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Turf Grass June 16, 2018

Temperatures are heating up and we are seeing less rainfall, so it may not be as appealing to spend time outside in the garden. There are some gardening tasks that require weekly attention and one of those is your lawn.

Some gardeners want a perfectly manicured, weed-free and lush green lawn to showcase their flower and shrub gardens. Others just want something green that they can walk or play on. Regardless of your preference, lawn grasses require some care. Depending on the quality of the lawn you want, that care level can vary. Weekly mowing during the growing season is required regardless of the type of care you give, but for turf to do its best, water, fertilization and weed control are added into the mix.

Some homeowners do all the work themselves, while others hire a service to do the mowing, fertilization and spraying. If you are doing the work yourself, there are many good resources from lawn care calendars for each of the grasses grown in Arkansas, fertilization tips, mowing, and general maintenance on the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Extension website: <https://www.uaex.edu/yard-garden/lawns/>

There are also many companies across the state who maintain and care for lawns. For turfgrass professionals and interested homeowners, the University of Arkansas will host a Turfgrass Field Day in Fayetteville at the Agricultural Research Center on Wednesday, July 25, 2018. The field day provides individuals the opportunity to hear the latest up-to-date information about new products and research studies as well as providing an opportunity to network with others in the turf industry and visit with vendors at the trade show. The cost to attend the Field Day is \$80 and includes breakfast, a hat, program, lunch, and pesticide recertification (if desired). A registration discount is given to companies or organizations that register multiple individuals.

The field day not only applies to lawn care providers, but there are also divisions for athletic or sports field maintenance and golf course maintenance. Registration is now open. A complete list of the program and a link to on-line pre-registration is located at:

<https://horticulture.uark.edu/research-extension/turf/turf-education/field-day.php>

Registration is also available on-site, beginning at 7:30 am on July 25, 2018 however, they can only guarantee meals, hats, and programs for those who pre-register.

In addition to the University of Arkansas field day, there is an Arkansas Turfgrass Association <https://www.arkansasturf.org/> dedicated to providing education and a network for those in the turfgrass industry. Membership in this organization is included in the fee to attend the annual two day educational conference and trade show which is held in January each year at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The 2019 Conference will be January 10-11. This conference is the best source of turfgrass education in Arkansas besides the upcoming turf field day (which is held every other year). The ATA conference provides a strong educational program with some of the leading industry authorities as speakers. This is where you go to get the most up-to-date and relevant research and recommendations for the turfgrass industry. In addition to the

educational seminars, there is also a tradeshow and for those who need pesticide recertification, that is available. General sessions cover all areas of the turfgrass industry, with breakout sessions geared specifically to lawns, athletic fields and golf courses.

Two years ago, the ATA implemented a new awards program to recognize companies and individuals who are making a difference in the industry across our state. There are three divisions for the awards - Lawn, Golf & Sport Fields. In the lawn care area there are two awards – the ATA Turf Site of the Year for Commercial or Residential Site. The site must be at least two years old and under the continuous care of the entrant for at least two years. There are two categories: Under 10,000 sq. ft. and 10,000 sq. ft. and above. For the sport field category they award the ATA Field of the Year. Fields must be two years or older and under the continuous care of the entrant for at least two years. Complexes of fields may be entered as one entry, and can be football, soccer, baseball or softball fields. And the final award is the ATA Golf Course of the Year which is awarded to a Private/Resort or Public/Municipal Golf Course. All the guidelines for the award entries is located at: <https://www.arkansasturf.org/awards/> Applications for these awards will be accepted through October 31, 2018 and award recipients will be recognized at the annual conference in January. This past year the winners were:

2017 Turf Site of the Year under 10,000 sq. ft. - Better Lawns and Gardens (David Munsey – Little Rock)

2017 Turf Site of the Year over 10,000 sq. ft. - Ace of Blades (Josh Landreth – Springdale)

2017 Field of the Year - Conway Parks & Recreation (Trey Price)

2017 Golf Course of the Year - Hot Springs Country Club (Trey Rutledge)

For many homeowners the only thought they give their turf is the weekly time they spend mowing it, but for many in our state turf is big business. It is a growing industry and there is a great deal of research that is ongoing to determine best practices to maintain home lawns, commercial lawns, sports fields and golf courses. Luckily for those in the industry there are some great resources to help them do their jobs well. For students deciding on a field of study, there is also a turfgrass degree program at the University of Arkansas. Dr. Mike Richardson and Dr. Doug Karcher in the horticulture department lead this program. Students learn the latest cutting edge techniques and learn all about turfgrass management in a hands-on learning environment. If you would like more information on the opportunities of joining this program contact the horticulture department at 479-575-2603 or visit the website at <https://horticulture.uark.edu/research-extension/turf/index.php>