

Turfgrass specialist makes lawns and sports fields greener

By DENISE RUTTAN
For the Capital Press

On any given day Alec Kowalewski juggles quite a few plates.

The mild-mannered turfgrass specialist for the Oregon State University Extension Service might teach undergraduate students about the principles of turf maintenance one day. Another day, he might find himself on an athletic field at a high school in Ontario training groundskeepers how to better manage pests. On yet another day, he might work with master gardener trainees on lawn care techniques.

Kowalewski's duties, however, have taken on a broader scope in addition to his extension work within the past year.

"In the past, my extension work was focused on golf course turf management," Kowalewski said. "But I felt I really needed to expand

the program to get more students interested in undergraduate degrees in turfgrass management. I've expanded to include municipal, sports and residential turf."

This evolution brings Kowalewski full circle to his roots, so to speak. His Ph.D. thesis at Michigan State University focused on sports turf and extension.

"I feel personally that turf management has three facets to it," Kowalewski said. "Turfgrass has to be pleasing to the eye. It has to be functional in things such as preventing surface runoff. Thirdly, if we can't figure out ways to develop turfgrass to make it playable for young people, then I feel we aren't doing our job. There should be more game spaces for people to enjoy."

As part of that effort, he is working with OSU's Integrated Plant Protection Center to reach out to public schools across the state on

integrated pest management. From Ontario to Portland to Reedsport, in 11 training events a year, Kowalewski and the IPPC's Tim Stock work with groundskeepers and school IPM coordinators. Stock teaches them about structural pests. Kowalewski takes people outside.

Kowalewski first tells a group of about 20-30 of these adult students about practices like mowing, fertilizing, and irrigating that will reduce the number of pesky bugs using fewer pesticides. Then the students take him out to their tracks and sports fields to tell him their particular challenges with pests and turf management.

"The biggest problems I've seen are limited budgets, limited staff and grounds that have high use requirements," Kowalewski said.

Turn to TURF, Page 55



Courtesy of OSU

Alec Kowalewski, Oregon State University's turf specialist, reaches for a pot of creeping bentgrass at a greenhouse on the Corvallis campus.

Bag needs? Bag solutions!

SMITH PACKAGING YOUR MAIN SUPPLIER FOR:

- Polyethylene Bags
- Polypropylene Bags
- Paper Bags
- Bulk Bags
- Stretch Films
- Hay Sleeves
- Mesh Produce Bags
- Plastic Pallet Covers
- Bag Closure Products
- General Warehouse Supplies

*Competitive pricing!
Great quality products!
Service you expect and trust!*



NOW ALSO SERVING YOU IN
EASTERN WASHINGTON!

Call Ed Kropf:
509-936-2652

Halsey, Oregon
541-369-2850

ed@smith-packaging.com

www.smithpackagingservices.com



Row Mulch Spreaders For All Growers



Whatcom Manufacturing's Mulch Spreaders are specifically engineered for fast, easy and precise mulch application. Whether it's for moisture evaporation, weed control, amendments for enhancing soil tilth, the Whatcom Manufacturing Mulch Spreader saves time and money.

Created with your needs in mind, they are available in multiple sizes with numerous options and features. They are built to accommodate all applications using mulch, sawdust shaving, manure, solids, gypsum, organic compost, wood chips, etc.

Whatcom Manufacturing Inc.
Lynden, WA
360-354-3094
www.whatcommfg.com
whatcommfg@nas.com



Custom Built Equipment - Built To Last

S15-5/#24

S15-2/#5