

2024 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14

12 pm	DSTE Board Meeting	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
4 pm – 6 pm	Large Equipment Move-In	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
6 pm	DSTE Board Dinner	Beau Rivage

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15

8 am – 4 pm	Registration Open & Exhibitor Move-In	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
9 am – 3:30 pm	Alabama Ornamental & Turf Exam Review	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
11 am	DSTE Scramble Golf Tournament	The Preserve Golf Club
11 am – 2:00 pm	DSTE Softball Game	Gulfport Sports Complex
3:30 – 7:30 pm	Bus Shuttle to Tailgate	Beau Rivage
5 pm	Tailgate Celebration • <i>All attendees & exhibitors welcome!</i>	The Preserve Golf Club

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16

7 am – 4 pm	Registration Open	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
7 am	Continental Breakfast	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
8 am – 11 am	General Session: Keynote Speakers	Mississippi Coast Convention Center

GENERAL SESSION

8 am	Tesla, Robots, and Truly Green Equipment • <i>Derek Kaye, Whispr Innovations</i> In this keynote, we will explore how Tesla's commitment to innovation has revolutionized the automotive industry and how these principles can be applied to turf and lawn maintenance. We will delve into the latest advancements in automation, highlighting robotic lawn mowers and other lawn and turf robots on the market and coming soon. Attendees will learn about the pros and cons of wired versus wireless robotic equipment as well as the benefits of on-site versus cut and go solutions. We'll also touch on the state of battery-electric equipment, introducing the American Green Zone Association's (AGZA) AFTC certification program. This presentation aims to equip attendees with the knowledge to embrace and lead sustainable innovation in their fields.	
9 am	Recruiting, Training and Retaining a Qualified Workforce • <i>Tony Mancuso, CGCS, Escondido Golf and Lake Club</i> This presentation will include a retrospect of each decade of Tony Mancuso's career from 1980 to 2020, describing the workforce and how he navigated to find qualified staff. Tony will cover how training has evolved over the years, especially as it relates to liability and how incentives have changed. Tony will review the 2020s and the massive shift in the labor market, how social media impacts decisions and also inject some of his good-natured humor in his experiences with people.	
10 am	Golf and Sports Venues are Changing: Trends Impacting the Turf Industry • <i>Nathan Crace, ASGCA, PLA, The Watermark Golf Companies</i> It's no secret that golf has enjoyed a boom since the pandemic in 2020, but with that boom came a myriad of changes regarding how courses are designed, managed, and operated. Are you prepared for the changes still to come? Golf course architect Nathan Crace discusses the trends he has seen in the past 4 years and what the American Society of Golf Course Architects (ASGCA) thinks golf course owners and operators need to prepare for in the next 5 to 10 years as trends in rounds played continue to trend upward. What investments should you be making in infrastructure, equipment, and water usage? If your course or club is enjoying the benefits of increased play and revenue, learn how to discuss investment with owners and board members to make the most of the golf surge.	
11 am – 5 pm	Tradeshow Grand Opening	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
11:30 am	Lunch	Mississippi Coast Convention Center – Tradeshow Floor
12 pm – 3 pm	Annual Business Meetings 12 pm Alabama Turfgrass Research Foundation 1 pm Alabama Turfgrass Association & Mississippi Turfgrass Association 2 pm Louisiana-Mississippi GCSA	Mississippi Coast Convention Center
12 pm – 3 pm	Cornhole Tournament	Mississippi Coast Convention Center – Tradeshow Floor
3 pm – 5 pm	General Session	Mississippi Coast Convention Center

GENERAL SESSION

3 pm	New Tools in the Poa Management Toolbox • <i>Dr. Becky Bowling, University of Tennessee</i> The five-year multi-state 'Resist Poa' project has come to its end, but findings from the project and related studies continue to further our understanding of managing this especially challenging weed. Hear a concise update on more recent research findings and related resources for managing Poa annua.	
3:30 pm	Trends in Bunker Renovation, Re-Design, and Restoration • <i>Nathan Crace, ASGCA, PLA, The Watermark Golf Companies</i> Golf course architect Nathan Crace is also known as the "Bunker Doctor" for his work with bunker renovations throughout the southeast and beyond. In this tradeshow floor talk, learn how you can take the trends he has seen over the years and use them to your advantage if you are considering a bunker renovation or just trying to convince your owners or members that it's time to seriously consider an upgrade. Learn how a proper bunker renovation is truly an investment and can help eliminate costly man hours and reallocate resources and money into other areas of the course such as greens, tees, fairways, and more. You'll leave this talk armed with the knowledge you need to get your bunker renovation ideas over the finish line at the next budget meeting!	
4 pm	High Tech Meets Turfgrass Management: Trends to Watch For • <i>Amy Wilbur, Mississippi State University</i> Data. Drones. Robots. Artificial Intelligence. Today, managing turfgrass goes beyond the art of growing grass. Implementing new technologies can reduce the use of fuel, water, pesticides, and man hours without decreasing turfgrass quality. New and emerging technologies for use in home lawns, athletic fields, golf courses, and sod farms will be discussed.	
4:30 pm	Hasta La Vista, Weeds: Terminating Weed Control Issues with AI-Based Targeted Applications: Achievements, Aspirations, Anticipations (and Roadblocks Ahead) • <i>Dr. Pawel Petelewicz, University of Florida</i> This presentation will explore aspects related to the AI-based turfgrass-specific targeted application technology for weed management. It will encompass current advancements in machine learning- and computer vision-based systems, alternative actuators, and robotics for weed management. Moreover, the aspirations for effective transfer of such solutions into the realm of turf, including current turfgrass-specific research endeavors and potential factors hindering the technology transfer and adoption will be discussed. While drones will get a nod, emphasis will be on ground-based solutions.	
4 – 6 pm	Tradeshow Closing & Exhibitor Move Out <i>Dinner on your own</i>	
5 pm	Alabama Pesticide Sign-Out	

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17

7 am	Continental Breakfast				Mississippi Coast Convention Center
8 am – 12 pm	Breakout Sessions				Mississippi Coast Convention Center
	Golf Sessions	Sports Turf & Grounds Sessions	Lawn Care & Landscape Sessions	Sod Production Sessions	
8 am	<p>WATER You Doing about Water Quality <i>Dr. Becky Bowling, University of Tennessee</i> Diminishing water quality is a growing challenge for many turfgrass managers, and there are many questions around the potential implications for turfgrass health and soil structure. This talk will provide a broad overview of how water quality can impact turfgrass management, basic parameters to keep an eye on with water and soil tests, and pathways for addressing water quality problems as they arise.</p>	<p>Overseeding Sports Fields: Agronomic Considerations <i>Dr. Barry Stewart, Mississippi State University</i> In this presentation we will discuss the process of overseeding athletic fields. Agronomic topics such as overseeding preparation and management will be discussed. Considerations regarding transition times will be reviewed. We will also discuss removal of overseeding and Bermudagrass recovery from overseeding.</p>	<p>Cultivating Sustainable Landscapes with Integrated Pest Management <i>Dr. Eric DeBoer, Louisiana State University</i> Attendees will learn about the importance of sustainable pest control as it pertains to commercial lawn care. The discussion will include defining IPM, discussing the advantages of IPM, learning the specific components of IPM, and discussing some specific strategies showing IPM in action. Attendees will be able to utilize specific concepts in their day-to-day operations.</p>	<p>Mowing Technology for Sod Farmers <i>Dr. Scott McElroy, Auburn University</i> Robotic and automated technology will revolutionize the turfgrass industry. Sod production could benefit the most by replacing laborious mowing with automated or semi-automated mowers. This seminar will explain all the technology currently on the market, compare the deployment of different autonomous mowers, and discuss the economic implications of automated mowing.</p>	
9 am	<p>Managing Environmental Risk Factors on the Golf Course <i>Dr. J. Bryan Unruh, University of Florida</i> Risk abounds on the golf course. However, risks associated with the impact of agronomic practices are rarely considered. Attendees will be introduced to hazards associated with fertilizer and pesticide use as it relates to environmental protection and worker safety considerations.</p>	<p>What to Choose From and What to Wait For: Trends in Warm-Season Turfgrass Breeding <i>Dr. Marta Pudzianowska, Mississippi State University</i> Changing standards and challenges shape the expectations of the turfgrass industry for new cultivars. Warm-season turfgrass breeders strive to develop cultivars that will meet these needs. One of the biggest challenges in the southern United States is the increasing frequency of droughts, which leads to higher water prices and reduced availability. New cultivars of bermudagrass, zoysiagrass, and other warm-season species with improved tolerance to drought, as well as other stresses such as shade, pests, and diseases, have been released in the past few years. More are expected in the near future. This presentation will provide an overview of recently released warm-season turfgrass cultivars, their characteristics and use, and outline the future direction of modern turfgrass breeding.</p>	<p>Robotic Lawn Mowing & Battery Electric Landscaping – Pushing for Change <i>Derek Kaye, Whispr Innovations</i> This interactive presentation will share insights from nearly five years of experience with robotic lawn mowing and battery-electric landscaping and how I franchised our business model. We will explore the journey of adopting these technologies, including personal stories of successes and challenges. The pros and cons of battery-electric equipment will be discussed, focusing on efficiency, cost, and health benefits. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage in a Q&A session to foster a collaborative and informative atmosphere. This session aims to empower lawn maintenance professionals to push for innovative and sustainable practices in their work.</p>	<p>Optimal Nitrogen Rates and Compost Utilization for Sod Production <i>Dr. AJ Lindsey, University of Florida</i> New fertilizer reporting requirements have highlighted the critical need to revisit the UF/IFAS fertilization recommendations for sod production, which were developed in 2008. A new project is underway to determine the optimal nitrogen rates for bermudagrass, St. Augustinegrass, and Zoysiagrass sod production. Additionally, compost topdressing is being explored as a soil amendment in hopes of reducing irrigation and fertilization. This presentation will share more about the scope, structure, and expectations for this critical research.</p>	
10 am	<p>Winter Management of Ultradwarf Bermudagrass Putting Greens <i>Dr. Eric DeBoer, Louisiana State University</i> Attendees will learn about the unique challenges and innovative techniques involved in managing ultra dwarf bermudagrass putting greens during the colder months. Discussion will include winter physiology of ultra dwarf bermudagrass, and research involving protection strategies, cultural practices, and moisture management.</p>	<p>Traffic Tolerance of New Bermudagrass Cultivars <i>Dr. Dave Han, Auburn University</i> How do newer varieties of bermudagrass stand up to wear and tear? Our current research examines traffic tolerance of old standards and popular bermudagrass varieties released in the past 10 years, including Tifway, TifTuf, Latitude 26, NorthBridge, Tahoma 31, Ironcutter, and Celebration Hybrid. Traffic is applied with a mechanical traffic simulator and the study has two locations – one in full sun at the Auburn University Sports Surface Field Laboratory and one in partial building shade outside the Watson Fieldhouse at the Auburn Athletics Complex.</p>	<p>Herbicide Headaches: Understanding Possible Reasons for Herbicide Failures <i>Dr. Pawel Petelewicz, University of Florida</i> This presentation will focus on discussing some of the possible reasons for why herbicides may fail to provide successful control in the field – both from plant biology and application procedure standpoint. This topic will embrace the principles of IPM and herbicide resistance management.</p>	<p>Soil Health Characteristics in Sod Production <i>Jason Eberhard, Mississippi State University</i> The soil microbiome and soil health have become a very hot topic in agricultural sciences. However, there has been a gap in knowledge in the turf industry and more importantly very little examination on the effect of soil health in sod production. This discussion will include soil health parameters that are measured in agricultural systems and how they can be implemented in a sod production setting, as well as, the efficacy of products that contain microbials and their impact on the soil microbiome and overall soil health. Lastly, the presentation will examine the gaps in knowledge in a sod production as it pertains to soil health and address possible studies that will improve sod harvesting/sod quality.</p>	
11 am	<p>Managing Ultradwarf Greens <i>Tony Mancuso, CGCS, Escondido Golf and Lake Club</i> This presentation will focus on choosing the right cultivar for your golfers and provide the reasons why. Budgeting for ultradwarf greens, and how inputs equal results will be reviewed. We will also discuss management of diseases, insects, nematodes, weeds, growth regulation and how to protect your greens for winter.</p>	<p>Overseeded and Non-Overseeded Sports Fields <i>Dr. Scott McElroy, Auburn University and Dr. Jay McCurdy, Mississippi State University and Dr. Pawel Petelewicz, University of Florida</i> This seminar is designed to equip groundskeepers and sports field managers with the knowledge and skills necessary to maintain high-quality turf surfaces year-round. Participants will delve into the intricacies of managing both overseeded and non-overseeded fields, exploring effective strategies for weed control through the use of preemergence and postemergence herbicides. Additionally, the seminar will cover the application of plant growth regulators to promote healthy turf growth and enhance playing conditions. Through interactive sessions and case studies, attendees will learn how to tailor their maintenance practices to the specific needs of each type of field, ensuring optimal performance and aesthetics regardless of the season.</p>	<p>Potential Strategies for Reducing Fertilizer and Irrigation Inputs <i>Dr. AJ Lindsey, University of Florida</i> Sustainable and environmentally friendly management practices have garnered much interest within the turfgrass industry and the general public. Additionally, fertilizer and irrigation restrictions also have the potential to change and dictate management practices. This presentation covers some of the recent research trials conducted with soil amendments and alternative fertilizers. It will also explore how these can be incorporated into management practices to reduce fertilizer and irrigation inputs.</p>	<p>Landscapes are Changing: Are Sod Producers Prepared? <i>Dr. J. Bryan Unruh, University of Florida</i> Concerns about water conservation, degraded water quality, and changing urban ecosystems are leading some to call for changes to urban landscapes. The proposed changes range from landscapes without turfgrass to mixed-species plantings. The proposed changes will require producers to rethink their current product offerings and consider alternatives. Unruh will highlight current trends facing the industry and will offer insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed alternatives.</p>	
12 pm	CEU & Pesticide Sign-out and Expo Adjournment				