



Green Industry Day with State Legislators

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

Members from the green industry are meeting with state legislators in February to make known the huge impact the industry provides to Wisconsin's economy. It is important that many members of the green industry participate in this event which is being dubbed "The Green Industry Day on the Hill." It would be great if you could participate.

The reason it's important to have this "Day on the Hill" right now is because of the newly completed Wisconsin Green Industry Survey. This independent and unbiased survey, conducted by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service, found that Wisconsin's green industry contributes over \$2.7 billion annually while providing over 43,000 jobs to the state's economy.

Our day with legislators is for impressing this economic impact upon them. We are not meeting to lobby any specific laws. It will be a positive meeting to get to know each other and for us to promote the landscape industry. Then when future issues arise that may impact our industry, they will know who to contact before making decisions.

Future decisions that could impact us are issues of pesticide and fertilizer use, small business taxes and benefits, land and water use, advancements in plant breeding, invasive species, and other environmental concerns. We are the people in the trenches working to promote healthy plant growth and a clean environment. They need to know we are affected by their decision making and that we are there to supply expertise before laws are changed.

Brian Swingle, executive director of the Wisconsin Landscape Federation (WLF), is coordinating this "Day" to educate legislators about the green industry. He started by bringing together representatives from 14 different green industry organizations for a planning meeting on October 14th, 2004 in Waukesha. They discussed the feasibility of having this "Day on the Hill." Everyone present thought it would be a beneficial program and that now would be the time to publicize our importance to law makers.

The "Green Industry Day on the Hill" will take place on February 15th, 2005 in Madison. We will begin by meeting at the Inn on the Park in downtown Madison, where participants will be given an issues statement to present to the individual legislator we meet. The program will run from 9:00 a.m. to 1:45 p.m. and lunch will be provided.

If you wish to participate contact me at the Noer Facility (608-845-6895) or Brian Swingle at the WLF

office in Greenfield (414-529-4705). If you prefer, you may contact a board member from any of the participating associations listed below. They will have the meeting information as well.

A couple hundred people are needed in order to make this day a success. Our goal is to have representatives of the green industry from every corner of Wisconsin. You don't have to be a political creature to volunteer to help. You just need to be concerned about plants, the environment, and your business.

"Green Industry Day on the Hill" Participating Associations and Organizations:

Commercial Flower Growers of Wisconsin
Gardens Beautiful Garden Centers
Grounds Management Association of Wisconsin
Northern Great Lakes Golf Course Superintendents Association
Wisconsin & Upper Michigan Florist Association
Wisconsin Arborists Association
Wisconsin Christmas Tree Producers Association
Wisconsin Golf Course Owners Association
Wisconsin Golf Course Superintendents Association
Wisconsin Landscape Contractors Association
Wisconsin Nursery Association
Wisconsin Sod Producers
Wisconsin Sports Turf Managers Association
Wisconsin Turfgrass Association



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