

# 1997 Midwest Turfgrass Field Day kicks off William H. Daniel Center

**WEST LAFAYETTE, IN** – Purdue University's Turf Program is on a roll.

Its new 25-acre William H. Daniel Turfgrass Research and Diagnostic Center (even without its 7200-sq.-ft. education building which is under construction) was a big hit with 750 turfgrass managers. The occasion was the Midwest Turf Field Day on July 28. This was the largest attendance ever at the field day, a 15 percent increase over 1997's attendance. This was the first-ever field day held at the new site.

Turfgrass managers from Indiana and surrounding states enjoyed perfect weather as they reviewed what turf experts at Purdue were working on. Besides the



Dr. Clark Throssel reported that so far results have been inconclusive on attempts to control *Poa trivialis* in creeping bentgrass by using pesticides.



Perfect summer weather attracted over 700 to Midwest Turfgrass Field Day at Purdue. The new 25-acre site provided more room for supplier displays.

technical discussions at each separate research plot, the visiting turf pros seemed to appreciate the extra space provided to suppliers. The new site is four times larger than the former research site.

The Turfgrass Science Program at Purdue received approval and finished plans for the teaching and research facility in the summer of 1996. That same summer drainage and irrigation were installed at the site, which is adjacent to Kampen Golf Course and just a mile or so from Ross-Ade Stadium. In October 1996 two acres were seeded there at the Daniel Turf Center, with eight additional acres seeded in 1997.

July 1997 saw the installation of specialized irrigation plots for biological control research, and by October 1997 a 1-acre USGA green was in place. It was seeded this past spring.

But, the biggest boost to the program will come with

the construction of the 7200-sq.-ft. turfgrass education building. Construction began this summer. It will house a teaching laboratory for 60 people, offices for grad students and faculty to use while working at the Daniel Turf Center, a field lab, an office for Don Fassnacht, the facility manager, and space for equipment storage.

"We plan to use the teach-

ing laboratory for undergraduate classes in turf management and also for seminars for professional turf managers," says Dr. Clark Throssel, turfgrass professor at Purdue.

"Our goal is to provide for as much hands-on education for students as we can. We want students to be able to learn by seeing turf and turf problems with their own eyes and getting their hands dirty." More than 70 students are majoring in Turfgrass Science at Purdue.

The new research/education site was named to honor the late William H. Daniel, a nationally respected turfgrass educator and researcher at Purdue, and the co-inventor of the PAT natural turf sports field construction system. □

## TruGreen-ChemLawn buys Ruppert Company

ServiceMaster subsidiary, TruGreen/ChemLawn and Ruppert Landscape Company announced on August 26 that TG/CL has acquired the Ruppert company. Ruppert's team will lead the TG/CL landscaping division, which will be headquartered at Ruppert's current base in Ashton, MD. Ruppert will continue to operate under its current name and leadership structure for the foreseeable future. Craig Ruppert will stay on as President of Ruppert Landscape Company, and will take on added duties to manage the new division, which currently operates from 14 offices throughout the U.S. Additional expansion is planned for the division, reports Ruppert. The buy gives TG/CL's landscape division annualized revenues in excess of \$140 million. □

## Landcare USA, Brickman still buying

LandCare USA and The Brickman Group continue to acquire commercial landscape companies.

"We're on a path to become the leader in the commercial landscape and tree services business," Bill Murdy, chairman and CEO, told LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT. "We intend substantial more growth."

In August the Houston-based company announced that it had acquired:

**Clean Cut, Inc.**, Austin, TX, founded in 1985 by Dennis Dautel and Rex Gore;

**Landscape West, Inc.**, Anaheim, CA, founded by Barry L. Konier in 1962;

**Horticultural Industries, Inc.**, Sarasota, FL, founded by Donald and Bill Davoli in 1987;

**Gator & Gator Landscape Co.**, Longwood, FL, founded by Scott Annan and Chuck Richardson in 1983;

**Continental Landscape Management, Inc.**, Phoenix, AZ, founded by Aaron Eubank in 1985.

These additions, completed with a combination of stock (81 percent) and cash (19 percent), provide 83 percent maintenance and 17 percent installation services. Several other acquisitions will be announced in September.

"We have closed a couple of other companies, but we have not released those names," Murdy told LM. "They want to have a chance

to have their employees understand the whole thing."

Meanwhile, The Brickman Group Ltd., headquartered in Langhorne, PA, in July purchased **Allen Keesen Landscape, Inc.**, based in Denver.

"We're going to continue moving west," Scott Brickman, president and CEO, told LM. Brickman's goal is also to

be a national service provider.

Earlier this year Brickman acquired KT Enterprises, Chantilly, VA; Kopabianco Landscape, New Haven, CT; BMI, Indianapolis, and Cannon Landscape Services, in Maryland. Founded in 1939 as a landscape business for homeowners by Theodore W. Brickman, Sr., The Brickman

Group now has more than 60 locations, most of them east of the Mississippi.

"We're growing as we always have, primarily through internal growth," Scott Brickman said, adding that his organization is always looking for other companies to embrace "as long as they're good fits." □

## Leaf mulch not bad for turf

**WEST LAFAYETTE, IN** - The easiest way to dispose of leaves is to mulch them into the turf. Though this practice has been recommended for many years, there is little data on the long-term effects of tree leaf mulching into turf. Work at Purdue University and Michigan State University could change that.

"After four years, everything has been positive regarding mulching leaves into the turf," said Zac Reicher at the Midwest Turf Field Day. Reicher, an extension turfgrass specialist, was referring to a long-term study at Purdue focusing on multiple years of annual leaf mulching on turf performance.

Every October since 1994, Purdue investigators have collected maple tree leaves to apply to the turf. These leaves are run through a graden shredder and applied to a perennial ryegrass—about 4000 lbs./A in a single application and immediately mowed with a mulching mower. (A woodlot will drop about 3000 lbs./A/yr of tree litter.)

Since the researchers felt that the high carbon-to-nitrogen ratio in the tree leaves would eventually limit nitrogen in the stand they used three annual nitrogen rates. Beginning spring 1995, N rates used were 0.2 and 4 lbs. N/1000 ft<sup>2</sup>/yr. However, by summer 1996, the ryegrass receiving no additional nitrogen declined dramatically and so the annual N rates were adjusted to 2, 4 and 6 lbs. N/1000/ft<sup>2</sup>/yr.

Data collected includes monthly clipping weights, visual quality and color ratings, and annual evaluations of thatch, soil pH and soil nutrient concentrations.

"There has been no negative effects of mulching these leaves into the turf," said Reicher. "There is no disease effects, no weed pressure effects, no nutrient effects, and no effect on soil pH.

"We're not saying that everybody can mulch the leaves into the turf. But what we do recommend is that any place that you can, consider mulching the leaves." □



Dr. Zachary Reicher, turfgrass extension specialist, says leaf mulch won't harm turfgrass.