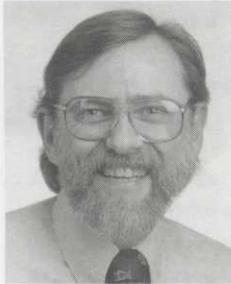


# A worthy challenge

by Russ McKinney



**A**T FIRST GLANCE, caring for lawns is not a complex business. After all, for thousands of kids, mowing their neighbors' lawns is a more common first venture than the proverbial lemonade stand. All they need is Dad's lawnmower, a can of gas, and a little initiative.

From such humble beginnings, lawn care has grown into a multi-billion dollar industry. It employs tens of thousands of professional turf managers and independent lawn care business operators. The entry level requirements for the frontline sector of the field are still relatively low. Many people enter the field without the benefit of a long period of specialized pre-employment training. Once in the field, the on-going educational requirements for certification are minimal.

But there is a lot to learn. Lawn care-givers must choose from:

- A WIDE SELECTION OF MACHINERY
- DIFFERENT VARIETIES OF GRASS
- VARIOUS METHODS OF PLANTING GRASS
- DIFFERENT WAYS OF HANDLING various kinds of soil conditions
- AND A HOST OF FERTILIZERS AND DISEASE and pest treatments designed to deal with a formidable array of turf diseases and plant pests.

In addition, turf managers must understand

- A DAUNTING AMOUNT OF TECHNICAL INFORMATION provided by manufacturers and academic researchers, and they must meet or comply with
- A GROWING LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS and standards.

For lawn care operators to succeed as businesses, they also must meet

- THE DEMANDS AND CONCERNS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS
- THE CHALLENGES OF THE COMPETITION for those customers
- AND A WHOLE OTHER WORLD of organizational and recordkeeping requirements related to "simply" being in business, paying taxes, and having employees.

The difficulties presented by this list of variables is compounded by the fact that all of them are more or less constantly changing.

## How will *Turf Grass Trends* help?

Our aim is to provide a single independent source of reliable, usable information on the full range of topics involved in this field. We will cover specific topics in detail, but,

as our name suggests, we will help our readers keep an eye on the general direction of changes. We also will seek to distinguish between verified facts and "mere" opinions—including our own. In short, *Turf Grass Trends* will help frontline lawn care decision-makers to educate themselves, so they can make their own, more informed decisions.

While many publications contain more advertising than actual editorial content, from cover to cover, *Turf Grass Trends* will be nothing but news, information, commentaries, and discussions. We will not be distracted by the need to sell advertising, and we will not be compromised by the ever present temptations of the publication and advertiser relationship.

We also aim to help our readers develop their own independent judgment about the enormous amount of information which is, in fact, put out by businesses with an obvious interest in promoting particular products and approaches. We will devote space to the perspectives of businesses involved in the lawn care industry, but the views expressed will be clearly labeled.

This does not mean that we will seek controversy for its own sake. It means that we will not hesitate to cover a subject, or to express our view on a subject, because it might be controversial. Like all industries, turf management deals with a variety of unsettled questions. Opposing opinions are to be expected.

While our primary audience will be lawn care operators and turf managers, we believe that *Turf Grass Trends* will help manufacturers and suppliers, academic researchers, and government regulators as well. In these fast-paced times, everyone has difficulty keeping up with new developments. *Turf Grass Trends* will provide a common forum for these different segments of the industry.

## Who will produce *Turf Grass Trends*?

To provide the required depth and breadth of coverage, *Turf Grass Trends* will be produced by a team whose qualifications cover the whole range of technicalities and topics:

- CHRISTOPHER SANN is a successful lawn care operator with 18 years of experience where it counts—out in the field. In 1990 he began sharing his expertise as a columnist for *Lawn Care Industry* magazine.
- DR. ERIC B. NELSON is Assistant Professor of Plant Pathology at Cornell University. He is one of the most respected academic researchers working on expanding the scientific understanding that underpins progress in the field.
- RUSS MCKINNEY is an award-winning business writer and illustrator, who has published hundreds of articles and illustrations. He understands the business and regulatory environment that lawn care shares with other fields, and he knows how to translate complex information into plain language.
- OTHER PROFESSIONALS—turf managers and lawn care business operators, academic researchers, and representatives of businesses and government agencies involved in the field—will contribute in various ways:

by serving as contacts for quoting in articles and by serving as guest experts and commentators.

- OUR READERS also will have several ways of contributing: suggesting topics, submitting their own comments and questions to experts on specific subjects, providing tips on practices that have worked for them, and participating in the discussion of issues and writing letters to the editor.

In today's world, becoming better informed is essential to doing a better job—and to staying in business. *Turf Grass Trends* will improve the flow of information that is as vital to greener, healthier lawns as using the right kinds of grass, the right fertilizer, and the right disease and pest controls. By improving the flow of information, *Turf Grass Trends* will help promote a greener, healthier lawncare industry. ■

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Readers who wish to comment on any aspect of the articles, news items, or commentaries published in *Turf Grass Trends*, or on any issues or concerns raised by them, should do so by writing to:

**TURF GRASS TRENDS**  
2070 Naaman's Rd., Suite 110  
Wilmington, DE 19810-2644

Please include a return address. Where appropriate, and as space allows, we will respond to the letters we publish. We reserve the right to edit all letters. All published letters become the property of *Turf Grass Trends*.

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\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU.