

## Turfgrass Education at the University of Illinois

by David Wehner

Many of the readers of the Bull Sheet have heard me mention the continuing need for students to enroll in the turfgrass management program at the University of Illinois. We have attacked recruiting of students in an indirect way by developing a brochure and, more recently, a video tape that describes what is involved in being a turfgrass manager and the benefits of the profession. The brochure was funded by the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation and as such lists all of the schools in Illinois that have programs in turfgrass management. The video tape, which was sponsored by the CIBA-GEIGY, Deere & Co., Spraying Systems Co. and the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation, is a generic video that could be used by any educator or other individual in the U.S. to promote turfgrass management. The purpose of this article is to describe the turfgrass management program at the University of Illinois and present some aspects of our program. There are many fine schools offering turfgrass education, however, our program offers some distinct advantages that you should be aware of.

The turfgrass management program at Illinois is based in the Department of Horticulture. Students interested in turfgrass management pursue a B.S. degree in Ornamental Horticulture. There are two courses in turfgrass management, an introductory course that covers basic species utilization and management, and an advanced course that deals with intensive turfgrass culture. Students interested in the turfgrass option take both courses while students interested in other aspects of horticulture may take the beginning course as an elective. All of our students are required to take a core of horticulture courses covering woody ornamentals, plant propagation, horticultural science, and bedding plants. Electives are available in arboriculture, nursery management, home grounds design, floricultural crop production, vegetable crops, small fruits, and tree fruit science. With careful course selection, the student can become qualified to work in virtually any aspect of the horticultural or turfgrass industry. The broad training that our students receive allows them to easily make career changes if they discover new opportunities.

In addition to horticulture courses, students take required courses in soil science, botany, plant pathology, entomology, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and chemistry with electives available in business, agriculture engineering and several other departments. Our students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for the challenges of the future.

The University of Illinois offers tremendous resources that can be used by a student to excel in their chosen field of study. Computer facilities are readily available (including computers in the dormitories) with training on how to use them offered through various courses. The university has the fourth largest library in the United States (top three are Library of Congress, Harvard, Yale) with well over 7 million volumes. Students can gain experience working with the faculty on special projects or on the research plots. Students receive help with placement for summer jobs and after graduation.

Numerous MAGCS members have studied at the University of Illinois. These individuals have been successful in obtaining excellent positions and are among the leading superintendents in the Chicago area.

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(Education University of Illinois cont'd.)

The courses offered at the University of Illinois are for the most part, taught by faculty members who are doing active research in the area that they teach. Thus, the students are kept up to date on the latest techniques, procedures, and plant material.

Recently, the University of Illinois was rated 16th on the list of top schools for your educational dollar (Money College Guide 1990). The rating was based on the amount of tuition versus what the school has to offer. No other school in the midwest was rated higher than Illinois.

In addition to the undergraduate program, we offer advanced degrees in turfgrass science. Our graduate students have taken important positions in industry or have become turfgrass educators in several states such as Michigan, Massachusetts, Ohio, Virginia, and Oklahoma.

In summary, the University of Illinois is an excellent place to study turfgrass management. If either you or someone you know is interested in the University of Illinois, please give us a call. I can be reached at 217/333-7848. My address is Horticulture Department, 1201 S. Dorner Drive, Urbana, IL 61801.

## Leaves, Limbs, Needles & Boughs

by Fred D. Opperman

This month's selection is a tree that you see a lot of further south in Illinois, Indiana, and Missouri, etc. But it can and is growing quite well in many locations around the Chicago area. One just has to plant this tree to see its beauty and you will be adding it to your yearly plant list.

Liquidambar styraciflua (lik-wid-am'bar sti-ra-se-floo'a) American Sweetgum.

Leaves: Alternate simple, 4 to 7½" wide and about as long, 5 to 7 lobed with oblong-triangular, acuminate star-shaped, finely serrate lobes. Leaf color is a very beautiful deep glossy green above in summer, changing to rich yellow-purple-red tones in the fall; there is a great variability in fall colors.



Bud: Terminal imbricate, 6 to 8 scaled ovate to conical ¼ to ½" long, laterals smaller, reddish green brown, sometimes fragrant when crushed.



Size: 60 to 75' in height with a spread of 2/3's to equal the height; can reach 80 to 120' in the wild.

Fruit: Syncarp of dehiscent capsules, (in plain language they are little balls with spines and holes), 1 to 1½" diameter, persists into winter.

Culture: Transplant in the spring into deep, moist, slightly acid soil and full sun.

Credit: "Manual of Woody Landscape Plants" by Michael A. Dirr.

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