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on the field to a minimum, and perhaps most importantly, getting the parents and the school board on your side. For turf management, though, he follows the GRASS system reported in *WEEDS, TREES & TURF*, September, 1986.

McCaffrey spoke on the subject at the Iowa Turfgrass Conference.

TREES

Shigo says: don't feed sick trees

Contrary to proper belief, fertilizer is not tree food. So said Alex Shigo, a tree expert formerly with the U.S. Forest Service. "Do not feed sick trees with fertilizer," he told attendees at the GCSAA show in Phoenix. "Trees are different from people."

Shigo, who has his own consulting firm, Shigo and Trees, Associates of Durham, N.H., also gave tips on proper pruning of trees. "Branches are not attached to trunks of trees," he said.



He said there is a collar that the branch is attached to; the collar should never be cut. A flush cut removes the collar, doing damage to the tree and inviting fungal infections.

The proper method involves locating the branch bark ridge on the top of the branch, and the branch collar on the bottom. The cut should be made so that both remain on the tree.

Shigo added that wound dressing should never be used to promote callus growth. If the cut is done properly, the wound will close and form its own callus, or "doughnut," during the next growing season.

TURF

Most turf grasses not made for the shade

While humans love to sit in the shade on a hot sunny summer afternoon, the grumblings we hear while sitting there might be coming from the grass. While we might not, it would rather

be out in the open sunning itself.

Clark Throssell, assistant professor of turfgrass science at Purdue University, notes that only a few cool season turfgrass varieties perform well in the shade.

Fine fescues, he told attendees of the Iowa Turfgrass Conference, do the best, but would perform better if the shaded area was a dry one. Tall fescues did well also, but only if fescues were planted, with no mixing. *Poa trivialis* performed well in wet shaded areas, while improved varieties of bluegrass did moderately well, he added.



Clark Throssell

The reason for the general poor performance, he said, "is a lack or alteration of light." The light quality is diminished because trees absorb the same light needed by grass, and since the trees get to it first, they get the most. In addition, trees affect the intensity and duration of light on the turf.

Trees alter conditions by moderating temperatures, leveling out the highs and lows, decreasing wind, increasing humidity and intensifying competition for water and nutrients.

As a result, turf experiences reduced shoot density, more upright growth, increased plant height, decreased root depth and thinner leaves and cell walls, causing fewer carbohydrates to develop in the cell walls, reducing photosynthesis and transpiration rates and making them more susceptible to disease.

But things are not hopeless, he noted. Certain cultural practices can help turfgrass performance. Start by planting open canopy trees. If it's too late for that, then prune lower limbs and try to thin dense tree crowns, he said. "By removing dense vegetation, there's better air movement," he said.

Tree roots can also be pruned, but Throssell recommends using caution to avoid killing the tree in the process. Also, remove fallen leaves from under the trees. The grass will grow the best when trees have thinned in the fall, and have yet to thicken in the spring. In all, he said, the grass should receive three to four hours of direct sunlight each day to grow well.

Other cultural practices which help include raising the mowing height, irrigating deeply but infrequently and controlling traffic. Also, avoid excessive applications of nitrogen. "Don't force any more growth," he said. "The grass is struggling as it is."