

TURFGRASS INDUSTRY - SIZE AND SCOPE

from *The Lawn Institute*

Some interesting projections have been made concerning the importance of turfgrass in a hypothetical city with a population of 170,000 people. How does your area rate in the following categories for each 170,000 people?

- Turf facility maintenance involves employment of 166 people;
- Other sectors of economic activities supporting turf facilities involve employment of 110 people;
- There are 3 bowling greens utilizing 1 acre;
- There are 3 cemeteries located on 90 acres;
- There are 195 churches on 17 acres of land;
- There are 50 city parks covering 628 acres;
- There are 6 golf courses utilizing 599 acres;
- There are 2 colleges with 156 acres of grounds;
- There are 56 schools with 400 acres of grounds;
- There are 350 factories located on 47 acres;
- There are 45,200 single-family residences located on 3,495 acres;
- There are 19,600 multiple-family residences located on 987 acres;
- There are 65,465 total facilities on 6,419 acres;
- Average lawn size is 750 square feet in front and 1,000 square feet in back.
- The homeowner spends on the average \$200.00 per year on fertilizer, pesticides, seed and water. This amounts to \$9,040,000 a year spent by people

living in single-family residences.

- Lawns associated with multiple family dwellings cost about \$20 per unit to maintain each year. This amounts to \$392,000 for maintenance, including water.
- City parks, cemeteries, schools, churches, colleges and factories are located on 1,338 acres and spend more on water than any other item. Labour, supplies, equipment and water cost \$1,100 per acre for a total of \$1,471,800.
- Golf courses and bowling greens cost \$2,200 per acre to maintain each year. For 600 acres, this amounts to \$1,320,000.
- \$12,223,800 in direct expenditures on turf alone significantly affects the economy of this city. This example may be conservative for some parts of North America.

In United States, lawn and sports turf are big business as the following data indicate:

- In 1965, turfgrass was considered a \$4,300,000,000 per year industry;
- In 1982, turfgrass was considered a \$25,000,000,000 per year industry;
- California, Florida, Michigan, New York and Pennsylvania all have billion dollar turf industries. Illinois and Texas are very near this level;
- Two-thirds of all turf expenditures go to maintain home lawns;
- Turf management is labour intensive. It is estimated that 380,000 people make their living directly from the care and maintenance of turf in the United States.

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