

Impressive EXPO — But Where Were the Crowds?



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

The Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO 2003 was held January 6, 7, and 8th, much to the fanfare of all in attendance. The only problem was not many attended. What a difference a year makes! Last year's attendance set the record, but this year's numbers were down by more than 1/3. Only 278 attendees passed through the doors this year compared to 415 last year. Is it the economy? Is it something with the show? Are there conflicts with other state and local shows? I heard lots of good comments from attendees about the education, so it must be the economy and conflicts with other shows. There has to be a way to bring the people back. The EXPO planning committee will meet soon and will be "thinking outside the box" to make big plans for next year's show to bring the people back.

The planning committee, led by WTA vice-president Rich Riggs, is inspired to keep EXPO as the show of shows for you every year. The university and

industry representatives on the committee are likewise dedicated to keeping the show top-notch. A questionnaire is being sent out to get attendee and exhibitor feedback on what they would like to see at future shows. The committee would like to hear your input. It's your chance to tailor the education for your benefit.

The trade show actually increased in size this year over last year. The vendors do so much to make EXPO well-rounded and interesting. They likewise help to support the education so please show them your gratitude and purchase from them throughout the year. The list of 2003 EXPO exhibitors with short company descriptions is listed on a following page. The trade show hours also increased for 2003, so if shopping for services or products was what you wanted, then EXPO was for you.

The education was likewise excellent. EXPO started out with several half-day workshops that



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delved into topics like learning Spanish, maintaining equipment, becoming a certified and environmentally friendly facility, and pesticide applicator training. The workshops cost an extra fee above the regular conference package, but the added detail was worth it to many attendees.

The next two days were full of all kinds of information. There was an opening session, a huge trade show, and numerous educational presentations. The presentations had great information for everyone in the green industry including those in the golf, lawn and landscape, and sports turf industries.

The opening session had a theme of safety in the workplace. Mark Purschwitz, from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of Biological Systems Engineering, led off the session. He discussed how to get started and ways to achieve a better workplace safety program, which included establishing a safety committee and training program. You follow that with a monitoring of the workplace for hazards, evaluating and prioritizing those hazards, establishing corrective measures, and monitoring the situation. Then he gave lots of information on when and how to train employees. For those of you who missed Mark's pre-

sentation, he said that you can get more information of safety by visiting the website - www.osha.gov or by calling 1-800-522-7448 and ordering the training manual "Safety Management for Landscapers."

Mark's talk led perfectly into the keynote presentation delivered by Richard Kithil from the National Lightning Safety Institute. He gave the audience many life-saving lightning safety guidelines to put into practice immediately this spring. Some of the guidelines are well known, yet others are not. The well known rules are that during a lightning storm one should avoid high ground, tall trees, metallic objects, water, and machinery. One rule that caught the audience by surprise was that small shelters, **even with lightning rods attached**, are one of the worst places to be in a lightning storm. Another rule of lightning safety that has been adopted by such prominent associations as the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association), NATA (National Athletic Trainers Association) and the AMS (American Meteorological Society) is the 30/30 rule. This rule states that you, your crew, and clients should go to a safe shelter if the time between lightning and thunder is 30 seconds or less. Then stay there 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder. Or



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Richard said you can think of it this way, "If you can see it (lightning), flee it; if you can hear it (thunder), clear it." He gave a couple websites to visit if you would like to see more of his and other organizations' safety tips for lightning. Those are www.lightningsafety.com and www.lightningsafety.noaa.gov.

Following opening session was the start of the trade show, and then came the awards and scholarship banquet. WTA president Dan Barrett started the banquet with the announcement of some big changes that will occur in the University's Turf Diagnostic Lab. He was proud to assure all clients of the lab that only the best and most prompt service will be given to each and every turf sample that is sent to the TDL in 2003. Awards and scholarships were handed out next. The list of UW-Madison turf student scholarship recipients is listed below. Also listed on page 58, are companies or individuals that gave turf research money to the WTA in 2002.

The educational presentations started in the afternoon and continued all day Wednesday. The golf course session was especially strong this year.

**2003 Wisconsin Turfgrass and Greenscape EXPO
Research and Scholarship Recipients**

Scholarship Donor	Recipient	Amount
WGCSA J.R. Love Scholarship	Grayson Harms	\$750
WTA	Anthony Hudzinski	\$600
WTA	Benjamin LaBarre	\$600
WTA	Brian Pyszka	\$600
WTA	Douglas Soldat	\$600
Bayer Environmental Chemical	Steven Houlihan	\$500
Spring Valley Turf Products	Jacob Schneider	\$500
Chalet Nurseries	Kurt Steinke	\$500
Dave Murgatroyd Memorial	Eric Koeritz	\$500

Turf Research Donor	Recipient	Amount
Becker Underwood	WTA	\$300
Bulls-Eye Country Club	WTA	\$1,095
Gary Zwirlein	WI Turfgrass Research & Development Fund	\$250
Horst and Aquatrols	WTA	\$275
Horst and Milorganite Program	WTA	\$1,375
JW Turf Equipment	WTA	\$500
Northern Great Lakes GCSA	WTA	\$1,000
Oshkosh Country Club	WTA	\$2,360
Reinders and Daconil Program	WTA	\$6,405
Simplot Partners	WTA	\$150
Stevens Point CC	WTA	\$745
Thomas VanValin	WTA	\$75
Westmoor Country Club	WI Turfgrass Research & Development Fund	\$2,500
Wisconsin Sod Producers	WTA	\$1,375
Wisconsin Turf and Milorganite Program	WTA	\$1,330

Subjects were presented by such able speakers as Karl Danneberger from the Ohio State University, Andy Hamblin from the University of Illinois, and John Stier and Wayne Kussow from the UW-Madison, among others. They covered such pertinent subjects as intraseeding new bentgrass into existing turf, blending turf varieties for disease resistance, and *Poa* control in bentgrass. Many other great subjects were covered in golf as well as in the Landscape and the Sports Turf sessions. Likewise the roster of presenters was as impressive in other sessions as they were in golf. Everyone left EXPO with pertinent information to make positive changes to their work back home.

The conference ended with research and extension reports from your UW-Madison turf research team. They are a busy group of researchers looking for better ways to grow turf for everyone in Wisconsin. We hope you will come back next year if you couldn't make it this year. Those that attended were glad they did. Send us any input you might have to make the show more valuable for you and trust that the planning committee is hard at work already to make EXPO 2004 the one show you don't want to miss. ♣

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