CUTT

Know More, Do Less

The Lawn Reader

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Fuel prices in 2001 reached almost $2.00 per gallon in the United States. The rapid price increases prompted discussion about fuel consumption in turfgrass management. Few resources are as critical to the management of turf as fossil fuel. This ranges anywhere from the obvious fuel needed to run a mower, and the fuel used to manufacture fertilizers and pesticides, to fuel consumed in the manufacture of irrigation pipe. Turf is extremely reliant on petroleum.

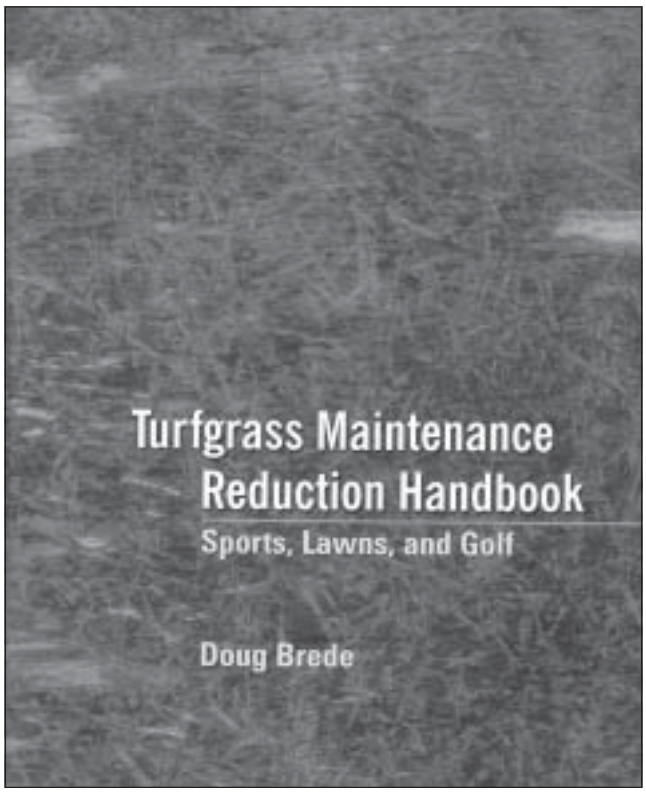
Clearly, the need to question fuel use in turf is here, however, what is the best way to go about it? Historically, reducing maintenance inputs often leads to reduction in turfgrass quality. It is unlikely that the American public will be willing to accept reductions in quality. There are few turf books dedicated to the principle of reduced turfgrass maintenance. In fact, Danneberger's *Turfgrass Ecology and Management*, published by GIE Publications, Cleveland, OH is one of the few that dedicates any space to lower inputs, that is until now.

Turfgrass Maintenance Reduction Handbook:
Sports, Lawns, and Golf
Doug Brede
Ann Arbor Press, Chelsea, MI
ISBN: 1-57504-106-5

Doug Brede has spent his entire professional life in the turfgrass industry. In fact, he has spent most of his life either at the handle of a mower, poking around seed fields, or at the end of a microscope. He is a credible source of information on a variety of turfgrass issues, specifically, turfgrass development, breeding, selection, and establishment. It appears that only one thing continues to plague Doug and that is Mrs. Fernstead and the pro-fertilizer establishment.

Turfgrass Maintenance Reduction Handbook is a one-of-a-kind textbook. This book combines useful maintenance tips with scientific principles in a readable style. It challenges existing thought on energy and water use and offers new ways of thinking about turf maintenance.

The book begins by outlining the issue of low maintenance turf, recognizing the opportunities and pitfalls that lie ahead for those who



embrace the idea of reducing maintenance. Brede is quick to add that the key ingredient in reducing maintenance is not a biological control agent, nor a native grass, rather it is **you**, the manager.

Nevertheless, a significant amount of the text (almost 50%) is dedicated to improving our understanding of turfgrasses. Brede reviews each major cool and warm season species, as well as a collection of "unconventional" grass and grasslike plants. I especially enjoyed the mixing turfgrass chapter. While the charts require a little study to fully grasp, they are good additions and some of the key principles of mixing turf seed are substantiated with research.

The unconventional grass chapter is the only treatise of the subject of which I am aware. In fact, this chapter would really be a book in and of itself. The catalog of these grasses in the Appendix section would be very useful for architects and others who specify grasses for sites.

The remaining chapters are filled with ideas about how to reduce maintenance in a thoughtful way. Of course, more deliberate reductions in maintenance may allow for less drastic reductions in quality.

The major drawback of this text are the black and white images. They rarely add anything to the topic and should have been eliminated.

The book concludes with an interesting discussion on how to trim your pesticide budget. It begins with a little conversation with former *CUTT* editor, Norm Hummel, that highlights the importance of having the right grass. The tables for biocontrols and how to prevent and solve pest problems are handy quick reference guides, although the former may date the text.

The handbook title befits the ease of getting information from this book. Despite its larger format, it is a great book to refer to regularly when making turf management choices. Brede has brought together information, though not necessarily new, in a way that allows the reader to develop reduced maintenance programs based on information, not on products. A must for any thoughtful turfgrass manager.

Frank S. Rossi

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