

Key Points: Georgia's Turfgrass Industry and UGA's Turfgrass Program

Industry

- ✎ Estimates suggest that at 1.8 million acres, turfgrass is one of the largest agricultural commodities in the state.
- ✎ This includes home lawns, sports fields, golf courses, sod farms, and other managed landscapes areas.
- ✎ The Georgia turfgrass and related industries contribute a total of \$7.8 billion annually to the economy.
- ✎ In terms of earnings and value added, the turfgrass and related industries contribute \$4.6 billion each year.
- ✎ The federal, state, and local tax impact is over \$1 billion dollars annually.
- ✎ This industry accounts for 87,000 full- and part-time jobs.
- ✎ The majority of these jobs are related to landscape maintenance of buildings and households.
- ✎ The landscape industry has a history of professional development and use of researched-based information.
- ✎ Through drought periods, the golf and landscape segments have demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship with their Best Management Practices (BMPs) approach to water use efficiency and conservation.
- ✎ This industry has strived to be a part of the solution to Georgia's environmental issues.

UGA Turfgrass Program

- ✎ UGA is the research, development, and education arm of Georgia's turfgrass industry.
- ✎ UGA has a 60+ year history of providing scientifically based information to the turfgrass industry.
- ✎ UGA is known for its renowned scientists and specialists developing practices, pest management strategies, and grasses that are best adapted to Georgia.
- ✎ Turfgrass breeding for warm-season species dates back to the 1950s and continues today with two productive programs focused on sustainable bermudagrass, centipedegrass, seashore paspalum (pronounced *pass-pal-um*), and zoysiagrass cultivars.
- ✎ These scientists are continuing to stretch the scientific boundaries with novel approaches and strategies to solve the most challenging management and environmental issues that face this industry.
- ✎ UGA scientists continue to be involved with water conservation and have demonstrated effective methods of achieving sustainability of natural resources (i.e. water) while maintaining industry viability.
- ✎ Extension and professional development of Georgia's turfgrass practitioners is also of strong emphasis. Without a well-educated workforce, economic development of the turfgrass industry would not be where it is today.
- ✎ Opportunities exist with continued support of strong academic programs along with industry partnership to increase economic development, further scientific exploration, and enhance the environment.