A Collaborative On-Site Research Project Between Independence Golf Club and the Virginia Tech Turf Team

Become One of the Businesses for the Bay!

Debunking Myths: A Professional's Take on Herbicides and Algaecides in Lake Management
Over half of the state of Virginia (15.3 million acres) is in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This amazing body of water is widely known for its beauty, its value for recreation and a variety of fresh and salt water fish and shellfish. Far too often, turfgrass systems are deemed by the general public as being “bad” for the Bay, and of course, those of us that work in this industry argue (and rightly so) that a properly managed turfgrass is very beneficial for water quality.

While there will almost always be varying opinions about the value/concern of turfgrass and the environment, it is very exciting to see the positive, collaborative relationship that has developed between the Virginia Turfgrass Council and its membership with the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. One of those relationships involves Wes Bray and his Lawns and Gardens Plus company in Virginia Beach.

Corinne Stephens made a great presentation from the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay at the 2017 Come to the Bay Conference in Virginia Beach detailing an Alliance program called Businesses for the Bay (B4B). The mission of the Businesses for the Bay membership association is to encourage businesses throughout the Chesapeake region to find voluntary, innovative and measurable solutions to improve water quality and the health of the Chesapeake Bay rivers and streams, and to raise public understanding of the valuable role these business members play in environmental restoration. This program provides businesses with a forum where they can make their voices heard, share best practices, facilitate environmental-stewardship volunteer opportunities for employees, save money, reach social and sustainability goals and promote environmental efforts that are important to them, their customers and their communities.

It was great to see four turfgrass management firms affiliated with B4B: Agronomic Lawn Management, Lawns and Gardens Plus, MowCow Lawn & Landscape and Project Green, but that means there are a lot more firms out there that might also get involved! Craig Zeigler of Agronomic Lawn Management showed how a stream cleanup project not only made a huge impact in the amount of trash removed, but it also turned out to be a lot of fun for the employees and a great team-building exercise. Wes Bray of Lawns and Gardens Plus echoed these thoughts for his business.

For those of you in the Bay watershed, I encourage you to consider becoming a member of Businesses for the Bay (http://businesses.allianceforthebay.org/) and engaging your firm in some specified activities designed to promote Bay health. Again, turfgrass systems do some great things in environmental protection, but the general perception remains that our industry harms (worst case) or doesn’t care (best case) about the environment. There is a strong need for us to continue to be proactive in environmental protection rather than reactive, and what better way than to participate in a program with clearly defined strategies/activities in Bay protection that you can implement?

There are six general “themes” in Bay protection programs in B4B that turfgrass firms in the Bay watershed can enroll in, and many of these themes encompass sustainability/ envi-
Environmental protection initiatives you are already engaged in, but perhaps not quantifying and reporting. These activities range in scope from relatively large, team efforts (stream cleaning/restoration) to small but still significant efforts (perhaps converting your bulbs or lamps to low-energy options?); each one of these endeavors has real value and makes a difference in the environment.

All partners with Businesses for the Bay receive their own webpage to document their activities on behalf of improving Bay water quality. The photo above (right) shows a screen capture for the Lawns and Gardens Plus webpage (http://businesses.allianceforthebay.org/member/lawns-gardens-plus) provided by Businesses for the Bay. The webpage details the ways that L&GP is committed to protecting the environment and the projects that Wes and team signed up for through B4B. It is a win/win for L&GP AND the Bay, and it gives Wes and his team some very well deserved recognition for their efforts.

For more information on this great program, visit the website link provided above or contact Corinne Stephens at cstephens@allianceforthebay.org.