How to build your business with Turf Love

IPM Concepts for Landscape and Lawn Care Professionals

Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Putnam County

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
What is Turf Love?

IPM Principles for Environmentally Friendly Lawn Care

- Green Lawns = Clean Water
- Site Assessment !!!
- Soil Testing / Soil Amendments
- Over-seeding / Re-seeding
- Mowing
- Watering
- Weeds: Get rid of the really bad guys

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Turf Love in 2007 for Homeowners

• Homeowners learned to have a healthy lawn and protect water quality
• Site assessment: will lawn grow here?
• Fertilizer recommendations: a zero-sum game for phosphorus / adjust N for weed control
• Heavy over-seeding and re-seeding
• Mowing: Sharpen your blades!
• Homeowners said: “How can I get my landscaper on board?”

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Turf Love 2008 for Homeowners

Spring workshop:

- Homeowners will bring us samples of their lawns and photos
- We’ll do pH testing, off-site site assessment, weed ID and make a few recommendations
- Teach IPM principles

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
What’s Our Pitch to D-I-Y Homeowners?

- Less work – mow high, water less
- Threshold tolerance
- Healthy lawn – not magazine cover
- Clean water
- Where do you come in?

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
A new kind of customer?

- We’ll share Turf Love with homeowners
- Other homeowners may be more demanding
- Are you ready?

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
How Can You Benefit? Your clients need you for education

- The “green carpet” lawn is advertised everywhere
- Ads for grub control run in June – the wrong time of year to control grubs
- Phosphorous and fertilizer regulations are coming to a town near you

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
Regulations everywhere

- Minnesota – shelf limits, application bans
- Dane County, WS – no person shall apply fert containing more than 0% phosphorus
- Michigan – 0%
- NYC watershed – Westchester, Town of Kent(?)
- Lake George, Lake Champlain

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
Your clients need you for education

- Lawns are reflections of self-worth
- People are confused about what “organic” really means
- IPM practices are cheaper over the long term than automatic pesticides

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
What's Your Biggest Obstacle to Using and Selling IPM for Lawns?

• Lack of qualified labor
• Customers’ desire for a perfect lawn
• Customers are concerned about ticks
• Your reasons?

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Why Landscapers Don’t Use IPM

Why Landscapers Don't Use IPM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Agree/strongly agree (%: n=56)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customers won't pay more for IPM</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concern about training needs</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of qualified labor</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customers want perfect lawn</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPM ineffective</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack biological information</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPM = less profit</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What if you could save money with IPM?

- Right-turns-only saved UPS millions
  - New route saved 464,000 miles in Washington DC alone
  - UPS in Washington DC saved 51,000 gals
  - How much could you save?
- Sharp mower blades save 25% on fuel
- Close the gas valve on your lawn mower fuel line between jobs

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
What if you could add profit with IPM?

- Site Assessment Visit
  - Is Turf Working Here?
  - Would Groundcovers be Better?
- Soil Test / Compaction Analysis
- Scouting / Pest Threshold Visit
- Drought Tolerance / Irrigation Check

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
Sharp Mower Blades

Quick quiz:
Most homeowners sharpen their blades:

• Once a year
• Twice a year
• Every month

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
You know the answer . . .

Never! ✓

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Show Them Your Mower Blades

Explain how your sharp blades:
• Reduce disease
• Reduce need for fungicide
• Reduce need for frequent watering
• Help lawn resist weeds

It’s no miracle... It’s Turf Love
How Can You Offer Environmental Services?

Change your estimating form

- Turfgrass varieties
- Controllable weeds
- Site-specific problems
- Diseases and Insects
- Soil condition
- Non-lawn Plant Health Care
- Riparian buffers

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Would this help?

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
How Much Water?

- One inch a week is all the lawn needs
- Explain the tuna can method
  - Teach water conservation
  - Place irrigators properly

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Use only as much fertilizer as needed

• How often do homeowners get their soil tested? **Hint: Never!**

• How often do you test your clients’ soils?

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
Back to the Fertilizer

- A blast from the past
- Nitrogen is king
- A little bit all season long – except summer
- No phosphorous except for establishment

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Maybe you've seen this (back in 1986)

It's no miracle . . . It's Turf Love
Identify pest and disease thresholds

• How many white grubs before panic sets in?
• What do you do about mid-season fungus?
• When do you control crabgrass?

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Select the right seed for the site

- Cheap seed = cheap lawn
- Good seed costs more
- You know how to select the right seed for the site
- You know about seeding rates
  
  It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love
Profit from our Homeowner
Turf Love Messages

You do the rest:

• Sell them on good fertilizer timing, quality seed, environmentally sound weed control, organic or least-toxic insect control, soil testing

• Provide educational fact sheets

*It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love*
How to build your business with Turf Love

IPM Concepts for Landscape and Lawn Care Professionals

It’s no miracle . . . It’s Turf Love