

## **Project Title: Sustainable Turf Management and Production**

**Project Leader: Mary Owen**

### **Project Overview**

In the highly populated northeastern United States, managed grass covered surfaces (utility turf, lawns, parklands, sports fields, etc.) collectively comprise an integral part of our communities. Turf management practices have broad implications for water resources, property values, energy consumption, greenhouse gas mitigation, safety of youth and adult sports participants, and the economic viability of businesses and communities. In addition, turf management materials present potential risks from human and non-target exposure. Professional turf managers in all segments of the turf industry are challenged to meet shifting customer demands while meeting safety and quality expectations and protecting the environment. The development, communication and adoption of best management practices are critical for maintaining the quantity and quality of open space, and can positively impact ecosystem integrity in Massachusetts.

The UMass Extension Sustainable Turf Management Project helps turf managers and other interested individuals, organizations and communities meet these challenges by providing research based information disseminated through a comprehensive array of workshops, courses, newsletters, websites, educational presentations, field days, and site consultations. These activities serve to convene state and regional partners to focus on building the skills and knowledge that are needed for sustainable development and maintenance of turf in the environment, while protecting human health and conserving water and other natural resources.

### **Activity Summary**

- Liaison, Leadership and Networking for Professional Turf Industry (32)
- UMass Turf Research Field Day (1)
- Environmentally sustainable turf management classes for Master Gardeners (2)
- Field Manual: Best Management Practices for Landscape Turf (1)
- Barnstable County Master Gardener Training and University of Rhode Island Master Gardener Training: Sensible Steps to an Environmentally Responsible Lawn (2)
- Professional Guide for IPM in Turf (1)
- Site visits and consultation regarding Integrated Pest Management and Best Management Practices for turf (840)
- TurfTalk, an electronic message sent as needed through the seasons (49)
- UMass Winter School for Turf Managers: Principles of Turf Management, Department of Plant Soil and Insect Sciences (Offered through UMass CPE)(1)

### ***Total educational contacts***

	Adult Contacts
In Person	7784
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)	304797

### **Narrative Summary and Impact**

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 2015, through a combination of seminars, workshops, courses, educational presentations and site consultations, complemented by online content and communications, approximately 114,720 (13,920 directly, 100,800 indirectly) professionals and businesses in or related to various aspects of turf and grounds management learned information that will result in protection and enhancement of water resources and environmental quality. 3044 implemented or planned to implement those environmental turf management practices. And 230 individuals, many of whom are responsible for making land and grounds management purchasing decisions in publically funded as well as private business situations, learned information that will enable them to make better purchasing decisions.

### **Collaborating Organizations**

- Audubon International
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Water Resources
- New England Regional Turfgrass Foundation
- New England Sports Turf Managers Association
- Massachusetts Association of Lawncare Professionals
- Sports Turf Managers Association

