Project Title: Sustainable Turf Management and Production

Project Leader: Mary Owen

Project Overview

As Massachusetts communities face expanding development, increasing pressure on water resources and tightening fiscal resources, professional turf and grounds managers are challenged to manage the public and private lands under their purview in an environmentally responsible manner. The goal of the UMass Extension Sustainable Turf Management Program is to develop, research, gather, and share knowledge that will enable turf managers and people in communities to practice economically viable and environmentally sound turf management with emphasis on natural resource protection. How urban, suburban and rural land resources are managed has broad implications for water resources, property values, energy consumption, greenhouse gas mitigation, the safety of youth and adults, and the economic viability of businesses and communities. In FY 2014, through a combination of seminars, workshops, courses, educational presentations and site consultations, complemented by online content and communications, approximately 107,660 (3510 directly, 104,510 indirectly) professionals and businesses in or related to various aspects of turf and grounds management learned information that will better enable them to protect and enhance water resources and environmental quality through the use of IPM as well as sustainable turf best management practices (BMPs).

In particular in FY 2014 the UMass Extension Sustainable Turf Management Program focused its educational efforts in particular, though not exclusively, on the proper management of nutrients, in response to the passage of nutrient management legislation and the development of ensuing regulations on state-wide as well as regional levels.

Activity Summary

- Liaison, Leadership and Networking for Professional Turf Industry (23)
- Turfgrass Identification and Selection Workshop(1)
- Environmentally sustainable turf management classes for Master Gardeners.(2)
- Field Manual: Best Management Practices for Landscape Turf(1)
- Invited Presentations on sustainable turf management and production(19)
- Maintain UMass Turf Program website for www.umasssturf.org(1)
- Professional Guide for IPM in Turf (1)
- Site visits and consultation regarding Integrated Pest Management and Best Management Practices for turf (696)
- TurfTalk, an electronic message sent as needed through the seasons(47)
- UMass Winter School for Turf Managers: Principles of Turf Management, Department of Plant Soil and Insect Sciences (Offered through UMass CPE)

**Total educational contacts**

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<tr>
<th>In Person</th>
<th>3510</th>
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<td>Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)</td>
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**Narrative Summary and Impact**

Massachusetts legislation, Chapter 262 of the Acts of 2012, authorized the enactment of new statewide nutrient management regulations by the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture (MDAR), and permitted the enactment of regulations by specific and discreet regional and local entities (Cape Cod Commission, Martha’s Vineyard Commission, Nantucket). This statute requires all of the named regulatory authorities to ensure that subsequent regulations relative to plant nutrients are consistent with UMass Extension’s published information, educational materials and other public outreach programs relative to nutrient management and fertilizer.

The UMass Extension Turf Program undertook the following:

- Developed and keep current content for a Nutrient Management BMPs informational website on the UMass Center for Agriculture site, covering both agricultural production and green industries: [http://ag.umass.edu/agriculture-resources/nutrient-best-management-practices](http://ag.umass.edu/agriculture-resources/nutrient-best-management-practices).
- Convened staff and coordinated two UMass reviews of proposed statewide nutrient regulation. Prepared and provided testimony at public hearing for proposed statewide nutrient regulation. Coordinated meetings of UMass staff with MDAR representatives.
- Collaborated with Cape Cod Extension in the development of an educational brochure for property owners, “Protect Cape Cod Waters with Good Lawn Care Practices”. This was subsequently distributed to every property owner on the Cape.
- Prepared and provided UMass Extension testimony at public hearing for proposed model nutrient regulation for communities within the Cape Cod Commission’s jurisdiction.
- Served as UMass representative and technical expert regarding nutrients and fertilizers during listening sessions, working meetings and public hearings.
- Participated in discussions with Martha’s Vineyard Commission staff and committee working on the nutrient by-law for the municipalities under the jurisdiction of the MVC. Provided expertise in technical matters regarding nutrients, turf and the environment.
- Provided training for about 140 fertilizer applicators as part of their required certification process at Nantucket’s Spring Training for Lawn and Landscape Professionals in preparation for the new municipal fertilizer regulation that took effect in mid-April 2014.
Collaborating Organizations

- Massachusetts Department of Agriculture
- New England Sod Producers Association
- New England Sports Turf Managers Association
- Golf Course Superintendent Association of New England
- Golf Course Superintendents Association of Cape Cod
- New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation
- Massachusetts Association of Lawncare Professionals