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TALKING TURF

NORTH CENTRAL TURFGRASS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2023

President's Message

By Tim Fleegel, MTI Distributing

Greetings NCTGA members,

Spring has finally arrived, bringing an end to a winter that will not soon be forgotten. Bismarck experienced the 3rd snowiest winter on record, and Fargo the 11th. As a result, many of you may be dealing with flooding once again this spring.

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to the membership for re-electing me to the board, and to the board for their trust and support. It is an honor to serve as your board president, and I would like to extend a special thanks to Cammi Campbell for her leadership over the past three years. Cammi's dedication has positioned the NCTGA better than ever before. I am also pleased to serve alongside our other board members: Tyler Foster as Vice President, Matt Schmid as Secretary, and Lucas Palczewski as Treasurer, and Jesse Lunde, Collin Cannon, Garret Schultz, Mark Michalski, and Cammi Campbell as directors. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us with ideas for how to improve the association.

The 2023 conference was one of the best I can remember, despite Mother Nature's influence,

which left over a foot of snow on February 28th into March 1st. Over 140 members joined us at the Holiday Inn, and the feedback we received

from the survey was overwhelmingly positive. Our speakers covered a wide range of topics, including cutting units and maintenance facility tips from Trent Manning, maintenance on a budget with Matt Cavanaugh, and Liz Carlson's presentation on communicating across generations. We hope that everyone found value in the conference, and we appreciate those who completed the post-conference survey. Your feedback is essential to planning future events, so please continue to share your thoughts and ideas with us. We are already working to make the 2024 conference even better.

Continued on page 3...



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President's Message continued

Continued from page 1...

I am also excited to announce our upcoming Spring Golf event at Dakota Winds Golf Course in Hankinson, ND, on Monday, May 15th. Tyler Foster has been working hard to prepare the course, and we hope to see many of you there.

Lastly, mark your calendars for our 2023 scholarship tournament, which is scheduled for **Monday, September 11th, hosted by Collin Cannon at Grand Forks Country Club.** This date falls on the Monday before the North Dakota Recreation and Parks conference, which is being held in Grand Forks. We are planning a first green event for Tuesday morning following the golf

tournament, and we would love your help.

Educating children about the work we do is an essential part of our mission, and we look forward to seeing you there. We will provide more information as the event draws closer.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to the NCTGA.

Sincerely,
Tim Fleege



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Join us for a fun-filled day of golf and networking opportunities. **NCTGA at Dakota Winds** is an opportunity for all NCTGA members to play golf at one of North Dakota's premier golf courses.

NCTGA board member, Tyler Foster, and his staff are excited to showcase their golf course to fellow NCTGA members. Dakota Winds is just an hour drive from both Fargo, ND and Fergus Falls, MN. Those driving longer distances can leave in the morning, arriving just prior to the noon shotgun start, or take advantage of the hotel on property the night before.

PRESENTS NCTGA at Dakota Winds

LOCATION:

Dakota Winds Golf Course

16849 102nd St. SE
Hankinson, ND 58041

DATE: Monday, May 15th, 2023

GOLF FORMAT: Two Person Teamed Best Ball. Each player will play their own ball for the hole. The lowest score from an individual team member will be counted as the score for that hole.

COST: \$40/person for golf

SCHEDULE:

11:00am Arrival at Dakota Winds
(*Lunch on your own Dakota Winds Tavern*)

12:00pm Shotgun start

5:00pm Golf awards & social

7:00pm Departure back home

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2023 Conference Report

A sincere **THANK YOU** to all NCTGA members who braved the weather to attend our 38th Annual Conference and Trade Show from February 28th to March 2nd, 2023 at the Holiday Inn in Fargo. Pre-registration for this year's conference included 109 NCTGA members, and 27 vendor companies with 41 individuals representing. Fortunately for us this year, the blizzard didn't begin until after registration, in which case most pre-registered attendees did make the conference. Overall it was a great conference, one of the best in several years.



Educational sessions

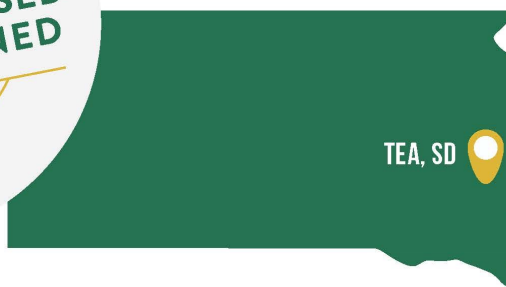
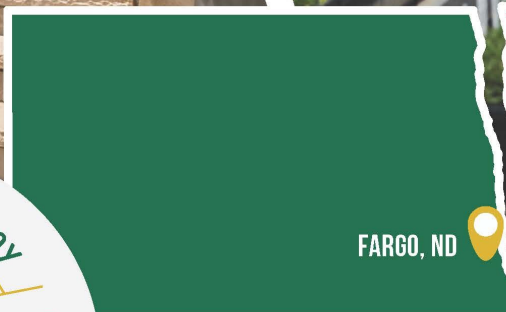
With over 13 hours of educational content throughout the three days, NCTGA members were educated on a wide range of topics. On Tuesday, Randy Robinson from GCSAA provided a state of the golf industry and some information on the First Green Program. Matt Cavanaugh from Rush Creek Golf Course spoke about maintenance on a budget. We also heard from Bruce Williams on 50 years of lessons learned, and Dr. Doug Soldat on turfgrass fertility. The trade show and social followed.

On Wednesday, we opened the day with vendor seminars, followed by trade show time. The NCTGA Annual Meeting was held from 11:30am-12:15pm; covering association financials, events, and voting on new board members. In the afternoon we held concurrent sessions with Dr. Doug Soldat (Golf) and Ben Boeding & Roger Weinbrenner (Sports Turf) from Minnesota Sodding Company. For the 3pm to 5pm time slot, Bruce Williams and Roger Stewart spoke about leadership lessons for the green industry. Our social was held at 5pm, including silent auction and 50/50 raffle winners.

Thursday morning seminars were exceptional. We started the day with two equipment presentations from Trent Manning from Georgia. Then Gary Deters from the U of M spoke about his experience in turfgrass research there. Our keynote speaker for the day was Liz Carlson, who spoke about communication across generations.

Silent Auction/Raffle

We had a very successful silent auction this year. In total, we generated \$2980 from vendor donated items. Thank you to all vendor members who supported this year's silent auction and to NCTGA members for buying the items. With the 50/50 raffle we were able to raise \$788 and this money will go directly to fund a \$100 Par 3 honorarium for Steve Hamelou at future fall golf tournaments. Superior Tech Products added \$500 to this, for a total of \$1288 going to the honorarium.



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2023 Conference Report Continued...

Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to the eight 2022 scholarship recipients. In total, NCTGA funded \$2000 in Legacy scholarships, \$2000 in turf scholarships, and the North Dakota Golf Association (NDGA) funded a \$1000 turfgrass student scholarship. Thank you the NDGA for continuing to support turfgrass student scholarships, and thank you to all scholarship applicants.

NCTGA Turfgrass Scholarships

Trace Brayton received a \$1,000 NCTGA Turfgrass Scholarship. Trace is a senior majoring in Golf and Sports Turf Management at the U of MN-Crookston.

Spencer Dahlquist received a \$500 NCTGA Turfgrass Scholarship. Spencer is a senior majoring in Golf and Sports Turf Management at the U of MN-Crookston.

William Honsa received a \$500 NCTGA Turfgrass Scholarship. William is a junior majoring in Plant Science with a Turfgrass Management emphasis at the U of MN-Twin Cities.

NDGA Turfgrass Scholarship

Hallie Counts received the \$1,000 NDGA Scholarship. Hallie is a junior majoring in Sports and Urban Turfgrass Management at North Dakota State University. Originally from Dunseith, ND, Hallie currently works at both Osgood Golf Course as a groundskeeper and Hornbacher's as a florist.

Legacy Scholarships

In our third year of offering the \$500 Legacy Scholarship, we had four scholarship winners. One scholarship was funded by Bruce Williams Golf Consulting:

Jane Hetletved

(daughter of Dustin Hetletved, Valley Golf Association)

Keagan Neppi

(daughter of Alexis Peltier, The Tessman Company)

Alexes Prasek

(daughter of Gordon Prasek, Jamestown Country Club)

Parker Wood

(son of David Wood, Oxbow CC)

2023 Conference Survey Results

Immediately following the 2023 conference, surveys were sent to all general member and vendor attendees. We greatly appreciate those of you that took the time to provide your feedback for shaping future conferences. Below are some of the survey results from the 2023 conference.

General member survey:

- 39 total responses. Of which, 67% were from golf, 18% suppliers or manufacturers, 13% parks and grounds maintenance, 2% (1 person) sports turf/golf.
- 67% of attendees were very satisfied, 31% satisfied, and 2.6% (1 person) was dissatisfied with the conference.
- Favorite speakers from the conference were Matt Cavanaugh, followed by Trent Manning and Dr. Soldat.
- 97.3% said that the amount of education was just right. 2.7% (1 person) said there was not enough education.
- 53.8% said the conference was an excellent value, 38.5% a good value, 5.1% neutral, and 2.6% low value.
- 71.8% said the Holiday Inn was absolutely a good experience, 20.5% said yes somewhat, 5.1% neutral and 2.6% said no not really.
- 92.3% said catering and food options were excellent or good, 5.1% neutral, and 2.6% not good.

Some comments from general members:

- It is encouraging to see the large number of younger people involved now. There is a good deal of one on one with vendors at this show, much better than the larger shows.
- I had a blast and can't wait for future years, the socials were great networking opportunities.
- I loved the conference. I wish I was better at taking notes because there is so much valuable info. I would say keep getting communication speakers, it is as important as all the technical info.
- The 2023 NCTGA Conference was a huge success in my book. I loved it, my son loved it, and my bet is everyone else loved it too. Great job and huge thanks. 5stars -would recommend!
- Loved the new name badges!
- I think you have a very good balance of education & vendor time. Having said that, I wouldn't mind seeing additional presentations besides those around golf.
- 32 years in the industry and attended state and national event and this years NCTGA was top 5 of any I've attended.

2023 Conference Survey Results Cont'd

Vendor member survey:

- 9 total responses. Of which, 89% had previously attended.
- 100% of vendor attendees were very satisfied or satisfied with the conference.
- 89% had enough time to visit with customers, 11% were neutral.
- 50% would like to keep offering vendor seminars, and 50% were neutral. No vendor said to discontinue vendor seminars.
- 100% said the conference was an excellent or good value.
- 100% said the Holiday Inn was absolutely a good experience.
- 89% said catering and food options were excellent or good, 11% were neutral.

Some comments from vendor members:

- The food and beer start too early. As soon as it does, many customers gather and visit with each other instead of the vendors. We had more traffic on Wednesday morning. We still had positive interaction with the customers.
- Trade Show/Social - start at 3:00, end at 7:00... so people can get supper earlier. Maybe food & drinks for last two hours only to encourage more trade show traffic.
- First time attending the show and it exceeded my expectations. Great work!



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Honorary Member Profile: Roger Stewart

Roger Stewart of Stewart Golf Consulting has been a presenter at the NCTGA Conference now for several years. At this year's conference, Roger was nominated as an honorary NCTGA member of the association. We sat down with Roger for a few questions about his career.

Talk to me about your career in the golf course industry, including your education and how you got started. What did your career progression look like?

Like many people, I got my start with a summer job in high school on a small daily fee course in St. Anne, IL. After high school and two years at a liberal arts college in Crete, NE, I needed to make some career plans. I liked working at a golf course so I decided to transfer to the University of Nebraska, where my dad graduated from, and they had a good Agricultural School. I ended up with a B.S. Degree in Agronomy. From there I moved back to the Chicago area and got a job as a Superintendent trainee at Bob O'Link G.C. working for the legendary Bob Williams. I had no idea how fortunate that would prove to be for me. After one year there, I progressed on to my first entry level GCS job at Midlane C.C. in Wadsworth, IL. After three years, on to a better job at Riverside Golf Club, North Riverside, IL. It was here that I got involved with the Midwest Association of Golf Course Superintendents and eventually served as President in 1985. After eight years at Riverside, I was fortunate to get the opportunity to do a construction/grow-in at a new Tom Fazio course in the western suburbs called Stonebridge Country Club. This is a development type club with housing around it and eventually I hosted six Champions Tour events there called the Ameritech Open. It was during my time at Stonebridge that I got involved with the Chicagoland Association of Golf Course Superintendents and eventually served as President.



After eight years at Stonebridge, my career took a dramatic change when I was able to go to work for the PGA TOUR and move to a new TPC course in Princeton, NJ called TPC Jasna Polana which was being built on the estate of Seward Johnson, heir to the Johnson and Johnson fortune. I did the construction/grow-in there and hosted one of the last Shell's Wonderful World of Golf episodes and three more Champions Tour events. Here is where I settled in working for the PGA TOUR which was both a fantastic opportunity and a bit of a surreal experience. It was during my time at TPC Jasna Polana that I became involved with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey and eventually served as President. After eight years at Stonebridge, my career took a dramatic change when I was able to go to work for the PGA TOUR and move to a new TPC course in Princeton, NJ called TPC Jasna Polana which was being built on the estate of Seward Johnson, heir to the Johnson and Johnson fortune. I did the construction/grow-in there and hosted one of the last Shell's Wonderful World of Golf episodes and three more Champions Tour events. Here is where I settled in working for the PGA TOUR which was both a fantastic opportunity and a bit of a surreal experience. It was during my time at TPC Jasna Polana that I became involved with the Golf Course Superintendents Association of New Jersey and eventually served as President.

Continued on page 12...

Honorary Member Profile: Roger Stewart

Continued from page 11...

What were some of the more challenging or rewarding aspects of your career as a golf course superintendent?

This may sound strange, but the most challenging aspect and the most rewarding aspect of my career is the same because it about managing people, working with people and working for people. When you are successful managing people and you see the progression they make and the growth they enjoy, both professionally and personally, there is no greater reward. When you can bring the people you work for around to your point of view, there is no greater feeling of satisfaction.

What was one of your more memorable experiences on the golf course? Any embarrassing moments in the workplace?

I have many memorable experiences, but I have to say two stand out a bit more than others. After the match on Shell's Wonderful World of Golf between Tom Watson and Hale Irwin, I asked to have them autograph some flags and hats for my staff. Tom Watson gladly agreed and asked me to bring my assistants along as well. He was the most gracious person and spent over an hour autographing memorabilia and just having a conversation with all of us about everything from the TOUR, to mowing equipment, to our opinions about all things golf course maintenance. I'll never forget that experience. Continued on page 13...

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Honorary Member Profile: Roger Stewart

Continued from page 12...

The second one is when I was asked to come to the practice facility for a picture with some of the Champions Tour players at the 3M Championship. When I got there I realized this was not a few players. It was a group of the most distinguished players I could have ever imagined. It included Nicklaus, Watson, Player, Palmer, and about 20 others of similar renown. I was pretty nervous and sort of jumped in on the edge. Then to my surprise, Nicklaus and a few others said no, no, no, Roger move down here in front with us! They didn't have to do that and it meant a lot to me. The players on the Champions Tour for the most part, really are good people.

Probably the most embarrassing moment was when I hosted my first Champions Tour event at Stonebridge CC.. The first day of the tournament, I thought I had covered every detail until just as the first group teed off at #1 tee (which is right next to 18 green) and the rules official called on the radio and asked to meet me at #18 green. I met him there and his question was if I was sure that 18 green had been mowed that morning because he said it was much slower than the others. I said I was sure that had been mowed. Actually I never got there to personally see that happen and later after questioning my staff I realized that a mix up between two of them left the green uncut. Huge learning moment for me and very embarrassing.

What do you remember about your initial introduction to the NCTGA?

My initial introduction to NCTGA was when I was President of MGCSA and Jack MacKenzie and I drove up to play in the Scholarship fund raising tournament. I didn't know anyone really but it didn't take long before people made me feel right at home. Then when I spoke at the conference the first time, I felt the same welcoming atmosphere from members. It's a really great association of professionals who are very interested in learning and growing professionally. That's what I like about going up to Fargo.

Continued on page 15...

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Honorary Member Profile: Roger Stewart

Continued from page 13...

You've orchestrated a lot of golf tournaments as a superintendent. Is there one tournament that stands out to you?

Hosting 16 Champions Tour events was about as exhilarating and rewarding as it gets. I can't really say one stands out from another. I know one thing though, each one made me a better manager than the previous one. I know that you can't do anything like that without great people working for you and without great volunteers. I can't thank them enough.

What do you think the future holds for the turf business, including equipment, technology, and staffing?

Technology will continue to grow exponentially in the turf business just as it seems to be doing across the board in other businesses. It is amazing to see how much we have progressed over the past 40 years. We will continue to see development of more efficient irrigation systems technologies because water

continues to be a resource that is regarded as threatened in many parts of the country. The development of low water use turfgrass varieties will continue to deliver more options for us and there will be more developing technologies to deal with poa annua. Autonomous mowing, bunker raking, spraying and fertilizing will be the new norm in the future. The use of drones for everything from fertilizer and plant protectant applications to disease diagnosis will be here sooner than later. This will help us deal with labor shortages that seem to be with us going forward. We will still need people to do both technical and non-technical jobs but not as many of them.

The challenge for those of us who manage the budgets is that all of this will continue to increase in cost and new ways of paying for those technologies will have to be developed. New leasing options demonstrated trade-offs of technologies and labor savings take time to develop, courses will continue to be challenged with the revenue vs costs conundrum. Although I appreciate the new complexity of our business I think there is still room for the KISS principle in many things we do.

What are up to now that you're retired?

I still do some consulting and speaking when the phone rings. I play more golf now and I returned to a passion of mine in trap shooting. I volunteer each year at The Players and the 3M Open. I go to some MAGCS meetings and I hope to attend a few more GCSAA conferences in the future as well. I volunteer as an ELGA Judge and I still am an active CGCS that I would like to continue as long as I am able. Thinking about Pickle Ball!

Continued on page 16...



Honorary Member Profile: Roger Stewart

Continued from page 15...

Who is your ideal foursome to play with?

Tom Watson, Colin Morikawa, Joel Dahmen, Me

What message would you like to give to those just starting out in the turf industry?

Be open minded, have a great work ethic, a great outlook on life and a burning desire to learn. It is most important to try to work for someone you can learn a lot from, who is a great mentor, a progressive manager, and will be your advocate. It is good for your resume to work at facilities that have a reputation for excellence, progressive management, and producing future GCS. If you can get both it can pay off. If you can't—go with the known mentor and rely on your networking. Participate in your professional organizations. Volunteer or serve on a committee for your local chapter. Develop your interpersonal skills, you will need them. Surround yourself with good people, you will rely on them in some fashion in your future.

Is there anything else that you would like to pass along to NCTGA members?

I am very grateful to the membership for this Honorary Membership. You really have a great association and I have enjoyed speaking at your conference and meeting and interacting with all of you. Keep striving to grow your association and provide for the membership. I wish you the best.

(Editors note: Thank you to Roger Stewart for taking the time to share his experiences with NCTGA members)



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Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program

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The University of Wisconsin Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program (TAP) consists of a 12-week, in-person educational bootcamp and a field-based apprenticeship at a golf course, athletic facility, or other turfgrass facility. The program provides participants with the hands-on, real-world experience needed to succeed in the turfgrass industry. Successful completion of both the bootcamp and the apprenticeship is required to earn the Turfgrass Apprenticeship Program Certificate.

Step 1: Educational Bootcamp

The bootcamp takes place over two 6-week terms during the late fall and winter. The fall term will begin the first week of November and end in mid-December. The winter term will begin the second week of January and end in late February. Each week will have class on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10 AM until 3 PM CST with a 1-hour break for lunch.

Program cost is the same for in-state and out-of-state students. Check the website for current rates. Housing is not provided by UW-Madison, but we provide a number of affordable hotel options in the Madison area.

Significant scholarship funds will be available to support student tuition and housing costs from a variety of turfgrass associations. More information on scholarships and how to apply for them will be provided in the first week of class during the fall term.

Step 2: Field-based Apprenticeship

Students in the TAP are required to complete a field-based apprenticeship at a golf course, athletic complex, or other turf management facility of their choosing. A list of tasks to complete during the apprenticeship have been developed in cooperation with associations in the turfgrass industry and can be viewed on the program website.

How to Enroll

Please visit <https://turf.wisc.edu/academics/> and add your name to the enrollment form. Alternatively, contact Dr. Soldat or Dr. Koch via email (djsoldat@wisc.edu / plkoch@wisc.edu). The deadline for enrollment in the fall term is October 15th.



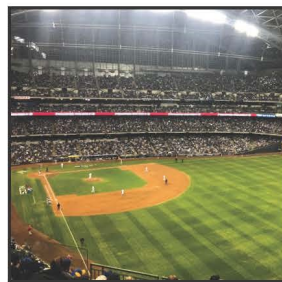
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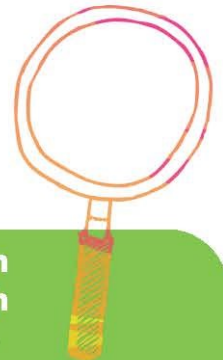
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Educate, engage and inspire your students with a one-of-a-kind STEM learning, environmental science and career exploration field trip to your local golf course. First Green brings students out of the classroom to a local golf course for a fun, hands-on field trip to explore the living laboratory that is the golf course. Career professionals will lead stations featuring the math, engineering, technology and environmental and earth science practiced each day. If you've ever wanted to reinforce STEM skills while on a unique field trip – here's your opportunity! Students will engage in a variety of real-world applications to what you teach in the classroom.

Choose from a variety of hands-on STEM learning stations. Work with the golf course superintendent to tailor the field trip to meet your students interests and needs.

2-Hour Field Trip

- Includes **3** STEM learning stations
- Plus, a fun golf activity
- Student Packs for each child
- No charge for field trip

3-Hour Field Trip

- Includes **4** STEM learning stations
- Plus, a fun golf activity
- Student Packs for each child
- No charge for the field trip

Each learning station is led by a career professional and lasts 20 – 25 minutes. Students will be in small groups and rotate thru each station.



Grants are
available for
transportation
assistance!



Learn more at thefirstgreen.org.



GCSAA's First Green program is a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) environmental outreach program that uses the golf course as a living laboratory. K-12 students participate in hands-on, outdoor learning stations that include lessons on wildlife habitat, soil science, environmental sustainability, mathematics, water conservation, water quality, career exploration and much more.

First Green Benefits:

- Building Community – Raising awareness of how golf courses impact the community through environmental stewardship and habitat preservation.
- Inspiring Students – Sparking students' interest in STEM through fun, hands-on experiences.
- Applying Lessons – Learning stations bring the classroom to life on the golf course.
- Advancing Golf – First Green field trips introduce children (and their teachers, parents, and chaperones) to golf, golf courses, career opportunities and the industry; many for the first time.

First Green Field Trips Include:

- K-12 students in diverse communities throughout the United States
- 2 – 4 hours in length
- 4 – 5 STEM/Environmental Learning Stations
- Partnership between local schools and golf course superintendents
- Field Trips are free

First Green Mission:

- Support environmental education, STEM learning and stewardship.
- Illustrate the environmental and community benefits of golf courses.
- Introduce the next generation to the game of golf.



Our Team

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“ If we can get just one student from each field trip interested in the game of golf, curious about working on a golf course, or studying turfgrass management, then it is a huge success. ”

Ryan Kraushofer,
General Manager, Westminster National Golf
Course

“ I wanted my students to participate in a First Green field trip so they could see real life application of what we had been learning in class... ”

Jeff Glasser,
6th Grade Teacher, St. Louise School



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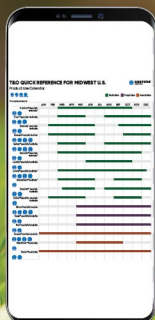
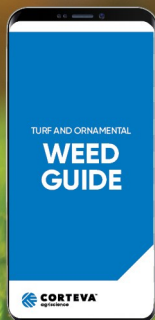


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Quick Reference



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