

SEASHORE PASPALUM FIELD DAY RAISES AWARENESS AND MONEY FOR TURFGRASS RESEARCH

The hottest trend in turfgrass

By **Stacie Zinn** • International Marketing Director, Environmental Turf Inc.



Wiley McCall, (center), president of Environmental Turf, Inc., presents a check for \$5,000 for turfgrass research that was raised at "A Seashore Paspalum Field Day," to Dr. Richard Jones of the University of Florida/IFAS (right) and Jan Beljan of the FTGA and Fazio Golf Design, (left).



Dr. Brian Scully, associate professor at the University of Florida, (far left), speaks to a group of golf course superintendents and landscape professionals at "A Seashore Paspalum Field Day" held at Emerald Island Turf sod farm in Avon Park, Florida, about the new Aloha Seashore Paspalum cultivar that he helped to develop.

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Money and information flowed freely at "A Seashore Paspalum Field Day" held on October 8th at the Avon Park, Florida, sod farm of Emerald Island Turf.

The event, presented by the Florida Turfgrass Association, University of Florida and Environmental Turf, Inc., raised \$5,000 for turfgrass research.

Wiley McCall, president of Environmental Turf, presented a check for \$5,000 to Jan Beljan, of Fazio Golf Design & the FTGA, and Dr. Richard Jones, Vice President of University of Florida/IFAS.

But more than just research funds were raised at the event. Awareness of Seashore Paspalum, a highly salt-tolerant turf that many believe to be the hottest trend in turfgrass, was also on the program. Seashore Paspalum is a fine-bladed turfgrass recommended for use on golf courses and sports fields. Some of the most popular Seashore Paspalum cultivars include SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum and Aloha Seashore Paspalum.

Several University of Florida re-searchers released up-to-the-minute information on Seashore Paspalum cultivars.

Dr. J. Bryan Unruh, an associate professor and extension turfgrass specialist at the University of Florida's campus in Milton, shared some of the preliminary results of his USGA-funded study on Seashore Paspalum.

"During the initial grow-in phase of freshwater grown greens and fairway-height Seashore Paspalum, significant differences were evident in color, quality, density and dollar spot (*Sclerotinia homoeocarpa*) incidence," Unruh said.

A chart showing color, quality and density, revealed SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum as the clear leader of all eight Seashore Paspalum cultivars tested. Cultivar SI-98 had the poorest scoring in the test.

Another chart showing the incidence of dollar spot during grow-in of Seashore Paspalum showed Sea-Dwarf Seashore Paspalum with the lowest incidence of the disease. Cultivar SI-98 showed the highest incidence of the disease of all eight cultivars tested.

Dr. Brian Scully, Dr. Russell Nagata and Dr. Gregg Nuessly, presented information on Aloha Seashore Paspalum, a brand new cultivar of Seashore Paspalum developed by the University of Florida and marketed by Environmental Turf.

One of the major benefits of the fine-bladed Aloha Seashore Paspalum over other cultivars, the three re-searchers reported, is its apparent ability to tolerate or repel an aphid called the greenbug (*Schizaphis graminum*).

Dr. Laurie Trenholm, who received her doctorate at University of Georgia while studying Seashore Paspalum and has been researching the grass for five years at University of Florida, offered tips on maintaining Seashore Paspalum. She outlined requirements for fertilization, irrigation and mowing.

"Seashore Paspalum offers an alternative to Bermudagrass for golf courses and athletic fields," said Trenholm, who is a big proponent of the grass. "It may be especially beneficial where reclaimed or saline water is used."

The event would not have been possible without the support of several industry leaders. Sponsors included: Hendrix & Dail; Monsanto; UAP of Florida; Florida Fertilizer; Aerra-green Turf Services; Liquid Ag/Douglas Fertilizer; Emerald Island Turf; and South Florida Sod.

For more information on SeaDwarf Seashore Paspalum, Aloha Seashore Paspalum or to learn about upcoming Seashore Paspalum-related events, contact Environmental Turf at 772-460-5575 or www.environmentalturf.com