



Billboard along Florida highway emphasizes turfgrass' importance.

FTGA seeks to increase turfgrass awareness

ORLANDO, Fla. — In an effort to create awareness of one of Florida's most precious natural resources, the Florida Turfgrass Association has launched an aggressive advertising and public relations campaign.

The campaign began in mid-April with five billboards erected throughout the state in Pinellas, Orange, Pasco, St. Lucie and Brevard counties. The messages read "Can You Imagine Your Life With-

out Turfgrass? A Reminder from the Florida Turfgrass Association," along with the FTGA's toll-free number and an image of a swing set sitting on concrete pavement.

Turfgrass absorbs gaseous pollutants and returns pure oxygen back into the environment. Approximately 2,500 square feet of lawn will release enough oxygen for a family of four. Additionally, turfgrass helps to modify temperature; upgrades air quality, helping to control allergies;

acts as a fire barrier; and reduces undesirable noise by 20 to 30 percent.

The turfgrass industry also plays a vital role in Florida's economy. More than 4.4 million acres of turfgrass exist in the state, employing approximately 185,000 workers annually and generating close to \$15 billion in expenditures and value-added impact.

"We're trying to get the message to people across the state that turfgrass is a natural resource and that we need to work together to preserve it, as we do all our natural resources," said FTGA President Roy Bates. "Most people think of athletic fields and golf courses when they think of turfgrass, but all naturally grown grass is turfgrass, including home lawns."

Established in 1952, the Florida Turfgrass Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to education and the preservation of environmental resources. FTGA directs its efforts toward increasing awareness of the fundamental importance of the turfgrass industry. The FTGA, with cooperative funding from the Florida Golf Course Superintendents Association, is represented through lobbying efforts on behalf of the turf industries' interests in Tallahassee. FTGA keeps its members abreast of all issues pertaining to the turfgrass industry.

For more information contact 800-882-6721.

Mount St. Helens eruption benefits Washington track?

KELSO, Wash. — The tragedy wrought by the eruption of Mount St. Helens in May 1980 has been turned into at least one positive in this small city near the Washington-Oregon border.

The public, 18-hole Three Rivers Golf Course, designed by Robert Muir Graves, enjoys an unusual distinction among area golf courses: it's the fastest-draining layout around during and after rain and has become particularly popular during the winter season, when other courses are too soggy to play. The reason the drainage is so good goes back to the Mount St. Helens eruption.

The site where the course was built in the early 1980s was covered in some 3 million cubic yards of silt and dredgings from nearby rivers that included sand and ash from the eruption. The fill runs from 2 to 20 feet deep over the course, and, as it turns out, drains extremely well.

The flip side, of course, is that the excellent drainage requires more summer irrigation. The course uses close to a million gallons a day (from the Cowlitz River) when the summer heat hits, which is about twice as much as any other course uses, according to golf course superintendent Walt Stender.

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