



Integrated Turfgrass Management: Coming to You Soon!

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In a proactive response to the proposed and anticipated legislative mandate (NR-151), the turfgrass faculty and staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison College of Agricultural Life Sciences (CALS) and Extension (UWEX) are in the final stages of development of an Integrated Turfgrass Management (ITM) program. The goal of the ITM program is to provide the necessary training, education, and outreach (consulting) to turfgrass managers. Such information will enable turfgrass managers to develop practical turfgrass management

programs that are cost-effective, agronomically and environmentally sound, without compromising ecosystem quality, yet are in compliance with relevant local, state, and even federal regulations.

Aside from conceiving the original idea for the ITM program, the initial, and likely the most important step was obtaining funding for the program. As you might expect, this is often the most difficult and sometime frustrating part of the process, especially when you think you have a great idea. Nonetheless, thanks to Drs. Geunwha Jung

(Dept. Plant Pathology), John Stier (Dept. Horticulture), Wayne Kussow (Dept. Soil Science), Mr. Jeff Gregos (Turf Diagnostic Lab), and myself, we were awarded a grant from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School. This particular grant was made available as part of the Wisconsin Idea Initiative whereby resources are made available to ideas, concepts, and programs that bring together the University of Wisconsin and the people of Wisconsin.

Now that we have secured the

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financial resources necessary for the ITM program, our second step, which we are currently involved, is to interview and hire an ITM specialist. This person's responsibilities will include advising, assisting, educating, and supporting turfgrass managers in developing and managing both plant and pest management programs. The ITM specialist will work closely with university faculty and staff that comprise the turfgrass extension and research working group. We anticipate having the ITM specialist on board no later than the mid-February.

The third step of this process is the development of the ITM manual. The ITM manual will be a comprehensive tool that will contain information on: 1) turf growth and development, 2) turfgrass species selection and adaptation, 3) turf soil characteristics, 4) primary cultural practices, 5) secondary cultural practices, 6) concepts of integrated pest management (IPM), 7) sample IPM plans and record-keeping logs, 8) pest and nutrient management laws and regulations, 9) simple turf math calculations, equations, and conversion factors, and 10) reference lists. Our goal is to have the manual available by late-March.

Finally, the last step is to implement the ITM program. If our plans materialize as designed, we expect to begin enrolling turfgrass managers into the ITM program as early as this spring (2002). Since the ITM program is essentially a self-funded (fee-based) outreach program, subsequently a modest program fee will be associated with participation. Enrollees will be entitled to the ITM manual, full-scale training and educational workshops, an annual on-site consultation, turfgrass diagnostic services, and access to an interactive turfgrass web site.

Ultimately, we are confident that the ITM program will provide valuable information, education,

and resources, as well as aid turfgrass managers in their continually increasing need to justify management plans, policies, and procedures. Participation in the ITM program may also enhance the frequently perceived public opinion or misconception that turf is

potentially an environmental hazard. Moreover, this program has the impetus to potentially reduce unwarranted or unjustified inputs, thus saving monetary resources, and providing agronomically and environmental sound management practices. ♣

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