

## UM TURFGRASS RESEARCH FIELD DAY AND MAAGCS PICNIC LINK FOR A SPECIAL DAY

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The 2008 University of Maryland Biennial Turfgrass Research Field Day was held at the UM Paint Branch Turfgrass Research Facility in College Park in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Association of Golf Course Superintendents (MAAGCS) Annual Picnic on July 31. Traditionally, the biennial field day would begin with walking tours of research projects in the morning, host a cook-out lunch, and offer workshops or field tours in the afternoon. Hard working turfgrass professionals have been telling us in recent years that it is difficult to get away for an entire day in the summer. Indeed, we have noted stagnation in field day attendance since the late 1990's. It is a sign of today's demanding work schedules and difficult economic times. Therefore, we recognized a need to try something different. Working closely with the MAAGCS and Stephen Potter (Woodholme CC), we decided to team up with a field day – picnic outing. Approximately 200 people attended, including golf course superintendents; lawn care company operators; sod producers; sports turf managers, master gardeners; fertilizer, chemical and seed company representatives and others. The tour of research projects began at 2:00PM and concluded at 5:30PM and the picnic followed. The field day walking tours featured 26 different research projects conducted by the Turfgrass Professors: Mark Carroll, Peter Dernoeden, Kevin Mathias, Paula Shrewsbury and Tom Turner. Among the research projects and topics they discussed included turfgrass variety trials and the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program; herbicide and fungicide trials; various lawn and putting green management studies; and an insect pest control update. Five graduate students summarized their research projects as follows: Thatch Pesticide Sorption Characteristics (Ricky Leshin); Effect of Cultivation on Thatch and Soil Microbial Activity (Yusong Mu); Impact of Rainfall On Fungicide Performance and Effect of Spray Volume and Application Timing on Fungicide Performance (Ray Pigati); Environmental Monitoring of Dollar Spot Epidemics In Six Bentgrass Cultivars (Chris Ryan); and Effect of Common Residential Lawn Practices On Turf Carbon and Nitrogen Cycling (Paul Lilly). Mary Kay Malinoski from the Home and Garden Information Center talked about new Lawn IPM initiatives. Kevin Mathias and Ken Ingram discussed new learning opportunities at the Institute of Applied Agriculture. At the conclusion of the tour, Dr. Cheng-i Wei, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources addressed the group. The Dean had spent the entire three and half hours on the tour and provided complimentary and encouraging words. Never in the history of the UM turf program has a Dean shown this level of interest in our research projects, facilities and stakeholders. We therefore were very grateful for his interest in and support of the field day. Bob Shumate (President of the Maryland Turfgrass Council) announced that the Angie Cammarota Golf Tournament in support of UM Turf Research would be held on September 29, 2008 at the Upland Golf Club in Ridgely, which is near Denton, MD. Mark Kingora (President MAAGCS) concluded the announcements and presented a check in the amount of \$1500.00 in support of turf research activities at Paint Branch.

The picnic was a sensational feast orchestrated by Chef Potter. Steve wanted everyone to feel at home and insisted that he could work with the local turfgrass industry members to make the picnic possible at no cost to the attendees. Nobody wrote a check and members of the commercial sector brought and prepared all of the food and beverages. Steve worked the phones and made it all possible. He devoted many personal hours to organizing the event and even worked a hot grill preparing his famous ribs. Todd Cowling, Doug Fleming and others (Turf Equipment and Supply) supplied the ribs. The roast pork, chicken, beef and Caesar salad were made possible and expertly prepared by Joe Herkalo (CJH Greens); Mike Janzer (Plant Food Company); and Seth Greenwood (Helena). Tom Walsh (UAP) brought the crabs; Bob Clemens and Matt Miller (G.L. Cornell) supplied all of the salads; George Barger (Nutramax Laboratories) provided ice cream; and Karen Hartman (Dupont) supplied the munchies. Mark Merrick (Syngenta), Jack Roxbrough (Fisher and Sons); Mike Hutchinson (Sports Aggregates) and Larry Cosh (Finch Services) provided a variety of beverages. Both Theresa Baria and Steve McCormick coordinated the picnic on behalf of MAAGCS and Vernon Cooper, Cheryl Gaultney and Michelle LoConte coordinated field day announcements on behalf of the Maryland Turfgrass Council. We thank Rick Lanore, who printed the field book. Special recognition is extended to the people that made the research tour possible: Dave Funk (Paint Branch Farm Manager) and Joe DeRico, Matt Kasuleres, and Ray Pigati (Agricultural Technicians). Their efforts are indispensable in ensuring a productive research program. The turf faculty and graduate students appreciate and respect the professional expertise they bring to the UM Paint Branch Turfgrass Research Facility every day.

