

Take Heed, Nature Needs Us Just as We Need Her

No matter how much we study nature in an effort to predict and control economic disasters, she always reminds us that we have a long way to go. But we keep trying. Harnessing nature's own power to correct imbalances seems to be wiser than to depend too heavily on artificial solutions. Natural solutions are slower and less reliable than some of our manmade tricks. Our manmade solutions are often necessary to bridge the gap between disaster and nature's own solution. It's ludicrous to condemn our laboratory-born answers to problems in favor of natural answers. We have both and we should use both.

Clearly the future of turfgrass management involves increased application of natural techniques to meet manmade expectations. Lowering our expectations does not seem to be the most popular answer. So we need to dig deeper into nature's bag of tricks.

We can't seem to control natural processes to the same degree that we can artificial ones. Science and nature do not see eye to eye. Repeatable results from specific events do not always occur in nature because nature has variables we don't see or know how to manipulate.

Modern technology is helping us understand more of nature's variables. Satellites, computers, and gene manipulation are bringing us closer to the rules of science. This is viewed as interference to some because the potential for misuse generates fear. Nevertheless, that is the way we are headed and there seems to be no turning back.

Turfgrass management is not exempt from the modern technology. Turf managers will need to have a broader education in the future to fully appreciate the impact of their work. Few occupations are as exposed to nature as we are. Therefore, our responsibility to protect nature is greater.



Bruce Shank

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