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 201-837-2140

**CALENDER OF EVENTS**

**STMA**

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

**RUTGERS**

January 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6 - Professional Parks  
 Maintenance Call (732) 932-9271

February 26-28 - 3-day short course-Athletic Field  
 Construction and Maintenance Call (732) 932-9271

**NEW JERSEY LANDSCAPE TRADE**

**SHOW & CONFERENCE** see flyer enclosed  
 February 27 - 8:30am to 4:30pm at the  
 Meadowlands Exposition Center in Secaucus, NJ.  
 Call 201-664-6310

**SFMANJ FIELD DAY**

April 2002 - Plainsboro Township - More info in  
 next months newsletter.

**SFMANJ Membership Registration form**

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**Send with Check or voucher to:**

**SFMANJ**  
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## “RUTGERS CORNER”

*‘Perennial Ryegrass Varieties for New Jersey Athletic Fields’* by Dr. James Murphy

Perennial ryegrass is popular in many parts of the world because of its ability to rapidly establish turf with an attractive, leafy appearance and a persistent, wear tolerant surface. Present varieties have been developed with increased stress tolerance, improved resistance to many pests, cleaner mowing, a lower growth habit and reduced mowing requirement, darker green color, more uniform texture, and higher shoot density. The varieties ‘Linn’ and ‘Nui’ should be avoided because the very poor mowing quality, low shoot density, and poor disease resistance of these grasses will result in unsatisfactory turf.

Although improvements in summer performance and pest resistance have been made, further improvements are needed to realize the full potential of perennial ryegrass, particularly for regions with hot, humid summers. Cold hardiness and the ability to tolerate long periods of cover from ice sheets are other weaknesses of perennial ryegrass that can be important during the very occasional severe winters in New Jersey. For this reason, it is a good strategy to include Kentucky bluegrasses in a mixture with perennial ryegrass, since Kentucky bluegrass has excellent cold hardiness. Such mixtures should consist of one or more Kentucky bluegrass varieties in combination with two or more of the turf-type perennial ryegrass varieties with the following standards (percentage by weight):

85-95% Kentucky bluegrass

5-15% Perennial Ryegrass(Table 1)

**NOTE:** Lower maintenance varieties of Kentucky bluegrass include the Bellevue Type; Mid-Atlantic Type; and Aspen, Cheri, Ram I, and NuStar. For more information on Kentucky bluegrass varieties see Rutgers Cooperative Extension publication FS738 at :

<http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/pdfs/fs738.pdf>

<http://www.rce.rutgers.edu/pubs/pdfs/fs738.pdf>

Table 1. Recommended turf-type perennial ryegrass varieties.

### Very High Quality

Allstar<sup>2</sup> Amazing

Applaud Barlennium

Brightstar II Charismatic

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Stellar Wilmington

High Quality

Affirmed Allsport

Ascend Calypso II

Catalina Charger II

Divine Legacy II

Majesty Manhattan 3

Panther Phantom

Pleasure XL Secretariat

### RUTGERS WEBSITES

Center for Turfgrass Science  
<http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~turf>

Turfgrass Management Program  
<http://aesop.rutgers.edu/~murphy>

Rutgers Cooperative Extension  
<http://www.rce.rutgers.edu>

# “Winterizing’ Your Turf Equipment”

by Dean Marzocca  
Dean’s Lawn & Landscape

We all do the same thing, its part of life or should I say it is our life: We wake up, go to work, get work done, do more work, get more work done and then go home and go to sleep. Repeat process the following day until the end of the season. That’s it, right? Same program every year until we retire. Well, the object here is to make the work part a little easier during the year so we can get to the retire part and still have enough life in us to enjoy it. So what do we do? We buy machines that will make our job easier. Simple enough until you think about the details for a while.

Here are some simple facts:

- Machines make us money
- Machines cost us money
- What should we do?
- Spend money wisely on the machines
- Machines will make more money

The “end of the season” is defined as the time of the year when a particular machine / equipment will not be needed for some extended period of time. For example, snowplows end their season in the spring. Aerators end their season twice in one year, at the end of spring and then again at the end of autumn. Sounds tricky but it is pretty much a straightforward concept. Finish the last job and put it in the shed. Need it again, pull it out of the shed and get it in service. If you are lucky that procedure might work.

Hold on! Not so fast here. Remember last year when you pulled the snowplow out of the shed and you noticed all the rust on the blade and the cutting edge? How about the pins and the springs that look like they might fail the first time the blade trips. Or, how about the aerator that was put away after the last job in the spring. Now all the tines are covered with rust and the hollow cores are plugged up with what looks like dried soil but acts like cement. How about the time needed to free the cores so they will penetrate the soil so they can do their job.

What we need here is a bit of ‘WINTERIZING”

‘WINTERIZING’ can be defined as getting the machine ready for the next job BEFORE you put it away after the LAST job.

Time is money, machines make money the more time you have to do the work without spending

more money than you have to leads to one thing: retiring with lots of money. Great concept!

Seriously now. If we take care of our machines they will take care of us. They make the work easier to complete and probably in less time. Seeing the job being completed in a timely manner will also lower our stress to a manageable level. Time is money! Put the time in now and you will make more money later.

I don’t know if you can accurately say that a neglected engine will cost the most money to repair but it might be a good place to start talking about ‘winterizing’.

## How to Winterize Your Turf Equipment Engines

As winter approaches, it is time to winterize your gasoline-powered equipment such as lawn mowers.

*FACT: Winterizing will help extend the life of your small gasoline engines.*

To winterize your small gasoline engines there are two different approaches you can take:

### **1. Drain the Tank**

Check the owner's manual for information on draining the fuel system for off-season storage. If recommended for your specific model, draining the tank will reduce evaporative emissions that occur during storage. *Continued on page 5 “Winterize”*



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## 'Winterize' Continued ---

If the owner's manual says the gasoline can be removed and it can be done easily, the gasoline should be carefully drained from the tank (and carburetor, if possible) and collected in a clean, approved storage container. Any remaining gasoline in the system can be removed by operating the engine until it stops.

### 2. Use a Fuel Stabilizer

If the gasoline cannot be easily removed, a gasoline stabilizer should be added to the fuel in the tank. To minimize air space in the engine's fuel tank, fill the tank full with the gasoline/stabilizer mixture. The engine should be operated for a few minutes to draw the stabilized gasoline into the carburetor. For added protection you may want to consider taking the time to close the engine's valves. For engines with hand-pull starters this can be done by pulling the cord until resistance is felt. Also an effective vapor barrier can be added by placing a piece of aluminum foil over the tank cap and then securing the foil with tape.

Whichever approach is taken, you should also store your motorized equipment in a cool, dry place that is well ventilated and out of direct sunlight. Either winterizing approach is the same, regardless of whether you are using reformulated gasoline or conventional gasoline. Reformulated gasoline meets all the same requirements for storability as conventional gasoline. Therefore, reformulated gasoline is just as storable as conventional gasoline.

Why is 'winterizing' the fuel system so important? Winterizing is important because gasoline left in an engine's fuel tank and carburetor can degrade over time. During storage, gasoline can interact with air and moisture to form gums and deposits. Therefore you should not store gasoline in the engine's fuel tank for any inactive periods longer than one to two months unless it is properly stabilized.

The next step is to thoroughly lubricate the internal moving parts. Fogging oil is the best solution here. Fogging oil is a very thin lubricating oil that penetrates all small cracks and crevices getting to the parts that need it the most. The crank bearing, valve seats etc. all need that oil to be there when you start it up for the first time in the spring. Remember what I said above... 'WINTERIZING' can be defined as getting the machine ready for the next job BEFORE you put it away after the LAST job.

Spray all external moving parts with light oil such as WD-40 or CRC. This will form a barrier to keep

moisture off the metal parts. Then look over the piece of equipment and find all the scratched and dented damaged areas. Spray all these areas with the same oil. I prefer to wait until spring to do any touch-up painting. Sometimes moisture is still under the paint in the fall and it tends to spread over the winter. This just leads to doing the job twice.

I failed to mention cleaning but you already knew that. Soap and water every where. Decks, covers, handles, wheels, frames all need to be free of soil, oil and contaminates. Get it clean so you can see what you have to work with and what might need attention. You will never see that cracked deck when it is covered with dried mud. Grass clippings, chlorophyll, soil and grime all hold moisture. Moisture promotes rust. Rust deteriorates and fatigues metal. Rusted metal fails. Rusted machines fail and then you fail when you have to do the machines' jobs!

Once all the above tasks are complete for the machine it is a good idea to place a thin piece of plastic over the machine. I like to use a trash can liner. Use a sharp knife to slit it open and lay it over the entire machine especially the engine. This plastic will be the layer that attracts any condensation. Better there than on that clean 'winterized' machine that you won't be using for awhile. The daily dew, or frost settling on the machine will eventually break down or weaken many parts. The woven pull cords will rot and break just like rusty nuts will. You know how we all hate rusty nuts. Avoid it all together and enjoy the moment when it is placed back into service.

Remember, be smart and take care of that equipment and it will take care of you. Refer to your owner's manual or shop manual for any special details that might pertain to your special piece of equipment. You paid good money for it and it is making good money for you so why not keep it in service for many seasons to come. ;) )





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TO  
SUCCESS  
STARTS  
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# **NEW JERSEY LANDSCAPE 2002**

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**ANNUAL**

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## **"Give It What It Needs"**

*"Understanding Soil Test Results"* by Jim Hermann

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Athletic field maintenance has always been and always will be a product of cause and effect. Within the sports turf environment there are both positive and negative influences. Proper turf management is the product of a thorough understanding of these influences along with an ability to visually evaluate turf quality and make educated decisions using all information available. Soil testing is one means of acquiring information and should be used as a foundation for program development.

The most basic requirement of proper turf management is maintaining optimum soil fertility. Understanding soil test results gives the turf manager the basic information necessary to establish a yearly fertility program. The objective of an effective fertility program is to achieve and maintain optimum available nutrient levels while taking into consideration turf growth habits.

Information necessary to the turf manager for the purpose of proper soil evaluation is supplied in the form of a basic soil test. This test should include soil acidity (pH), nutrient levels (P, K, Mg, Ca), salt concentration (EC) and organic content. Different soil testing labs may or may not include all of these components in their basic soil test. However, the more information you have available to you the more capable you will be in determining your individual turf strategy. Additional information I have found to be beneficial to me is CEC (cation exchange capacity) and base saturation of K, Mg, and Ca.

Soil pH is simply a measure of soil acidity. I have seen pH levels range from 4.8 – 7.5. I would imagine the range could be broader. The important point to remember is that turf utilizes nutrients most effectively at a neutral pH of approx. 6.5 – 6.8

Test results will include lime recommendations based on the soil pH. When considering lime products it is important to be aware that there is high calcium lime and there is also high magnesium lime. The proper product again is determined by the results of the test. Don't allow someone to sell you high magnesium lime when you need high calcium lime. There can be a considerable cost difference between these two products. Screen quality is also a major consideration when choosing a lime product. Lime is nothing more than pulverized rock. The finer the

rock is pulverized, the faster the response will be. The higher the screen quality, the finer the material is. A higher screen quality is more desirable than a low screen quality.

Pelletized lime is typically considered the most effective and efficient material. This material is a pulverized lime, which is then compressed into pellets for ease of distribution through a broadcast spreader.

Most soil testing labs report nutrient (P, K, Mg, Ca) availability in a similar fashion. Availability is listed at four or five relative levels ranging from the worst to the best-case scenario such as poor, medium, good, high, very high or below optimum, (very low, low, medium) optimum, above optimum. Along with this rating the availability is listed in lbs./acre. What is important is the level of availability. Be it poor, medium, good etc. Recommendations are generally made to bring fertility levels into the optimum range. Assuming that clippings are recycled the turf generally returns most, if not all the nutrients it has taken from the soil. For this reason once optimum fertility levels are reached it becomes the decision of turf manager whether or not maintenance applications of a nutrient are necessary to maintain existing levels. Over time with continued soil testing on an annual or bi-annual basis, trends and nutrient usage can be projected for a given field, thus giving the turf manager increased confidence in his fertility program.

Once proper pH is established and optimum levels of phosphorous and potassium are reached and equilibrium is established, nitrogen is generally the only nutrient necessary to maintain healthy turf. When dealing with straight nitrogen products the turf manager can be much more selective in the source of nitrogen used. He/she is not so dependant on standard formulations. The fertilizer cost per acre drops substantially when you go from a complete balanced fertilizer formulation to a straight nitrogen formulation.

Soil test results will typically give recommendations on the yearly amount of nitrogen necessary for turf. I have found these recommendations to be very general in nature. It is the job of the turf manager to take these recommendations and modify them to fit the individual needs of each particular field. An example of this would be to increase the amount of nitrogen applied in the

early fall to a soccer field as compared to a more conservative application on a baseball outfield. The stress inflicted on a soccer field deserves more consideration than do three people standing in a baseball outfield. The baseball outfield deserves more consideration than does the common ground between the fields. By modifying recommendations to fit individual situations, the efficiency of your program can be maximized while overall cost can be minimized or reallocated.

In addition to nutrient availability, potassium, magnesium and calcium are sometimes listed as a base saturation percentage. I have been given different recommendations from different labs in reference to optimum levels but they basically say the same thing only in a different way.

One lab recommends that calcium should be a 5 to 1 ratio with magnesium while potassium should be below 7%. Another lab recommends that calcium be around 65% and magnesium be around 12% while potassium should be 2 to 5%. When you think about it that is just about a 5 to 1 ratio calcium to magnesium and I'm not going to question a couple of percent with potassium. When potassium, calcium and magnesium are in their proper proportions the soil pH will generally be close to optimum.

All these percentages and numbers really don't mean anything individually. Because they are percentages, which are relative values, when one goes up typically the other goes down and vice versa.

This part of the soil puzzle continues to get more involved beyond the simplistic explanations I have given and my personal understanding is limited to what I have written, so let's move on.

Soil is a blend of sand, silt and clay in varying proportions. It is a complex medium of physical, chemical and biological properties. Organic content is one measure of soil fertility. Here in Hunterdon County the soils I have had tested typically range from around 1.5% to 3.5%. Again, only speaking from a very basic level of understanding, the organic content of the soil is responsible for the breakdown and availability of nutrients to the turf. It is the portion of the soil that suffers when high salt content is a problem. It is the biological properties of the soil they are addressing when they recommend bio-stimulants. There's a subject that's tough to understand. Reading an article on biostimulants is like reading the ingredients on the side of a loaf of store-bought white bread. I don't know what all they contain,

but I do know that some of it is already contained in the organic content of your soil.

The consideration for existing organic content of a soil is most important during the establishment period of a new stand of turf. If there is enough organic matter available in the soil for turf establishment, there is typically enough for maintenance of the turf. A new seeding will utilize existing reserves of organic matter during initial establishment. Once turf is established it has the miraculous ability to replenish its reserve of organic matter through the continuous growth, decomposition, and decay of root system. Organic content along with clay content has a lot to do with the water holding capacity of the soil. This trickles down (get it, trickles down?) to the soil texture and drainage quality. Incorporation of organic matter into a heavy clay soil has the potential to relieve or minimize compactive tendencies. This can be of great value on athletic fields.

Modification or manipulation of the organic content in your soil is sometimes overstated when considering products and developing a topdressing strategy for your fields. The key to a successful topdressing strategy is in finding a product that is compatible with the existing soil, and properly incorporating that product into the top three inches by tilling or by core aeration. These procedures will be discussed more in depth in an upcoming article.

Please note: The benefits derived from increasing the level of organics in your soil are not a license to indiscriminately topdress with ungodly amounts of organic topdressing. The problems caused by the incorrect application of topdressing far and above exceed the potential benefits.

**CEC (cation exchange capacity):** Simply stated, the CEC value is a measure of the soil's ability to hold cation nutrients, primarily K, Ca and Mg. Kind of like the facets of a diamond. The more facets, the more potential sites for nutrients to be held. In general, the higher the sand content of your soil the lower the CEC will be. The higher the clay and or organic content of your soil, the higher the CEC will be. Most soils I have had tested range from 5 on the moderate side to 18 on the high side. CEC is not a factor that can be considered "Good" or "Bad" but is more a value, which describes the soil's properties. A soil with a lower CEC has less holding power. A higher CEC on the other hand depicts a soil with more holding power. The soil-testing laboratory utilizes this information when making fertility recommendations.

Because CEC is a function of the clay and organic content of the soil, and clay is generally the dominant of the two, CEC can also be a good indicator of other soil characteristics such as drainage and ease of compaction.

Last but not least is salt content or EC (electrical conductivity). Different labs report results in different units of measure. These units can be millimhos/cm (mmhos/cm), decisiemens/meter (DS/m), or parts per million (ppm). These units can be converted as follows- 1 mmhos/cm. = 1 DS/m = 640 ppm

Rutgers lab assigns a status to the level of salt content. The status levels are as follows:

**0 – 0.2 mmhos/cm** = Low salt concentrations - may be too low for turf growth

**0.2 – 0.5 mmhos/cm** = Medium salt concentrations - a satisfactory range for turf growth.

**0.5 – 0.8 mmhos/cm** = High salt concentrations - slightly higher than desirable

**Above 1.5 mmhos/cm** = excessive salt concentrations - plants dwarfed, failure in established turf becomes evident.

Determining and maintaining optimum fertility levels in the soil is only the start of providing a healthy environment for turf development. There are a total of 17 nutrients necessary for the healthy development of turf. We have discussed only a few. The remaining nutrients are typically needed in smaller amounts and are generally readily available. These nutrients become a much greater consideration in sand based fields due to the relatively low nutrient holding power of these soils.

When problems in turf health and vigor arise and remain undiagnosed, based on information provided by your soil test it may become necessary to investigate the availability of micronutrients by further soil testing. The turf manager may also elect to do a tissue analysis of the turf in question, and compare the results to a tissue analysis on healthy turf. Soil and tissue testing are available through a number of commercial test laboratories as well as:

Rutgers Soil Testing Laboratory  
P.O. Box 902,  
Milltown, NJ 08850. ....  
Telephone: (732)932-9295 ;)

## **'Effective Communication Skills'** *A Key Component for Athletic Field Managers*

By George Van Haasteren, CGM  
Sports Field Management Systems

From time to time, I hear from athletic field managers across the country on how difficult it is for them to get their point across to the people above them. Another concern from grounds managers is that they feel that they constantly have to justify their position or their department. For the most part athletic field managers are a rare group who are totally dedicated to their profession. They know how to grow turf, identify weeds, diseases and areas that need repair to reduce injuries and liability. The difficulty lies in when everyone around them "seems" to know their job better than they do. This may be the result of not knowing how to present their ideas and thoughts through memos, reports or careful budget preparation.

We may know more than those who we report to when it comes to caring for the fields we maintain but it matters little if we have difficulty in communicating our ideas or thoughts to those we report to. That is why it is equally important for the manager or supervisor to equally be proficient in having effective communication skills.

I believe that in order to have those above you understand and support you, you need to be equally as good or if not better as they are when it comes to your writing and speaking skills, budgeting, computer skills, labor laws, diversity, gender issues etc.. To do so, I recommend the following ways that will aid in being a truly successful athletic field manager:

Attend workshops, seminars or classes. Don't just attend something that pertains to the technical aspect of grounds management. Look for something that you know that you need to improve on as a manager or supervisor and that you will benefit from.

If you have difficulties working with your computer skills, take a course or courses that will assist you. *Continued on page 10.. 'Skills'*

**Did You Know? Soil Compaction can cause nitrogen to be unavailable to the turf, thus wasting time and money.**



## “Sports Field Managers”

### ‘Certification Program’

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA), having recognized the importance of fostering and improving professionalism within the sports turf industry, has developed a certification program for Certified Sports Field Managers. The purpose of the program is to:

- Increase professionalism in the sports turf industry
- Promote Better and Safer Sports Turf Areas
- Establish credentials that signify a specific level of expertise
- Increase career opportunities and promote the sports turf manager and the profession
- Provide recognition for attaining a level of expertise and performance as professionals in the industry
- Stimulate and motivate improved performance and increased professionalism
- Increase opportunities for education and training

Additionally the STMA has established continuing education requirements that all Certified Sports Field Managers must satisfy to maintain their status as a STMA Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM)

In order to attain the designation of Certified Sports Field Manager, a candidate must satisfy: 1) the Basic Requirements; 2) the combination of education and experience point requirements; 3) pass a national certification examination. There is an application fee of \$250 for STMA members and \$350 for non-members, a testing fee of \$100 for members and non-members.

STMA offers other member benefits including: facilities tours, a national awards program, a bi-monthly newsletter, Sports Turf Topics (their compendium), an annual membership roster and resource manual, a monthly magazine, the annual conference and exhibition, and this certification program.

If you are interested in receiving more information about becoming a member or on the certification program contact the National Sports Turf Managers Association at 1-800-323-3875 or e-mail SportsTMgr@aol.com You can check out their web-site at [www.sportsturfmanager.com](http://www.sportsturfmanager.com)

## “Monthly Field Tip”

Shoot first and ask questions later. When grading or renovating your infield, use a transit level to shoot elevations of turf perimeters, base paths, base inserts, home plate, pitchers mound etc. Document these elevations to use as a reference any time drainage or other problems arise. Water typically requires a 1% slope (1/8" per foot) to flow freely off an infield. Try to maintain a minimum of 1% slope on all skinned areas.

Note: Whenever shooting elevations, always shoot a benchmark. This is the elevation of a stationary object in the close vicinity of your infield such as a catch basin, head wall etc. This benchmark can be used as a reference to correlate changes in field elevations caused by wear, erosion, lip buildup etc.. If your benchmark reads 4' this time and 5' the next time you are taking shots, all you need to do is add 1 foot to all your documented elevations and they will be relative to your new shots.

### ‘Skills’ continued

Most work is generated and done through a computer. Text writing, spreadsheets and e-mail are now becoming part of the daily norm. Not to be on top of this as the person who oversees daily activities of your athletic fields could have an effect as part of effectively communicating to others.

For those who have trouble conveying their thoughts or recommendations on paper, look for a class or workshop that will strengthen that area. Also, as an athletic field manager it is very important to stay current with the laws and regulations that pertain to labor, gender and diversity as well as having a knowledge of the budget procedures at your place of employment.

Join and get involved with your association. Joining and becoming involved with your association represents who you are and what you do. This is a great way to expound upon your role as an athletic field manager. Networking and building professional relationships with others both locally and nationally, I have found to be a tremendous asset in dealing with problems and finding solutions. Get involved, attend national and local meetings and be an active member.

Remember, the industry is constantly changing. To be the very best in athletic field maintenance and management you need to be at the top of your game. It all begins with communication. ;)