

new jersey turfgrass association



clippings

Green
& World



Winter 2007 | VOL 68



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ▷ Pictorial Review - Green Expo 2007
- ▷ End of Year 2007 Awards



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President's Message

by Dr. Karen Plumley, NJTA President

If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else. - Yogi Berra

Four years ago, our long serving executive director stepped down. While there is always a tinge of sadness associated with the 'end of an era', there is also the promise of hope that each new beginning brings. That search for a new executive director proved to be fateful for NJTA as the board came to realize that the search was about more than just finding a new director. It also presented NJTA with the opportunity to develop a strategic plan so that the association would know 'where it was going', and wouldn't wind up 'someplace else'. As president of NJTA for the past three years, Chris Carson presided over the development of the original strategic plan and two subsequent revisions. While NJTA has benefited greatly from the strength of Chris's leadership, the creation and updating of the strategic plan stands chief among his many accomplishments which also include moving NJTA forward in size and stature to become a strong statewide association; increasing support to Rutgers, our state university; improving the financial health of NJTA; providing a voice to its members through an increased focus on legislative initiatives; forging closer ties with our sister organizations; and raising the profile of the organization as the public face of NJTA. Thank you seems inadequate to express what all of us who work with Chris feel about his commitment and leadership of the organization, but thank you it is, Mr. Carson, for all you have done and for all you will continue to do as the new president of the NJTA foundation and Green Expo chairman.

As we have for the last three years, the NJTA board met recently for our annual strategic planning session. The board is currently shaping the notes from that meeting into a strategic planning document to be shared with the membership this spring. As we went through the process we realized not only that many of our goals from the first planning meeting had been met, but that we had also made significant progress toward many others. So as I look forward, I see many more places NJTA might go:

- 1. Grow Our Membership.** Like the shark, NJTA must keep moving forward and a growing membership roster is the best indication of forward movement. From providing a voice for our members on legislative issues to supporting Rutgers as they train the next generation of turf professionals, NJTA is focused on the short and long term needs of our members.
- 2. Provide for Financial Security of NJTA/NJTF.** Providing financial support to the Rutgers University turf program is a prominent component of our mission. Through the Rutgers Golf Turf Research Classic, our foundation has raised nearly three quarters of a million dollars since its inception and our foundation now stands close to our goal of one half million dollars in assets. Raising the bar for our foundation to one million dollars in assets and planning for NJTA's long term financial security are ongoing commitments.
- 3. Communicate: With our membership. With our legislators. With the public.** Technology offers us many new ways to quickly and efficiently get information to our members, our legislators and the public. Technology also benefits NJTA when we can use it to cut operating costs as we do when you to renew your membership on-line, saving time, paper and postage. NJTA will continue to adopt new technologies and communication strategies for the benefit of our members.
- 4. Build Stronger Ties to Allied Associations.** NJTA has found many ways to work with our sister associations in the state to achieve common goals. Our partnership with NJLCA at Green Expo, our partnership with GCSA-NJ to hire an executive director to serve each association and our joint efforts with SFMANJ at the Rutgers Lawn and Landscape Field Day are all examples of how we have formed relationships with allied associations. NJTA will continue to seek partnerships to benefit the associations, their members and the turfgrass industry at large.
- 5. Increase Membership Participation.** Committee membership allows you to volunteer your special talents for the benefit of the turfgrass community in any number of ways. Our committees then serve as our 'farm team', providing NJTA with a deep bench of talent for the future.

NJTA has certainly had a celebrated past and has come a long way since its inception in 1970. We have grown in numbers, in influence, in resources and in stature, but we are not ones to rest on our laurels. There is still much to do. Chris Carson joins an elite club of past presidents and other who have brought NJTA to where we now stand, at the threshold of our future. It is now up to us to determine what that future will be.

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Green World

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Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Happy New Year! Is it too late to wish you a Happy New Year? I hope not, because time flew so quickly that 2008 began before I finished wishing everyone success in the new year.

Wow...what a super Green Expo in Atlantic City! From all the feedback we've heard, it was a huge success...with superlative seminars to a spectacular trade show. If you missed it this year, mark your calendars right now to be part of the 2008 Green Expo. It just keeps getting better and better.

The New Jersey Turfgrass Association has so much to be thankful for and so many members, educators, and vendors who make the things we do happen and happen well. There are always important and timely happenings on the turfgrass horizon and we'll share them as the year unfolds. Thanks for being part of our association and this industry.

Have a great 2008!

Cece Peabody



by Cece Peabody,
MAT, CMP,
NJTA
Executive Director

Have you renewed your 2008 Membership yet? Many did so at Green Expo...but if you did not, use the application on page 19.

2008 Renewal Dues deadline is April 15, 2008. We accept new memberships at any time.

NJTA Membership Year is January 1, 2008 through December 31, 2008.

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New Jersey Green Expo A Big Success!

by Chris Carson

The 32nd Annual New Jersey Green Expo was held December 4-6 at the Trump Taj Mahal Hotel in Atlantic City, and it was once again a big success. Offering excellent speakers and wide-ranging education opportunities, a high quality trade show, and a variety of social opportunities, Expo continues to serve the green industry well... and this year's version had near record attendance as well.

The show had extensive education sessions for Golf, Landscape Contractors, Sports Field Managers, and Landscape Turf plus separate DEP credit bearing sessions too; it truly was a show that encompassed all of the turf and landscape disciplines. Socially, attendees took advantage of the many free opportunities, including the high quality food and drink on the trade show floor, the Grass Roots Golf Mix-and-Mingle, Storr Tractor's free lunch on Wednesday, a number of after-show hospitality rooms and countless informal get-togethers with friends in the hallways, during meals, and at the Irish Pub. For many, these random meetings with old and new friends are the high points of the show.

Did you know, by the way, that newly installed NJTA President Dr. Karen Plumley was first introduced to her husband (golf course superintendent Ron Luepke) at Expo at the Irish Pub? Or that current NJTA Board member Shaun Barry did the introducing?

NJTA's partnership with the New Jersey Landscape Contractors Association is still in its infancy, but we have started to see a spike in attendance from that end of the industry. NJLCA has brought several new trade show partners on board as well, which has meant that the arena floor displayed a wider array of products and services. We expect this partnership to thrive in the future, helping us grow the preeminent New Jersey green industry conference and show.



Thanks to the Education Committee for assembling a very strong program, and to Bob Dickison and his Green Expo Committee for their many hours of hard work. Thanks also to major sponsors Storr Tractor, Grass Roots, Tree Tech, Course Contractors Inc., and Syngenta for your significant support of our efforts. It is appreciated!

Finally, the NJTA Board would like to express our warm appreciation and thanks to all of our trade show partners. Your continued participation and support help us serve the New Jersey turf and landscape industry. We couldn't do it without you.



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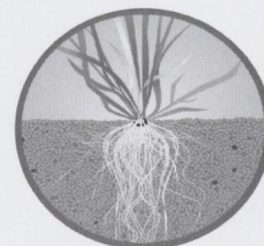
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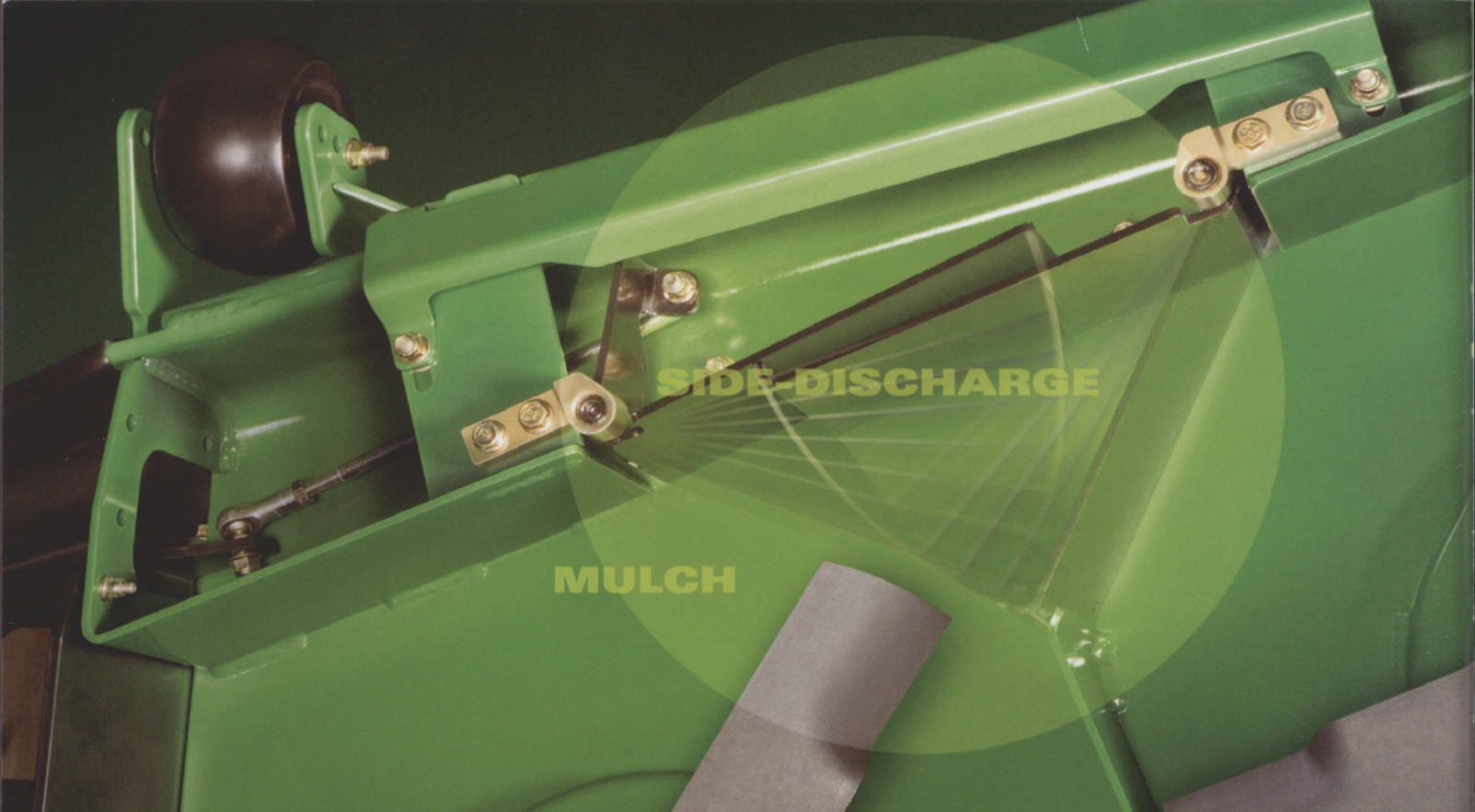


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JOHN DEERE

Practical Fungicide Resistance in Turf Stands - Part 2

by Richard Buckley, Director

Soil Testing and Plant Diagnostic Services

New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station

In the last issue, fungicide resistance was defined as a stable, inheritable adjustment by a fungal population to the toxic effects of a fungicide. We also established that the adjustment by the fungal population to the toxic effects of the fungicide does not develop spontaneously. The ability of a local fungal population to tolerate the fungicide program generally occurs after the repeated use of materials in the same chemical class over a period of time. Resistant biotypes are found in all fungal populations and are subsequently selected by the fungicide program. When the resistant biotypes come to dominate in the turf stand satisfactory disease control will no longer be provided by the fungicide. This is known as practical resistance. Practical resistance in the field can be measured in the laboratory by comparing fungal growth rates on fungicide-amended and non-amended mycological media.


Be aware that all fungicide failures are not due to practical resistance. Improper diagnosis, improper dilution rates, poor selection of materials, bad timing, tank incompatibilities, improper calibration and bad nozzle choices are just a few of the possibilities. That being said, if one experiences control failures in the field and the fungal population has been screened by a qualified laboratory and determined to be insensitive to the materials in the program, then adjustments to the fungicide program are in order. In some cases the suspect materials need to be eliminated entirely. For other materials, one could simply suspend their use for a period of time.

The duration of resistance to any fungicide depends on the biological fitness of the resistant fungal biotype. The resistant strains of the fungus selected by a fungicide program must be able to compete with the other microbes in the soil and thatch. If their competitive ability is good and they can survive in high enough populations to incite a disease outbreak, then the resistance will persist on the site. Past research on *Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*, known presently as the cause of dollar spot, indicates that resistant biotypes selected

...continued on page 8

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Fungicide Resistance.....continued from page 7

by the use of benzimidazole fungicides are good competitors and those selected by the use of sterole demethylation inhibitors are not. In practice then, we would expect to see a nearly permanent insensitivity of *Sclerotinia* to thiophanate methyl in the field and would need to eliminate that product from the current a future dollar spot control program. If propiconazole was determined to be the cause of the resistance, one would see the resistant biotypes wane over time. In this case, we could eliminate the sterole inhibitors from the program temporarily and then reintroduce them back into the program after 12 months.

Although practical resistance can be identified and remedied in any disease control program, we feel that the best approach is to manage and prevent resistance problems in the first place. An effective strategy to manage fungicide resistance involves the use of a broad range of materials in different chemical classes according to the manufacturers' label specifications.

The following is a list of suggestions for resistance

management:

1. Do not use the same fungicide or fungicides in the same chemical class for more than three successive applications.
2. Do not use fungicides above or below label specified application rates.
3. Tank mix materials whenever possible. Use mixes proven to provide synergy in University trials.
4. Make applications in the proper dilution according to label specifications.
5. Make preventive applications rather than curative.
6. Make uniform applications and get good coverage.

Rich
Buckley



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WHO'S DAVID ERIC MCGHEE?

David Eric McGhee, Superintendent of Oak Hill Golf Course in Holland Township NJ, was born in Phillipsburg NJ in 1972. He lived in Holland Township until the age of nine, when he moved to Whitehouse NJ. His father was the original Superintendent of Oak Hill when it was founded in 1964.

A 1990 graduate of Hunterdon Central Regional High School, McGhee attended Morris County College from 1991-1992. McGhee moved to South Carolina in August of 1992, where he attended Horry Georgetown Technical College. He graduated in 1994 with an Associates degree in Turf Grass Management.

McGhee worked as an Assistant Superintendent at Legends in South Carolina from 1992 until 1994. He went on to serve as Superintendent with the Legends Group from 1994 until 2003, when he took over as Superintendent at Oak Hill.

McGhee is a member of the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Turf Grass Association (NJTA) and the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America

(GCSAA). He also serves on the Education Committee of the GCSANJ.

McGhee and his wife Cindy were married in 1996 and have three children. The couple's oldest daughter, Kelsey, was born in 2000, and twins Carter and Caroline were born in 2005.

An avid golfer, McGhee also enjoys camping, fishing and barbequing in his spare time and is a fan of the New York Giants, New York Yankees, and Tennessee Volunteers.



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Sport Turf

- Level 1** Fertility Test: Nutrients, pH, recommendations
- Level 2** Complete Test: Nutrients, pH, estimated CEC & cation saturation, soluble salt level, organic matter* content, soil textural class
- Level 3** Sand Root Zone Test

*Organic matter content would be determined by loss-on-ignition for golf course greens, as described by USGA guidelines.

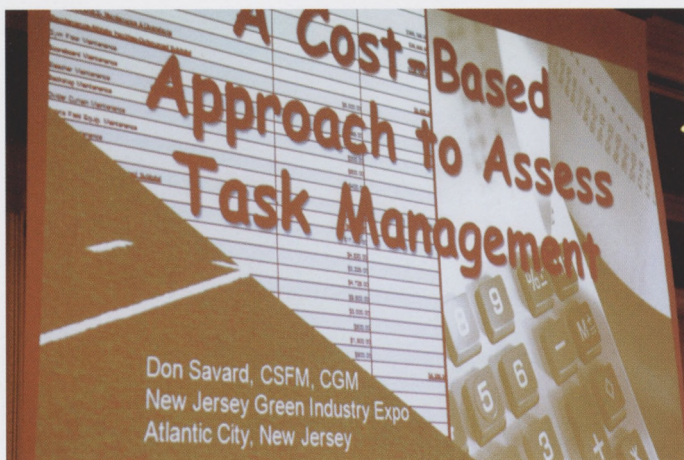
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Serving the New Jersey Green Industry



"Think globally... act locally" is a hackneyed expression used to encourage local participation in causes. In the turfgrass universe, this need for committed volunteers is great indeed, and all of us in NJTA have been fortunate to have an extraordinary volunteer working on our behalf:

Robert A. Dickison is the long standing superintendent at the Upper Montclair Country Club in New Jersey, and has been a tireless worker in support of golf and turf management. His 47 year career at Upper Montclair is in itself remarkable... but add to that 20 successful PGA, LPGA, and Champions Tour Events -and many local tournaments- and the professional skills of the man may be better understood. Thirty years as a Certified Golf Course Superintendent shows his early commitment to the profession, as does his publication in local and national golf magazines (e.g. twice in *Golf Course Management*). A speaker locally and nationally on course preparation, tournaments, trees and water usage, Bob has achieved a measure of esteem that, coupled with his many years of professional success, is extraordinary.

But there is more to Bob than being a successful professional and having a committed career. What sets him apart is his long time volunteer service:

-A two-term Presidency of the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey was followed by the Presidency of the NJ Turfgrass Association.

-Since 1991, Bob has served as General Chairman of the NJ Turf and Landscape Expo, now named Green Expo. Green Expo is our 3 day conference and trade show that provides education, camaraderie, and professional credits and certifications to the more than 1000 attendees. This volunteer effort adds up to more than 200 hours per year, helps facilitate an excellent education program and ultimately contributes to the financial bottom line- funds used to support NJTA's mission of supporting the NJ turf industry through support of the Center for Turfgrass Science at Rutgers University.

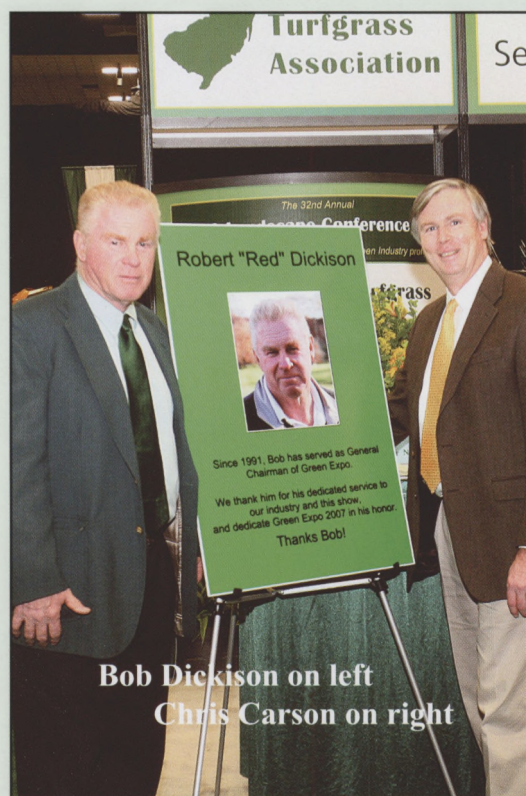
-Bob has served several times as a committee member of GCSAA and is a long time member of the Rutgers Turf Advisory Committee, the NJ State Golf Association Advisory Board, and the USGA Green Section Committee.

Bob Dickison Steps Down as Green Expo General Chairman

by Chris Carson

-His hometown of Verona, NJ also benefits from his expertise as Bob has served on several community committees and has been a member of that town's Shade Tree Commission since 1972 and its chairman since 1985.

Bob has received every local award possible: GCSANJ Distinguished Service 1988, NJTA Hall of Fame 1993, Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Achievement Award 1990, Rutgers Professional Golf Turf Management Award for Professional Excellence 2003... but most people who know him don't have a clue of his service or awards: Bob is a quiet man who does not beat his breast with self-promotion. Because of that sense of humility, because I know that if he knew I was writing this article he would object and identify another person to honor, it gives me particular joy say thank you to NJTA's great friend, Bob Dickison. Thanks for all you've done, Bob!



Bob Dickison on left
Chris Carson on right

WORKING TOGETHER

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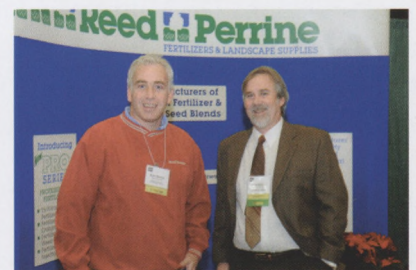


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NJTA'S RECOGNITION AWARD DR. JIM MURPHY AND MONMOUTH PARK RACETRACK

Dr. Jim Murphy was the principal supporter from the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science who assisted with the complete rebuilding of the turf track at Monmouth Park Racetrack in preparation for the 2007 Breeders Cup.

Dr. Murphy showed the progress of this project during his speech at the General Session of the New Jersey Green Expo, and the more than 300 audience members were amazed at the extent of this work. They were even more impressed that the track held up to the extreme rain during the Breeders Cup Championship.

Congratulations Dr. Murphy and the team from Monmouth Park Racetrack... you elevated the standing of thoroughbred horseracing in New Jersey with your work, and made us all proud in the process!

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Robert Juliano, Director of Facilities
Stephen P. Fischer, Turf Course Manager
Dr. James Murphy, Turf Consultant, Rutgers University for their commitment and contributions to the turf track renovation at Monmouth Park Racetrack in preparation for The 2007 Breeders' Cup Thoroughbred Championships, the most prestigious event in thoroughbred racing.

32nd Annual New Jersey Green Expo
Atlantic City, New Jersey
December 5, 2007



HALL OF FAME AWARD MARIE POMPEI

The New Jersey Turfgrass Association presented the first Hall of Fame Award back in 1974 to James Smith, Sr. (see article page 16). The award has been presented annually ever since to recognize a continuing lifetime commitment of dedication, service, and achievements contributing to the advancement of the turfgrass industry of New Jersey.

Rutgers alumna Marie Pompeii was presented with the 2007 Hall of Fame Award at the General Session of the NJ Green Expo by NJTA President, Dr. Karen Plumley. Ms. Pompei began her career by earning a bachelor of science degree from Rutgers University in Plant Science. After graduation she was hired as a research technician with Lofts Seed where she came under the influence of three former Hall of Fame Winners, Peter S. Loft, John Morrissey and Dr. Richard Hurley. While at Lofts, she was encouraged to become an active member of the turfgrass community. She gained teaching experience at Rutgers University and was instilled with the philosophy of giving back to the industry. Ms. Pompei served on the board of NJTA, eventually becoming its president in 2003. She led a national search for a new executive director and shepherded the association into the 21st century. For the past three years, Ms. Pompei has served as president of the NJ Turfgrass Foundation, helping the foundation to very nearly reach its goal of \$500,000 in assets. Ms. Pompei currently holds a position with FM Brown Seed Co. and also continues to teach turfgrass identification to the students in the Rutgers Professional Turfgrass Management School as she has for nearly twenty years.



Marie Pompei, center, with her Mom (l) and sister.

MEMBER OF THE YEAR AWARD

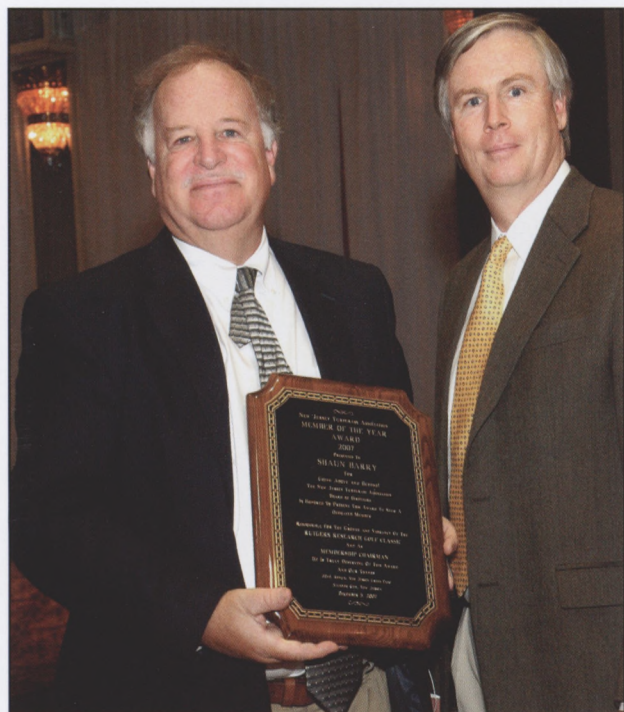
SHAUN BARRY

by Chris Carson

It was my pleasure to present the Member of the Year Award to NJTA Board Member Shaun Barry at this year's Turf and Landscape Expo. Shaun is a long-time supporter of NJTA, and as Board Member he's taken the responsibilities of membership chairman as well as Golf Classic chairman.

Shaun is one of those people who never say "no", and it is NJTA's good fortune to have him looking out for our best interests. You need only witness his quiet leadership in preparation for –and the running of– the Rutgers Research Golf Classic to know of his dedication, and the smooth running and record setting fundraising achieved at Fiddlers Elbow has much to do with that leadership.

Thanks, Shaun, for all you do for the members of NJTA, for the Board, and for Rutgers University. We all appreciate your hard work!



Shaun Barry holding Member of Year plaque presented by Chris Carson, outgoing President NJTA

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARD

HYATT HILLS GOLF COMPLEX

The Hyatt Hills Golf Complex received the New Jersey Turfgrass Association's Environmental Stewardship Award at the 32nd Annual Green Expo in Atlantic City. Designed to honor significant commitment to environmental preservation and conservation, the Award honors Hyatt Hills for its transformation of a brownfield remediation site into a vibrant community recreation facility.

Hyatt Hills is a self-sufficient 9-hole golf course, driving range and miniature golf course located in Cranford and Clark, run by a Commission made up of members from both communities.

"We are delighted to be recognized for this project" said Commission executive director Robert Hoefler. "To be in the company of the distinguished list of previous winners is a thrill... and being recognized for our positive environmental efforts is very satisfying."

Previous winners of the Award include congressmen, senators, Audubon International, the United States Golf Association and television reporter John Stossell. The New Jersey Turfgrass Association is a professional organization that promotes the turfgrass industry through its support of the Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science, generally acclaimed as the world leader in turfgrass research, breeding, and education.

...continued on page 22



NJTA'S HALL OF FAME AWARD

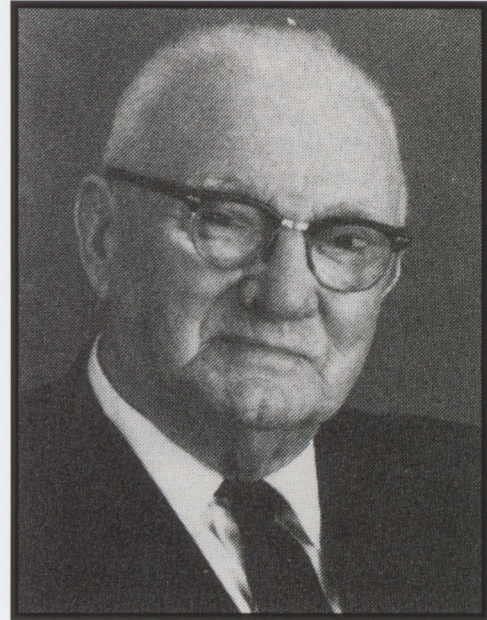
The New Jersey Turfgrass Association's **Hall of Fame Award** is "presented annually to a person in recognition of a continuing lifetime commitment of dedication, service, and achievements contributing to the advancement of the turfgrass industry of New Jersey." This award was first given in 1974. As the NJTA nears our 40th anniversary in 2010, we felt it was appropriate to highlight the past winners of our highest award.

The following is a reprint from the "New Jersey Turfgrass Association 10th Anniversary Commemorative Book (1980).

1974-James Smith, Sr.

James Smith, Sr., founder and long time President of the Fertl-Soil Company, had the distinction of being the first student to graduate from Rutgers University - in that University's first course in Turf Management. During the course of a long and distinguished career, Mr. Smith formulated and developed the first widely accepted greens top-dressing; invented and manufactured the Aero-Thatch,

an innovative machine for turfgrass renovation. He also distinguished himself while serving as Greens Chairman and later President of Colonia Country Club. In 1950, Mr. Smith was named President of the Rahway Savings Institution and served in that capacity until the ninetieth year of his life.



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My First Expo Experience

Behind the Scenes

*...by Sabrina Tirpak,
Soil Testing and Plant Diagnostic Services
Rutgers, NJAES*

So, my boss [Rich Buckley] becomes a New Jersey Turfgrass Association board member, and I get my first opportunity to volunteer behind the registration desk at Expo. (Funny how that happens...) Or should I say, to hunker down and brace myself behind the marble countertop against the onslaught of green industry humanity. OK, so maybe it wasn't nearly as dramatic, just a little hectic. It was actually a great opportunity to say hello to a lot of people I know. It was also a chance to meet and put faces to names of many of our clients that send samples to the Rutgers Plant Diagnostic Laboratory, my home away from home.

After a brief registration training from NJTA Executive Director Cece Peabody and Barbara Vydro, it was time to open the gates. What started as a manageable-sized group of registrants quickly swelled into a large, intertwined mass of the pre- vs. on-site registered folks. So here is my plug for pre-registration; for next Expo, send in your registrations and membership renewals early. You'll save yourself some money and also some precious New Jersey standing-in-line minutes! I'm told that before the Taj's latest and greatest renovations (does anyone else remember that crazy purple and pink rug?), the area for registration was twice as big with separate areas for pre- vs. on-site registration.

And wouldn't you know it, just when it was busiest, technical difficulties decided to make an appearance. First, I think it was the name badge printers that didn't want to work quite right, even though they were just fine the night before. Thank you Matt Sweatlock for running from one malfunctioning printer to the next, and in the end, managing to get them back up and running. And thank you Pedro Perdomo for setting up another printer that was added to the arsenal for day two of registration. Not to be outdone by the printers, the credit card machine then decided to go on the



That's me above on the left...and that's Joann Chirip (l) and Barbara Vydro (r) in the photo on the right.

fritz. Have you ever seen that television commercial where everyone is running around shopping and paying by plastic and then someone throws a wrench into the works and tries to pay with cash – and then the rest of the world ceases to function as they have to wait for that person to get change? Well, that's kind of what it felt like when the credit card machine went down. But instead of ceasing to function, I think everyone remained fairly calm, cool and collected as the machine was replaced. All the while, Joanne Chirip did a great job of keeping track of the payments that had to wait for the new machine. Needless to say, by this point, off went the fashionably painful high-heels, and on went the sensibly comfortable flats. Too much information?

We had some trials behind the registration desk, but I think all those who helped did a great job of multitasking through it. And not that I should be surprised, but as far as I can tell, everyone who waited in that line was patient and pleasant when they finally reached the front. I don't remember hearing any grumbles or complaints. Later, I heard that the first educational session that morning was bursting at the seams with over 340 people and that additional chairs had to be brought in half-way through. Thank you all for your patience.

Live and learn and make it better for next Expo is what will happen. I recall seeing the new Expo Chairman, Chris Carson, eagle-eyed and positioned in the back corner taking it all in during that morning's hectic registration. So, I have no doubts that any wrinkles in the process surely will be ironed out by next Expo. See you all then! Unless, of course, you decide to kill your grass in the mean time and need to visit us at the lab this summer! ;)



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Deadline to renew is April 15, 2008

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Green World

Organic Management of Turf: Do We ► Know What It Means?

by James A Murphy, Ph.D.
*Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Applied Turfgrass Research from Rutgers, the State University, and the New Jersey Turfgrass Association

Organic Philosophy

The term organic is often misunderstood by those unfamiliar with the agro-ecological philosophy of organic production and management systems. Use of carbon-based fertilizers for management of plants is often considered organic management; however, this is an incomplete perspective much like the viewpoint that elimination of pesticides from agricultural production constitutes organic management. While both of these examples are components of the organic philosophy, proponents of the organic philosophy take a much broader approach to land and plant management and view the entire system as an “organic whole”. They consider the complex interrelationships of the various components within a landscape as analogous to the parts of living things (organisms). Thus, concepts in organic agriculture typically center on integrating a diversity of crops and livestock to cycle nutrients and re-use natural waste products within the landscape.

Organic agriculture restricts the types of materials that can be used to amend soil, enhance plant nutrition, and suppress pests. Materials allowed for use in organic production are either essentially derived from living things or naturally occurring minerals; synthetic (man-made) materials typically are not allowed. But the organic philosophy isn't just a set of guidelines on the selection of input materials. Building a “living soil” is a central concept of organic agriculture and is sometimes referred to as the soil food web. Organic agriculture builds and manages soil structure and fertility over many years using compost, approved mineral amendments, livestock, and crop rotations. Management techniques are used to encourage soil organisms including fungi, bacteria and other soil dwellers to form “living bridges” between plant roots and soil humus. These interactions are relied on to transform and release nutrients from the soil organic matter. Additionally, increased biological activity in the soil is thought to enhance beneficial organisms that suppress disease and insect pests. A reduction in the severity of drought, disease and insects are reputed benefits

of improved soil quality or health. Organic agriculture production greatly benefits from the fact that the soils on organic farms have not been degraded to the extent that occurs with land development in urban and suburban environments. Thus, organic production is more than simply switching to natural organic fertilizer products and eliminating use of synthetic pesticides.

Organic production has become big business in North America with an increasing number of niche markets for organic agricultural products. In the United States of America (USA), National Organic Program Standards (NOPS) were implemented on 21 October 2002 and established clear labeling regulations for organic products certification (see <http://www.ams.usda.gov/nop/NOP/NOPhome.html>). The NOPS were created to protect producers against marketing fraud and assure consumers that organic products meet uniform and consistent standards. Standards were developed by the National Organics Standards Board (NOSB) as mandated by the Organic Food Production Act of 1990. The NOSB is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and consists of 15 members representing farmers, food processors, retailers, consumers, environmentalists, scientists, and certifying agents.

Interpretations of Organics in Turf Systems

Organic production in agriculture is not new, however, the labeling laws, consumer confidence, industry growth and marketability are new. (Note that organic agriculture was essentially the exclusive agricultural practice for thousands of years before the industrial age.) This popularity of organic agriculture is spilling over into other markets including lawns, sportsfields and golf. To date, this increasing interest in organic turf management appears to be largely consumer driven; to lesser extent lawn and landscape businesses are developing programs to capture a share of this growing niche market. This has prompted debate over the feasibility of organic production in turf systems - will lawns, sportsfields and golf courses survive if only an organic production philosophy could be used?

► Organic Management of Turf: Do We Know What It Means?

*by James A Murphy, Ph.D.
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Applied Turfgrass Research from Rutgers, the State University, and the New Jersey Turfgrass Association

The answer is probably “yes” based on the fact that these land uses have existed for many centuries. On the other hand, the business of managing turf/land for these uses would change dramatically if organic standards were mandated, particularly if non-uniform regulations for managing turf systems continue to be developed across communities.

Much of this interest in “organic management” stems from the desire to eliminate or reduce use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in turf management as evidenced by the regulations developed in communities across North America including Seattle, San Francisco, Long Island, Ottawa and others. Currently, national standards for organic turf maintenance do not exist in the USA, yet individual communities are developing regulations that reduce or eliminate pesticides and often refer to these regulations as “organic”. Typically these regulations do not fully address the principles of organic management and largely ignore the challenges of improving degraded soils for growing plants in urban and suburban environments. A greatly enhanced effort on the part of individual property owners and communities to improve the degraded urban and suburban soils used to grow plants (turf, shrubs, trees, etc) would probably be the single most effective practice that would enable a reduction or elimination of synthetic pesticides and other inputs used in landscapes. The loss of soil structure and organic matter as well as severe compaction of soil during the development of land creates extremely difficult growing conditions for plants. Typical turf and ornamental plant management practices (and related regulations) in urban and suburban landscapes do not focus on correcting these severe deficiencies in soil. Thus, plants grown on degraded soil routinely suffer from low fertility and inadequate supply of plant available water unless provided relatively intensive management inputs to compensate. A more complete and effective regulatory approach to change turf and landscape management practices would be to address the substantial problem of soil degradation during land development. The focus on regulation

of management practices/philosophies only addresses the “band-aid” techniques used to compensate for the long term plant management problems inherent with degraded soil.

The casual and imprecise use of the term organic can create confusion in the turf marketplace, and it is evident that all parties are not talking about the same thing regarding pesticide elimination/reduction and organic maintenance. Numerous pests, environmental extremes (particularly soil), and traffic stress seriously compromise a turf manager’s ability to produce a competitive product (turf) regardless of the management philosophy. The ability to use certain management “tools” in one community but not another (due to non-uniform regulations) creates an unfair situation for turf managers and maintenance businesses. Turf management programs and companies in communities with more stringent restrictions are essentially at a competitive disadvantage in the market compared to communities with more liberal definitions of “organic”. Moreover, research and practical experience indicates that the elimination of synthetic pesticides from turf management systems will produce a product (turf) quality that is very different from what is commonly expected by many of today’s clientele (property owners). Consumers also need to be aware that the elimination of “synthetic” practices and the adoption of only a couple “organic” practices is unlikely to correct the underlying long term problems caused by degraded soil in landscapes. Thus, considerable education of the consumer is needed so that individuals and communities can make well-informed decisions on landscape management philosophies related to purchase of services and products as well as regulations.

***For more information or additional
research reports and abstracts, please visit
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The NJTA Annual Meeting was held at the New Jersey GREEN EXPO on December 5, 2007.

Chris Carson, 2007 NJTA President, presented a new slate of officers to the membership for election.

After a voice vote, the following individuals were elected to the executive board of NJTA for a one year term:

- * President, Dr. Karen Plumley (Mitchell Products)
- * Vice-President, Keith Kubik (Grass Roots, Inc.)
- * Secretary, Richard Buckley (Rutgers University)
- * Treasurer, Matt Sweatlock (Cedar Park Cemetery)

Congratulations to All!

Environmental Stewardship Award

...continued from page 15

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As further evidence of its commitment to the environment, the facility has recently been honored as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Wildlife Sanctuary by Audubon International, one of only a handful of courses with such designation in New Jersey.

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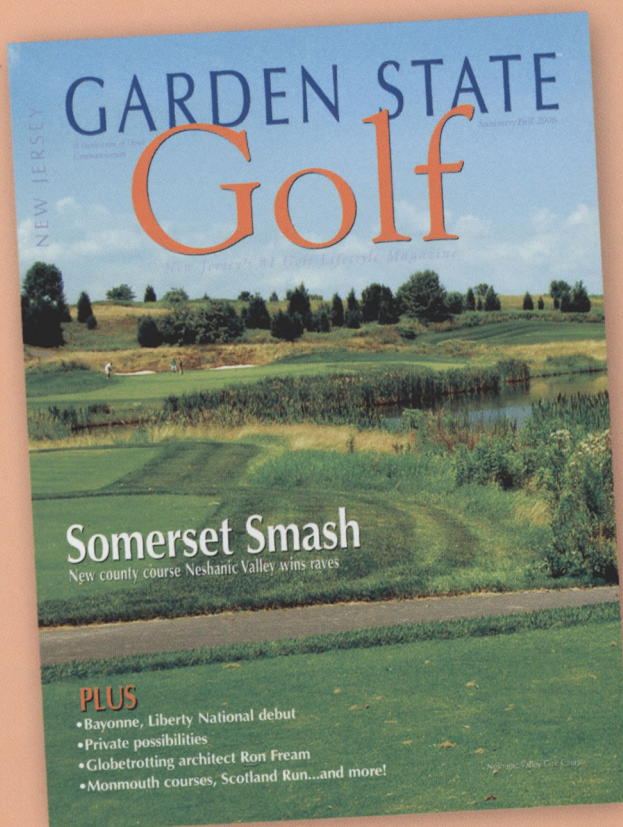
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