



# The Green Sheet

Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

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## 2024 Chapter Delegates Meeting Highlights



*Member volunteers gather for Chapter Delegates Meeting to conduct critical association business*

Eighty-eight delegates, including 31 first-time delegates, from 90 GCSAA-affiliated chapters gathered on Oct. 28-29 at GCSAA headquarters in Lawrence, Kan., for the 32nd annual GCSAA Chapter Delegate meeting. The interactive two-day meeting was themed around how the GCSAA board and staff can continue their “pursuit of excellence” in achieving the association’s mission of serving its members, advancing their profession, and improving communities through the enjoyment, growth, and vitality of the game of golf.

A key part of the discussions centered around how to best provide staff with the resources to more effectively deliver the ever-increasing number of programs and services designed to support members in their essential role to golf’s success. In addition, all 2025 Board candidates shared their vision for board service. The slate of candidates will be voted on Feb. 6 at the 2025 Annual Meeting in San Diego. See the full slate.

Through presentations, breakouts, a Town Hall hosted by the GCSAA Board and Q&A sessions, the delegates, board, and staff shared ideas to address key member challenges around workforce development, government regulations, career enhancement, and elevating the profession.

The staff, led by CEO Rhett Evans and GCSAA board led by Vice President T.A. Barker, CGCS, shared the concept of career pathways, which focus on attracting, training and retaining a qualified workforce for golf course maintenance operations. Career pathways offer an entry point for those new to the profession and a progression of training, education, certificates and certifications (including a new greenkeeper certificate) to encourage new people to join the industry and grow. With finding and keeping qualified labor continuing to be a challenge for many members, delegates were briefed on GCSAA’s workforce development initiatives that are introducing young people to the industry and creating career paths for them. GCSAA is also working closely with FFA and Jobs for America’s Graduates (JAG) to introduce golf course careers.

A key part of the meeting was a deep discussion around a potential member dues increase. GCSAA has continued to boost programs and member value but has reached a point where it is difficult to keep raising the bar without additional support. It was shared that while GCSAA has dramatically increased its offerings and value in the last 18 years, the resources necessary to provide those offerings have not kept pace. After the presentations, the delegates had the opportunity to ask questions and provide input in small group discussions and in a town hall format.

The delegates also received an update on GCSAA’s advocacy efforts on key issues impacting the industry, including proposed chlorothalonil label changes and the Endangered Species Act’s (ESA) impact on pesticide use. They also learned more about how GCSAA is addressing issues at the state level and heard about the work being accomplished by the Grassroots Ambassador program, which just celebrated its 10th anniversary.

GCSAA President Jeff L. White, CGCS, keynoted the first night sharing key accomplishments of the board along with thoughts on his board tenure and the need for those in attendance to continue leading out for the benefit of the industry.

The event began on a somber note as it was announced that Michael Upchurch, the North Texas GCSA delegate, passed away from a medical emergency while traveling to the meeting. The delegates held a moment of silence in his honor and shared stories about his work as a GCSAA member.

As next steps, delegates will be taking the information learned at the meeting and sharing it with the members of their chapter, gaining feedback, and continuing to collaborate with GCSAA staff to answer questions and share insights. This process will help guide delegates as they prepare to vote on behalf of their chapter at the Annual Meeting in San Diego on Feb. 6, 2025.

**(Special thanks to CPGCSA Board Member Corey Barnes from Chambersburg Country Club for attending to represent our chapter!)**

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~Northeast Regional Update~

**But There's No Frost at My House**

November 17, 2023

Elliott L. Dowling, Regional Director, East Region



Topography and trees are two of the main reasons why there may be frost at the golf course even if your yard is totally clear.

Just about every golf course that has ever had a frost delay has probably had to deal with comments from golfers about there being no frost at their house. The explanation is pretty simple, weather conditions that affect one location might not have the same impact in another location nearby. Beyond that basic fact, there are some specific reasons why golf courses may be more vulnerable to frost than your front yard.

Frost lingers longer in a shaded environment than one that is more open. On a golf course with trees lining fairways or surrounding greens, sunlight is slower to penetrate leaves and branches so turf will hold on to frost later in the morning. Compare that to a home where there might be fewer trees. Sun gets to the grass shortly after sunrise and “burns off” the frost earlier than it might at the nearby golf course.

Orientation to the sun, prevailing wind and topography also play a role in frost severity and duration. Golf courses generally wind through a landscape with holes going in many directions. Holes also go up, down and over hills and valleys. The front half of a fairway could be north facing and lose frost later than the second half that turns to the south. Golf holes also play into low-lying valleys where cold air can settle, causing frost to linger. If your front yard is facing the morning sun and gets plenty of air movement, you can expect frost to melt sooner than it would on that drop-shot par 3 surrounded by trees.

I'm going to assume most homeowners wouldn't remove a level from their house or cut down all the trees in their yard to lessen frost, but there are some options on a golf course to help reduce frost delays. Tree spacing and location are important for several reasons on a course, but their impact on frost is certainly a consideration. Too many trees planted too close to a fairway or green are going to cause shade that may extend frost delays. The longevity of the frost could be reduced if the trees were removed or at minimum thinned out to allow shafts of light to reach the ground.

The important thing is that you don't make assumptions on frost delay length or how much rain fell at the course from your home. There are too many variables to think that what you see out your front window is what you should expect at the course. When in doubt, call the golf shop for an update before heading over.

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## MetGCSA Claims Victory at the 2024 MET Area Team Championships at Whitemarsh Valley CC

**Introduction:** The 43<sup>rd</sup> annual MET Area Team Championships, held on October 21st at the scenic Whitemarsh Valley Country Club, concluded with an exciting victory by the MetGCSA (Metropolitan Golf Course Superintendents Association). The team secured the championship title with a strong score of 292, narrowly edging out Central Penn GCSA (294) and last year's defending champion Philadelphia AGCS (297). This year's tournament featured a competitive field of 13 teams, from Maryland to Cape Cod all vying for the prestigious title at one of the Philadelphia area's finest golf courses.

**The Champions: MetGCSA** In 1980 the MetGCSA started this team event at Blue Hill GC in NY and this marks only their second win in the past 20 years! The MetGCSA team showcased consistent, solid play throughout the day, finishing with a score of 292 to capture the 2024 MET Area Team Championship. Their victory came after a tense day of competition, on lightning-fast greens where every stroke counted. Despite a strong challenge from Central Penn GCSA, who finished just two strokes behind in second place, MetGCSA's steady performance by their Net teams, led by team captains Brett Chapin and Grover Alexander's 5 under par 67 and legendary Steve Rabideau and Dave Conrad's 2 under par 70 to be the key to their success.

"It's always an honor to play in such a well-organized event, and to come out on top is truly special," said the MetGCSA team co-captain Brett Chapin. "The team played fantastic golf today, and we're proud to bring home the title. Thankfully Jason Meersman's short miss didn't cost us the title, he said jokingly"

**Central Penn GCSA and Philadelphia AGCS Round Out the Top Three** **Central Penn GCSA, who had been within striking distance of the lead all day, finished in second place with a score of 294.** Despite their 65, the best Net score of the day by Jamie Dennison and Eric Kline, they were unable to catch MetGCSA, but their performance demonstrated they're here for the long haul and determined to get their first MET Team Championship win soon! Last year's winner, the Philadelphia AGCS rounded out the top three, finishing third just 5 strokes back, with a score of 297. Their all-around solid play by the returning champions and low Gross score by host superintendent Darren Farrar and Chet Walsh ensured they remained in contention for much of the round, but they too fell just short of catching the leaders.

**Notable Performances** While the MetGCSA emerged as the champions, standout performances were evident across the field. The GCSA of New Jersey, who have won 3 times in the past 20 years, finished fourth with a score of 298, while GCSA of New York claimed fifth place with 299. Pocono Turfgrass Association (305) and Connecticut AGCS (308) also had strong outings, finishing within a few strokes of the top ten. Every team fought hard, making for a thrilling day of golf. The team from the Pocono TGA led the way on the skills side taking 2 of the 4 closest to the pin contests! Jeff Koch had the best shot of the day, nearly missing a hole in one for \$20,000 on the 12<sup>th</sup> hole stopping the ball at a mere 10 inches! Duane Schell stopped one 7'-4" on the lengthy 4<sup>th</sup> hole as well!

**Whitemarsh Valley Country Club: A Premier Venue** The tournament was held at **Whitemarsh Valley Country Club**, a historic and prestigious golf course known for its challenging layout and beautiful scenery. Founded in 1918, the club is located in the heart of the Philadelphia suburbs and has a rich history of hosting regional events. Last year Whitemarsh hosted the Philadelphia amateur for the 16<sup>th</sup> time! The George Thomas design features a classic layout, with narrow fairways and strategically placed bunkers that test the skills of even the most seasoned golfers. Thomas only designed 3 courses in the East before moving to California. Host Darren Farrar had the undulating greens firm and fast in this the driest of years, testing even the wily veterans at this year's championship!

"The course is in impeccable shape," said Jason Meersman from the MetGCSA team. "It's a true test of golf, and the layout required us to be strategic with every shot. It was an ideal venue for a tournament like this."

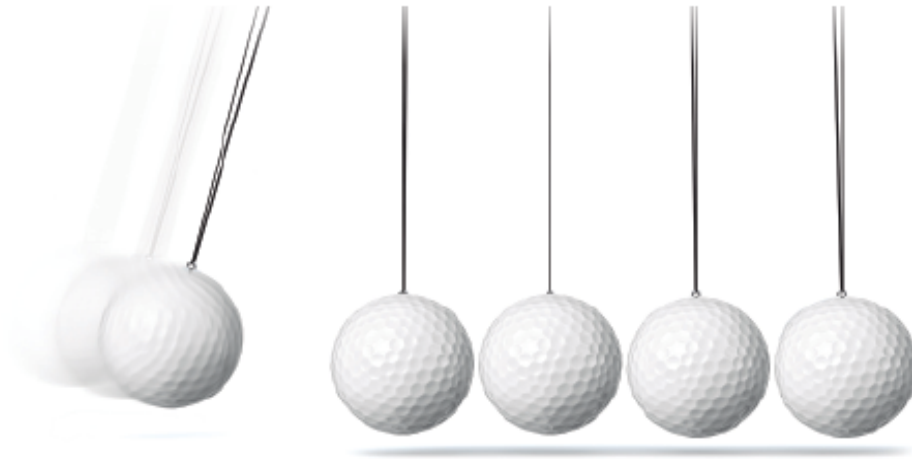
**A Special Thanks to Our Sponsors:** The 2024 MET Area Team Championships would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. A heartfelt thank you to **Allied Nutrients, BASF, Envu, Ocean Organics, Plant Food, Syngenta, and Toro** for their continued commitment to the event and to the broader golf course management community. Your support makes it possible for us to host such a wonderful competition, and we are grateful for your partnership in promoting excellence within the industry. We also wish a speedy recovery to Kevin Collins, a perennial participant who just underwent spinal fusion surgery!

**Acknowledgments:** We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to **Kevin Doyle**, the GCSAA representative, for his unwavering support and involvement throughout the event. Special thanks to **Kristen Liebsch** for capturing the day's unforgettable moments through her photography, which will help preserve the memories of this special event for years to come. Photographs can be found at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBQeVr>

Finally, we would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to **Darren Farrar**, our gracious host, for ensuring the event ran smoothly and for providing an exceptional venue in Whitemarsh Valley Country Club!

We look forward to seeing everyone next year, so stay tuned for announcements and of course, if you're no longer the contact please let me know who is!

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## Five tips to develop a successful team culture

Chris Lewis, CGCS, director of agronomy for Landscapes Golf Management, shares the practices that help his crew stay productive.

September 4, 2024 |

Terry O’Connell

*Editor’s note: The following article was supplied by Landscapes Golf Management. All product claims, research cited and other information is directly from the company.*

As director of agronomy for Landscapes Golf Management, Chris Lewis, CGCS, travels the country, tours the company’s properties and shares ideas with superintendents. The 22-year GCSAA member posits it’s only natural there are differences in product quality, staff efficacy and budget performance between cultures categorized as great, good and those with room for improvement.

No one is perfect all the time, but no matter the size of the team, morale level – be it frustration, happiness or other emotions between these bookends – affects employee retention. Moreover, its contagiousness spells the difference between stellar work outputs and deleterious effects.

Culture is the optimal word, and it’s not something Lewis and his teams merely check off the list before moving on to the next duty. They must be on top of it because there’s constant change, and they must adapt accordingly, day to day, month to month and year to year. In this vein, it’s paramount to remember that people and their spectrum of attitudes represent unique creatures.



*Providing constructive feedback and expressing gratitude and respect for your team helps foster a supportive work environment.*

While workforce dynamics have largely shifted the past 20 years, here are five foundational, controllable tenets Lewis says successful golf course, country club and resort superintendents have in common:

### Respect

Raise your crew’s self-esteem by sharing positive feelings and deferential actions. Convey a sense of admiration for valuable qualities. Golf course maintenance takes considerable time, planning and hard-nosed effort. Assembling a group of people from diverse backgrounds and life experiences, and creating a collaborative and cohesive workplace, requires respect both for a supervisor and for each other. Get your team rowing the boat in the same direction with a consistent process toward a common goal. Be willing to admit

we’re all prone to occasional mistakes but that obstacles can be overcome when we treat each other equally, trust ourselves and trust each other.

### Gratitude

Taking time to say “thank you” and “good job” and not following it with a “but” is worth its weight in motivational gold. Young, old, novice and experienced team members appreciate being appreciated. Whether it’s cutting cups in the correct locations, mowing straight lines across fairways or other turf-care tasks, remember that good employees quit bosses more than jobs. Lewis promises they will – without giving it a second thought – go the extra mile with over-the-top contributions upon receiving expressions of support.

### Recognition

Maintenance teams conduct most of their work out of sight of golfers, relegating them to relative anonymity. Therefore, as superintendent, upon receiving compliments about course conditions, let guests know it’s a team effort, and don’t forget to share the plaudits with your team. Post employee accomplishments (with photos) on a clubhouse bulletin board or a monthly newsletter to share a team member’s extraordinary impact. Even simply introducing staff members to guests goes a long way toward winning employee productivity and loyalty.

### Constructive feedback

Instead of reacting to mistakes or stressful situations with harsh criticism, find ways to make tomorrow better than today by shifting interactions with staff toward teaching moments. As a superintendent, sometimes you need to be tough when managing others, but you can communicate that in a non-accusatory tone. Your employees may not inherently possess your obsessive attention to detail; however, pointing out what to look for and how to achieve win-



*Chris Lewis, CGCS, is the GCSAA Class A director of agronomy at Landscapes Golf Management and a 22-year GCSAA member. Photos courtesy of Landscapes Golf Management*



*Because golf course maintenance is largely a behind-the-scenes job, Lewis suggests looking for opportunities to make your team’s work known to club members and leadership.*

ning results will ultimately separate your golf course and management style as superior. When engaging with employees for teaching-learning exercises or serious conversations about performance, don't conduct it – or call them out – in front of others. Politely pull them aside for a constructive one-on-one discussion, coupled with tips for improvement.

**Leadership**

Calmly, collectedly and assuredly lead by example, showing you care about the team as individuals and professionals. Take the time to empathetically hear their concerns, then share recommendations based on your experiences. Lewis proclaims most superintendents (in his experience) would rather mow greens than sit in another meeting. However, you can't always be in the field alongside your employees. That's why checking and showing you care eases stress and helps maintain top-notch course conditions.

Lewis adds that one of the most difficult elements of the turf industry is the ability to maintain work-life balance. Make time to get away from the property, because with proper teaching, your team will feel comfortable trusting your leadership and management process, often with even more dedication in your absence.

*<https://www.gcomonline.com/profession/operations/news/five-tips-to-develop-a-successful-team-culture>*

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Kevin Mark and Jeff Green on left



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# Met Tournament At Whitemarsh Valley Country Club



**Congratulations on 2nd Place!**  
CPGCSA Team Members  
Jamie Dennison and Eric Kline on right



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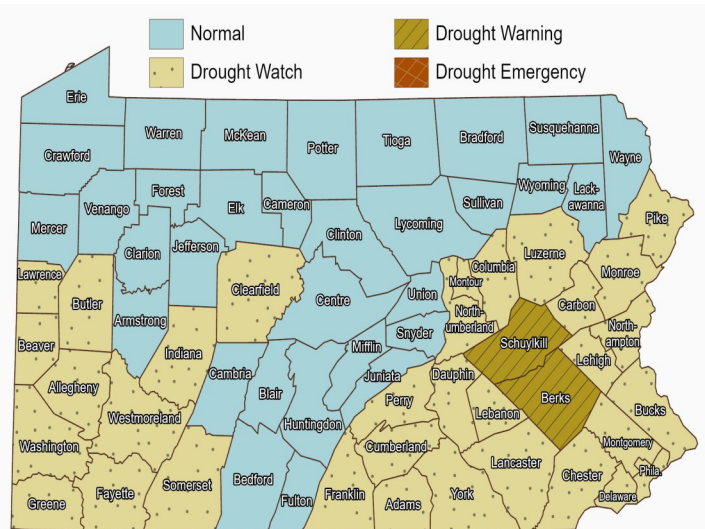


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# **Golf Course Winter Maintenance Tips for a Productive Off Season**

Vinnie Manginelli  
2023-02-16

The winter months provide an opportunity for many North American golf course operators and superintendents to take stock of their course, maintenance equipment, buildings and grounds and facility as a whole. Though many call it the “off season,” the winter work schedule can be just as busy as the peak golf season. In fact, golf course winter maintenance is a key part of any facility’s calendar and a prime example of the adage that every season matters.

To ensure a smoother spring opening, here are seven key winter maintenance tips and best practices that your golf course maintenance team should consider this winter.

## **1. Covering your greens**

“Installing winter covers can help golf courses reduce the risk of winter injury,” says Jordan Booth, Ph.D, an Agronomist with the USGA. “It also improves spring time conditions.” Booth says these covers are not needed in every winter scenario. Golf green maintenance often depends on severity of temperatures, type of grass species used and several other factors.

With the cost of materials and man hours needed, determining whether or not this is a necessary measure takes analysis and expertise. With golf green maintenance and aeration completed in the fall, it’s important to cover your prized greens before that first big snowfall of the winter.

This can be difficult, considering the desire to keep the course open as long as possible for members. That said, don’t push it! In the long run, it’s better for your course to shut it down with plenty of time for your maintenance team to cover the greens before frost, snow and ice do their damage.

## **2. Equipment maintenance, purchasing and repair**

Much of your equipment that gets so much use during the golf season will go unused over the winter months. This makes winter the perfect time to consider the age, condition and future of this maintenance equipment.

Preventative maintenance is certainly a better route to take than extensive repairs under the gun. It’s cheaper and will help your superintendent and their team stay on track throughout the year and work efficiently. And when you consider the ongoing supply chain issues affecting every industry, proactive ordering and purchasing makes sense during the down season.

## **3. Maintenance facility improvements**

Hey superintendents, take a look around your maintenance facility. Do you like what you see? After all, these facilities are not just for storing your tools and equipment.

Take time during the winter to analyze how you use your limited space. Create a safe, comfortable and modern work area for your staff, so when they’ve satisfied their many daily duties in the hot morning sun, they have a welcoming environment to turn to before heading home for the day:

- Clean, paint and add special amenities for your staff (with their input)
- Create a space that your staff can be proud of
- Create a safe, accessible, organized working environment
- Expand your space if necessary to ensure proper storage practices

## **4. Tree work**

Tree removal should not be done haphazardly, with course playability, sustainability and conditions being essential priorities to consider. There should be no overcrowding of trees in any one area, as thinning these clusters will increase sunlight and the flow of air to adjacent grounds and reduce the risk of damage to the course caused by falling limbs during windy or inclement weather.

Late winter and early spring are the best times to complete any major tree projects, as you won’t disrupt regular golf course maintenance or member play. You should regularly evaluate your tree situation and schedule any problem areas for repair. Budgetary planning must be done (as well as consideration of man hours) but once those I’s are dotted and T’s are crossed, off-season tree work is a highly worthwhile project to undertake.

## **5. Irrigation and cart path repair**

Course irrigation and cart path repair projects during the winter will hinge upon the amount of snow on the ground and your daily temperatures. Of course, snow covered areas will be difficult to address in either scenario. Superintendents want to be proactive, not reactive when it comes to course irrigation systems, and winter is an ideal time to complete this work if you can!

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**Irrigation**

It's important to train your maintenance team to know the signs of impending irrigation system failure so steps can be taken to rectify the problem before issues arise.

In addition, make sure your irrigation pipes are drained of all water. Sure some liquid might inevitably settle in low areas, and expand during the freezing winter days, possibly causing breakages. But doing your due diligence will help avoid these headaches and costly repair projects.

**Cart paths**

Again, winter can be a convenient and non-disruptive time of year to facilitate this type of project. Get your budgetary matters in place and set a timeframe for this project. Once all approvals are rendered, schedule the work and monitor your winter weather.

Depending on the weather in the off season, you can complete both of these projects before the new year arrives. This leaves you more time to prepare all your golf course maintenance systems, schedule continued education and conduct new employee training prior to the start of the new golf season.

**6. Golf cart maintenance**

Winterizing your golf carts for the off season starts with cleaning them well and making any minor repairs. These are not tasks that you'll want to have on your 'Things to Do' list come spring. Major work should be referred to the distributor in accordance with your contract and cart repair agreement.

- Electric cart batteries should be fully charged and battery cables disconnected.
- Ensure tire pressure is adequate, understanding that the cold winter temps will affect those levels over the next few months.
- Check the brakes on each cart.
- Turn the ignition key to OFF and turn the power switch under the seat to the TOW position.

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- Tune up gas cart engines by replacing the fuel, oil and air filters.
- Change the oil and drain the gasoline until the tank is dry.
- Make sure the shut-off valve is in the off position or disconnect the fuel line from the tank.

If you can store these carts in a climate controlled setting like a golf cart winter cover, your carts will be better for it.

**7. Ensure the safety of your maintenance staff**

Winter temperatures can be brutal at times. And though there will be some days that can be designated for indoor projects, your team will inevitably face the winter chill while working outdoors.

- Help prevent hypothermia and frostbite on the job by utilizing the warmest times of each day for outside work.
- Schedule frequent breaks and provide the necessary layers that your employees need to stay safe.
- Have them work in teams to prevent any one employee from being out there alone and train them to recognize the signs of impending danger in their coworker.
- Provide warming stations, ample breaks and hot beverages

**The off-season doesn't always equate to downtime**

When it comes down to it, there is never downtime for well-run golf courses. There are always tasks to do, even when the course is closed. Winter is when you can help ensure the most pristine conditions and best possible customer experience when the golf season gets underway in the spring.

<https://www.lightspeedhq.com/blog/golf-course-winter-maintenance-tips/>

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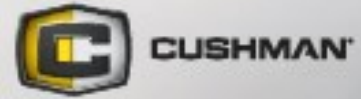
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Scott White, Golf Course Superintendent, Urbana Country Club



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## Crop Science Society of America Announces 2024 Award Recipient

MADISON, WI, Nov 20, 2024 – The Crop Science Society of America (CSSA) announces the following 2024 award recipient. The annual awards are presented for outstanding contributions to crop science through education, national and international service, and research.

### Fred V. Grau Turfgrass Science Award

This award is presented in recognition of significant career contributions in turfgrass science during the most recent 15 years.

#### Evaluation Criteria:

- Significance and originality of basic and/or applied research
- Teaching ability and effectiveness
- Planning and implementation of extension programs
- Development and implementation of significant industrial programs
- Administrative ability and effectiveness
- Total impact of contributions on turfgrass science, nationally and internationally

#### Grau Award Recipients:

<b>1987 James R. Watson*</b>	2006 Arden A. Baltensperger
1988 James B. Beard	2007 Peter H. Dernoeden
1989 Jack J. Murray	2008 Roch E. Gaussoin
1990 C. Reed Funk	<b>2009 Thomas L. Watschke*</b>
1991 Glen W. Burton	2010 Milton C. Engelke
1992 Robert C. Shearman	2011 Jack D. Fry
<b>1993 Donald V. Waddington*</b>	2012 Leah A. Brillman
1994 William A. Meyer	2013 No Award
1995 B.J. Johnson	2014 Lambert B. McCarty
1996 Terrance P. Riordan	2015 Michael D. Richardson
1997 Keith J. Karnok	2016 Bruce B. Clarke
1998 A.J. Powell, Jr.	2017 S. Bruce Martin
1999 Nick E. Christians	2018 Kevin N. Morris
<b>2000 Richard E. Schmidt*</b>	2019 James A. Murphy
2001 Wayne W. Hanna	2020 John Clinton Stier
<b>2002 Alfred J. Turgeon*</b>	2021 Elizabeth A. Guertal
2003 Paul E. Rieke	2022 Grady L. Miller
2004 T. Karl Danneberger	2023 Bernhard Leinauer
2005 A. Douglas Brede	<b>2024 Michael A. Fidanza*</b>



Dr. Fidanza is the 2024 recipient, and is a professor of plant and soil science at Penn State Berks, in Reading, PA.

*\*Graduate student and/or faculty member of Penn State.*

Michael A. Fidanza, Pennsylvania State University, Reading, PA – Fred V. Grau Turfgrass Science Award: Michael (“Dr. Mike”) Fidanza is a Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences at the Pennsylvania State University, Berks Campus, Reading, PA. He teaches undergraduate courses in Turfgrass Science, Soil Science, Botany, Plant Biology, Pesticide Education, and a graduate course in Turfgrass Physiology. He advises undergraduate students in agricultural science majors. He conducts research in turfgrass ecology, turfgrass integrated pest management with an emphasis on diseases and weeds, plant health and soil ecology, seed germination biology and ecology, evaluation of mushroom compost for agricultural crops and ornamental horticulture, the biology and management of fairy ring in turfgrass ecosystems, soil surfactants and the rhizosphere, and teaching and learning technology. He served as the Editor of Achieving Sustainable Turfgrass Management (Burleigh Dodds Sci. Publ.), and as Editor-in-chief of the International Turfgrass Society Research Journal. He was President of Northeastern Branch ASA-CSSA-SSSA from 2013-2017, and is a Fellow in the American Society of Agronomy.

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[agriculture.pa.gov/fertilizer](http://agriculture.pa.gov/fertilizer)

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