



THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN HALF-TIME
AN OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
COLORADO SPORTS FIELD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
SUMMER 2026

Spring Seminar
Aurora Sports Complex
Thursday, May 28th

Lawn Mower Open
Pinery Country Club
Monday, July 6th

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SUMMER
2026



The Rocky Mountain Half-Time
is published quarterly by the
Colorado Sports Field
Management Association
www.CSFMA.org

CSFMA
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JOHN FRANKENFELD

I hope everyone is having a productive spring season and that your athletic fields are coming out of dormancy in good condition. As we are moving into another busy year for sports turf management across Colorado, I want to thank all of you for the dedication and professionalism you bring to our industry each day.

I would also like to remind everyone that the CSFMA Spring Seminar is slated for May 28th at the Aurora Sports Park. This seminar will provide an excellent opportunity for sports field professionals from across the state to network, exchange ideas, and discuss current challenges facing our industry. We encourage all members to attend and participate in what promises to be a valuable educational event.

This year's seminar will feature hands-on learning opportunities led by Matt Krebsbach's team, focusing on practical field maintenance techniques and day-to-day operational best practices.



Training topics will include:

- Ballfield maintenance
- Pumphouse operations
- Turf maintenance and field painting
- Irrigation inspection and audit procedures

These hands-on sessions will provide attendees with valuable demonstrations and real-world applications that can be implemented at their own facilities.

As many agencies and facilities continue to navigate drought conditions throughout Colorado, the opportunity to collaborate and share ideas with fellow sports field professionals remains extremely important. Events such as the Spring Seminar allow our members to learn from one another, strengthen professional relationships, and continue advancing the sports field management industry throughout the state.

One of the greatest strengths of the Colorado Sports Field Management Association is the willingness of members to share knowledge, experiences, and solutions with one another. Working together allows us to better adapt to environmental challenges while continuing to provide safe and high-quality athletic facilities for our communities and athletes.

Thank you again for your continued support of CSFMA and for the hard work and professionalism you demonstrate every day. Your dedication plays a vital role in the success of parks, schools, municipalities, and athletic organizations across Colorado.

We look forward to seeing everyone on May 28th at the Spring Seminar.

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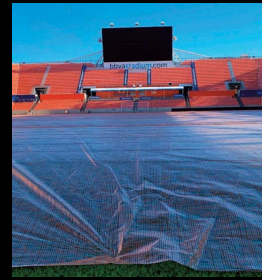
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Wednesday,
April 22nd**

Continuing Education
Core Credits
Webinar

**Thursday,
May 28th**

Spring Seminar
Aurora Sports Complex

**Monday,
July 6th**

Lawn Mower Open
Pinery Country Club,
Parker, CO

TBD

Fall Seminar
Location TBD

**Wednesday,
December 2nd**
Annual Meeting
RMRTA Conference



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2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS BIOS



CRISTI CLAY, CSFM
Co-Executive Director

Christi is the Assistant Director of Grounds for Denver Summit FC in Centennial, CO. She is responsible for managing three natural grass fields and one synthetic field at the training center and interim stadium. A native of Ironton, Ohio, Christi graduated from Denison University with her B.A. in Economics and earned her CSFM designation in 2017.



TARA JORDAN
Co-Executive Director

Tara has worked full-time for the City of Greenwood Village since 1998 and was promoted to Parks Supervisor in 2000. Her crew is responsible for the natural turf maintenance of 7 multi use athletic fields and developed parks totaling 30 acres. Outside of work she enjoys traveling with her husband, taking road trips with their dogs, reading, and spending time outdoors.



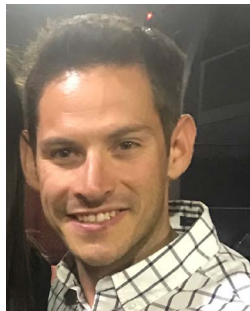
JOHN FRANKENFELD - President

John began his turf career in the fall of 1993 with Manhattan Country Club in Manhattan Kansas working part time on the golf course while attending school at Kansas State University. After graduating from KSU with a Bachelors in Horticulture and Turf Management, he accepted the position as an Assistant golf course superintendent with Salina Country Club. In February of 1998 he moved to Colorado to work for the City of Thornton where he started out as a Parks Worker and earned his Certified Landscape Technician certificates in irrigation and maintenance. John worked his way up to management staff and became a parks supervisor from 2000-2008. In the spring of 2008 John was offered the position to take over a new multi-use sports complex. In the spring of 2008 the City of Thornton opened a new multi-use sports complex and asked John to be the managing parks worker over the complex. In August 2016 John accepted a new position at the Town of Erie as a Parks Supervisor for Turf and Irrigation. John earned his Certified Sports Field Manager designation in October 2015. John is married to Stephanie and has two children.



ROBERT SEDLAK - Vice President

Robert has been in turfgrass and sports field management for well over a decade. Robert attended the University of Nebraska Lincoln earning a B.S. in Turfgrass and Landscape Management. While in college he did two internships at golf courses, Shepherds Hollow Golf Course and Ocean Reef Club as well as working on the University of Nebraska athletic fields and facilities. After graduation he worked for Camelback Ranch Spring Training of the Los Angeles Dodger and Chicago White Sox, Los Angeles Dodgers at Dodger Stadium, South Bend Cubs Single A of the Chicago Cubs, Foothills Park and Recreation District at Clement Park and Sheridan School District #2. Denver has become his home and ultimately decided to open Rocky Mountain Sports Fields so he can share his knowledge and help organizations with their athletic fields.



DREW ANDERSON - Commercial Officer

Drew is with SiteOne Landscape Supply in Denver, Colorado where he leads efforts to increase awareness and growth for municipalities, sports fields and golf sectors. With over 10 years of experience in the landscaping industry, Drew has managed successful teams across both commercial and residential landscaping. He earned his Qualified Supervisors license in 2018. Drew holds a B.A. in Economics from the University of Oklahoma and received an A.A. from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, NY. .



ALEC GRIMES - Comm. Officer Elect

Alec has been a commercial sales representative for Colorado Golf & Turf for almost 4 years. He focuses on working with parks departments, landscaping companies, municipalities, universities, resorts, and other commercial entities. He has industry experience prior to Colorado Golf & Turf through his work at golf courses and his studies at Colorado State University. While Alec graduated with a degree in finance, he also took several courses in the agricultural college for landscape architecture. Alec is a Colorado native and enjoys the outdoors in his free time. Alec enjoys hiking and playing golf in the beautiful weather. He also loves to play and watch many different sports. His favorite team is the Minnesota Vikings.



DR. TAMLA BLUNT

Dr. Tamla Blunt is a Continuing, Contract, Adjunct Faculty Instructor at Colorado State University in the Agricultural Biology Department. Dr. Blunt is familiar with a variety of plants that include greenhouse, forest, landscape, turf, and cropping situations and the associated disorders that accompany many of these plants. At Colorado State University, she teaches LIFE102 (first-year biology) as well as Online Horticulture Pathology classes in the Fall and Spring Semesters, and assists with Elements of Plant Pathology, a resident instruction class. She also does Apprentice and Advanced Master Gardener training in Plant Pathology and Diagnostics. Dr. Blunt also teaches Landscape Plant Health Care, Plant Propagation, and Pesticide Safety and Use at Front Range Community College campuses in Westminster and Fort Collins, CO.



DAVID ALEXANDER

David is a Parks Maintenance Supervisor for the Parks and Recreation Department for the Town of Erie. He oversees the general maintenance of the towns neighborhood parks including turf care, irrigation maintenance as well as projects within the neighborhood parks system. Prior to joining Erie in 2025, David worked for the City of Loveland Parks Department for 18 years where he was responsible for the oversight of Sport Turf, Parks Operations as well as Cemetery operations. David enjoys the ever-changing work environment and the unique challenges of Parks maintenance as well as the people he works with each day. Outside of work, David enjoys fishing, hunting, and skiing with his wife and 3 boys as well as coaching his sons in baseball.

DIRECTORS



RYAN ZAWACKI

Ryan is a dedicated Maintenance Technician III at Carbon Valley Recreation Center with over six years of experience in building and parks maintenance. His primary focus is on preparing and maintaining local parks to support Adult and Youth recreational programs. Originally from Antioch, Illinois, Ryan has lived in Colorado for the past 14 years. In addition to his professional role, Ryan has umpired baseball and fastpitch softball for more than a decade, which has fueled his passion for the turfgrass industry and exploring innovative ways to improve field conditions. Outside of work, Ryan enjoys longboarding, attending concerts, camping, and gaming.



JASON BULMER

Jason works as Park Technician II for the City of Greenwood Village. Where he is responsible for 6 parks and 2 athletic fields. Before coming to Greenwood Village, he worked for Brannan Sand and Gravel, Scotts Lawn Services, The Ridge at Castle Pines North, and the Town of Castle Rock Parks Dept. He is a native of Cedar Falls, IA but has called Colorado home since 1987. Jason married in 2020 and has 2 daughters. In his free time Jason loves golfing, vacationing with his family, and has coached girls fastpitch softball for 15+ years.



MATT KREBSBACH

Matt works for the City of Aurora as the Parks Superintendent-Athletic Fields and Irrigation. He was promoted to this position in May of 2024 after spending the last 4 years as the Parks Supervisor of the Aurora Sports Park. Originally from Austin, Minnesota, he has lived in Colorado for the past 18 years working for the City of Cherry Hills Village and City of Aurora. He graduated from the University of Phoenix with a B.A. in Business Management and from Penn State with a B.S. in Turfgrass Science. He earned his Certified Sports Field Manager designation in April of 2024.



DREW BARBER - Past President

Drew Barber is the Specification and Public Agency Manager for Rain Bird in the Rockies region and has spent his entire career in the green industry. Drew previously worked 15 years for various municipal park operations in the Denver Metro area before starting with Rain Bird in 2021. He now supports public agencies and irrigation designers to find solutions that help preserve our most valuable commodity in the West, water.

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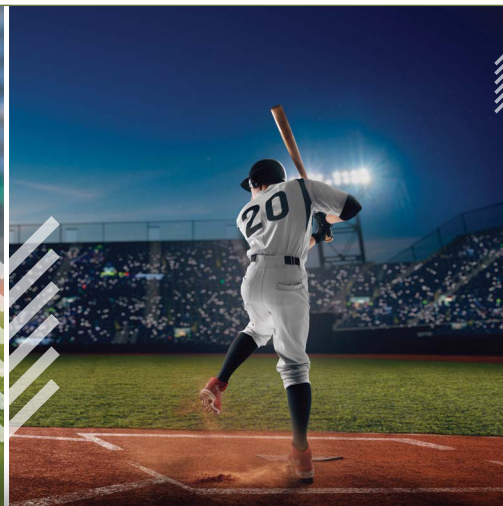


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MOWER MAINTENANCE TIPS: THE IMPORTANCE OF KEEPING SHARP MOWER BLADES

SIMPLE LAWN SOLUTIONS

Maintaining a sharp blade is a crucial step to achieving an aesthetically pleasing lawn. Sharp blades and reels give the lawn a nice, neat, manicured look. Dull mowing blades can rip and tear the leaf blade tissue, resulting in a discolored appearance and an unhealthy-looking lawn.

A sharp blade minimizes stress on the turfgrass plant, allowing it to recover more rapidly and grow stronger. This also enhances nutrient uptake, making the plant more resilient against drought and heat.

Ragged and torn leaf blades from dull mowing blades are more susceptible to disease. The open wounds allow disease pathogens to enter the internal part of the plant and disrupt the natural pattern of biological growth. A clean and even cut from the mowing blade minimizes the risk of disease and other environmental stress. Healthy and undamaged leaf tissue can photosynthesize better, which leads to more aggressive and vigorous growth.

What Causes Dull Mower Blades?

What causes blades to become dull? There are several reasons for mowing blades becoming dull after use. First, it is normal for blades to become dull over time and require sharpening or replacing. When blades rotate at high rpm's, the cutting edge of the blade strikes the leaf tissue and reduces the fine, sharp edge over many mowing sessions and time. Grass leaf tissue contains silica that causes an abrasion and dulls the blade.

- Tiny objects such as rocks, sticks, small branches, and thick thatch can dull blades by curving the cutting edge of the blade and causing an inconsistent cut. Mowing on certain types of soils, such as sandy, loam, or clay, can contain fine particles that also dull blades over time.
- Mowing wet grass does take a toll on the sharpness because the grass's moisture content is high and thickens around and inside the leaf tissue, which makes it harder for the blade to cut. The increased moisture in the grass tissue will lead to dullness due to the formation of rust on the blade, which degrades the sharpness of the overall blade.
- Mower blades are normally made of softer steel so they can be sharpened easily. However,

because they are made of softer steel, they will naturally become dull after many hours of use. The quality of the steel may be inconsistent in hardness and may contain soft spots, and the metal will wear and become duller than other spots on the cutting blade edge.

- Mowing the lawn too short brings the cutting blade closer to the ground, which increases the likelihood of cutting more debris and soil, and dulling the blades more rapidly. Cutting through thick grass and thatch requires the blade to work harder and demand more power from the mower's engine.

Dull blades cause the lawn to turn white, and the lawn will appear unhealthy. Grass that suffers from torn and ripped blades can't fully recover and continually struggles to survive if dull blades and scalping continue. Dull blades can also cause uneven cuts, leave differences in the height of the cut, and visually make the lawn appear "bumpy." Dull blades cause the mower's engine to work harder and can slow the rotation speed and the recommended angle to maintain a balanced cut.

A dull blade doesn't cut the grass cleanly and gives a jagged and frayed appearance. The torn grass blades act as an open wound, making the lawn more susceptible to diseases such as brown patches, dollar spots, and rust. Tearing the grass hinders its ability to recover fully and grow stronger, deeper roots. The damage to the plant's leaf tissue and root system can reduce the amount of water and nutrients that can be absorbed, making the plant more susceptible to environmental stresses. Dull blades can lead to scalping, with the mowing blade tearing the leaf tissue away from the plant's crown.

Mowers themselves are affected by dull blades. Unnecessary strain occurs on the engine and other mechanical components of the mowing system, causing premature wear and shortening the engine's life. When the engine is under increased strain, it burns more fuel, increasing operating costs. In extreme cases, the additional strain can

cause the engine to overheat and become damaged. Additionally, oil and lubricants can become degraded and cause more damage to all parts of the mower. Slower mowing and increased effort result from mowers that use dull blades.

Why is a Sharp Lawn Mower Blade Important?

Sharpening mower blades is necessary to ensure a healthy lawn and proper mower operation. Removing mower blades from the mowing deck can be challenging if not performed in a while. Following a routine schedule and taking the time to remove blades and sharpen or replace them makes the removal easier. Before completely removing the blade(s), mark the face of the blade so that reinstallation is adequately performed. Once the blades have been removed, clean the blades with a putty knife or other scraping device to remove old grass clippings, mud, or other stubborn debris. A wire brush will thoroughly clean the blade, which is essential when inspecting and sharpening.

Once cleaned, inspect the blade for smoothness on the cutting edge and cracks. Small indentations can be filed to sharpness, but blades with cracks should be replaced due to safety risks. Ensure the blade lift (portion of the blade bent upward) is not worn or cracked. Check the blade for thinness, as metal can wear and reduce thickness after consecutive sharpenings. If the blade's width has been reduced to 50% or more, the blade would need to be replaced.

How to Sharpen or Replace Mower Blades

The first step in sharpening the blade is to secure it in a vice or work table. Once this has been done, it is time to choose your tool to sharpen the metal: either a hand file, a drill-powered blade sharpener, or an angle grinder.

- **Hand File:** Use a mill file and work along the cutting edge at a 30-degree angle. Operate the file in one direction, making smooth and even

strokes. Lift the file after each stroke and repeat the process across the front cutting edge of the blade.

- **Drill-Powered Blade Sharpener:** Attach a sharpening stone kit to a drill. Use the grinding stone over the blade's edge with the flat guide against the back of the blade to maintain the correct angle. Move the grinding stone back and forth along the edge with medium pressure.
- **Angle Grinder:** Use an angle grinder with a flap disc. Align the grinder with the cutting edge and slowly move it back and forth.

The goal is to create a sharp edge, not a razor-sharp edge, because a too-thin blade will chip and wear faster. When using power tools, be cautious of overheating, as this can weaken metal. Dipping the blade in water during the sharpening routine will help keep the metal cool and stronger. The blade is to be balanced after the desired sharpness has been achieved. Once the blade has been balanced, reinstall the blade with the face marking downward.

Sharpen the blade regularly after roughly twenty-five hours of operating time. Clean the blades after each use and check for damage to the blades regularly. By following these steps and procedures, you can maintain a sharp blade, which is much healthier for the lawn.

Choose the Right Types of Mower Blades

Knowing the different types of mowing blades that match your lawn situation is essential.

1. Standard Blades (2-in-1 or Medium-Lift)

- These are the standard blades that come with new mowers. The metal is curved to create enough air flow to hold the grass upright while cutting and discharge clippings.
- Regular mowing of well-maintained lawns is desired, with or without discharging or bagging clippings.
- Not ideal for mowing thick or tall grasses.

2. High-Lift Blades (Bagging Blades)

- Has an increased curve in the blade to create more airflow
- Creates a suction action on the grass
- Excellent for bagging clippings
- High lift prevents clogging when bagging or discharging

3. Low-Lift Blades

- Blade has less curvature and creates less air flow
- Best for dry conditions, sandy soil, or mowing at lower heights
- Not suitable for bagging clippings

4. Mulching Blades (3-in-1 Blades)

- Features a curved surface and many cutting teeth on the blade
- Designed to cut the grass and then chop the leaf blades into tiny particles
- Best for recycling clippings and reintroducing nutrients back into the growing environment
- Excellent for lawns that are mowed more than two times weekly
- Struggles with tall or wet grass
- Not ideal for bagging clippings

5. Gator Blades (Shredding Blades)

- A type of “mulching” blade with serrated edges and notches on the edge of the cutting blade
- Increased mulching power grinds the leaf clippings finer
- Suitable for mulching leaves in the fall season
- Excellent for bagging clippings
- Requires more frequent sharpening due to the serrated edges

How to Choose the Right Blade for Your Lawn

First, decide if bagging or mulching is desired. Is your grass thick-bladed or thin-bladed? What is the mower type? Will it work on every lawn mower?

What is the desired outcome? There are many benefits to recycling grass clippings that will save on applied fertilizers, as the nutrients will return into the soil from the decomposing clippings. Bagging has advantages but can create the need for disposal and storage in approved places. Not every mower is the same, and not all types of blades will work properly on all mowers. Mowing within the recommended ranges of height is of the utmost importance, regardless of whether the blades are sharp or not.

Sharp Mower Blades for Grass

Maintaining a sharp blade is one of the most crucial steps. Sharp blades and reels give the lawn a nice, neat, manicured look. A sharp blade minimizes stress on the turfgrass plant. Dull blades cause the lawn to turn white or light tan haze across the surface and cause an unattractive appearance. The torn grass blades act as an open wound, which makes the lawn more susceptible to diseases. Sharpening mower blades is a necessity to ensure a healthy lawn and proper mower operation.

The goal is to create a sharp edge, without being razor-sharp. Be cautious of overheating if using electrical or battery-operated tools. Sharpen the blade(s) every twenty-five hours of mowing time and clean the blades after each use of cutting grass. Knowing the different types of mowing blades that match your lawn situation is essential. There are as many as five different types of mowing blades for the home lawn. The desired outcome and the type of lawn will determine what type of blade is best for your lawn care situation.



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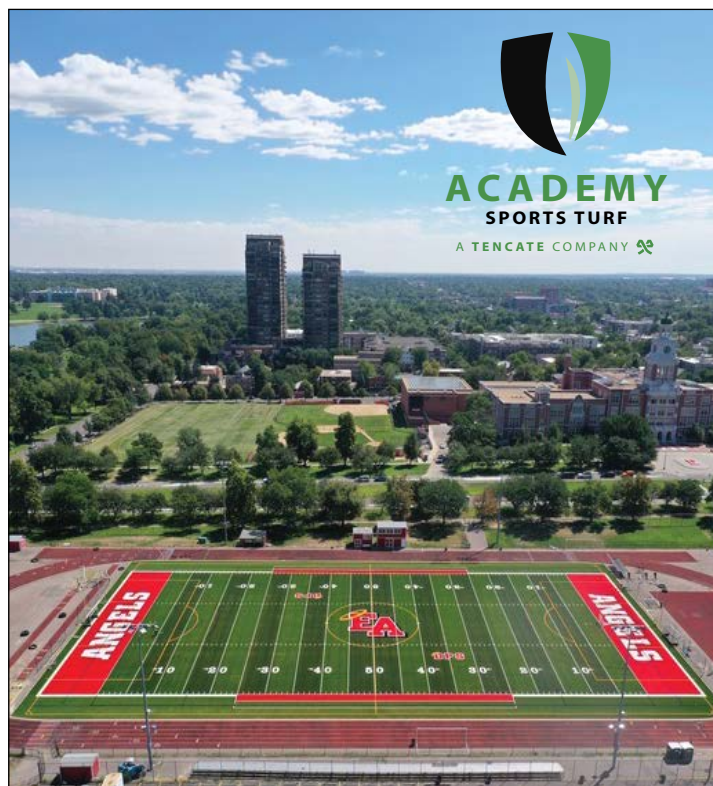
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HOW TO RESTORE TURFGRASS FROM SUMMER STRESS

SIMPLOT

During the summer, turfgrass is exposed to two primary stressors: drought and heat. These two challenges can cause significant damage and lead to a decline in plant health. Both drought and heat stress should be taken seriously, as they can trigger dormancy in the grass, weakening its defenses and making it more vulnerable to weeds, diseases, and pests. Addressing summer stress promptly is crucial to maintaining a healthy, resilient lawn.

Drought Stress

Drought stress occurs when turfgrass does not receive adequate water to meet its physiological needs. This can lead to a decline in the plant's overall health, which can lead to wilting, browning, reduced growth, and eventual root damage. During drought, roots will often shrink reducing the plant's ability to absorb water and exacerbating the stress. Without adequate intervention, drought-stressed turf can become severely weakened, making recovery more difficult.

Heat Stress

Heat stress is caused when excessively high temperatures overwhelm turfgrass, reducing its ability to cool itself through transpiration. Unlike drought stress, which is typically presented as uniform browning, heat stress often causes patchy discoloration, with some areas of the lawn turning yellow or brown, especially in spots with direct sun exposure. Heat stress can weaken the grass significantly, making it more susceptible to disease and further decline if not properly managed.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

Grass Color

Although both drought and heat can produce a brown-like color, there are some differences to look out for between the two. Drought is more uniformly discolored and dry-looking, whereas heat-stressed grass may be uneven and produce a yellow or brown color. In addition to color differences, when turfgrass undergoes heat stress it often looks wilted or scorched.

Disease and Weed Presence

Heat stress may provide the perfect opportunity for diseases like brown patch or pythium blight. If you notice one of these two, the turfgrass is likely under heat stress since both diseases are less common under drought conditions. Also, be aware of an increase in weeds for either drought or heat stress. Because the grass is already under pressure, it struggles to compete, allowing weeds to take hold more easily.

Soil Moisture

Dry, crumbly soil and hard, compacted areas are key indicators of drought stress, as they prevent grass roots from absorbing sufficient water. When the soil is dry or compacted, it restricts water infiltration, leaving the roots unable to access the moisture they need. This often leads to a loss of turf elasticity, where footprints remain visible on the lawn for an extended period, indicating that the grass has lost turgor pressure. This combination of soil and turf conditions is a clear sign that the lawn is under drought stress and requires immediate attention.

RECOVERING FROM SUMMER STRESS

Rehydrate Appropriately

Gradual rehydration is key to getting turf back to normal. Start by watering turf deeply and consistently to restore moisture levels. To minimize evaporation, watering early can help. As you are doing this be careful of overwatering, as this can lead to additional problems like fungal diseases.

Consider Fall Overseeding

Fall overseeding is a great way to aid recovery since it can fill bare spots and provide a thicker-looking turf. Overall overseeding can revive weak turfgrass, strengthen root systems, prepare lawns for cooler weather, enhance turf resilience, prevent erosion, and improve the overall color and texture of the turfgrass.

Adjust Mowing Practices

Mowing adjustments are crucial for aiding turfgrass recovery after summer stress. Raising the mower blade to a higher setting helps protect the grass by leaving more leaf surfaces, enhancing photosynthesis, and promoting deeper root growth. Additionally, mowing less frequently reduces the strain on the grass, allowing more time to recover between cuts.

Monitor for Diseases

Since diseases thrive when turfgrass is weakened, it is vital to be on top of any issues that may arise. Monitor daily for any fungal diseases, such as discoloration or patches, and take note of any changes. If any disease is found, treat it promptly to avoid it from spreading and creating further damage.

Fertilize Appropriately

Proper fertilization plays a key role in helping turfgrass recover from summer stress. Applying a controlled-release fertilizer can help provide the proper nutrition needed during a given period, making it less likely to increase stress. When choosing a fertilizer for recovery, avoid high-nitrogen products as they can lead to excessive top growth at the expense of root development, making grass more vulnerable.

PREVENTION FOR FUTURE ISSUES

Select the Right Grass Species

Choose drought- and heat-tolerant grass varieties like tall fescue for cool-season lawns or Bermuda for warm-season areas. Mixing different species can also boost resilience, allowing your lawn to better withstand varying environmental conditions.

Improve Soil Health

Aerate your lawn annually to reduce soil compaction, promoting deeper root growth and better water absorption.

After aeration, topdress with organic matter to enhance soil structure and increase moisture retention, resulting in a healthier, more resilient lawn.

Implement Strategic Fertilization

Apply a slow or controlled-release fertilizer in spring and fall, to support steady growth and strengthen your lawn. Regular soil testing helps you avoid over-fertilization, which can lead to excessive growth and increased stress. When turf has the appropriate nutrients, it is more likely to be resilient to diseases and environmental stressors such as heat and cold.

Establish a Consistent Watering Schedule

Make it a habit to water deeply and less frequently to encourage strong root development. To reduce evaporation and disease risk water in the early morning. To make things easier, consider a smart irrigation system to ensure turf gets the right amount of water based on weather and soil conditions.

Maintain Proper Mowing Practices Year-Round

Adjust mowing height seasonally—keep grass taller in summer to shade the soil, and lower in cooler months for denser growth. Always use sharp blades for clean cuts, which help prevent disease and promote quicker recovery.

Prevent and Manage Thatch Buildup

Regularly dethatch your lawn to prevent the accumulation of dead organic matter that can block water and nutrients. Promote healthy microbial activity in the soil to naturally break down thatch and maintain a healthy lawn.

Protect Against Diseases and Pests

Inspect your lawn regularly for signs of disease or pests and address issues early. Use an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to balance cultural practices, biological controls, and targeted treatments, preventing widespread damage and keeping your lawn strong.

Conclusion

As you recover turfgrass from summer stress, it is important to be patient and provide consistent care. By understanding the effects of drought and heat stress and taking proactive steps like proper watering, mowing adjustments, and disease monitoring, you can help your lawn recover and build resilience for future challenges. With time and dedication, your turf will regain its health and vibrancy, ready to withstand even the toughest summer conditions.

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DIAGNOSING LAWN BROWN SPOTS WITH AN IRRIGATION AUDIT

COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Brown spots in lawns can have many potential causes, but the most common issue is poor/non-uniform irrigation coverage. When an irrigation system is operating, it always looks like water is being applied evenly, but that's rarely the case. Conducting a quick irrigation audit (measuring the amount and uniformity of water being applied) can be a very beneficial tool.

Many Colorado water providers provide irrigation audit services to customers – for little or no cost. However, you can do your own informal audit to help solve lawn brown spot woes.

The Informal Lawn Irrigation Audit Process

Step 1

Gather 5-10 identical containers for collecting water. These can be tuna or cat food cans, plastic cups, rain gauges, etc. It's important they are the same type to collect water evenly and sit level in the lawn.

A pack of 40 clear plastic cups packaged in a plastic bag being held up by two hands in a store.



Step 2

Working in one irrigation zone, randomly place the cups in the lawn. Put some on green areas and some on brown areas. Make sure the containers are level. Avoid placing containers next to sprinkler heads – keeping them a few feet away.

An empty plastic cup placed on a lawn for an informal irrigation audit.



Step 3

Let the irrigation system run through a normal cycle. Or run the system for 15-20 minutes while watching the sprinklers run. Look for crooked, low, plugged, or blocked heads.

Step 4

Measure the depth of the water in each container with a ruler. Write down each number, along with a note if the lawn is healthy or brown. Measure to 1/10" if possible.

An active sprinkler watering grass and other plants.



Step 5

Do some simple math to get the average depth of water applied in the green turf areas and the brown areas. While it may seem insignificant, keep in mind that a green area that received 0.2" of water versus a brown area with 0.1" is getting TWICE as much water every time you irrigate!



Common Brown Spot Causes

- Heads are too low in the ground which results in green “donuts” in the turf and brown areas beyond
- Heads aren’t coming up perfectly vertically. Crooked heads will never distribute water uniformly!
- Heads not turning the way they should – they may be “stuck”.
- The spray pattern may be blocked by plants or landscape materials.
- Water pressure may decline as additional homes are built in your neighborhood. Find windows of time when water pressure is best (i.e. the middle of the night).
- Nozzles can get plugged or worn
- Heads can get broken, bumped, or moved by mowers or aerification equipment.
- Tree roots can impinge on irrigation lines, decreasing or stopping water flow to heads.
- The valves for a station may not be opening fully.
- The irrigation design is poor – heads may be spaced too far apart or there are too many heads on a station.





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BEATING THE HEAT AT WORK

SHRM ONLINE STAFF

A scorching heat wave is rolling around the world, with record-setting temperatures in Asia, Europe and North America. In the U.S., nearly a third of the states face excessive heat, with heat warnings and advisories for parts or all of 28 states.

Employers have a duty to make sure workers avoid heat illnesses. Outdoor workers need water, rest and shade to make it to the end of their workday safely. Indoor workers, such as those in warehouses, boiler rooms, kitchens and laundries, can be affected by heat stress, too.

Water, rest and shade can help prevent many heat illnesses, including heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Hard work in hot weather can raise body temperatures higher than the body can cool itself by sweating. Heat illness might manifest initially as heat rash or heat cramps but can become heat exhaustion and then heat stroke quickly.

Different people get used to the heat at different times: Most young, healthy people who increase their exposure to the hot weather gradually should be acclimatized fully within 14 days. People who are not used to strenuous activity and who exercise sporadically might take longer to adapt.

Signs and Symptoms

Be on the lookout for these symptoms of heat illness, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA):

- Sunburn: Redness and pain. In severe cases, swelling of skin, blisters, fever and headaches.
- First Aid: Ointments for mild cases if blisters appear and do not break. If breaking occurs, apply dry sterile dressing.
- Heat cramps: Painful spasms usually in the muscles of legs and abdomen with heavy sweating.
- First Aid: Firm pressure on cramping muscles or gentle massage to relieve spasm. Give sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue water.
- Heat exhaustion: Heavy sweating; weakness; cold, pale, clammy skin; thready pulse; fainting and vomiting but might have normal temperature.
- First Aid: Get victim out of sun. Once inside, the person should lay down and loosen his or her clothing. Apply cool, wet cloths. Fan or move victim to air conditioned room. Offer sips of water. If nausea occurs, discontinue water. If

vomiting continues, seek immediate medical attention.

- Heat stroke (or sunstroke): High body temperature (106° F or higher), hot dry skin, rapid and strong pulse, possible unconsciousness. Heat stroke is a severe medical emergency. Summon emergency medical assistance or get the victim to a hospital immediately.
- First Aid: Delay can be fatal. While waiting for emergency assistance, move the victim to a cooler environment and reduce body temperature with cold bath or sponging. Use extreme caution. Remove clothing, use fans and air conditioners. If temperature rises again, repeat process. Do NOT give fluids. Persons on salt restrictive diets should consult a physician before increasing their salt intake.

Follow these tips to prevent heat illness:

- Drink water often, take breaks and limit time in the heat.
- Build up to heavy work gradually in hot conditions. Help workers become acclimated, especially workers who are new to working outdoors in the heat or have been away from work for a week or more. Gradually increase workloads and allow more frequent breaks during the first week of work.
- Slow down. Reduce, eliminate or reschedule strenuous activities until the coolest time of the day.
- Dress for summer. Wear lightweight, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight.
- Put less fuel on inner fires. Foods such as meat and other proteins that increase metabolic heat production also increase water loss.
- Drink plenty of water and nonalcoholic and decaffeinated fluids. Your body needs water to keep cool. Drink plenty of fluids even if you don't feel thirsty. Persons who have epilepsy or heart, kidney or liver disease, who are on fluid restrictive diets or who have a problem with fluid retention should consult a physician before increasing their consumption of fluids. Do not drink alcoholic beverages; limit caffeinated beverages.

Pay Attention to the Heat Index

The heat index can make all the difference in how safe it is to work outside on a given day, according to NOAA. The National Weather Service, a division of NOAA, uses the heat index to determine whether to issue watches, warnings and advisories for excessive heat.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a free app for Android-based mobile devices and iPhone devices that enables workers and supervisors to monitor the heat index at their worksites. The app displays a risk level for workers based on the heat index as well as reminders about protective measures that should be taken at that risk level. English and Spanish versions are available.

Employers are Responsible for Protecting Workers from Heat Illness

By law employers are responsible for providing workplaces free of known safety hazards, including extreme heat.

It is your responsibility to:

- ☒ **Provide workers with water, rest and shade.**
- ☒ **Allow new or returning workers to gradually increase workloads and take more frequent breaks during the first week of work as they build a tolerance for working in the heat.**
- ☒ **Plan for emergencies and train workers on prevention.**
- ☒ **Monitor workers for signs of illness.**

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Helen Keller



MEMBER PROFILE

EUGENE LOEW

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE, CITY OF AURORA SUPERINTENDENT - IRRIGATION AND SPORTS FIELDS

Where are you from and how did you end up where you are today?

I got my start in turf management in 2002, working the driving range at Oak Marr Golf Course in Fairfax County, Virginia. What began as a summer job quickly turned into something more, thanks to a superintendent named Brian who took the time to share the science and strategy behind turf care during our daily commutes. I didn't realize it then, but those conversations planted the seed for a career. I stayed on with Fairfax County, moving into full-time golf course maintenance in 2006, where another mentor helped shape my early development, teaching me everything from irrigation repair to disease diagnosis. Within a year, I was promoted to Senior Maintenance at Laurel Hill Golf Club, where I continued learning both on the job and through Rutgers University's Turf Management Certification program.

My career path eventually expanded beyond golf courses, including a role as Parks Crew Chief at historic properties and later as Waterfront Supervisor for the City of Alexandria. During that time, I earned my Certified Grounds Manager credential and Virginia Nutrient Management Certification, and our team received a beautification award for turf improvements. After moving into broader leadership roles across Texas, California, and Virginia, I recently returned to my roots in turf as a Superintendent for the City of Aurora, overseeing irrigation and athletic fields. Today, I'm focused on working alongside staff and partners to elevate the quality and sustainability of Aurora sports fields.

What attracted you to the sports turf profession?

I was originally drawn to turf maintenance from my love of being able to spend my days outdoors working with my hands. I have pride in creating beautiful spaces to play, I've always appreciated the satisfaction that comes from a job well done. It's that combination of physical work, being outside, and seeing the results firsthand that started my journey passionate for the profession. In later years the science, challenge, and problem solving kept me engaged, as well as the sense of service and promoting community happiness and health.

What types of fields do you care for?

I oversee the Aurora Sports Field Complex, Athletic Field Crew, and Irrigation Team for the City of Aurora. These teams manage specialized irrigation and sports field maintenance on over 50 athletic fields across the city.

What do you enjoy most about the sports turf industry?

What I enjoy most about the sports turf industry is the impact it has on the community and the role we play in creating spaces where people can gather, compete, and recreate. There's a strong sense of purpose in knowing the fields we maintain are used every day by athletes, families, and residents, and that our work helps provide safe, high-quality spaces for those experiences.

I also enjoy the challenge that comes with managing turf sustainably, especially when it comes to water use and sustainable nutrient management. Balancing quality with conservation efforts takes thought, skill, and flexibility, and that challenge is part of what makes the work so engaging and rewarding.

What do you enjoy the least about the sports turf industry?

What I enjoy the least about the sports turf industry is that the work of the team can often go unrecognized or be quickly criticized. A lot of effort happens behind the scenes to keep fields safe, playable, and looking their best, and it's not always fully understood by those who use them. While the results are visible, the time, care, and expertise it takes to maintain those conditions can sometimes be overlooked.

What is something that you have learned working in sports turf that you would like to share with others?

One thing I've learned working in sports turf is that managing people is not all that different from managing turf. Just like healthy turf needs the right balance of water, nutrients, and attention, a strong team needs recognition, support, and the right environment to grow. You can't expect consistent results without investing in what makes both the field and the people maintaining it successful.

What would you tell someone who is considering the sports turf industry for their profession?

There's a unique satisfaction in looking out over a field and knowing the condition it's in is a direct reflection of your effort, care, and attention to detail. It's honest work, and it teaches you patience, discipline, and a strong sense of responsibility for the spaces you maintain. It's not always easy, and there will be long days, tough conditions, and moments where the results don't come as quickly as you'd like. But if you enjoy working with your hands, being outdoors, and seeing the impact of your work in a real and visible way, it can be incredibly fulfilling.



HARRISON TRAFAS

MILWAUKEE TOOL TERRITORY MANAGER - OUTDOOR TRADES COLORADO

VENDOR PROFILE

What is your current affiliate company and your position? How long have you been in this position?

Territory Manager – Outdoor Trades Colorado. Four months into my role.

Where are you based out of and what territory do you cover?

Based out of Fort Collins, CO, covering all of Colorado and parts of Wyoming.

What are the responsibilities of your company to our industry, and how is your company involved with CSFMA?

My responsibilities that relate to this industry are symbiotically working with end users and our distribution partners providing trainings and demos to the field that align to turf management. Milwaukee has been involved with CSFMA for 3 to 4 years.

What might we be surprised to know about your company?

Milwaukee has been around since 1924

Did you go to college? If so, where and what major did you graduate with?

I attended the University of Northern Colorado majoring in Marketing.

How and when did you begin working in the golf industry and what do you like most about it?

I started working in the golf industry this year once accepting my position in the Outdoor Trades Field is January. My favorite part of working in this industry is, the people, the tools we work with, and getting to see the behind the scenes of how they manage a golf course.

Tell us a little about your family, and what hobbies or activities you participate in when you are not at work?

I am a middle child of two brothers. Mom lives in Colorado and dad lives in Massachusetts.

Hobbies: Golf, making music, Comedy, and spending time with family and friends

What are the biggest changes you have seen in the profession since you began your career? Or, what are the most important changes that the company has seen the past 5-10 years?

Biggest changes has been starting at the home depot moving into working in the field with end users. The most important changes my company has seen in the last 5-10 years is the innovation of battery powered tools.

Do you regularly attend CSFMA meetings or events, if so, why are they important?

The Spring Seminar will be my first time at a CSFMA event.

What would you like other people to know about CSFMA?

The Collection of end users and distributors coming together to better the industry and creating a strong community

You know a lot of people in our industry. What are they saying are the biggest obstacles to overcome for them to be successful?

The lack of precipitation this year has caused a lot of issues.

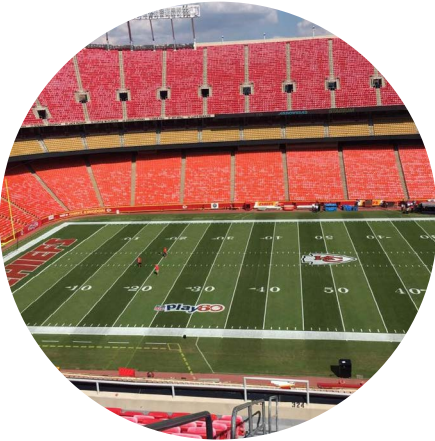
You get to see many facilities and properties. What is an interesting new or innovative practice you have seen?

Autonomous Mowers has been the most innovative practice I have seen in the field.



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SFMA IS SEEKING HELP FROM ITS CHAPTERS

SFMA chapter members are our ambassadors to local high schools. Please help spread the word about this online course. Attend career days, invite students to your local meetings and encourage them to take this online course. Chapter members will benefit from a local pool of students ready for internships, crew members and seasonal positions.



HOW MUCH DOES THE COURSE COST?

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ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

SFMA has officially launched its Environmental Facility Certification Program. The program was developed to help document the environmental stewardship of SFMA members and is awarded to the facility. The first step is to conduct an electronic assessment of 10 areas – either for your athletic complex or for a single field.

After you have completed the assessment, SFMA will score it. If you have achieved 80 percent compliance on each of the 10 sections, you will be notified that you passed.

The next step is to engage an attester who can do a walk-through of the facility with you to validate your environmental practices. Qualified attestors include an academic in the field of turf management or a Certified Sports Field Manager (CSFM). SFMA will provide an electronic assessment form to the attester. If the attester verifies your practices, the facility will be designated an SFMA Certified Facility for Environmentally Responsible Management. You can choose recognition for your facility through a plaque or a banner. A \$100 fee will be charged once your facility achieves certification, which includes the recognition materials.

If you do not achieve the 80 percent passing score, you have one year to re-assess the sections that you did not pass. Certification is valid for three years; after that time period, the process will need to be repeated. If a sports turf manager leaves a facility, the facility still maintains its certification until the end of the three-year period.

If you have questions, please call SFMA Headquarters at 800-323-3875.

2026 CSFMA SCHOLARSHIPS

The 2026 Colorado Sports Field Management Association Board would like to offer you a look at continuing education or assisting in your degree program to be a Sports Turf Manager. In years past only students were able to receive these benefits. Please look over the different scholarship programs we now offer and think about furthering your education. CSFMA is committed to allowing all Sports turf personnel the option to better themselves through this new program. Visit our website at www.CSFMA.org under CSFMA Resources, to download the application and instructions to get you started down the path to receive one of these great benefits.

Two Year Horticulture Student Scholarship- \$500 each 2 Will Be Awarded

- Student must be enrolled full time at a 2 year college in Colorado
- Student must be a member of CSFMA
- Enrolled to attend classes towards a degree or certificate in a sports turf industry field

Four Year Horticulture Student Scholarship - \$1,000 2 Will Be Awarded

- Student must be enrolled full time at a 4-year college in Colorado
- Student must be a member of CSFMA
- Enrolled to attend classes towards a degree or certificate in a sports turf industry field

Employee Continuing Education Scholarship- \$500 each 4 Will Be Awarded

- Employee must be employed full time
- Employee may not be enrolled full time at a college
- Studies must be sports turf industry specific
- Employee must be a member of CSFMA in good standing

CSFM Scholarship- \$350 each

- Must be a SFMA & CSFMA member in good standing
- Scholarship will be paid once completion of the CSFM certificate is provided to the board.
- Member must work in the Sports Turf Industry
- Must apply before taking CSFM exam





SOCIAL MEDIA

We want to provide more avenues for our members to stay connected. CSFMA members can use social media for networking, sharing experiences with our peers and opening discussions about sports turf management. Please join us in our goal to keep all of our members as connected and informed as possible.

Like us on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/CSFMA and “like” our page to begin seeing our posts on your Facebook newsfeed. We will be posting information about upcoming events as well as photos from each event held. Feel free to post your own photos of your fields or your ongoing projects. We would love to see what you’re working on!

Follow us on Twitter @ ColoradoSFMA. On Twitter we can connect with turf industry professionals locally, nationally and internationally! Follow us to see our tweets on your timeline. We will

tweet information about upcoming events, photos and re-tweets of turf related topics.

Join our LinkedIn discussion group “Colorado Sports Field Management Association”. LinkedIn provides a great discussion forum to help you get information from other turf managers.

Follow us on Instagram: ColoradoSFMA

Members of our social media groups will be entered to win prizes at our CSFMA events!

Whoever could make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before, would deserve better of mankind, and do more essential service to his country, than the whole race of politicians put together.

Thomas Jefferson



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