

Grass: stupidly simple?

By Curt Harler/Managing Editor

Our profession is deceptively obvious. The popular belief that anyone can manage a patch of grass holds true until some disaster befalls the turf.

A recent one-sided conversation with my daughter (aren't all such conversations one-sided?) brought that truism back to light. She and her husband were upset about their inability to grow grass in their backyard. "We've tried everything and nothing works," she lamented.

So I took off my "Daddy" cap and put on my extension agent hat, rattling off a half dozen questions about the grass variety she'd tried, her fertility program and the soil's condition.

"We did all that stuff. Do you think we're so stupid we don't know how to grow grass?" she howled in frustration. Aside from pointing out the obvious — that her backyard is as barren as a pitcher's mound — I let the subject drop.

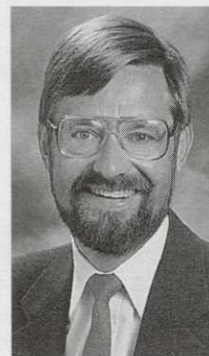
Yet the interlude brought back to mind

one of the challenges of the turfgrass industry. Everyone expects each fairway and green to be in excellent condition in all seasons. Every football field should be TV-ready all the time. Lawns should never suffer from grubs.

I'm sure there's not one reader of Turf-Grass TRENDS who hasn't had a similar conversation, whether it be with a client, a member of the country club or a neighbor.

Nobody ever lists grounds manager or agronomist as one of the more stressful jobs around. It seems so obvious and so simple — until the stadium is covered with five inches of snow with less than a week before Opening Day.

Good turfgrass management is like hitting a 90-mph fast ball, tying one's shoe, painting a picture, or dealing with daughters. It's so stupidly simple...until one has to do it correctly and well. Only then do the uninitiated appreciate the art and technique that goes into the final product.



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