

STA Member Profile

Cam Beneteau • Manager, Grounds/Arena Department • Ridley College • St. Catharines, Ontario

What is your role at Ridley College?

My title is manager of the grounds/arena department. My role is to attend property and landscape committee meetings as well as set budgets, schedule work and employee shifts. I also do all the purchasing for the department and oversee the day to day operations.

What kind of team do you work with?

The core group has four full time employees. We bring in four students to help with landscape projects along with some of the daily jobs. I am happy to say that our full time staff is knowledgeable and have been with the school for a number of years.

What are you and your team responsible for?

We are responsible for the maintenance of all the turf and gardens during the growing season. We do some landscape projects and we also do the preparation for all sporting events. During the winter months, we are responsible for the ice maintenance and flooding for the user groups along with snow removal. We also look after all of our equipment maintenance.

What is the biggest challenge in your job?

I find there are two extremely difficult challenges in my job. The most difficult is trying to get all of our work done on a very tight schedule. A heavy field usage schedule along with a small department creates a real nightmare for scheduling work. I also find it difficult to juggle budget monies to accomplish much needed work especially when I have very little control over determining exact costs.

The only fixed spending for me is fertilizer and everything else is an experienced guess.

What is the most satisfying part, what makes the job worthwhile for you?

To look at the quality of the grounds and to accomplish what we do with so little. I myself was determined to provide athletes with better quality facilities than what I had when I went to high school. The ultimate compliment was paid to us last year when the Headmaster told us that some students had enrolled at the college and the determining factor was the campus and quality of the outdoor facilities.

What is the biggest misconception about your job?

Simply put, it is not that difficult to maintain the grounds. Many compare caring for a 100 acre campus with maintaining their own home lawn and gardens. We also have many who think that our department is off during the summer months, as are the teachers. It has taken me over ten years to explain and teach others how and why we do things.

What is your educational/employment background?

I received my ODH in general horticulture in '82 and my ODH in turf management in '92. I also received certificates of achievement as a home gardener in '89 and in grounds maintenance services in '96. I studied business administration for one year at university. Finally, I've spent 14 years in the horticultural industry (garden centres, nurseries and landscape maintenance) and 16 years in the sports turf industry.

Tell us about your family.

I was born and raised in the Windsor area. I moved to the Niagara Peninsula in '83 to continue my career in horticulture. This is where I met my wife Lori with whom I have been happily married for 14 years. Lori is presently employed as a keeper/horticulturalist at the Niagara Falls Aviary. My daughter Lindsay works in the field of law and security and resides in the Windsor area.



What do you enjoy doing outside of the workplace? Hobbies, favourite past times?

I'm a sports buff. At present, I play squash and attempt to play golf. I enjoy working on home renovation projects and gardening. I also enjoy having pets around the house.

What direction(s) would you like to see the industry, as a whole, move towards?

I have found throughout my career that many people do not take our industry seriously. There are inconsistencies in the industry such as hiring practices and

standards of care for sports fields that contribute to these inconsistencies. We need to reach common denominators when it comes to hiring practices. Employers need to demand prerequisites like schooling and minimum years of experience. We also need to set standards for wages and minimum standards for sports field maintenance. By doing this, we create consistency throughout the industry and therefore our credibility increases. Our voices are weak right now because of these inconsistencies. This proves difficult when trying to fight such things as pesticide bans.

What do you consider to be the biggest benefit of being a member of the Sports Turf Association?

Being a member of this association provides me with the tools needed to succeed in this industry. The association offers seminars and field days geared to our special needs. It also affords me the opportunity to keep up on the educational aspect of our industry. I benefit from the business contacts and can meet and discuss topics with fellow members. ♦

How Do You Learn?

A LEARNER TENDS TO REMEMBER:

20% of what the learner hears; your verbal instructions to them.

30% of what the learner sees; while they watch the job being demonstrated.

50% of what the learner sees and hears; while you explain the job and demonstrate it at the same time.

70% of what the learner says while talking; they are repeating the steps to you.

90% of what the learner says while doing something; they are verbalizing about the job while actually showing you the various steps.

— *Farmsafe*, Farm Safety Association, Volume 29(2), Spring 2004

Environmental Benefits of Turfgrass

DR. JAMES B. BEARD, PROFESSOR EMERITUS, TEXAS A&M UNIV.

As well as being attractive, turfgrasses have numerous important functional purposes. These important dimensions that contribute to our quality of life are too often overlooked.

Functional Benefits

- Soil erosion control – the best and most cost-effective means for protecting a vital resource.
- Dust stabilization – the best and most cost-effective approach.
- Reduces precipitation run-off (flood control) due to a dense canopy biomass.
- Increases ground water recharge by water entrapment in dense canopy.
- Active entrapment and biodegradation of organic chemicals via a large, diverse microbial population.
- Atmospheric pollution control, both particulate and chemical, by canopy entrapment.
- Carbon sequestration (soil organic carbon accumulation) in grass-based soils from extensive root decomposition.
- Reduces noxious and nuisance pests – mosquitoes, chiggers, rodents and snakes – Lyme disease, West Nile virus, etc.
- Enhances property security by providing open visual site lines.
- Lowers fire hazard spread via green fire-breaks in urban areas.
- Safety in vehicle operation/equipment longevity on roadside and air fields
- Urban heat dissipation via evapotranspiration.
- Noise abatement – a 40% reduction in 70 ft. of roadside turf.
- Lower water use rate than trees due to lower leaf area per unit land area.

Recreation and Aesthetic Benefits

- Enhances physical health of participants including cardiovascular functions.
- Serves as a safety cushion against impact injury – best in cost-effectiveness.
- Provides a low-cost surface for outdoor sport and leisure activities.
- Even home lawn care offers physical exercise, especially for senior citizens.
- Improves mental health, especially in urban areas.
- Contributes to social harmony among people.
- Contributes positively to attitudinal work productivity.
- Has therapeutic value to individuals recovering from serious illness.

Among many other benefits, turfgrasses control erosion, increase ground water recharge and enhance property security.

Summary

Properly maintained lawn and recreational turfs:

- 1) Contribute a diverse array of benefits that make turfgrasses one of the best friends of the urban environmentalists.
- 2) Greatly enhance our quality of life, especially in densely populated urban areas.

Acknowledgement

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