

SPORTS TURF MANAGER

... for better, safe, natural Sports Turf

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IPM: What is It?

EDITOR MICHAEL BLADON EXPLORES THE ISSUE OF INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

One definition given for IPM is that it is a decision making process to suppress pests in an environmentally safe manner by reducing pesticide use with other types of controls. In his latest book *Understanding Turf Management*, Dr. R.W. Sheard writes that perhaps IPM should be an acronym for Intelligent Pest Management. A third perspective on the term, and the one I like best, is from the book *Sports Fields: A Manual for Design, Construction and Maintenance* by Jim Puhalla, Jeff Krans and Mike Goatley. They put forward their own philosophy and have defined it as ICM – Integrated Cultural Management – rather than IPM. Their rationale is that IPM focuses too narrowly on pests. ICM dwells on the entire subject matter of turf stresses. In other words, a well maintained stand of turfgrass is better able to resist the invasion of insects or disease.

Regardless of the definition, there can be barriers to implementation of the IPM approach to sports fields such as staff who are set in their ways, those who will not share information, and in some cases, a lack of community involvement. It can



Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is more than just reducing pesticide use – turf managers have to take a broad look at all turfgrass stresses.

also be difficult to explain that some pesticides are used in most IPM programs.

Three important considerations in IPM programs are: 1) a good working knowledge of the pest; 2) knowing if you need to treat, and if so, the best treatment times. Scouting or monitoring the field is vital, as is record keeping and your tolerance of injury level – what are you willing to live with before you feel the need to take action; and 3) knowing and understanding all the options available to you. Too often the turfgrass manager does not know a par-

ticular pest's life cycle which certainly limits his/her ability to control the problem.

In the landscape design of park systems, we need plants that are adapted to the site, cultivars that are resistant to certain pests, and native species – diversity rather than monoculture. We also need to release beneficial insects, such as aphid predators, or microbials which are the least toxic to the environment.

Sports field managers need to manage the various stresses involved with field management. Puhalla *et al.* rank stresses as follows: 1) environmental – water, light, air and temperature; 2) me-

chanical – foot traffic, cleats, mowers and maintenance equipment; and finally 3) pests – weeds, insects and disease.

Good cultural practices are essential and involve the need to know soil types, pH levels, fertility and adequate drainage. Wise use of fertilizers and sound judgment in the maintenance of moisture levels through watering programs are also necessary. Next comes thatch removal to not only eliminate an area where pests may reside but also to enhance chemical treatments or fertilizer ... *continued on page 2*

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