

# Western Turf Industry Profile

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Identifying a need to heighten public awareness and develop a profile of its membership, the Western Canada Turfgrass Association (WCTA) responded by conducting a detailed industry survey and publishing a summary of its findings. The *British Columbia Turfgrass Industry Profile* is a detailed summary of their research study, intended to strengthen WCTA's public profile, provide a vehicle for sharing best practices, and assist turfgrass managers with strategic planning and decision-making initiatives.

Four focus groups and a cross-section of WCTA members were surveyed capturing responses from a variety of sectors including school districts, parks and recreation, sod producers, and industry-related suppliers.

One key finding that became apparent was the diversity of the industry, from farming to services to private and public sector recreation, all with one common denominator—the production and maintenance of turfgrass.

There also appeared to be a general consensus that there is little public aware-

ness of the industry itself and its challenges.

Although the published results focus on the British Columbia industry, there are ample opportunities to draw comparisons to the turfgrass profile here in Ontario. Specific topics such as management, stewardship, future trends, and community relations are typical to both provinces. The survey findings are a worthwhile read, if only for an understanding of the many components related to successful turfgrass management.

A brief summary and overview of the main survey categories includes:

**Management:** Over 90% of the respondents agreed that those connected with the industry are better qualified in turf management.

**Stewardship:** Findings indicate that there is considerable diversity with regards to operational practices and policies.

**Membership:** Members of the WCTA appear to be well perceived in the turf industry.

**Benefits:** There are many positive spin-offs provided by WCTA members includ-

ing a growing number of recreation/fitness facilities, the amount of green space being maintained and preserved for public and urban areas, and a number of natural areas being preserved for wildlife habitat.

The *British Columbia Turfgrass Industry Profile* is an easy read, full of beneficial and informative results, perceptions, issues, and challenges that currently affect our industry. Broken down into well-defined subheadings, the book allows readers to quickly identify their area of choice or to engage in findings from the "bigger picture," including member comments and focus group feedback. The book is a stable framework from which one can establish future directions and identify key components to improving and promoting a positive turfgrass management profile within the industry and beyond. ♦

*Editor's note: The British Columbia Turfgrass Industry Profile is available from the Western Canada Turfgrass Association, telephone (604) 467-2564, E-mail wcta@dowco.com, for the purchase price of \$12 which includes taxes and shipping.*



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