

# Turf grass industries

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The field of turfgrass science, and golf course management has become very sophisticated in just the few short years that I have been involved. Much of the equipment has gone higher tech, as far as electric motors, and more computerized technology. Many golf course superintendents now are , "online via the web". If there is a question concerning a new disease or fertilizer one can log on to Texas[[email protected](#)]home page and hopefully find a solution to the problem. The technology in the computer field has also advanced the irrigation technology in the agriculture field.

Irrigation systems can now be turned on with the touch of a button through IBM or MACINTOSH Personal computer. New computer technology will continue to make leaps and bounds for the turfgrass industry. Ransome Industries, maker of fine turgrass mowing equipment, has come out with the first electric mowing machine. I myself am not in favor of this, or I would guess anyone in the petroleum industry is either for that matter. There has been a greater demand for environmental concern along the nations coastlines, and nation wide. Most of the worlds great golf courses are located along the coasts.

Ransome was banking on that an electric mowing machine would fit that need. It has been slow to catch on as of late. It" s benefits are an almost quiet no noise machine. (Beard 302). Many country club members would become outraged when the superintendents would send out the greensmowers daily at 6: 00 A. M. The diesel and gasoline powered engines are noisy, and would wake up many members that live along the golf course. The second benefit is no cost of gasoline or oil, and therefore no chance of a

petroleum leak or spill. Their downfall lies in their initial cost, "\$15,000 for a gasoline triplex mower, and \$20,000 for an electric powered mower.

Another real downfall is that they can only mow nine holes, then they have to be charged for ten hours, rendering them useless for the rest of the day. Hopefully technology can produce an environmental friendly machine, while not putting the oil industry in a bind, " And also keep the governments hands out of the cookie jar with new environmental taxes"!!!!!! The Internet has become a very important tool to the people in the turfgrass industry. At any given time a golf course superintendent can log onto various company's home pages to learn something about their product.

If one day I am searching for a new fairway mower, I can bypass the phone calls and written estimates, and go straight to the information. Toro, Ransome, Jacobsen, and even John Deere all have home pages. You can inquire on a certain mower model, engine size or anything you need to know. It will list a price and even the shipping and handling and the salesman's commission. Perhaps the best part about the Internet, is all the turfgrass related information that is at your fingertips. (Beard 120) One can access the three dominating turfgrass schools in just seconds.

Those three schools would be Texas[[email protected](#)], Mississippi State, and Oklahoma State. If it is in the middle of the summer, and there is a big tournament coming up they can be of great help. If your putting greens start to die in spots in the heat of the summer, one could log on to Texas[[email protected](#)]home page, and root around for some information, on what type of disease might be causing it. (Beard 420) They give identifying

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characteristics for each disease that is helpful in a quick diagnoses of the problem. They even offer helpful tips on what chemicals will best control the problem, and how much to spray.

If that" s not enough they give tips on employee management, and possible job opportunities with the college. How can the Internet and computer technology possibly make my future job any easier, I might ask. Well that is an easy question to answer. Toro, Rainbird, and Flowtronics PSI, have found a way to make water management an easy task. Automatic water irrigation systems have been around since the early seventy" s. First they were run off a mechanical pin and timer system for home lawn use. This was a very reliable system, but it lacked flexibility. (Wikshire95) Next came the automatic timer systems.

These run off an electronic timer from a 110 volt wall outlet. These are still in use today, and it is a very good system. (Wikshire 112) Last but not least has come the water management system run from your personal Macintosh or IBM compatible computer. The personal computer actually works as the brain for the irrigation system. (Wikshire200) You down load the program into the computer, and bam it does all the work for you. It has a water sensor located outside that tells the system to shut off if it has rained to much, or to come on if it is getting extremely dry on a hot summer day.

It also can measure the amount of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium in the soil, if necessary. It will test the water, and tell you the amount of salt or nitrates located in the water. Once a watering program is started it is also easily changed to another program if so desired. (Wikshire202) This has

benefited the turfgrass industry in many ways. It has saved superintendents from having to come and shut the irrigation off in the middle of the night if it starts raining hard. Most importantly it has saved money in the labor part of the budget.

It keeps hourly employees occupied with other tasks, other than having to turn on individual sprinkler heads every day. The most popular program by far is the Rainbird Vari-Time V and VI programs. (Wikshire250) These two programs are leaps and bounds above the rest. Having knowledge of computers and computer related programs will be very beneficial to me in the turfgrass industry. The technology will benefit me and others. From new high tech electric mowing machines, to non hydraulic mowers. The Internet could be the most useful tool for me in my job.

It will give me useful knowledge on what is going on in the world. Also it could help save me from a costly mistake when it comes to disease control that could cost me my job. The computer industry has also made great accomplishments when it comes to water conservation management. These programs can be downloaded into your personal computer. They are great labor savers, and most of all effective time management tools. I hope that the technology will keep advancing, and make my future job as a golf course superintendent much easier.