

TURFGRASS RESEARCH LIBRARY

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
East Lansing, Michigan

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In the spring of 1984, after an initial earlier grant, the USGA and Michigan State University signed an agreement whereby the MSU Library would design and develop a computer-based bibliographic database to provide access to published materials reporting the results of research that affects turfgrass and its maintenance. As of October, 1988, 13,000 records were entered in the bibliographic database. The USGA's Turfgrass Information File (TGIF) is housed in an Alpha Micro multi-user microcomputer, using the STAR database management software. It continues to work well with regular and continuing enhancements to record structure and searching capabilities.

Access and information services from TGIF were offered without charge until August, 1988. Following that date, searches became a billable activity with significant discounts (bordering on subsidy) for subscribers, and an outright subsidy (with a token \$2.00 charge) for students. Making the database available for students in any location, under such an arrangement is, perhaps, a national precedent in bibliographic practice. Search requests from 31 states during the past year indicate the increasing level of recognition the file is receiving.

A full color brochure was published in August, 1988 describing TGIF, its charges, and how to access the index on-line, via telephone, or via mail. The brochure is available from USGA Green Section offices, or by contacting Peter O. Cookingham, Project Manager, Michigan State University Libraries, East Lansing, MI 48824 (517-353-7209).

To further promote TGIF, an insert post card was included in the July, 1988 Green Section Record magazine. Some 273 cards were returned, including responses from Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Malaysia, The Netherlands and Thailand. Cards continue to arrive. Articles in The Record, the GCSAA Golf Course Management magazine and Grounds Maintenance, as well as numerous superintendent newsletters, assisted awareness activities.

The Turfgrass Information Center (TIC) at Michigan State also distributes the TGIF brochure as a part of it's Subscriber Application Package, which includes the details and forms necessary to subscribe to USGA TGIF and open an account with TIC. About 650 packets have been distributed since July, 1988.

VuePort, the PC software needed to dial into the Alpha Micro and STAR, is distributed to subscribers. The USGA Turfgrass Information

File Dial-Up User's Manual became available for subscriber use in October, 1988. The Manual provides an introduction to searching, USGA TGIF, TIC services, and guidance in using USGA TGIF as a tool in research and management. Revision and enhancement of the Manual will be a continuing activity of TIC, as we respond to user needs, inquiries, and system/service enhancements.

The initial subscribers to on-line access number 40 thus far, from 23 states and provinces. This group of pioneers roughly breaks out as 51% clubs/courses; 28% research/academic; 12% not-for-profit agencies; and 9% private sector. We are quite pleased with this initial distribution, which we feel gives us a good feel for expectations from several perspectives.

The first public edition of a Turfgrass Thesaurus, to aid in search strategy construction, awaits completion of developmental efforts to strengthen its usefulness and comprehensiveness. This is a primary activity of the Graduate Assistant working on the project, Douglas Lee. We hope that a first public print edition of the Thesaurus will be available in early or mid-1989. The Thesaurus, a necessary element to provide long-term stability to file structure, details inter-relationships between some 12,500 keywords related to turf culture. In time, it may become a standard turf reference work in and of itself, available both on-line alongside USGA TGIF and in print form.

In July, a survey was distributed to all turfgrass affiliated members of the American Society of Agronomy. It included information regarding USGA TGIF and resulted in a significant response, in terms of awareness, interest, and donation of materials. Summary results will be reported during this coming year.

In the meantime, data acquisition and entries continue to be made to the TGIF file. All pertinent information on turfgrass research, theses, dissertations, unpublished manuscripts, monographs, technical and popular journal articles, maintenance literature; any material deemed valuable is added to the file on a systematic basis. Emphasis continues on the completion of the 1980 - 1988 conference proceedings. In addition, citation tracing of currently published refereed turfgrass material adds to the comprehensiveness of the file. These file building techniques have resulted in TGIF citations originating from more than 1,270 different serial sources.

As file users have become acquainted with database objectives and usefulness, many materials have been contributed for processing and addition. Such contributions are particularly important for annual progress reports, theses and dissertations, and unpublished manuscripts. A systematic effort to encourage even more extensive collection donations will begin in the coming year.