Update
Sports Field
Managers Association of New Jersey

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SFMANJ Spring Field Day in Hammonton Hits a Homerun

by Don Savard, CSFM*

It was perfect! The weather was warm, the program was terrific and the tours were outstanding. The 2005 Spring Field Day was held in Hammonton, N.J. this year on April 6, 2005. We met under the water tower at the Grounds Maintenance shed at Hammonton High School. Frank LaSasso and his team of Groundskeepers had everything ready for us. While enjoying coffee and donuts (courtesy of GSI Consultants-Turfcon), we visited and got registered. After a welcome and a brief introduction from our President Eleanor Hermann, we started the tour.

Frank LaSasso brought us to his Varsity baseball field and gave us an overview and history of the complex, from peach orchard to school campus, explaining how he and his crew have overcome some of the problems and challenges of a new site. Frank also gave us some tips on how he prepares his baseball field for games. Jim Hermann CSFM-Total Control gave us a very timely presentation on the Ten Points to a Safe and Playable Infield. A good Q&A session followed.

Betts Family from Tuckahoe Sod Farm

Next it was off to the Football Field (one of the best high school fields I've seen) where Frank explained how they keep the field in top shape. Dr Jim Murphy-Rutgers

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Inside This Issue

This newsletter is the official bi-monthly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.
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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

Field Day tour included cutting of big roll sod.

SFMANJ Business

Next Board of Directors Meeting –
June 1st, at Rutgers University, Geiger Bldg. at 5PM

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Morgan, Larry	Tuckahoe Turf Farms
Mulholland, Steven	New Jersey City University
Orgera, Robert	Mendham Borough
Panek, Zig	Monmouth County Parks
Pastrick, Bradford	North Brunswick Township
Patterson, Craig	Richard Stockton College
Paul, Albert	Ridgewood Village
Perdomo, Pedro	Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Pierce, Harold S.	Winslow Twp. Board of Ed.
Radcliffe, Ryan	Lakewood Blue Claws
Ravaschiere, Frank	Long Branch, City of
Ryan, Edward	The LandTek Group
Santalone, Jr., Ed	Atlantic Irrigation Specialties
Siegel, Bill	U.S. Athletic Fields, Inc.
Stetser, Scott	Atlantic Irrigation Specialties
Vestal, Charlie	Profile Products
Wilson, Howard	Somerset County Park Comm. ◆

Did You Know?

The only mandatory dimensions on a regulation baseball or softball infield, regardless of level of play are:

1. Distance between the bases
2. Pitching distance

All other dimensions are "recommended" Painting your fairlines on the infield skin will minimize poor playing conditions caused by sticky powdered materials ◆

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University, Cook College spoke about Soil Characteristics and Turfgrasses. We got a pretty good discussion going about soils, fertilizers and amendments. Jeff Cramer gave the talk about Understanding Specifications that Dr. Henry Indyk was supposed to give. Dr. Indyk was home recovering from an illness and was unable to join us (please get well soon Henry, we miss you!!!!) We saw a demonstration and discussed the uses of turf blankets (the Cover Sports USA turf blanket was generously donated by John Doyle, JDL Equipment Co.). Brad Park-Rutgers University, Cook College wrapped up the session with a discussion about Pre & Post emergence Selective Weed Control.

Next, we drove about 2 miles to the Tuckahoe Turf Farm where the Betts Family provided a luncheon feast under a big tent. Following lunch, we split into District groups and held brief District meetings. We are hoping to strengthen our District organization in the coming year.

Following lunch and the District meetings, we boarded 2 deluxe motor coaches compliments of Tuckahoe Turf Farm and began a tour of the farm. Tuckahoe Turf Farms is one of the largest growers in the Northeast, and is a leader in new and innovative varieties of sod and growth technology. Their operations include 1500 acres- 800 located in Hammonton and 100 located in Tuckahoe. The balance of the land is used for maintenance and watershed.

George Betts explained that his father Walter Betts and grandfather moved from Stratford, Connecticut in 1931 to Estell Manor, New Jersey and operated a truck farm, producing mainly lima beans and cranberries. In 1967 the family began producing sod and by 1969 devoted their entire

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farm to sod production. The farm in Hammonton was purchased primarily for its soil conditions, water access and prime location for its tri-state sales. In 1980, the business was purchased by Walter's sons, Tom and George, who continue to operate it today with their sons, John (turf production), James (office management and sales), Philip (farm manager), and David (dispatcher). The farm produces mainly bluegrass sod and tall fescue sod. Approximately 83,000 pounds of seed are planted each year.

This farm is big! The Hammonton farm is approximately 6 miles in perimeter. As the busses drove through the verdant sod fields in varying stages of growth development, over the remarkably smooth dirt roads, I admired the irrigation system that the farm uses. This irrigation system uses a number of large above ground irrigation machines on wheels that can roll over the field on a big circle from a central vertical water pivot. The large horizontal pipe with sprinkler heads is called a lateral. The size of these water pivots and laterals range from 1,100-2,000 feet in length, and deliver a water volume of 700-1,000 gallons per minute. The water is supplied from 120'-150' deep wells (10-18" wide) on the farm. George Betts said that it takes 2 days to water the entire farm.

The first stop was a demonstration of how they harvest big roll sod. I was expecting to see a mammoth harvesting machine. Instead, I was amazed that a 30 hp tractor with a 3 pt. hitch mounted harvesting implement not much larger than an aeravator was capable of harvesting a 4'x50' roll on sod in less than a minute. Fork lifts load the big rolls on a flat bed semi in record time. George said that they can harvest an acre of big rolls in about 2 hours. And as easy as it appeared to harvest the big roll, the crew gave a demonstration on how to install big roll sod using a tractor equipped with a tool mounted on the 3 pt. hitch that holds the big roll. Tuckahoe will install the sod for you or the attachment is available for you to do it yourself.

Next stop was across the farm to another field where a crew was harvesting the more common slabs of sod that are loaded on pallets. The harvesting machine is configured around a tractor, the pieces are cut, and a conveyor moves the slab from the ground up to a couple of workers who stack the sod on a pallet. The entire work area is under a canopy protecting the workers from the elements. When the pallet is full, the machine drops the pallet on the ground where the fork lifts load it a flatbed. There are about 500 square feet. of sod on a pallet. 1 acre of pallets can be harvested in about 4 hours. The farm's eight delivery tractor trailers each hold about 11,000 square feet per truck. This fall, 2 new auto stackers will replace the older harvesters.

In addition to growing sod, Tuckahoe Turf Farm does specialty work such as golf course restoration and installation, athletic fields and major off site seeding projects. They also operate a supply store, selling seed, fertilizer, tools and more. The day concluded with the awarding of pesticide credits.

Our sincere thanks go out to Frank LaSasso and his Team, the Hammonton Board of Education, the Betts family, John Doyle, Dr. Henry Indyk, our featured speakers, members of the Board of Directors and all who helped and who attended for making our Spring Field Day a success. ◆

White Grub Management in Athletic Field Turf

Biology of the white grub complex **by Dr. Albrecht M. Koppenhöfer***

In the northeastern USA, a complex of primarily introduced white grub species are the most widespread and destructive turfgrass insect pests. Until recently, the Japanese beetle (Popillia japonica) was regarded as the key species, but surveys have indicated that the oriental beetle, [Exomala (=Anomala) orientalis] has become the most important white grub species in New Jersey and some neighboring areas. Thus, the average white grub species composition in New Jersey home lawns in fall 2001 (5 counties, 61 sites, primarily central NJ) was 63% oriental beetle, 14% Asiatic garden beetle (Maladera castanea), 9% northern masked chafer (Cyclocephala borealis), 8% Japanese beetle, 4% May/June beetle (Phyllophaga spp.), and 2% green June beetle (Cotinis nitida) (Koppenhöfer et al. unpublished data). Another species, the European chafer (Rhizotrogus majalis) is the major low maintenance turfgrass pest north and west of New Jersey and may be more common in northwestern counties of New Jersey. However, it is important to keep in mind that species composition can vary considerably among sites.

Different white grub species can vary significantly in susceptibility to different control agents. Therefore proper species identification can be critical. The safest way to identify white grub species in the larval stage is to examine the raster pattern just in front of the anal slit on the grub's underside (Figure 1, see insert). Identification is the easiest when the grubs are 3rd instar larvae but at this point, the damage is often already done or impending. Therefore, identification should be done when grub populations are being monitored to determine whether curative treatments are necessary, i.e., in mid August.

Although the general life cycle of the important white grub species is very similar, the egg-laying period (major target for preventive treatments) and accordingly the occurrence of the voracious 3rd larval stage can vary by a few weeks among species; another reason for obtaining knowledge about the prevalent species in a turf site. Adult beetles emerge between June and August, mate, and the females return into the soil to lay eggs (total of about 20-60) in several batches over a period of 2-4 weeks. The egg stage, 1st larval stage, and 2nd larval stage each last about 3 weeks so that through September most of the grubs will molt to the 3rd and last larval stage. As the soil temperatures cool down in October, the grubs move to deeper soil layers to stay below the frost line to overwinter. During this time most species are more or less inactive. As the soil temperatures warm up in spring, the grubs come up to the root zone to feed for another 4-6 weeks in April and May before they pupate in the soil.

Signs of infestation

White grubs damage turf by chewing

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