

TURFGRASS RESEARCH

As urban areas continue to grow, the amount of turfgrass, including home lawns, commercial landscapes, parks, golf courses, recreational facilities, and other greenbelts, is expanding. Land-grant university research and Extension is helping protect turfgrass from pests, weeds, diseases, and environmental stress.

Since 1972, a multistate committee of scientists and Extension specialists and educators has identified turfgrass research, education, and outreach needs, coordinated collaborative projects, and shared recommendations for turfgrass management.

Coordination of turfgrass research and Extension programs maximizes the use of limited resources. It also helps land-grant institutions reduce costs by sharing turf science specialists.

Researchers and Extension specialists are helping turfgrass managers adopt practices that make turfgrass areas safer and more enjoyable for users. Researchers have made recommendations for mowing and pesticide use and developed turfgrass varieties that retain their color during fall and winter and hold up under heavy traffic.

Researchers also tested and recommended practices that help turfgrass managers efficiently use fertilizer, pesticide, water, and labor, reducing costs, conserving resources, and promoting a cleaner environment. For example, research and outreach has helped reduce urban turfgrass irrigation by at least 18%. Other scientists are exploring ways to use alternatives to drinking water—such as recycled water, gray water, and saline groundwater—for irrigation.

Scientists are developing turfgrass species with lower water requirements and higher tolerance to drought and salty irrigation water. These varieties will help turfgrass managers, especially those in coastal areas.

Researchers are studying the drought tolerance of different varieties of grasses. Photo by Paul Harris.

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Learn more: bit.ly/WERA-11