



Natural Lawn and Turf Management Training For Lawn Care Professionals

Course Description

- **History of conventional turf management practices and how a natural approach differs. What is a Systems Approach™ to turf management?**

We will begin with brief introduction to natural turf management and how it differs from a conventional approach. Discussion of the importance of organic matter and its role in a healthy turf system including soil biomass and the concept of soil health. By using a Systems Approach™ we will see how a series of preventative steps can be put in place to help mitigate potential pests and other turf problems.

- **Soil tests, managing soil fertility, and fertilizers**

Soil testing procedures will be outlined and how to interpret report results. We will look at nutrient, textural, and biomass reports of different soils and what problems or strengths might be present. Soil fertility and natural fertilizers will be discussed, including rates and calculations.

- **Liming, soil amendments, and product rates and calculations**

The discussion on soil amendments will include lime and appropriate liming techniques as well as other amendments that improve soil health.

- **Insects and fungal diseases of turf and control products**

This section will deal with turf insects, including scouting, identification, life cycles, and control measures. We will discuss product that is accepted in a natural system, EPA registered and those that are exempt. The identification of fungal diseases of turf and the conditions that foster their growth will be discussed, as well as preventative strategies. The discussion of product will emphasize that just because something is considered "organic" it cannot be used indiscriminately. All products have associated risks.

- **Turf weeds and control products and strategies**

This section will discuss the common broadleaf and grassy weeds of turf and the limited product available to mitigate them. Preventative strategies built

into the Systems Approach™ are the real tools of the natural turf professional.

- **Choosing the right grass**

An overview of grass species and their use in different situations. Endophytes will be discussed and their benefit to the natural turf manager.

- **Cultural practices-mowing, cultivation, irrigation**

A discussion of cultural practices and their role in creating the proper system in which to grow healthy turf grass. The focus will be on mowing practices, cultivation for the relief of compaction, and irrigation techniques.

- **Compost and topdressing**

Compost and the proper composting process will be addressed from the perspective of product quality and safety. We will discuss topdressing as a strategy for creating a healthy turf system and reduce the reliance on chemical control products. Build an awareness that improper composting can present problems for the turf as well as human health.

- **The transition period ~ Growing your business with a new profit center**

We will conclude with a discussion of the transition period from one management program to another and the realities of what to expect. As a business strategy, we will talk about servicing a growing demand for safer turf management programs and how this market segment provides a new profit center in an existing business.