

STMA in San Antonio: association's offerings taking shape for 2014 Conference

AS REFERENCED IN A RECENT STMA NEWS ONLINE ARTICLE, STMA's 2014 conference will be held in one of the country's most vibrant up-and-coming cultural centers: San Antonio, TX. Home to the historic Alamo and world-renowned River Walk, this unique community offers a wealth of sights and sounds for all to enjoy. The Grand Hyatt Hotel, the conference host hotel, is connected to the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center (site of the education and trade show) and STMA has negotiated a special \$165 room rate for attendees. More conference details can be found at stma.org, so don't forget to register and keep checking back for more updates!

A stop in San Antonio would not be complete without a visit to the world-famous River Walk, which opened a new 1.3 mile extension since STMA was there in 2007. In 2010, *Travel + Leisure* magazine named it one of "America's Coolest River Walks" saying, "This granddaddy of river walks charms with 4 miles of cypress-lined cobble-and-flagstone paths along both sides of the narrow San Antonio River. Locals and visitors cool off on the horseshoe-shaped loop downtown, meandering past trendy shops and stopping at hot spots like Boudro's for guacamole prepared table-side." A number of varied shopping and cultural events abound; the downtown area surrounds the convention center and the Alamo is directly adjacent.

And, with STMA's Call for Presentations behind us—and having reached a record number of submissions in the process—the content for 2014's conference in San Antonio is rapidly coming into focus. As with the 2013 conference in Daytona Beach, 11 distinct educational tracks will be highlighted with a good number of sessions supporting each. These tracks include **turfgrass management, pest control, water/drainage/irrigation, design/construction/renovation, synthetic fields, facility management, baseball/softball, professional development, environmental issues/sustainability, research, technology, and international sports/facility management.**

To give you a hint of the topics to be featured in San Antonio, we're highlighting just a few of the sessions to illustrate the depth and breadth of what's in store for attendees during STMA's 25th Annual Conference & Exhibition!

"Evaluation and Preparation of Fields for Heavy Use"

Presenters: Dr. Grady Miller

Description: Working with schools and Park & Recreation units, I continually see overused fields. The questions are almost always, 1) what are the most important practices? 2) What can I do when

they start to wear? 3) How much use can my field take? I've developed a presentation and handout material to help them answer these issues.

Objectives:

1. After seeing examples, attendees should have a better understanding of problems they may face with high use fields.

2. Attendees should have a better understanding of how to access their field conditions.

3. Attendees will be given informational tools they can use to find answers in field management.

Title: "What Are Your Weeds Telling You?"

Presenter(s): Jim Brosnan, PhD & Gerald Henry, PhD

Description:

Weeds are often indicative of other agronomic problems within warm- and cool-season athletic fields including issues pertaining to soil compaction and nutrient management that can reduce field safety and playability. This presentation will not only teach attendees the importance of indicator weeds (i.e., weeds that indicate an agronomic issue) within a field, but also emphasize the integration of cultural and chemical practices for weed management programs on athletic fields. Attendees will learn why implementing these weed management programs is a critical step towards maximizing athletic field safety and playability. Programs presented will be based on research findings surrounding the use of cultural practices such as aeration and fertilization as well as the use of both old and new herbicide technologies available to athletic field managers. Particular emphasis will be placed on annual bluegrass control given its importance to both warm- and cool-season athletic field managers at all levels of play.

Objectives:

After attending this presentation, attendees will:

1. Be able to identify indicator weeds of warm- and cool-season athletic fields

2. Understand agronomic problems associated with the presence of indicator weeds in their turf

3. Learn how to build integrated weed management programs using both cultural and chemical practices

4. Understand the importance of controlling weeds with these programs for the purpose of maximizing athletic field safety and playability

5. Be aware of new technologies for managing weeds of warm- and cool-season turf athletic fields; particularly annual bluegrass

On Wednesday during the conference, STMA will be featuring a full day track dedicated to pest control so people can receive their pesticide recertification credits. One of the featured sessions in

the pest track:

Title: Advanced Turf Disease Management: Maximizing Pesticide Applications to Improve Product Performance

Presenter(s): Mike Fidanza, PhD

Description:

I would be willing to deliver this presentation as a follow-up to my Post-Conference 'turf disease' seminar from the 2013 STMA Conference. This could be an 'Advanced Turf Disease' post-conference seminar. In this presentation, I would focus on product application delivery (i.e., spray nozzle selection, water volume, many other factors) to improve fungicide and other plant protection/plant health product applications to sports turf.

Objectives:

After attending this session, participants will be able to:

1. Properly select nozzle type and size for improving pesticide applications to sports turf

2. Select the best water-carrier volume to maximize pesticide performance

3. Understand the importance of fungicide selection and mode of activity to improve/maximize pesticide performance.

On Thursday during the conference, there will be three courses dedicated to student advancement in the industry. There are also two "STMA" courses with one dedicated to the CSFM exam and one dedicated to FOY winners.

Friday morning will feature a number of workshops, one of which is detailed below:

Title: "Turfgrass Mathematics 101: The calculations every turf manager should know"

Presenter: Barry Stewart, PhD

Description:

Many athletic field managers are unsure of their math skills. This workshop will cover common calculations that athletic field managers need to know how to do in the course of their jobs. Determination of area, applicator calibration, and product per area calculations will be highlighted. There are several apps for smart phones for these calculations and with the widespread availability of broadband internet and WiFi connectivity these are now even useful in the field, but without a knowledge base of what numbers to expect these apps can be problematic if they are relied on too heavily.

Objectives:

1. After attending this session the participant will be able to determine how much product to apply to a given area.

2. After attending this session the participant will be able to calibrate wet and dry applicators.

3. After attending this session the participants will become familiar with Smartphone apps that help solve these problems but have a working knowledge of the mathematics behind the Apps to know if the App is giving you garbage.

Also on Friday, there will be four innovative sessions featured on the trade show floor that will focus on emerging technology in the industry. ■