

It Had To Be The Education

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

WTA Summer Field Day on July 31st had the largest attendance since the field day that was held in conjunction with Turf Producers International six years ago. There were 287 attendees this year which was an increase of 123 over last year's show. That doesn't include 65 vendor representatives working 28 booths in the trade show. It's hard to know exactly why so many showed up this year but I'm guessing attendees heard about the great education being offered and realized they couldn't afford to miss this year's event. They were not disappointed.

Education came in the form of six general research presentations in the morning followed by a trade show around lunch time. Golf turf research and a sports turf construction tour were featured in the afternoon.

In the morning general turf presentations, Dr. Doug Soldat presented his work on reduced risk herbicides and other alternative weed control tactics. The results showed reduced risk products are not as effective as standard herbicides. But with the increased interest in the environment, many customers ask about reduced risk. Dr. Soldat's work showed those products could be used to achieve moderate weed control usually with repeat applications.

Doctoral student Brad DeBels presented work on water conservation strategies using radiometric sensing methods to measure ET use between different species and cultivars. This work will lead to better breeding selection for low input turfgrass landscapes.

Dr. Paul Koch spoke about identifying and controlling Summer Patch on Kentucky and annual bluegrass. He told of the difficulty in distinguishing Summer Patch from necrotic ring spot, brown patch, anthracnose, and abiotic stresses. He gave some tips to identify




Graduate student Glen Obear presents his research on iron layering in golf putting greens

Summer Patch and told how identification is so important because methods for managing it are significantly different than for the other diseases mentioned.

Dr. Chris Williamson's talk provided everything you need to know about two invasive insect pests; Japanese beetles and emerald ash borer. He gave many management options including products to use, best times to treat, best ways to treat, and when to fly the white flag.

Many other talks filled the day with great education. They included 'Ecological Poa Management' and 'Iron Layering in Putting Greens' presented by Glen Obear, 'Potassium Soil Test Calibration' presented by Brad DeBels, 'Environmental Regulations Update' from Jeff Saatkamp, and many more. The research presentations were not the only education at Field Day. The helpful and informed exhibitors at the trade show helped attendees with all their commercial questions. Exhibitors had information on seed, chemicals, any turf maintenance equipment you could imagine, turf nutrition, putting green materials, irrigation supplies, and more. Please see and support the 2012 Field Day Exhibitors, listed here. They help bring Summer Field Day and all its education to you every year.

It had to be all the great education that brought the crowds back to Field Day for 2012. Or maybe it was the drought and record heat of 2012 that sent everyone to Field Day for a break from this summer of stress. Whatever the reason, attendees left Field Day with many new ideas to use back on their own landscapes. The team of professors, students, guest speakers, and staff did all they could to make this year's Field Day one of the best and most educational ever. 



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NOTES FROM THE NOER



Pictures from Top to Bottom:

- Dr. Doug Soldat presenting on potassium soil test calibration.
- Dr. Jim Kerns greets attendees during the opening session.
- Dr. Chris Williamson provides updates on two Wisconsin invasive insect pests; emerald ash borer and Japanese beetles.
- Aerial of O.J. Noer Facility prior to arrival of record crowds for the 2012 WTA Summer Field Day



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