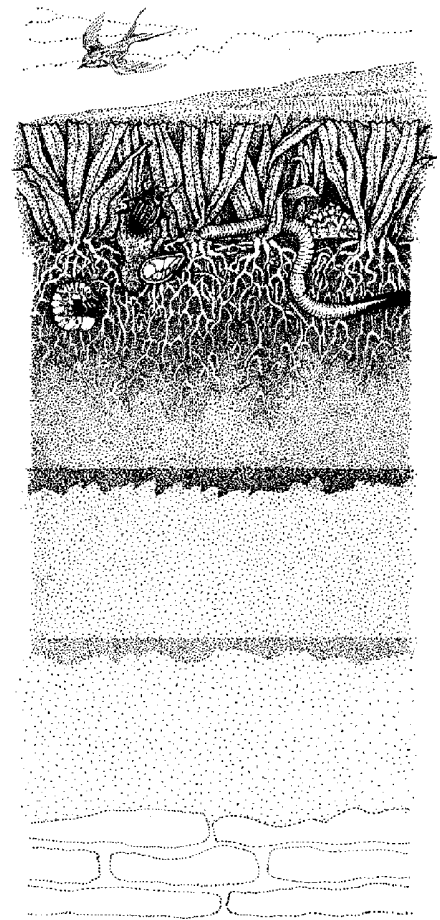


# CUTT

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## Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Crabgrass... *but didn't know who to ask!*

**A** well maintained turfgrass area provides many aesthetic and functional benefits. Decades of scientific research has been conducted to help managers maximize plant health and minimize environmental impact. Still, significant concern for environmental quality and human health has raised public awareness and led to increased scrutiny of management practices, especially pest management.

For many years, the turfgrass industry has been implementing a broad-based decision-making management system, known as Integrated Pest Management (IPM). IPM has evolved, since its inception, to more completely embrace the importance of turf culture that maximizes plant health. Still, misconceptions persist regarding the more traditional aspects of IPM such as “using only biological control” and “no use of pesticides.” ■

The misconceptions of IPM pose a unique challenge from a weed management perspective, where visual thresholds are subjective (some like the look of weeds, some don't), functional thresholds are exceptionally low or not known (how many weeds can an athletic field have before the game is disrupted) and lack of effective biological controls once the weed is established. Therefore, the most effective IPM program for weed management is prevention by maintaining a dense turf.

The role of turfgrass density is critical for IPM, as well as for maximizing the environmen-

tal benefits of turf. For example, studies from the University of Wisconsin have indicated that a thin, unfertilized turf resulted in greater nutrient runoff that could contaminate surface water bodies. Subsequently, as weeds invade a thin turf, while initial density of weeds and turf is adequate to cover the soil, annual weeds, such as crabgrass, die off in the fall and leave bare soil exposed to the spring rains. It is these scenarios where weed control can be justified to preserve surface water quality.

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