity to work with the FTGA. We look forward to building on this relationship to help Florida continue to grow beautifully.

Below is a recap of a September 12 meeting with Senator Ben Albritton:

- **LEGISLATION**—HB 147 introduced by Rep. Kristin Jacobs (D, Coconut Creek) was filed yesterday. The bill requires DEP to conduct a comprehensive overview of statewide water resources. These resources include: wastewater infrastructure, stormwater infrastructure, flood control infrastructure, environmental restoration and future anticipated demands. A report would be due to the Legislature by January 1, 2022.

- Chris Pettit with FDACS made offhand comments at a recent forum about seeking funding for controlled-release fertilizer during the upcoming session. A positive signal from FDACS.
- Last month in Naples, Governor DeSantis announced his intent to seek \$625M in recurring funding for Everglades restoration and protection of water resources. In addition, the governor called for stricter penalties for cities, counties and other utilities that dump sewage into their waterways. The governor is backing legislation that would increase the current fine of \$10,000 per day by 50% and allow DEP to impose the fines without a consent order. View the press release at <https://bit.ly/2kxbzDi>.

Seth and I also wanted to receive ideas from the group on potential legislation to add golf courses to the statute governing agricultural land use. 🌱



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PEOPLE



Unsung Heroes: Spotlight on Erin Harlow, North Florida

Erin E. Harlow, commercial horticultural agent, has recently relocated from the Duval County Extension to the Columbia County Extension. She received her B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Florida, Gainesville. Her love of the outdoors in her private life extends to

her professional life, which explains her deep devotion to the horticultural and turf sciences.

As a regular speaker at conferences and seminars, Erin shares her knowledge with attendees across the state and beyond. In addition to speaking at events sponsored by the University of Florida, she is a regular speaker at the Florida A&M University Field Days; the University of Georgia Pesticide Trainings; the Southeast Pest Management Conference, for which she also coordinates the education; the Florida Pest Management Association Summer Conference and Expo; and the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association Northeast Chapter Trade Show, where she serves as seminar coordinator. She has also participated in the UF Institute of Agricultural Sciences Evidence-Based Zoysiagrass Workshops for the past three years.

One of Erin's passions is cultivating and nurturing interest about the industry in younger generations. She says, "I am also passionate about introducing 4-H youth to the outdoors and industry, particularly through entomology and horticulture."

Horticulture is a family affair: Erin's husband serves as acting director, Union County Extension. She shares a home on five acres with her husband and two children, so she has the perfect environment to share her broad knowledge of the industry with her own children.



Congratulations, Jan Bel Jan

Past FTGA President Jan Bel Jan was recently elected president of the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA). According to her ASGCA bio, Jan carries on the golf tradition established by the preceding generation in her family. Her father, George Bel Jan, was a golf pro/superintendent, and three of his five

brothers were PGA professionals. Jan is a Landscape Architecture graduate of West Virginia University.

Jan began her design career with Tom Fazio, ASGCA, with whom she held a senior position in golf course design, construction and project management for more than 20 years. Her experience as a registered landscape architect, certified arborist and former assistant superintendent has provided her with a unique outlook on the playability, strategy, ecology, economics and aesthetics of golf courses.

Syngenta has named Jan one of its "Profile of Women Transforming the Golf Industry."

Syngenta reports, "One female leader who is both at the top of her profession and proof that diverse thinking drives profitability is golf course architect Jan Bel Jan, named by *Sports Illustrated* as among the top 10 most influential women in golf."

PRODUCTS & PROMOTIONS

Bayer Tool Offers "At-the-Ready" Expertise for Golf Course Management Professionals



The Turf and Ornamental business of Bayer, within the company's Crop Science division, has released the new Bayer Golf Solutions Guide (<https://bit.ly/2IWyloa>), a digital tool specifically designed to help turfgrass managers and other industry professionals quickly assess turf issues by making agronomic expertise more accessible—whether on the course, at home or catching a few minutes at their desk.

The Bayer Golf Solutions Guide is available for direct download for offline reference, as well as an easy-to-use online flipbook format. There are warm-season and cool-season guides. You

will find comprehensive agronomic recommendations, offering expert guidance on pest identification and long-term cultural practices as well as product recommendations. Included are text search to locate a range of information on specific products, diseases, insects, weeds and more; annotation capabilities; and downloadable files.

FMC Launches New Loyalty Program for Turf and Ornamental Professionals



FMC Professional Services has rolled out a new loyalty program

for turf and ornamental professionals—FMC True Champions (www.fmctruechampions.com). The program offers industry professionals a range of tools to help address their diverse business needs, including an early order program, in-season rebates and solution assurances.

The FMC True Champions rewards program is being integrated with the FMC Early Order Program to provide savings for end users with the ability to lock in their rebates all season long.

In addition to product rebates, the FMC True Champions program includes Solution Assurances, such as the Echelon® Herbicide Assurance Program for bermudagrass. The FMC True Champions program is also proud to strengthen its partnership with golf course superintendents and lawn and landscape professionals through a strong commitment to the industry through several nonprofit organizations such as We Are Golf.

Sipcam Agro USA Announces Coastal™ Herbicide



SIPCAM AGRO
USA, INC.

Coastal™ Herbicide (https://bit.ly/2kqA84L) features a complete pre- and post-

emergent for broadleaf and grassy weed control for all of the four major southern turfgrasses: bermudagrass, centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass and zoysiagrass. With three active ingredients combined, broad-spectrum Coastal Herbicide can be used without the need to tank mix, providing a solution for turfgrass managers when treating multiple lawns or fairways.

Sod Solutions Announced New E-Commerce Site



The company's proprietary Sod

Solutions eCommerce website and its PRO site, specifically for career landscapers, builders, sports and golf course developers and more, allow those with a need for turfgrass, to order and have the correct variety and amount of sod delivered directly to their doorstep with just a few clicks, on a new eCommerce system that utilizes Google Earth technology, reinventing the way consumers shop the turfgrass marketplace. Visit Sod Solutions at www.sodsolutions.com.

Introducing WinField United Pro Turf Tech Tool



The new Pro Turf Tech Tool

(https://bit.ly/2kSx55k) saves hours of research in finding the best genetic color or disease resistance for your individual and region needs. It filters nearly 20 million data points and about 1,500 seed varieties from the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program. After users input and rank desired turfgrass seed attributes, the algorithm searches all species, all years, all attributes and all state trials to find top-performing turfgrass varieties for one attribute or combination of attributes. The patented indexing algorithm identifies a "Top Performing Group" for each attribute users select. It also averages all individual attribute scores to assign an overall Turf Performance Index (TPI) score for each variety.

For ease of use, you can sort TPI scores into tables based on factors like year-over-year performance, location and performance across multiple attributes. You can evaluate the pros and cons of each seed variety to aid blending for genetic diversity, which helps turfgrass tolerate environmental stressors better.

OPEI Announced Standards for Robotic Lawn Mowers



The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI; www.opei.org)

has announced the first-ever standard for robotic, battery-powered, electrical lawn mowers issued by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). Publication of the robotic lawn mower standard has been highly anticipated by the outdoor power equipment industry and start-ups designing products for the category.

"It is predicted that this market category will grow considerably in the next six years, as the outdoor power equipment industry continues to innovate and improve products in response to consumer needs," says Kris Kiser, president and CEO of OPEI.

The global robotic lawn mower market is expected to grow by nearly 22% over the next six years, according to a recent study conducted by Grand View Research Inc.

"We expect every major manufacturer of robotic mowers to be at the Green Industry & Equipment Expo this fall with their products," says Kiser. He added that landscapers and dealers can see first-hand what's coming to market, including the latest in robotic mower technology and technological innovations in the industry.

EVENTS

FTGA Turf Seminars

January–February 2020

Online registration is open

https://www.ftga.org/events/event_list.asp

32nd Annual Stuart Leventhal CGCS Golf Turfgrass Research Tournament

January 6

Florida Pest Management Association Expo

January 21–23

Orlando, Florida

More information: https://bit.ly/2knDepZ

Sports Turf Manager's Association

2020 Conference and Exhibition

January 13-16

West Palm Beach, Florida

More information: www.stma.org/conference

Golf Industry Show

January 25-30

Orlando, Florida

More information: www.golfindustryshow.com

Turfgrass Producers International

TPI 2020 International Education

Conference and Field Day

February 17-20

Orlando, Florida

More information: <https://bit.ly/21FUxTK>

SOUND BYTES

Keep up with hurricanes

at the University of Florida's Hurricane

Tracking Center: <https://bit.ly/2mkS69v>

An oldie, but a goodie:

The No. 1 reason golf course superintendents lose their jobs... <https://bit.ly/21XDSuF>.

Congratulations

to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America for landing 15 national communications awards: <https://bit.ly/2Rx4cYz>.

Via Dr. Robert Wells, UCF:

UCF method could make more light wavelengths available for scientific tools: <https://bit.ly/2k0uqcS>.

Via Kristen Kusek, USF:

Scientists discover the biggest seaweed bloom in the world: <https://bit.ly/2k0EK4D>.

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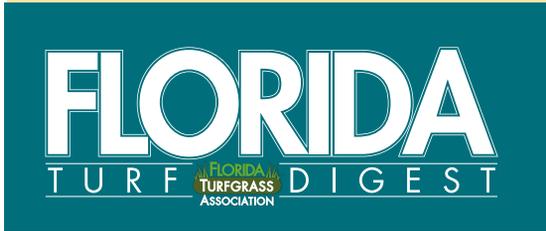
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