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## MRTF President's Letter (2023)

*(Brad Pugh)*

It appears that Spring has finally arrived, and in typical Indiana fashion we have had a slow start, but now it looks like things are about to bust loose. Now, everyone just has to try and just keep up. So many things to get done and not enough time in the day to accomplish it all.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as your 2023 MRTF president. Like many of us, we started in the turf industry at an early age. I began my career as a teenager on the eastside of Indianapolis. I went to Purdue and graduated under the direction of Dr. Throssell. After a few stops, I landed at The Country Club of Terre Haute where I have been the golf course superintendent for twenty-three years.

Through my time as a turfgrass professional, the MRTF has provided educational and networking opportunities that have allowed me to do my job better. So, when I was asked to serve on the board I did not hesitate because this was now my chance to give back to the industry that has been so good to me. Becoming president of the MRTF is a huge highlight of my career. Our industry is full of amazing professionals and it's truly an honor to serve this Foundation.

Finally, I would like to briefly mention the newest MRTF endowment. We are embarking on a fundraising effort to expand the facilities at the William H. Daniel diagnostic center at Purdue University. I believe we are off to a great start. We have had a wonderful response to the new sustaining member category during the membership renewals this year. We are also seeing

some interest in the Chip-in program. If you haven't heard of these efforts, and would like to know more, please visit our website: [www.MRTF.org](http://www.MRTF.org). Furthermore, I would like to send out a big thanks to all our members for their continued support of this foundation. It is going to be a great year!



Respectfully,  
Brad Pugh, CGCS  
MRTF President

## Membership Spotlight - Sustaining Membership Upgrade

*(Ashley Ryan Breed, ashbreed@purdue.edu)*

The launch of our new, sustaining membership option is going very well. We have seen MANY individuals and companies opting to upgrade their membership to provide additional support to the MRTF's project initiatives and student scholarships. If you have not heard about this upgrade, please see some additional information below.

MEMBER BENEFIT	2022 MEMBERS	2023 REGULAR MEMBERS	2023 SUSTAINING MEMBERS*
Stay engaged with the latest information on turf management	✓	✓	✓
Increased profit as you learn from the industry experts the MRTF supports	✓	✓	✓
Take advantage of Continuing Credit Hours (CCHs) at our education events	✓	✓	✓
Reduced registration fees for MRTF education events	✓	✓	✓
Recognition as a member on our website; brings enhanced business activity	✓	✓	✓
Foster new relationships and increase your network at our events	✓	✓	✓
Access to a new member-only collection of training videos (approx. 116 videos)	✓	✓	✓
Access to a new MRTF member newsletter	✓	✓	✓
Access to MRTF-member logo for your company website and business card	✓	✓	✓
Funding of Daniel Turf Center capital project improvements	✓	✓	✓
Funding of a new sustaining member student scholarship	✓	✓	✓
Recognition of your support as a sustaining member	✓	✓	✓

This upgrade can be added to a current membership, or to a new membership. If you have not registered to be a 2023 MRTF and receive the annual benefits listed above, please do so by visiting [www.mrtf.org/members/membership](http://www.mrtf.org/members/membership). There is a whole page dedicated to becoming a sustaining member.

## We would like to thank all of our 2023 Sustaining Members (so far):

Ag Nutrition  
Automatic Supply  
Barenbrug USA  
BASF  
Berger Hargis Landscape Management  
Berry's Garden Center  
Bishop Chatard High School  
Brickyard Crossing  
Brownsburg Landscape & Garden Center LLC  
Calvin Landscape  
Clounie Landscaping  
Commercial Grounds Maintenance  
Country Club of Terre Haute  
Cragen Lawn Care  
Crown Lawn Service  
Custom Cuts Lawn Care  
David George (retired)  
Duane Dammeyer (retired)  
Earlywine Pest Control  
Elcona Country Club  
Evansville County Club  
FMC  
Forever Green Lawn Care  
Fort Wayne Country Club  
Golf Club of Indiana  
Green Touch Services  
Hamlet Golf Course  
Harbour Trees  
Hawthorns Golf and Country Club  
Helms Lawn Specialists, Inc.  
Hillcrest Country Club  
Hubinger Landscaping Corp  
Idle Creek Golf Course, Inc.  
J&D Turf  
Knox Fertilizer  
Landscapes Unlimited  
Langdon Brothers Seed Corp  
Lawn & Turf Landscaping, Inc  
Lawn Tamer LLC  
Leckron Lawn and Sports Turf  
Liberty Country Club  
Links Aerification Plus  
Lush Lawns LLC  
Mark M. Holeman Inc.  
McGavic Outdoor Power Equipment  
Meridian Hills Country Club  
Morris Park Country Club  
North Shore Country Club  
Olympia Fields Country Club  
Pebble Brook Golf Club  
PermaGreen Supreme, Inc.  
Pine Valley Country Club  
Precision Turf Care LLC  
Rain Bird  
Randy Bellinger (retired)  
Ricci's Landscape Management, Inc.  
RT Yard Care  
ServiScape  
Skokie Country Club  
Syngenta  
The Bridgewater Club  
The CISCO Companies  
The Club at Holliday Farms  
The Fort Golf Resort  
Total Lawn Care, Inc  
Turf Care Solutions  
Vibrant Outdoors  
Youche Country Club  
Zebra Landscape, Inc.



*"I am an Indiana native and I attended Indiana University. I spent 17 years with Perf-A-Lawn in Owensboro, KY before returning to Indiana in 2011. I started with Advanced Turf Solutions in July of 2011 and quickly (4 months) transitioned to J&D Turf as business manager. In January 2022 I, along with a co-worker, had the opportunity to purchase J&D Turf.*

*I have 2 grown children, 2 grandsons (twins), and 2 dogs (Silver Lab & Bernadoodle). One thing I am proud of is that I am a living kidney donor. I enjoy reading, crosswords and other puzzles, helping others, spending time with family, and traveling!"*

The MRTF is very happy to have Michelle on the Board and we encourage all our members to get to know her at our upcoming events if you get the chance.

If you have questions for Michelle, she can be reached at [michelleh@j-dturf.com](mailto:michelleh@j-dturf.com).

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## Welcome, Michelle Hancock, to the Board of Directors

*(Ashley Ryan Breed, ashbreed@purdue.edu)*

At this year's January meeting, the MRTF welcomed Michelle Hancock, of J&D Turf, to our Board of Directors. Michelle replaced Nikki Hendrickson as the new IPLLA Representative. Please read more about her below.

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## Indiana Green Expo 2023 Recap

*(Aaron J Patton, ajpatton@purdue.edu)*

## Indiana Green Expo 2023 Recap



There were over 900 pre-registered attendees, including staff and speakers as well as over 350 exhibitors, and 200 on-site registrations for the 2023 IGE.

The Indiana Green Expo wishes to thank the following Sponsors that assist in alleviating some of the inherent cost of putting on an event of this stature.

**Corporate Sponsors: Blue Grass Farms of Indiana, Brehob Nurseries, Schuetz Insurance Services/ proud to offer Frankenmuth Insurance and Townsend Arborcare.**

**Lanyard Sponsor: Syngenta**

**IGE 2023 Tote Sponsor: Greendell/Musselman Landscape Supplies**

**Lounge Furnishing Sponsor: The Engledow Group**

**Lounge Break Sponsor: Midwest Groundcovers**

**Session Sponsor: PW - Proven Winners Color Choice**

**Landscape Challenge Sponsors: Belgard, Brickworks - Edgewood Landscape Supply, Brehob Nurseries, Greendell/Musselman Landscape Supplies and Perennials Plus**

**First Day - January 30, 2023**

The first day was full of very well attended morning and afternoon sessions of workshops, as well as the first day of the 2-day initial training for ICPI (Interlocking Concrete Paver Installation) class. While the various workshops were going on, ranging from Developing the most Robust Crabgrass Program: Using science to Prevent **Failures**, Interactive Plant Problem Diagnosis, Pollinator and Monarch Conservation in Green Spaces, Getting to the root of the problem: Biology and Management of Soilborne Diseases, Indiana Accredited Horticulturist (IAH) Review and Exam, which is the **only state approved certification program**, to TURF 101: an overview of Turf Management; some 100+ exhibitors began filling up Hall F to exhibit their wares.

**Day 2 - First day of Trade Show and Full Education Tracks**

The education tracks on Day 1 included the following sessions with most having Continuing Credit Hours (CCH) for applicator/RT licensing from the Office of the Indiana State Chemist (OISC), as well as Indiana Accredited Horticulturist (IAH -INLA) Continuing Educational Units (CEU) and the Golf Course Superintendents

Association (GCSA). Tuesday's Educational Tracks included the following as well as joint opening session; Lawn Care (full-day), Golf (full day), Landscape Installation and Maintenance (full day), Vegetation Management (half-day), Sports Turf (half-day), Plant Material (half-day), Spanish Track (full day) and Tree Care (3/4 day). Also, Tuesday was the second day of the ICPI Initial Installer Certification with the afternoon part of the day included the Certification Test. While this was all transpiring, educationally speaking, the Trade Show full over varying exhibiting company's was open from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, one hour longer by opening at 9:00 am instead of the usual 10:00 am. New for 2023 was also talks on the trade show floor from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm following the Landscape Challenge from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. The abbreviated version of the popular landscape challenge lessened by 1 hour and 80 square feet, could only be accomplished by 4 Central 9 students, which were split into 2 teams, due to Prosser Career Center unable to make the trip from New Albany because of ice storm. Also new for 2023 was the implementation of opening the concession stand inside Exhibit Hall F from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. There were several companies also exhibiting new products in the New Product Showcase designated area. We also handed out some Best of Show Awards for certain categories to our exhibitors. The winners are as follows: **Hardgoods - Techo-bloc, Green Goods - Walters Garden/National Nursery Products, Equipment - United Label, and Most interactive - Millcreek Gardens. Congrats to all the winners, your displays and enthusiasm were over the top!**

**Day 3 - Final Trade Show (half day) and Educational Tracks (full day)**

While the trade show was open from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm to allow exhibitors to teardown and load up after 1:15 pm, the concessions were open from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm and educational talks on the trade show floor were available from 10:30 am to 12:00 pm. Exhibitors generally prefer to leave when there is less traffic in the Indianapolis Metro area. The educational tracks for Wednesday included the following tracks; Workshop - Core Pesticide Training, Lawn Care (full day), Golf (full day), Sports Turf (3/4 day), Women at Indiana Green Expo (half day), Equipment Managers (half day), Landscape Installation and Maintenance (full day), Nursery Production (half day), Plant Material (half day), Invasive Species (half day), Design (1/4 day), and Business and Marketing (half day).

We trust and hope that with this much diversification of topics as well as the various expertise in the speakers that we assemble will create the need to attend the 2024 IGE, which takes place January 16-19, 2024 at the Indiana Convention Center.

On behalf of the Midwest Regional Turf Foundation (MRTF) and the Indiana Nursery and Landscape Association (INLA), partners for the Indiana Green Expo, we wish everyone a safe, healthy, and prosperous 2023.

**See you in person at the Indiana Green Expo 2024!!!!**

# Campus Update: Scholarships Awarded at IGE & Turf Student Successes

(Ashley Ryan Breed, ashbreed@purdue.edu)

Purdue Campus Update – 9 Scholarships Awarded at our 2023 Indiana Green Expo & Turf Students Win Again

This year, at our annual Distinguished Service Award reception during IGE, the MRTF awarded scholarships to 9 students. Congrats to all these students and their families!



MRTF Research Golf Day Scholarship (presented by Syngenta) - Eli Ziliak

MRTF Don Fassnacht Scholarship - Hayden Wilson

MRTF Dan Weisenberger Scholarship - Emma Seward

W. H. Daniel Undergraduate Scholarship - Jacob Winger

MRTF Board of Directors General Scholarship - Jacob Tower

MRTF Board of Directors General Scholarship - Drew Coe

MRTF Board of Directors General Scholarship - Brody Piel

MRTF Board of Directors General Scholarship - Gavin Kenning

MRTF Board of Directors General Scholarship - Hayden Flick

## SFMA Collegiate Quiz Bowl Success



Congratulations to Emma Seward, William “Billy” Myrehn, Jacob Winger, and Drew Coe for winning this year’s Sports Field Manager’s Association (SFMA) Collegiate Quiz Bowl Champs for 4-year Turf Science programs, making Purdue Turf Science students “back-to-back National SFMA Collegiate Challenge Champions.” The students were coached by Jada Powlen (Ph.D./Turf Science) and Dr. Cale Bigelow. The trophy was presented by James Bergdoll, immediate past-President of the SFMA and Purdue Turf Science graduate.

The SFMA Collegiate Quiz bowl examines the team’s knowledge on practical topics like turf/weed/insect identification, mathematical calculations related to sports field industry as well as topics like irrigation, and a practical case study on topics like what would be required to renovate a tired neglected sports field in a particular geographic climate. The Student Challenge was first held in 2004 and Purdue students have won the competition in 2005, 2011, 2012, 2022 and 2023.

*Notable mention: this same team won 2nd place at the GCSAA 29th annual John Deere Turf Bowl, where 235 students, 63 teams and 27 schools competed in February.*

## Research Spotlight – Pink Snow Mold (Winter '22/Spring '23)

(Lee Miller)

### A Cold Mold that Craves the Shade

Dr. Lee Miller & Asa McCurdy

Pink snow mold is a disease caused by the fungal pathogen *Microdochium nivale* (syn. *Monographella nivalis*) that is being observed in middle and northern Indiana this late winter. The pathogen is termed psychrophilic, or cold loving, due to its propensity to grow and infect in colder temperatures. The disease can be particularly severe on unfrozen turf under an insulating

snow cover, but the pathogen doesn't necessarily need snow to form and cause damage. For this reason, the disease is also referred to (perhaps more correctly) as *Microdochium* patch by researchers, since symptoms also occur in the cool, wet conditions that have been the bill of sale this winter. Conversely, the true snow molds, such as gray and speckled, require an extended amount of snow cover to develop, and are more regularly observed in the colder climates of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Canada.



**Shade impacts snow melt and disease activity.**

- A.** Shade from a building creating a stark contrast between a wintry and spring-like landscape. - *Photo by A. McCurdy*
- B.** *Microdochium* patch prevalent in shade from a structure and not affecting turfgrass in full sun. Inset: micrograph of pathogen spores.

*Microdochium* patch can occur on nearly all turfgrass species, with the most severe symptoms occurring on creeping bentgrass and annual bluegrass. On higher cut lawns such as Kentucky bluegrass or the fescues, *Microdochium* patch is less common, but when it occurs can be very conspicuous. Symptoms on higher cut turfgrass are circular tan brown to white patches approximately a foot or more in diameter that can coalesce to affect larger areas. When the disease is active, especially on cool wet mornings, a faint pink hue may be observed on patch edges. This pink coloration is the sporodochia which bear numerous spores, or conidia, that facilitate transmission and disease spread. *Microdochium* patch symptoms can be easily confused with red thread, necrotic ring spot, or *Ascochyta* blight, which may occur later in the spring season.

As shown above, shade greatly enhances disease incidence and severity. Note photo A and how the sunlit side has daffodil bulbs emerging from their slumber, while the shade from the building on the other half maintains a wintry wonderland. The extension of cool, wet conditions from the shade in photo B provides the conducive conditions for *Microdochium* patch while the sun-dried canopy remains disease free.

Heavily shaded areas under a tree canopy can be reduced through selective pruning, but renovating a multi-story down to a ranch isn't quite as feasible. In reality, most cultural practices for *Microdochium* patch suppression need to be remembered and implemented next fall. Don't apply nitrogen fertilizer too late in

the fall, particularly during extended periods of cool, wet weather. Continue mowing in the fall at a normal mowing height until the turf stops growing to prevent excessive growth and lodging. Don't reduce mowing height or scalp the turfgrass which may lead to winter injury.

When used on high amenity areas such as golf course or sports fields, one or two fall preventive fungicide applications prior to the first snowfall may be necessary to prevent widespread damage. If cared for properly, higher cut turfgrass will usually recover from *Microdochium* patch, so fungicide applications are normally not recommended in the home landscape. Restrict mowing and traffic while the disease is active. In affected areas, rake the matted leaf tissue to allow for sunlight and air into the turfgrass canopy. When high temperatures in spring rise consistently into the 60-70°F range, apply a quick release nitrogen fertilizer to encourage recovery. If the disease is especially severe, consider overseeding the area in early spring to rebuild lawn density.

## Research Spotlight - Conservation Plantings on Golf Courses (Spring 2023)

*(Doug Richmond)*

### Creating a Roadmap for Establishing Conservation Plantings on Golf Courses

There is broad and growing interest in the development of tactics to improve the sustainability of golf courses. In general, these efforts focus largely on practices that reduce inputs and increase ecosystem services. Among these efforts, the renovation of out-of-play areas to native or low-maintenance vegetation (conservation plantings) has received increased attention. The underlying reasons include a combination of economic, aesthetic, and ecological considerations that depend on the unique constraints and goals of golf course staff, their clientele, and the surrounding community. But, success can often hinge on the ability of golf course staff to confidently carry out the renovation process and accurately communicate expected outcomes to their clientele and other stakeholders. At present, there is virtually no road map available to guide installation efforts or set realistic expectations for golf course staff interested in undertaking such conservation efforts.

Given the lack of decision-making support available to golf courses interested in renovating out-of-play areas to conservation plantings, our lab is leading a 3-year, USGA-funded project to understand the economic, aesthetic, and ecological outcomes stemming from the establishment of native, prairie vegetation. However, in reality, this project represents a much larger multiparty effort supported in part by Purdue University (Department of Entomology and Birck Boilermaker Golf Complex), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (National Wildlife Refuge

System), two wildlife conservations organizations (National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever), a well-established local native plant nursery and seed supplier (Stantec), and one of the most experienced prairie establishment companies in the State (Martin Seed).

The first phase of the project will allow us to compare the effects of seeding time (winter dormant vs. spring) and seeding method (broadcast vs. drill seeding) on plant community establishment and begin to quantify ecosystem services by characterizing resulting pollinator communities. Several large, out-of-play areas on the Kampen Golf Course at Purdue University's Birk Boilermaker Gold Complex are being converted using these different seeding times and techniques, and resulting plant and pollinator communities will be characterized over the next several growing seasons. We are also partnering with others across Purdue's College of Agriculture to make these plantings available to be leveraged by others as a living laboratory for experiential learning and Extension.

If you play the Kampen course, you have undoubtedly noticed these areas since site preparation, mainly the removal of existing vegetation, began in the fall of 2021. But, stay tuned over the next several growing seasons as the vegetation and natural beauty of these areas unfold in real-time.

Doug Richmond, Ph.D.  
Department of Entomology  
Purdue University

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## Calendar of Events

(Ashley Ryan Breed, [ashbreed@purdue.edu](mailto:ashbreed@purdue.edu))

### **January 30 - February 1, 2023**

Indiana Green Expo; Indiana Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN

### **Spring, TBA**

Day of service

### **July 18, 2023**

Turf & Landscape Field Day; Daniel Turf Center, West Lafayette, IN

### **August 1, 2023**

Lawncare Diagnostic Training; Daniel Turf Center, West Lafayette, IN

### **October 2, 2023**

MRTF Golf Day -Fundraiser; Pine Valley Country Club, Fort Wayne, IN

### **Fall, TBA**

Day of service

### **November 16-17, 2023**

Turf & Landscape Seminar; Daniel Turf Center, West Lafayette, IN

### **December 2023**

Herbicide Workshop (Virtual Class)

### **December 7, 2023**

Herbicide Workshop; Holiday Inn Purdue, Fort Wayne, IN

### **December 12, 2023**

Herbicide Workshop; The Fort Golf Resort, Indianapolis, IN

### **January 17-19, 2024**

Indiana Green Expo, Indianapolis Convention Center, Indianapolis, IN

To get updates on events, please follow us on [Facebook](#) and regularly visit our website: [www.mrtf.org](http://www.mrtf.org).

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