

GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS

TURF

Basics emphasized at Virginia Turf Conference

The turfgrass industry has played a major role in increasing the homeowners' expectations and desire to have a perfect, weed-free lawn, according to A. J. Powell. Powell, speaking before 380 persons attending the 19th annual Virginia Turfgrass Conference at the Williamsburg, Virginia conference center, told turf managers that "the turfgrass industry is changing as never before." He noted that although a 100 percent eradication of weeds and crabgrass isn't expected in most areas, it is when the home lawn is the object of the treatment.

He cautioned that lawn managers have to be careful in soil testing. More is needed information about how minerals affect good plant growth, he said. "We don't test for iron because we really don't know how its lack affects growth. This is true in other areas."

"We need a lot of research on how these other minerals affect the growth of turf and determine exactly what their roles are," he added. "We are taking the buffers out of the environment and we should have adequate knowledge as to what is needed."

Palmer Maples of Lawrence, Kan., director of education for the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, told the largest crowd ever to attend one of the turf conferences that continuing education is necessary in the turfgrass industry, calling it a "tool of management."

Maples noted four reasons why continuing education is needed in the turfgrass industry. They are:

—Government regulations are requiring more and more time and knowledge. Various regulations, local, state and national, are requiring that a turf manager know herbicide and pesticide regulations and their effect on the environment.

—New and more sophisticated equipment are requiring knowledge

and skill in their operation. New developments are occurring regularly and a person must learn how to operate the equipment if he wants to do a better job.

—A person has to keep abreast of the management needs of a company and learn how to meet them. Good management is essential in the operation of a firm and the manager must continually keep abreast of the needed procedures.

—Water will become more and more of an issue. The use of effluent water and the ramifications of its use will continue to grow in importance. Knowledge in this area is essential.

Dennis E. Brown of Richmond, supervisor of the seed and sod section of the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services warned that closer labelling of seed is essential and called for the increased use of certification to protect the consumer from noxious weeds in their seed.

Joseph P. Harden, former meteorologist-in-charge of the National Weather Service Office in Rich-



John F. Doss of Suffolk, president of Tidewater Turfgrass Association, presents \$500 check to **Richard E. Schmidt**, associate professor of agronomy at Virginia Tech, to be used for development of turfgrass program at Southern Piedmont Research and Continuing Education Center at Blackstone.

Officers of Virginia Turfgrass Council pose for picture after re-election. They are: from left, **Kenneth P. Giedd**, Richmond, vice president; **Rex H. Harris**, Little Creek, assistant secretary-treasurer; **Earl H. Odell**, Chesapeake, vice president; and **Gus C. Constantino**, Richmond, president.



mond, observed that there are many sources for weather information for those in the turfgrass industry. Local weather bureaus now have available 30-day forecasts which can prove extremely helpful.

Richard E. Schmidt, associate professor of agronomy at Virginia Tech, traced the outline of the turfgrass program at the University. He noted turfgrass research currently is being conducted at Blacksburg, Blackstone, Langley Air Force Base, Newport News, Orange, Petersburg, Remington and South Hill.

He said there currently are 25 variety evaluation tests, 1 overseeding experiment, 12 fertilization projects, 6 bermuda grass programs, 2 irrigation experiments and 4 sod product projects being conducted.

The final session of the one-and-a-half-day meeting involved separate sessions on golf courses and the basics of nitrogen use and management techniques; general turf and athletic fields and the basic practices in turf management, and the basic practices in lawn service.

The annual meeting was sponsored by the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, Virginia Tech and the Virginia Turfgrass Council, Inc.