

# UPDATE

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Fall 2025

Vol. 25, No. 3

Sports Field  
**Managers Association** of New Jersey



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## SFMANJ Fall Field Day

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025**

**Chestnut Branch Park**

401 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 08051

(See Schedule Inside)

### See Inside For:

Plan to Attend EXPO 25

Dealing with Field Wear

SFMANJ Historical Records

Fall Field Day 2025 Schedule

Anatomy of a Chapter Field Day

2025 Sports Field Managers Expo Program







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# Welcome! New and Renewed SFMANJ Members for 2025

We have 187 new & renewed members for 2025. The Association generated invoices for 2025 membership dues. If you did not receive an invoice, please contact us at 856.514.3179 or download the membership form available at [www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org). Mail membership dues direct to SFMANJ, PO Box 205, Pennsville, NJ 08070.

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## SAVE THE DATE

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025**

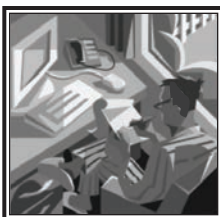
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## ATTENTION MEMBERS!



### SFMANJ Update is looking for authors.

Please feel free to send Brad Park, Editor, SFMANJ Update ([bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu](mailto:bradley.s.park@rutgers.edu)) and/or Debbie Savard, SFMANJ Executive Secretary ([mail@sfmanj.org](mailto:mail@sfmanj.org)) an article regarding your fields, your experiences, your problems and your surprises.

SFMANJ Update can accommodate articles of differing lengths and welcomes pictures. The SFMANJ Membership will benefit from reading your story.

**Feel free to call today:  
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**National Organization**

Sports Turf Managers Association

[www.stma.org](http://www.stma.org)

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*This newsletter is the official quarterly 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.*



# BEGIN YOUR PLANNING TO ATTEND EXPO 2025

DECEMBER 9-11, 2025

By Brad Park



*Editor's Note: This article was adapted from materials developed by Chris Carson, Expo Education Chair; and Sports Field Management Association (SFMA)*

It's time to begin planning your trip to Expo 2025. The New Jersey Green Expo will return to The Borgata in Atlantic City, NJ during December 9-11, 2025.

A few highlights of what's planned for Expo 2025:

**Credits, Credits, Credits...** New Jersey DEP Pesticide Credits (and other states) are anticipated as well as New Jersey ProFACT Fertilizer Credits.

**Education...** A comprehensive Educational Program will focus on Sports Fields, Lawn and Landscapes, and Golf disciplines. Local, national, and internationally known industry and university leaders will be presenting important information that you can use to make your operation better.

**Trade Show...** One of the largest trade show events in the region, Expo proudly presents many of the best vendors and suppliers of services. Discuss your specific management issues with the best companies our industry has to offer.

**Fellowship...** Many opportunities exist to meet old friends and to make new ones. Whether on the trade show floor, or in the hallways between sessions, or in the many formal social opportunities, or in the informal social get-togethers, the three days at Expo offer you a great opportunity to learn what others are doing in our business in a relaxed atmosphere. Many attendees have told us that these informal discussions are highlights of the conference!

**One-on-one discussion opportunities with industry leaders...** Including the many Faculty at Rutgers University and at other top-notch Universities. Rutgers Professors and more will be there to answer your management questions.

**Another year at The Borgata ...** The Borgata is the premier Hotel/Casino in Atlantic City and Expo will be returning to The Borgata for 2025!

**The Expo mission statement:** The NJ Green Expo is a science based conference and trade show that provides education, business, fellowship, and environmental stewardship opportunities in partnership with the Center for Turfgrass Science at Rutgers University.

**How can you convince your employer to send you?** Continuing education and industry connections are crucial to your success and the success of your sports fields. Here are some suggestions to help your employer understand how your attendance at Expo 2025 can add value to the overall operation of your facility.

## Educate yourself on the Conference and Exhibition

Provide your employer an overview of the size and scope of Expo 2025 and a copy of the education agenda. This edition of SFMANJ Update provides the Sports Field Managers Program for Expo 2025.

Pinpoint specific sessions you plan to attend, and tie their relevance to your sports facility. It is anticipated that tough-to-acquire New Jersey DEP Category 13 credits will be awarded for attendance during Sports Field Managers sessions in 2025.

Highlight the trade show and cite suppliers and equipment manufacturers you plan to meet. Discuss the networking opportunities you will have with peers who share challenges similar to the ones you have.

Explain how innovations in products, new research, and cutting edge management techniques continually change, and why it is important to stay abreast of those changes.

Reinforce how the success of your sports fields ultimately depends upon the continued professional development of you and your staff.

*Continued on page 18*

## SFMANJ Fall Field Day October 29, 2025 - Mantua Twp, NJ

**Don't forget to send  
in your entry for the  
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Photo  
Recap

# SFMANJ TRADE SHOW

Rutgers Lawn, Landscape, and Sports Turf Field Day • July 30, 2025

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## DEMOS



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Update Fall 2025





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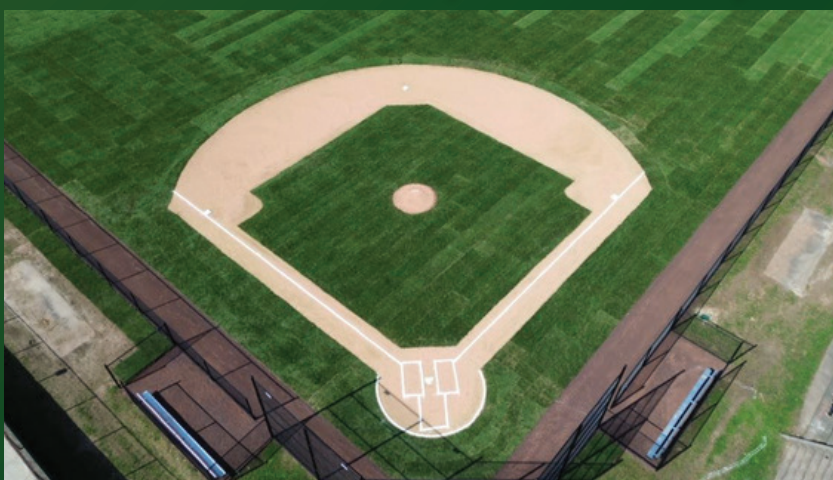
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# Anatomy of a SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (SFMA) CHAPTER FIELD DAY

By Rich Watson

I am amazed by the quality of the Sports Field Management Association (SFMA; formerly Sports Turf Managers Association [STMA]) Conference and Exhibition. The amount of time spent planning really shows every year. The educational sessions, vendor options and opportunity to network with your peers is a great chance to move your career forward. I always encourage anyone who has not been to a national conference to try at some point in their career to get to one. That may be easier said than done.

For those who cannot make it to the national conference, there is another option: SFMA Chapter field days. Chapter-sponsored field days also offer education, vendor participation and the opportunity to network with peers in your local area. I currently sit on the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) Board of Directors and previously served as President of the organization. Our Association is the New Jersey Chapter of SFMA.

Our New Jersey Chapter holds spring and fall field days every year. It is an opportunity for our organization to provide education, pesticide and fertilizer credits, equipment demonstrations, food and a fun day away from work. There are several things that have made our events successful (including but not limited to): a site with indoor and outdoor availability, a quality educational program, and a proportionate attendee to vendor ratio. It also doesn't hurt that there is typically no-charge for attendees. How is that possible? Let's take a look at the formula that has been developed in the Garden State.

## Picking the Right Site

When you think of a field day it brings to mind great weather, beautiful fields and an entire day of outdoor activities.

Sometimes Mother Nature has other plans. The weather in New Jersey and throughout the northeast and mid-Atlantic can be somewhat unpredictable in the spring and fall. I know that the folks attending our events are outdoor people but it is hard to concentrate when you have been in the rain for hours at a time. In addition to having a sports complex with a variety of sports fields we have also made it a priority to find a site with an indoor facility for educational sessions and vendor set-up if the weather turns ugly. This thinking has turned out to be a good strategy for a couple of reasons. It gives us the ability to have our event rain or shine.



## Education

"Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey is committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and networking with those in the sports turf industry". That is the mission statement of our chapter. It is something that we take very seriously. Providing education to our members is really what we are all about.

The SFMANJ Board of Directors goes through a process every year to put together topics that are timely and developed by a site visit to the venue that is hosting the event. An example of a timely topic was New Jersey's Commercial Fertilizer Applicator's Certification Program. The State enacted a law in 2012 that requires anyone applying fertilizer as part of their job to be certified and accrue continuing education credits to maintain certification. As with any new program there was a lot of anxiety and confusion when it was enacted. Our Association took the lead by offering education explaining the law and awards fertilizer recertification credits. Educational programs also include NJ School IPM Category pesticide credits that are difficult to acquire. Having the ability to provide hard-to-find fertilizer and pesticide credits is a great help in attracting people from all parts of the turf industry to attend our events.

We also encourage our vendors to provide hands-on education through a variety of field equipment demonstrations. This provides a good balance to our classroom type education. Everyone enjoys seeing new equipment and envisions how they might make it work on their site. It is a great way for our vendor members to contribute to the educational portion of the event while promoting their products.

## Vendor Support

The vendor members of our organization are the glue that holds everything together. We have a group of talented business people who really respect the industry and are a huge help in promoting SFMANJ. This group provides the financial backing that makes it possible to hold our field days at no-charge to sports field and grounds managers. I mentioned this earlier as a tease but holding a no-charge event is a great way to give back to the membership. It also allows municipal and school employees, who make up the bulk of our sports field manager membership, an easier way to get to the event by not having to try and find someone in their business office to go through the process of producing a purchase order for payment. Previously, many SFMANJ members and non-Members cited the difficulty getting to our field days because of the paperwork involved. We listened and thanks to our loyal vendor members more people are able to attend.

*Continued on page 17*

# New Jersey Green Expo – Turf & Landscape Conference

December 9-11, 2025  
The Borgata, Atlantic City, NJ

## 2025 Sports Field Managers Expo Program

### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

#### Afternoon session

- 1:00 - 1:30 PM New Jersey School IPM Update  
*Spencer Kerkhof, NJ Dep. of Environmental Protection*
- 1:30 – 2:30 PM Sports field management at schools using fewer pesticides  
*Dr. John Soroachan, University Tennessee*
- 2:30 – 3:00 PM SFMANJ Annual Business Meeting
- 3:00 – 4:00 PM Managing school sports fields and grounds using cultural practices and non-conventional pesticides  
*Dr. Adam Thoms, Iowa State University; President, SFMA*
- 4:00 - 8:00 PM Trade Show

(SEE EXPO ARTICLE ON PAGE 4)

### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2025

#### Morning session

- 7:30 - 8:00 AM Early bird sports field managers: Not just an acronym – Doing actual IPM at schools and parks  
*Zack Holm, Central Park Conservancy*
- 8:00 – 8:30 AM Sports field and grounds: The year in review  
*Brad Park, Rutgers University*
- 8:30 – 9:30 AM World Cup field preparation in North America  
*Dr. John Soroachan, University of Tennessee*
- 9:30 – 10:30 AM Securing necessary resources to manage sports fields and grounds at New Jersey schools  
*Keith Fisher, Central Regional School Dist (20 min)*  
*Kevin O’ Shea, Business Administrator, Central Regional School Dist. (20 min)*  
*Rich Watson, Laurel Lawnmower (20 min)*

Continued on page 17

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### SFMANJ BUSINESS

Next Board meeting – NJTA Expo Thursday, December 13, 1:15pm at the Taj Mahal athletic field educational session. Election of the 2002 Board of Directors will be held at the annual meeting. At that time members will have an opportunity to vote.

### CALENDER OF EVENTS

#### NJ TURF GRASS ASSOCIATION

December 11 – 13 – NJTA Expo Conference at the Taj Mahal in Atlantic City. For information call Dr. Richard Caton at 856-853-5973.

#### RUTGERS

January 7-11 & February 11-15 – Athletic Field Management School  
January 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6 – Professional Parks Maintenance  
February 26-28, 3 day short course – Athletic Field Construction and Maintenance  
Contact Office of Continuing Professional Education at 732-932-9271

#### STMA (Sports Turf Managers Association)

January 16 – 20 – National Conference in Las Vegas. Contact STMA at 1-800-323-3875.

### TIP OF THE MONTH

When temperatures drop in the late fall, four cycle, air cooled engines, which are utilized in much of the small to mid sized turf care equipment become very hard to start. A part of this problem is due to the fact that in our temperature zone, throughout the growing season a single viscosity SAE-30 is typically recommended. As the temperature falls, single viscosity oils become very thick and hinder starting. Change to a multi viscosity 10W-30 in the late fall to aid in starting your equipment. In cool temperatures multi viscosity oils remain thinner and allow the engine to turn over easier. Before trying this check with the engine manufacturer to be sure this is allowable and remember to change back to the original engine oil selection in the spring.

Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) turned 25 this summer - per the Association's alignment with Sports Field Management Association (then STMA) and our incorporation with the State of New Jersey in 2000. In commemoration of the Association's silver anniversary, historical items are being presented in SFMANJ during 2025 – Including this first ever publication of the SFMANJ Board of Directors in the December 2001 issue of SFMANJ Update.



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As we look forward to a great 2024 season, let us know if we can assist you in any way.

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# Dealing with Field Wear

By Don Savard CSFM, CGM

Field wear is a normal occurrence in our business and it is probably happening on your field while you are reading this. Whether it is a practice field or a game field, wear patterns develop as feet and turf collide. It is not your fault, and it doesn't usually go away. Don't get mad or get even, instead, just get more effective.

When I know what kind of damage I am experiencing, I can take appropriate remedial steps. Damage from field use in the form of soil compaction, leaf abrasion, or divoting are most common. Soil compaction occurs when soil particles become mashed together tightly by feet or wheels, (often when the soil is wet) resulting in restricted air and water movement through the rootzone. Mechanical aeration in its many forms helps to relieve compaction. Leaf abrasion occurs when the green plant tissues become ruptured causing the tissues to turn brown and die. Maintaining good soil fertility promotes new shoot growth to replace the damaged parts. Divoting occurs when turf plants are ripped out by the roots, often from cleats. Divoting can be minimized by maintaining a dense stand of turf with a dense, deep root system, but despite your best efforts, some damage is likely to occur. When that happens, replace the divots as soon as possible and fill in the chunked out holes with soil mix and seed to help repair the damage.

The common theme points to good cultural practices. A quality turf management program begins with good cultural practices. Our job is to reduce turf stress by creating the best possible conditions for

turf health. So, even if all you can do is nothing but grass cutting, at least mow correctly, that is, mow at the right mowing height (for your specific site), removing no more than 1/3 of the growth at one time, and mowing with a sharp mower blade.

As mentioned previously, mechanical aeration, in its many forms is an excellent defense against field wear. The benefits include: reduction in soil bulk density, faster water infiltration into the rootzone, venting the rootzone so that oxygen can reach the roots and soil gases can escape, aiding in thatch control and opening the surface for improved seed to soil contact when overseeding the field. According to the UConn Turfgrass Best Management Practices for Pesticide-Free Cool-Season Athletic Fields Bulletin B-0200 – October 2013 (Henderson, J.; Wallace, V.; Campbell, J.):

*“Aggressive overseeding is one of the most important cultural practices required to maintain acceptable turfgrass quality and playing conditions on a high traffic/pesticide-free athletic field.*

*Aggressive overseeding can be defined as applying seed (at rates exceeding the typical recommended ranges for seedling establishment) onto well-established turfgrass areas, regardless of turfgrass density, in an effort to maintain/increase desirable species on athletic fields subject to intense traffic (Minner et al., 2008).*

Continued on page 14

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# Dealing with Field Wear

Continued from page 13



Selection of turfgrass species and timing of application depends heavily on when the most intense athletic field use occurs. Given budgetary restrictions, overseeding efforts can be focused on concentrated traffic areas. Perennial ryegrass [PR] is the preferred turfgrass species for aggressive overseeding due to its quick germination, speed of establishment and its ability to develop under heavily trafficked conditions (Minner et al., 2008). However, consider a Kentucky bluegrass [KB]/perennial ryegrass (70:30) mixture (by weight) for spring re-establishment to help maintain Kentucky bluegrass populations on fall use athletic fields (Stier et al., 2008). Kentucky bluegrass has a rhizomatous growth habit that helps wear recovery.

Maintaining multiple species on the playing surface (i.e. KB:PR) also helps maintain genetic diversity for disease management.

Seed should be broadcast immediately prior to a cleated practice or game allowing players to work seed into the soil and optimize seed to soil contact. If traffic is not imminent, seed should be applied using a spike seeder that will maximize seed to soil contact while minimizing damage to the existing turfgrass stand.

If the athletic field is used May-August, apply 3-5 lbs. of PR seed/1000ft<sup>2</sup> per month.

September 1st, apply up to 20 lbs. seed/1000ft<sup>2</sup>.

Research has shown that applying seed as a single, early application of perennial ryegrass more than doubled the amount of turfgrass cover, compared to dividing the same amount of seed into multiple, smaller amounts applied each week before a game or practice (Minner et al., 2008). The amount of seed applied should be based on the amount of anticipated field use, intensity of traffic, and previous experience with each individual field. Generally, the more seed applied will result in greater turfgrass cover retention in late fall and fewer weeds the subsequent spring.

Continued on page 17

## SFMANJ FALL FIELD DAY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025

**RAIN OR SHINE**

### CHESTNUT BRANCH PARK

401 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 08051

**Host: Joe Anderson,  
Chestnut Branch Park, Mantua Township**

- 7:00 AM Vendors May Arrive and Set-Up
- 7:30 – 9:00 AM Attendee Registration and Trade Show  
Main Parking Lot Area
- 9:00 – 9:30 AM Pass-the-Mic Vendor Time  
Mantua Township Recognition
- 9:30 – 10:00 AM Motorized Sprayer Calibration  
Trade Show Area  
Turf Trade and Steel Green  
Manufacturing
- 10:00 – 11:00 AM Softball Field Maintenance  
Softball Field  
Joe Anderson, Mantua Township  
Skin Surface Demos
- 11:00 – 11:30 AM Expanded Mowing Equipment Demonstrations  
Football Field
- 11:30 – 12:30 PM Soccer Field Maintenance and Irrigation Management  
Soccer Complex  
Joe Anderson, Mantua Township  
Expanded Line Painting Demos.
- 12:30 – 1:00 PM Updating Your Drug-Free Workplace Policy & Procedures:  
Addressing the Legalization of Marijuana and the Opioid Crisis  
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Bill Lillis, Partnership for Drug-Free NJ
- 1:00 PM Door Prizes, Credits and Adjourn

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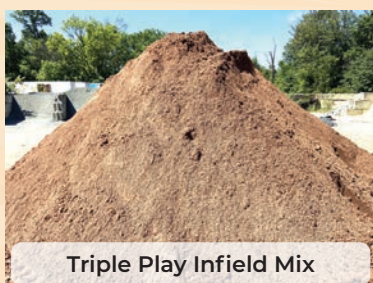


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# Dealing with Field Wear

Continued from page 14



Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey (SFMANJ) and Rutgers University all have resources to help you develop a sports field management program that will be effective.)

Nutrient management, based on current soil test results is nothing more a well thought out diet for a healthy stand of turf that will hold up for athletic events. There is no good reason to over fertilize turf. Adequately nourished turf recovers well from abuse, saves money and is better for the environment.

Soil management also includes irrigation management. As a rule of thumb, 1 inch of water either from rain or a sprinkler per week is necessary to keep turfgrass healthy. Try to adjust irrigation schedule so it doesn't conflict with sports activities because foot traffic on wet turf will cause damage.

Fences, track and permanent goals often dictate the boundaries of a sports field. One way to overcome this is to move the field or change the size. If you can shift a field left, right up or down, or make it smaller temporarily, you can spread some of the wear around a bit.

My favorite tool for dealing with field wear is the installation of sod to remediate a worn area, such as a goal mouth. Many people believe that purchasing sod is expensive, so instead, they will purchase grass seed. The advantage of sod over reseeding is speed of recovery. It takes 12-18 months for seed to reach the maturity of sod. During that time, it must receive numerous inputs of nutrients, water, mowing and perhaps some pesticides. When you purchase sod, all of the work and materials have been included, at a cost much cheaper than you could provide. You get safety and playability right away after a short grow-in period. For small areas, you can even cut out some of your own turf from an out of the way area for a quick patch.

No matter what you do, wear is going to continue to happen. Always remember that grass is more forgiving than people. It is unlikely that you will change people's habits or the team culture. Many coaches have the players "run the lines" or practice on wet fields in the rain to "toughen them up". Their focus is coaching a team, not growing a field. So, be tactful and carry an appropriate message. After a while, it begins to sink in. My coaches now stay off of saturated fields. It is an interesting fact that many of the STMA Field of the Year winners in the K-12 categories are coaches and athletic directors. Hard to believe!

*Don Savard is a Retired Sports Field Manager; SFMANJ Past-President; and past recipient of the SFMANJ Dr. Henry Indyk Memorial Award.*



## SFMANJ FALL FIELD DAY

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2025

CHESTNUT BRANCH PARK

401 Main Street, Mantua, NJ 08051

[www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org) / 856-514-3179

## 2025 Sports Field Managers Expo Program

Continued from page 8

### Morning session (continued)

10:30 – 11:30 AM Improving athletic field performance through research

*Dr. Adam Thoms, Iowa State University; President, SFMA*

11:30 - 2:30 PM Trade Show

### Afternoon session

2:30 – 3:00 PM Sports field management at Winslow Township BOE

*Dave Junkerman, Winslow Township BOE*

3:00 – 4:00 PM Problem weeds: Cultural and chemical controls for schools and municipalities

*Dr. Matt Elmore, Rutgers University*

4:00 – 4:30 PM Sports fields & Grounds Management at Dunellen BOE

*Matt Olivi, Dunellen BOE*

4:30 – 5:00 PM Fall sports set-up at Cumberland Regional High School

*Kevin Shipman, Cumberland Regional School District*



## Anatomy of a SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION (SFMA) CHAPTER FIELD DAY

Continued on page 7

There are many ways that a vendor can support our field day. We offer a variety of packages that can include a booth to display information and product, a field demonstration with equipment and sponsoring breakfast or lunch. This allows the vendor to participate as little or as much as they want in our event. We hope that our events provide a good return on their investment in us.

### Timing

We have found that if you schedule your events at the same time every year (i.e. Spring Field Day, Summer Trade Show & Equipment Demos at the Rutgers Adelphia Field Day, and Fall Field Day) it makes it easier for the membership to plan to make it to your event. The people that attend our events are very busy people with changing sports schedules but if they have the information about an event early enough, it makes it easier for them to make plans to attend.

Field days take a lot of work and planning but when it all comes together they are something to be proud of for all parties involved. Hope to see you at the SFMANJ Fall Field Day on October 29, 2025 in Mantua Township, NJ.

*Rich Watson is Sales Associate, Laurel Lawnmower, Blackwood, NJ; Past-President, SFMANJ; and current Vice President of the SFMANJ Board of Directors*

# Calendar of Events

## **SFMANJ 2025 Fall Field Day**

October 29, 2025  
Chestnut Branch Park  
Mantua Township, NJ  
856.514.3179  
[www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)

## **New Jersey Green Expo Turf & Landscape Conference**

December 9-11, 2025  
Borgata Hotel & Casino  
Atlantic City, NJ  
973.812.6467  
[www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org)

## **2026 Sports Field Management Association (SFMA) Conference & Exhibition**

January 18-22, 2026  
Fort Worth, TX  
800.541.4955  
[www.sportsfieldmanagement.org](http://www.sportsfieldmanagement.org)

## **2026 Rutgers-NJAES OCPE Courses (VIRTUAL) Two-Day Athletic Field Maintenance**

February 11-12, 2026  
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February 19, 2026  
848-932-9271  
[www.cpe.rutgers.edu](http://www.cpe.rutgers.edu)

Please go to  
**[www.sfmanj.org](http://www.sfmanj.org)**  
or call **865-514-3179**

for information on and  
registration forms for the  
**SFMANJ Fall Field Day**  
in Mantua Twp.

## **BEGIN YOUR PLANNING TO ATTEND EXPO 2025**

*Continued from page 4*

### **Know the Cost**

Make a case for efficient and effective use of your facility's training dollars. By attending Expo 2025, you will be exposed to the most relevant education and technology in one place, making it the most effective use of training dollars.

Research travel times and hotel costs. While Atlantic City is feasible day trip from almost anywhere in New Jersey, the New Jersey Turfgrass Association does its part to negotiate reasonable room rates at The Borgata to make staying a night reasonable. Expo 2025 will feature online registration at [www.njturfgrass.org](http://www.njturfgrass.org)

### **Have an Action Plan**

Develop a plan for how operations will continue in your absence. Make sure you are accessible by phone (please turn off or set on vibrate during sessions!!!!) to address any concerns that might arise in your absence.

Consider preparing and presenting a report on the information you learned and how you plan to put it into practice at your facility. Demonstrate how you will share the technical information learned with your staff for their continuing educational development.

### **See you in Atlantic City!**

*Brad Park is Research & Outreach Agronomist, Rutgers University; Editor, SFMANJ Update newsletter; and a member of the SFMANJ Board of Directors.*

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