

Off The Fringe

Tune Your Turf With iTunes

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA RESEARCHERS CREATE IPHONE APPLICATION FOR TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT

By Curt Harler

It'll come as music to a superintendent's ears that there's agronomic help available via iTunes and iPhone.

University of Georgia researchers have created an iPhone application for turfgrass management. It's available like any other iTunes application and can be used worldwide, anywhere turf is grown. "This works across the board: warm-season grasses, cool-season grasses," says Patrick E. McCullough, extension turf weed scientist at UGA-Griffin. "It's designed to be a universal turf management tool."

The app was finished in mid-August and was recently put up for sale

on iTunes. It's also available for BlackBerry phones.

The application contains pictures, information, and recommendations for turf, and turf diseases, weeds and insects. "We're also creating a database on this program for superintendents to search for fungicides, insecticides or herbicides by common name and trade name to access information about rates, labeled turfgrasses and pests controlled," McCullough says. "I believe this program represents a new technology for superintendents to access information through mobile devices, and we would like to begin presenting this to the industry."

McCullough started the project in

April, aiming to provide access to turfgrass information. It just became logical to expand it to weeds, insects and diseases. "Now it's like a turf textbook — universal, all inclusive," he says.

However, all the superintendent takes to the field is an iPhone or iPod, not a 10-pound textbook. Right now, the application consumes just a tiny amount of space on an iPhone, although a complete download would be larger.

Walk onto a golf course with McCullough and spot a weed. First guess is that it's goosegrass. To confirm, simply click the appropriate category (weeds) and search for goosegrass. The application delivers several photos of the weed — including a shot of the

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Broadleaf weeds can come to your iPod.

whole plant and close-ups of the leaf, ligules, seed-head and similar keys.

Confirming it is goosegrass is simple. What to do about it? The application's database lists herbicides, fungicides and insecticides by active ingredient and trade name.

Not even sure what weed you're looking at? Search the database by grasses versus broadleaves and you'll soon be where you need to be.

One cool thing about the technology is a superintendent can upload as many photos or as much text as he wants, McCullough notes. There's no limit to the cost of color photos or pages of material. Since recommended pesticides and suggested rates vary by state, there are no specific "ounces per thousand"



recommendations. However, the idea is to get the superintendent going in the right direction.

Next addition to the database will be turf diseases, then insects. Alfredo Martinez, UGA turf pathologist;

Will Hudson, entomologist; and Clint Waltz, extension turfgrass management specialist, are working with McCullough on the project.

It's available for \$19.95. However, as the database is expanded and updated, UGA likely will take advantage of the subscription service iTunes Store is rolling out. For a small monthly fee, superintendents will have access to the latest info. Proceeds from the sale of the app go back into UGA turf research. ■

Business briefs

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Becker Underwood Makes Organizational Changes

Ames, Iowa-based Becker Underwood, an international developer, marketer and producer of bio-agronomic and specialty products, announced organizational changes in its North American operations that will better organize and coordinate staff in serving a growing client portfolio, said CEO Peter Innes. There were no staff reductions and staffing additions are anticipated.

Innes said Becker Underwood aims to identify new opportunities and commit resources needed to turn ideas into products that deliver value to those who help market them and those who use them. With that in mind, the company realigned its North American marketing, sales, product management, customer service and manufacturing teams to take advantage of these opportunities.

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