



2018 LTA CONFERENCE ON JANUARY 9, 2018

It's time again for registration for the Louisiana Turfgrass Association (LTA) Annual Conference! The event will be held on **January 9, 2018 at Tiger Stadium in the beautiful Stadium Club South overlooking the south end zone.** Once again we will have great speakers, food, and prizes. **LSU Baseball Coach Paul Mainieri will be our special guest opening speaker.** The meeting will be a great learning experience as well as an opportunity to mingle with 250 attendees from the state's turfgrass industry. Pre-register with a credit card on our website at www.laturf.net or use the form available on the site and mail in your registration with a check. The fee for the conference is only \$50 per person. The 2018 LTA conference will be an opportunity for pesticide recertification with LDAF as well as a chance to obtain GCSAA continuing education units. Come learn a lot about turfgrass in Tiger Stadium and get your new highly coveted LSU Turfgrass Hat and win some other great prizes. Register now at www.laturf.net



Coach Paul Mainieri

Vendor Alley Booths are available for \$300 per booth. This includes conference registration fees for up to 3 total booth representatives. It's a great opportunity for vendors to interact with potential customers because conference attendees must visit vendors to get their vendor cards signed to be eligible for great prizes. Close contact with attendees is guaranteed. Vendor registration is also available on our website at www.laturf.net

BROWN PATCH—COOL WET WEATHER



It's time for brown patch disease to hit turfgrass. Brown patch (or large patch), caused by the fungus *Rhizoctonia solani*, is the most common disease of warm-season turfgrasses in Louisiana. As the name suggests, when conditions are favorable, the disease develops rapidly into large circular or irregularly-shaped patches of brown turf when not treated. Although the turf is usually not killed, *R. solani* does attack and rot the bases of the leaf sheaths, killing the leaf blades. This results in areas of sparse turf that are readily invaded by weeds, which creates another problem requiring additional management. St. Augustinegrass is the most susceptible turfgrass, but centipedegrass and zoysiagrass also have issues with brown patch.

The development of brown patch is favored by frequent or prolonged periods of rainfall when temperatures are moderate at night. Although we typically think of brown patch as a fall disease, it can also develop in the spring, especially when we have prolonged periods of cool, wet weather following green-up. So if you had brown patch in a location in the fall, be prepared to treat those areas with a fungicide in the spring before it becomes active. Typically, fall and spring applications of fungicides can reduce disease severity and limit its development until conditions become unfavorable.

Article continued on next page...

The duration of favorable weather in the fall and the frequency of rain dictate how many fungicide applications will be required. We generally recommend at least two fungicide applications in the fall: the first should be applied in mid- to late September and the second in mid-to late October. However, if the grass is still growing and conditions remain favorable for disease development into November and December, additional fungicide applications may be necessary. In areas where brown patch is known to have occurred previously, an application of a fungicide in mid-March, just before or at green-up is advisable. Again, if we experience an extended period of relatively cool, wet weather in the spring, additional fungicide applications may be necessary.

When fungicides are being applied as a prevention before the onset of disease, granular or liquid fungicides are appropriate. On the other hand, when fungicides are being applied to areas where brown patch is active, the use of spray formulations of fungicides is preferred as these will give better coverage. Systemic fungicides that are absorbed into the plant should be applied when the turf is still actively growing (so it will be taken up) and prior to periods of rainfall. It's important to alternate fungicide modes of action to reduce incidences of disease resistance. Almost all fungicides registered for use on turfgrasses are labeled for the control of brown patch. Below is a table of the highest rated fungicides based on ratings compiled by Drs. Vincelli and Williams of the University of Kentucky.

Efficacy of fungicides in managing brown (large) patch

Table 1. Fungicides	Efficacy Rating (4=consistently good to excellent results)
azoxystrobin	4
flutonil	4
PCNB	4
pyraclostrobin	3
triadimefon	4
triticonazole	3



Lawn Burweed / Sticker Weed (*Soliva pterosperma*)



Lawn burweed (stickerweed) is a low growing, mat forming winter annual. The leaves are opposite and divided into narrow segments or lobes. The flowers are small and inconspicuous. The seed forms in the leaf axils. The weed gets its name because the seeds have spines that are painful when stepped on. The spines are actually a method of transport for the seed. I see lawn burweed most often in weak turf areas.

I get the most calls on lawn burweed in early spring when athletes, golfers, and home owners get stuck by the spines on the seeds. It's too late to control the weed by then. Control lawn burweed in November with simazine + trimec type herbicide. For football fields including practice fields, that means make the application after the last home game. MSM Turf is also very effective postemergence on lawn burweed. Control lawn burweed in overseeded areas such as baseball fields with trimec type herbicides alone.

🔑 *The key to lawn burweed control is to apply herbicides well before the plant flowers.*

Control: Metsulfuron, simazine + trimec type herbicide (2,4-D, dicamba, mecoprop), atrazine + trimec type herbicide etc.

False garlic (*Nothoscordum bivalve*)

False garlic (crow poison), from the lily family, is one of the first cool season weeds to appear in lawns, meadows, and roadsides throughout the state. It starts blooming in October/November and lasts till the heat takes it out in the spring. False garlic grows from a bulb and looks much like wild onion, but it has fewer and larger flowers on long stems and lacks the onion odor. The plant has white flowers with 6 petals with a green to brown stripe, and 6 stamens. Individual flowers are 1/2 inch across and grow in loose clusters on stalks 4–12 inches tall. Seeds produced by false garlic are highly viable and germinate readily on most soils.



🔑 *The key to controlling false garlic is to apply metsulfuron. Atrazine is ineffective. Trimec type herbicides have not done well when applied alone in our trials.*

Control: Metsulfuron, metsulfuron + trimec type herbicides

WEBWORMS STILL A LINGERING PROBLEM THIS FALL

It's late October and there is still heavy damage from tropical sod webworms (*Herpetogramma*)! The infestation is not as bad as 2016, but the population this year has been very damaging. I just looked at a lawn this morning in Baton Rouge with a heavy infestation. Keep lawns, sports fields, and golf courses checked. We will probably continue to see damage until substantially cooler weather. Here is some helpful information to assist you in identifying and controlling these destructive moth larvae:



Tropical sod webworm larvae

Sod Webworm Facts

- Moths lay eggs in tall grass and shrubs and rest in landscapes during the day
- Eggs hatch in a week—larvae to adult in approximately 25 days
- Damage may begin near flowerbeds
- Look for notched leaves & green excrement pellets
- Webworms feed mainly at night and are lethargic compared to armyworms
- Watch for birds feeding in turf
- St. Aug and carpetgrass are favorites but I have seen webworms in bermudagrass and zoysiagrass

How do you know if it is tropical sod webworm damage?

For sod webworms, the lawns may have a few chewed up circular areas or browned out areas that exceed 1000ft². At first glance, you may think disease. After closer inspection of the turf, the leaves will show heavy chewing damage and you may see green excrement pellets. Young webworm larvae feed along the midrib trough of the leaf, mid-sized larvae chew notches in the edges of leaves, and older larvae will completely strip off the leaves similar to the damage caused by armyworms. It is the **notched edges** on grass blades that are the tipoff. Additionally, the worms leave trails of a silky web as they crawl through the grass. You can spot these “webs” in the morning when dew is on the ground. Like armyworms, watch for birds feeding in the area.



Notched leaves indicates sod webworm damage



Tropical webworm larvae with green excrement

Article continued on next page...



Tropical sod webworm damage in St. Augustinegrass lawns

Tropical Sod Webworm Life Cycle

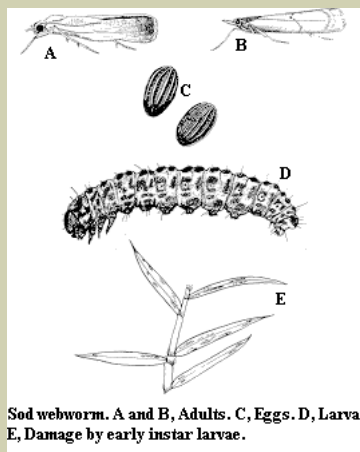
Moths are 0.5 to 0.75 inches long and have snout like projections on their heads. You see the moths fluttering over the turf and in flower bed areas nearby. This short-lived moth does not feed on the turf but is responsible for laying the eggs in the grass and landscapes. The eggs hatch in 7 to 10 days and the larvae begin feeding on the turf. The larvae (worms) can get up to 1 inch long and are light green to gray green with dark spots on their body. There is no characteristic inverted Y shape on the head of webworms like you see with armyworms. The tropical sod webworm completes development from egg to moth emergence in 5 to 6 weeks. The species overwinters as larvae in the soil. We may get 3 to 4 generations in a season.



Mature tropical sod webworm



Tropical sod webworm moth



Sod webworm. A and B, Adults. C, Eggs. D, Larva. E, Damage by early instar larvae.



Mature tropical sod webworm

Tropical sod webworms and armyworms can be found in the same lawn at the same time. The good news is that most insecticides that kill sod webworms also work well on armyworms. The following table shows some options for controlling worms in turfgrass.

Control Options For Tropical Sod Webworms and Fall Armyworms

Insecticides for webworms and armyworms	Common Trade Name(s)
bifenthrin	Talstar, Quali-Pro, etc.
carbaryl	Sevin, Carbaryl etc.
chlorantraniliprole	Acelepryn
dinotefuran	Zylam (only sod webworm listed on label)
spinosad	Conserve
trichlorfon	Dylox

HOW TO PROTECT TURF FROM STRESS AND WINTER DAMAGE

Keep potassium levels up on turfgrass

Potassium is commonly known as the “stress tolerance” nutrient. For example, tolerance to cold, diseases, and drought are linked to correct levels of potassium in turfgrass. Potassium is second only to nitrogen in the amount used by turfgrass. Turfgrass that is potassium deficient is less able to withstand stress. Reduction in the incidence of diseases such as brown patch, smut, and dollar spot can be associated with sufficient potassium levels. Let’s get a soil test and see where potash levels are this fall. Since turfgrasses are still green, a few pounds can be applied if necessary before dormancy sets in.

Winter Hardiness Checklist

- Remove excessive thatch during the growing season.
- Maintain centipedegrass at 1 to 1.5 inches and St. Augustinegrass at 2.75 to 3 inches (don’t let grasses grow excessively tall—proper mowing height is important for thatch management)
- Aerify to reduce soil compaction and encourage deeper root growth
- Get soil test to determine potassium levels in the soil

SODDING IS POSSIBLE YEAR-ROUND IN LOUISIANA

You can sod lawns year round in Louisiana. Lawns that are established correctly and managed properly will last indefinitely. The first step to a beautiful lawn starts with a high quality sodding process. I've seen so many poorly sodded lawns here lately that I thought it would be a good idea to write an article on how to sod a yard correctly. Sodding is not complicated but several important steps should be followed to successfully establish a new lawn.

Steps to Sodding Your New Lawn

1. In order to determine the fertility and soil pH, collect a soil sample and submit it to your local extension office.
http://www.lsuagcenter.com/en/our_offices/departments/SPSS/ServiceLabs/soil_testing_lab/faq/#2
2. Determine how much sod will be needed. One pallet of sod covers approximately 450 ft²
3. Kill existing damaged sod and weeds with a non-selective herbicide, such as glyphosate.
4. Wait at least 7 days for the existing vegetation to die, and sod cut or scrape dead material from the site.
5. If extensive grading will be needed at the location, remove the topsoil and stockpile it for replacement after the rough grade is established.
6. Redistribute or add topsoil back over the rough grade. Till in soil amendments and fertilizer as recommended by the soil sample results.
7. Optional: Install drainage and irrigation system if desired.
8. Establish final grade.
9. Install fresh sod (within 24 hours of harvest) soon after it's delivered. The longer sod sits on the pallet the more it will deteriorate. Moisten the area to be sodded prior to laying the sod to improve root recovery. Lay sod in a brick-like pattern, staggering joints. Butt joints tightly to prevent roots from drying out. Do not overlap sod pieces.
10. Roll the lawn after laying the sod to insure good sod/soil contact.
11. After rolling, water deeply. Maintain a high level of moisture in the soil for 7 to 10 days. Do not allow the area to dry out. Sod can be fertilized with nitrogen one month after sodding. Wait till next growing season for the first fertilizer application if sodded in fall or winter.

Keys to successful establishment



Good soil preparation



Fresh sod



Irrigation daily until established

A Word from LTA President

Networking & Recruiting

As I continue to march on with the process of advancing the proverbial ball down the field here at LSU and work to strengthen my staff's abilities to perform tasks in the most efficient and effective manner, I have reached a stalemate. Due to loss of talented staff members being hired away, I find myself in a position where I am unable to produce the results I desire or the meet the goals of my own self-imposed deadlines. So what do I do? I begin to draw upon the friends and contacts I have made over the years in this industry in an attempt to harvest some talent and bring them into my team.

All of you in some manner have had opportunities to meet your peers in this industry. Whether at the annual LTA conference or some other trade show, a workshop put on by the LSU AgCenter, while in school, or maybe just through a random encounter. These truly are fleeting moments that we all must take advantage of and work, as individuals, to make a team. It is imperative that we make efforts aimed at getting to know others, and making sure that they know whom we are. Your reputation in this industry will go a long ways, but it is my opinion that it does not go nearly as far as that first impression made by solid eye contact, a firm handshake, and a pleasant conversation.

I would advocate that you never sell the potential recruit or applicant solely on the job, but merely the personal relationship you wish to have with them. Try to sell yourself, not the job. Working in collegiate athletics, I can assure you this is what coaches do. Here at LSU we build beautiful facilities and have 100,000 plus Tiger fans at Death Valley and the recruits get to see that, and without a doubt it has sizeable impact on their decision, but I kid you not, Coach Mainieri has a reputation as a closer. Not in the baseball terms as it would apply to a pitcher, but it's what he is able to do with that potential student athlete when he gets them in his office that closes the deal and gets them to commit to his program and LSU. Sure, he sells them on tradition and titles but it is his personal communication skills, and how that recruit feels about him as a person that get it done.

Previously I talked about getting staff to buy into you and the potential you see in them, but with a new applicant that you are recruiting into your organization it is honestly more about the potential they see in you. What you can do for them, maybe as it translates to being a mentor, or even maybe more importantly, their ability to now insert themselves into your network should they decide to work for you. Think of some of the legendary Coaches in the game of football and the coaching trees that they have. Guys like Bill Parcells, Bill Belichick and Nick Saban; all from the same tree, but now have their own tree. This analogy is the same in our industry. Many of us in LTA can absolutely play six degrees of separation, and will end up within the same tree.

So as I embark down this path of attempting to replace the loss of talented individuals with other talented individuals, where do you think I turned first? I turned to my network of professionals and contacts within our industry to see who came out of who's "coaching tree." The art of networking & recruiting is absolutely that, an art form, and it is one that has the ability to make or break us. Therefore, I encourage you all to work on growing your tree, and making it one that can produce not just for yourselves, but for the rest of us who just might be going hungry and looking for good fruit off a good tree.

Mark Lee
Assistant Director of Athletic Facilities and Grounds, LSU
LTA President

