



Homeowners have a "Field Day" at Noer

By Tom Schwab, O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Before the dust even settled from the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day, the professors and staff at the Noer Facility were intent preparing for their next big event. The UW - Madison turf team hosts a homeowner turf field day every other year on the Saturday following the professional turf manager's field day. There are turf management clinics, field tours, handouts, and experts on hand to give homeowners unbiased, reliable techniques to take care of their lawns and landscapes.

A small section of the facility is set aside to present numerous demonstrations for the general public to learn about turf management. But rarely are all the university turf experts assembled at one time to interpret the demonstrations and give advice to these amateurs — except during homeowner turf field day — where they answered questions on plant nutrition, insect problems, weed management, lawn establishment, renovation, soil testing, disease management, turf selection, and choosing enhancements to the traditional lawn with prairies, ornamental grasses and never-



Large crowds gather to hear Wayne Kussow's wisdom on plant nutrition.

mowed fine fescues.

It was a great day to show off the UW-Madison's turf facility to the homeowners.

After all, they partially fund the facility with their tax dollars, and now they can share in the benefits of their investment. The day was perfectly sunny and warm. We greeted the homeowners with parking attendants, a welcoming tent for registration and asking questions, outdoor tours that were well marked, and several indoor



Doug Maxwell, who is developing his own prairie at home, bestows his prairie development experiences to interested visitors.

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John Stier getting down to the grass roots.



Michael Casler offers advice on selecting turf mixtures and cultivars.

turf management clinics. The grounds were still in peak condition from the professional field day preparation a few days earlier and from good growing weather. Roughly 300 homeowners attended. Judging from the abundance of questions, they left with increased knowledge about turf.

A homeowner turfgrass field day book was also made available (for \$2, to cover the cost of printing). This allowed homeowners to take home a collection of turf tips prepared by university turf experts to study at their leisure. If you or someone you know would like one of these homeowner turf books, they are available by calling Audra at the Noer Facility at 608-845-6536. (The cost is still \$2 per copy.) I can also provide most of this information through email for free if you write me at tgschwab@facstaff.wisc.edu. The email will be missing some of the niceties of the book form, like a cover, table of contents and an introduction, but the educational material will still be there. You could use this information to host your own homeowner field day for members at your golf course. Contact us at the Noer Facility if you want ideas about your own homeowner field day some day. 🌿



A marvelous day iced the cake for homeowner turf education day.

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