

Turfgrass research and extension comes to East Campus May 15, 2015

The John Seaton Anderson Turf and Ornamental Research Facility at the ARDC near Mead, NE has served the turfgrass industry for decades. It houses 50 acres of irrigated turfgrass plots ranging from golf fairway and putting green turf, to high mowed turf, to plots of weeds for herbicide evaluations and more than one thousand accessions of buffalograss for our breeding program. Unfortunately, the relatively long drive to and from Mead each day puts a strain on our resources and limits our capacity to conduct very laborious research. The distance also limits participation during extension-oriented programming and research exposure by our undergraduate students. Other factors, including poor irrigation water quality, have prompted the UNL Turfgrass Program to look for an additional location to conduct our most maintenance-intensive projects.

The Turf Program at UNL is excited to announce the creation of a new turfgrass research and education space on East Campus in Lincoln to compliment the JSA Turf Facility in Mead. The East Campus Turf Research Center is located on the north side of East Campus (northeast of the 38th St. bridge into campus). The first acre was constructed last fall and includes 14 turfgrass plots including a creeping bentgrass fairway, lawn height Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and turf-type tall fescue. Two buffalograss plots will be established this spring and summer. The plots are independently irrigated with a Rain Bird decoded system that allows for future expansion this summer and fall.

In addition to turfgrass research plots, the northwest portion of the site will house the Backyard Farmer Turf Garden. This area will be highlighted on Backyard Farmer and features a lawn species demonstration, amenity/ornamental grass display and a weed garden which will contain potted lawn weeds. There will also be signs explaining the benefits of turfgrass, sustainable lawn management, best lawn irrigation practices (mounted behind an EPA WaterSense irrigation controller) and weed management options. Additionally, the East Campus Turf Center has already improved our ability to engage and teach our undergraduate students as they helped with the irrigation installation and turfgrass establishment.

We need your help! We'd like to expand the facility further east, but we need financial support to construct an equipment storage building, expand the irrigation system and establish USGA spec greens. The goal is to develop a few more acres for our high-maintenance research sites and ultimately move the annual summer Field Day to East Campus in the near future. Contact me with questions, comments, or to help with the fundraising effort. We look forward to your continued support to jump-start the next chapter of turfgrass research and extension at the University of Nebraska. It's an exciting time for our program!

Bill Kreuser, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, wkreuser2@unl.edu



The addition of the East Campus Turf Center will expose our undergraduate students to real-world turf management and research. The UNL Turf Club helped install the first acre of irrigation last fall. For many, it was their first exposure to a two-wire decoder system.

Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

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The great fall conditions in 2014 helped with relatively quick establishment despite seeding in mid-September.



As of May 2015 the first acre of the East Campus Turf Center is nearly 100% established. The Kentucky bluegrass continues to fill-in with adequate N and P fertility. The exposed soil in the back will be the site of future expansion this summer and fall.

The addition of a white split-rail fence helps protect the area and nicely frames the new turf center from the road into East Campus. The brown areas will be seeded with buffalograss and other warm-season turf this spring.

