

ATHLETIC TURF

Too much synthetic?

The Seattle, Wash., area has become a haven for synthetic turf manufacturers. According to a series of articles in the Seattle synthetic football fields at the high school level are booming there.

One article, written by P-I reporter Greg Brown, notes that the 14-team South Puget Sound League has just three teams still playing on real grass. The city of Bellevue has four high school synthetic fields, valued at \$2.8 million each. Twenty-five Washington high schools, most of them in the greater Seattle area, are now synthetic.

However, another article, also written by Brown, questions the safety of synthetic fields.

"In the debut of Bellevue High School's field Sept. 21 (1990), Mike Camlin was the fourth Redmond player sidelined in the first half in what Redmond Coach Jim Sampson calls the most injuries he's seen in a half in 12 seasons," Brown's article notes. The injuries were torn knee ligaments and cartilage (to Camlin), a bruised rib, a bruised shoulder and loss of breath. □

IPM

Florida County officially adopts IPM practices

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — Sarasota County officials say they have officially adopted integrated pest management practices to decrease pesticide use on all county government properties.

But is this anything more than a publicity stunt, a jumping on the IPM bandwagon just to keep the wolves away from the door?

Michael Holsinger, director of the County Extension Service at the University of Florida's Institute of Food Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), says IPM is "the wave of the future. Citizens want environmentally safe pest control, the cost of research and registration for new pesticides continues to climb and there's a lot less liability involved with integrated pest management than with pesticides that are toxic to humans and animals."

Holzinger describes IPM as a practice that uses as few chemicals as possible. "When chemicals are necessary," writes the IFAS, "the least toxic are used."

After six months of preparation, the IPM mandate was made effective on April 2, following a vote by county commissioners and an 11-member citizens' advisory committee on environmental pest management.

"There's been a lot of rhetoric written about IPM over the past few years," says Holzinger, who admits that many of those who promote IPM have conflicting definitions for the practice. "The guidelines are somewhat limited," admits Holzinger, "but the general guidelines say you don't destroy the beneficial predators, and you should try to use pest-

resistant plants."

The extension service news release describing the program uses the words "toxic" and "least toxic," when describing chemicals. But is toxicity an issue when chemicals are used correctly? Yes and no, says Holzinger. "Say you have a selection of 10 different materials," he explains. "You want to select the least toxic of those. There are degrees of differences. I would consider Orthene and Dursban a lot more toxic than insecticidal soaps or horticultural oils, and diazinon more toxic than Orthene and Dursban."

Bacillus thuringiensis (bt)—a biological control agent that has proved to be the most effective of the as-yet limited biological products—is part of the county plan, as are nematodes for mole cricket control.

Structural pest control is included in the county IPM plan. Precor and Gencor growth regulators are used against fleas and roaches.

Even though many professionals are prudent when it comes to chemical use, Holzinger says they face the scrutiny of suspicious customers when chemicals are not used.

"The average customers feel they need to have something applied to feel they are getting their money's worth," Holzinger realizes. "The biggest problem with the way IPM is presented is that it's difficult for people to see concrete steps they can take to implement an IPM program."

"We need to develop appreciation for the fact that we're not going to eradicate insects," he concludes. "We have to set thresholds before treatment." □

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