

Collaborative Effort to Promote Natural Grass Pays Dividends at 2008 ASLA Annual Meeting & Expo



"We needed to work together to get the truth out about the benefits of "natural" green grass."

- **Christian H. Broucsault**
Vice President, Marketing
Sod Solutions



Earlier this month at the *American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Annual Meeting & Expo* in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, four companies came together in a collaborative effort to get the truth out about the benefits of "natural" green grass and to debunk some of the marketing claims of the synthetic turf industry which is always well represented at such shows.

In addition to sharing a 20 X 20 island booth at the show, Barenbrug USA, Sod Solutions, RTF and Todd Valley Farms also joined forces with a full page ad that appeared in *Landscape Architect* promoting their "GREEN" Grass Information Center booth at the show.

Each company promoted their own products during the show, but they are to be congratulated for presenting a unified message regarding the facts about natural grass and artificial turf.

Christian Broucsault of Sod Solutions estimated that nearly 250 copies of the booklet, "*Natural Grass and Artificial Turf: Separating Myths and Facts*" were distributed during the show. He went on to add, "The response was so favorable that we are definitely collaborating again at the *Landscape Industry Show* in Los Angeles this coming February and at the *2009 ASLA Annual Meeting & Expo* in Chicago."



Related Note: The collaboration on the part of TPI members to communicate the benefits of turfgrass (as illustrated in the above story) benefits everyone in the turfgrass industry. TPI's board and staff attend numerous trade shows throughout the year in an effort to promote "The Benefits of Turfgrass". A TPI representative currently plans to do a presentation at *The Maryland Turfgrass Association Fall Workshop* next month in Annapolis, Maryland. TPI also plans to be visible at the *2009 Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Conference & Exposition* this coming January in San Jose, CA. These are only two of the many upcoming industry-related conferences, conventions and meetings in which TPI plans to heighten its visibility and communicate the "Benefits of Turfgrass" to a broad and diversified audience.

Possible Ban on St. Augustine Grass in Lake County, Florida? NOT SO FAST!

"The main purpose of this ordinance is to save water; it's not a plant or variety issue. It's a usage issue."
TPI Board Member and Florida Sod Growers Cooperative Board Member —**Dave Dymond**



"Simply **banning a grass** instead of encouraging methods for water conservation doesn't get (Lake County) commissioners to the ultimate goal of saving water."

David Dymond
TPI Board Member
Florida Sod Growers Cooperative
Board Member

"The goal here is not to ban anything, it's to conserve water,"
Lake County Commissioner—**Linda Stewart**

Lake County, Florida commissioners appear to be backing away from a proposed ban on St. Augustine grass on new homes and developments, thanks to the efforts of representatives from Florida's sod industry who asked commissioners to re-think their proposed ruling. The ban was to be part of a new landscape ordinance. Industry leaders persuasively argued that irrigation controls, water-saving technologies and education would be more effective than banning a grass that can sometimes be more resilient than other drought-resistant varieties. "Simply banning a grass instead of encouraging methods for water conservation doesn't ultimately save water", said David Dymond, board member with the Florida Sod Growers Cooperative and general manager of H&H Sod Co., Inc. He added, "The main purpose of this ordinance is to save water; it's not a plant or variety issue. It's a usage issue." Commissioner Linda Stewart appeared to agree stating, "The goal here is not to ban anything, it's to conserve water." The county's original plans suggested banning St. Augustine grass from any new home or commercial developments as part of an effort to reduce irrigation. Keith Truenow, director of the Florida Sod Growers Association and owner of Lake Jem Farms stated, "If homeowners researched and knew exactly how to irrigate efficiently and correctly, they could still have green lawns without wasting water."