

Study finds similar nitrate losses on variety of lawns

RICHMOND, Va. — Cornell researchers have measured nitrate losses from turfgrass areas on many soil types and have found that nitrate losses on many fertilized lawns were no greater than those on unfertilized areas, Dr. Norman Hummel told the 30th Virginia Turfgrass and Landscape Conference and Trade Show.

Hummel said similar findings have been reported from around the countries on many soil types.

The conference was highlighted by presentation of the Virginia

Turfgrass Council Award to Dr. Rajandra N. Waghay, Fairfax County extension agent.

Waghay long has served the Virginia Turfgrass Industry and Virginia Tech in the fields of turfgrass and ornamental entomology and integrated pest management.

Dr. Houston B. Couch, professor of turfgrass pathology at Virginia Polytechnic College and State University in Blacksburg, was presented the R.D. Cake memorial award for significant contributions

to the development of the Virginia Turfgrass Industry.

His research is said to have saved turfgrass professionals thousands of dollars by his development of more efficient methods of controlling disease.

Several Virginia turfgrass associations and individuals committed funds to the newly formed Virginia Turfgrass Foundation for turfgrass research, teaching and extension programs.

Duff Beagle received the Norman scholarship, Kayle

Bigelow the Thomas B. Hutcheson Jr. scholarship, and Karen Kuhne the Larry S. Jones memorial scholarship.

Virginia Turfgrass Council scholarships went to Scott Ligon, Lisa Simonds and Tom Wilson, students in the newly formed Agriculture Technology school.

Hummel, of Cornell University's department of floriculture and ornamental horticulture, explored the turf manager's role in protecting ground water.

There are many benefits to ap-

plying fertilizers to lawns and other turfgrass areas, he said. In addition to improving turf appearance, fertilizers help promote turfgrass health and vigor. Nitrogen is the nutrient most needed by turfgrasses.

While the soil contains some nitrogen, Hummel noted, it usually isn't enough to maintain a quality lawn. Thus, turfgrass fertilization is an important part of any turfgrass maintenance program. Nitrates, a form of nitrogen, can be leached or carried through the soil by water. When large amounts of nitrates reach the ground water, they can accumulate to toxic levels.

Hummel said Cornell's research into nitrate losses found that in some cases, the potential for nitrate leaching exists. He said conditions that will promote leaching include: sandy soils, too much water from irrigation or rainfall, applying more fertilizer than necessary, and using water soluble (quick release) fertilizers in the late fall.

Waghay stressed that anyone concerned over pesticide use — residues, liability, human health hazards, cost and environmental quality — can establish and practice an integrated pest management program.

These include governmental agencies, golf course superintendents, athletic field managers, sod growers, lawn care companies, grounds managers and homeowners desiring a change from a piece-meal pest management approach to a more organized, ecologically sound program. He recommended more applied research at universities to establish pest threshold levels and biological control of pests.

He also emphasized employee training for scouting and monitoring of pests in cooperation with extension service, and customer education and communication.

Sod producers change meeting

PORTLAND, Ore. — Because of existing and potential problems associated with the 5-year-old California drought, the American Sod Producers Association's 1991 summer convention has been relocated from Santa Barbara to Portland.

The convention and field days will be July 31-Aug. 2, one week later than originally scheduled.

The Red Lion Lloyd Center will be the group's headquarters hotel, and the ASPA's annual business meeting, education sessions and committee meetings will be held there.

The California SPA recommended convention relocation, citing unpredictable water supplies and questionable field conditions.

Further information may be obtained by calling ASPA offices at 708-705-9898, or by writing ASPA at 1855-A Hicks Road, Rolling Meadows, Ill. 60008.

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