



Systems Approach to Natural Turf Management  
Professional Training  
Chip Osborne, Instructor

8:00 – 8:30	Registration
8:30 – 9:15	Introduction to the Systems Approach Overview and History of Conventional and Natural Turf Management
9:15 – 10:15	Soil Biology Basics Creation of a healthy biologically active soil helps protect plants from some pests Compost and Topdressing
10:15 – 10:30	Break
10:30 – 12:00	Growing Turf Naturally - Turfgrass Nutrition Fertilizers Soil Amendments The Importance of Soil Testing
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch
1:00 – 2:00	Amended Cultural Practices for Natural Turf Mowing Irrigation Cultivation Thatch Management Seeding / Over seeding
2:00 – 2:30	IPM Use of allowed pesticides
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 4:00	Addressing Pests with Cultural Practices and Allowed Materials Weed and Insect pest descriptions and control



4:00 – 4:30

Q & A  
Wrap up

### **Course Duration, Brief Description and Objectives**

This is a one-day course, from 8 am to 4 pm. The premise of the course is that a healthy organically maintained lawn is more resilient, more drought-tolerant and more resistant to pest infestations than chemically maintained lawns. Our instructor will discuss in detail how to measure, develop and maintain healthy soil biology, how to maintain proper fertilization levels for optimum growth and plant health, how cultural practices should be altered for organic turf, and how to address specific pest problems without traditional chemical pesticides.

### **Course Agenda**

**8:00 - 8:30 Registration**

**8:30 - 9:15 Introduction to the Systems Approach, Overview and History of Conventional and Natural Turf Management**

The concept of a systems-based approach will be introduced. It is this fundamental difference that sets this program apart from a product-centered approach. A brief history of conventional turf management will be discussed.

**9:15 - 10:15 Soil Biology Basics  
Compost and Topdressing**

We will discuss and explain how the natural soil system works, and how it is different from chemically altered systems. We will discuss the role of healthy soil in promoting plant health, why microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, nematodes and protozoa) play a critical role, and how to measure this microbiology and other aspects of the soil. This section of the course is designed to help attendees understand that organic lawn care is not a matter of product substitution but a fundamental change in approach. We will discuss the use of compost and what it can do and learn to understand the nutrient load involved.

**10:15 - 10:30 Break**

**10:30 - 12:00 Growing Turf Naturally-Turfgrass Nutrition**

The mechanics and science of natural turf nutrition will be discussed. We will go into detail describing how organic fertilizers work and influence both the plant and the biomass. A detailed discussion of nitrogen and its origins in the organic form



and how it works in the inorganic form will be presented. The critical role of the biomass will be explained. We will look at actual soil tests and understand how we measure and monitor texture, nutrient, and soil biology.

**12:00 - 1:00 Lunch**

**1:00 - 2:00 Amended Cultural Practices for Natural Turf**

We will discuss how various cultural practices should be altered in an organic lawn care program. Emphasis will be on mowing techniques (cut high), the importance of regular aeration (compaction is the number one enemy of turf grass) and how to manage irrigation for optimum results (too much water or water at the wrong time leads to fungal problems).

**2:00 – 2:30 Choosing the Right Grass**

We will present a brief overview of the cool season turf grasses, their strengths and weaknesses and why it is important to choose the right grass for the right application.

**2:30 – 2:45 Break**

**2:45 - 4:00 Addressing Pests with Cultural Practices and Allowed Materials**

We will discuss the various types of pest problems common to lawns in this area, and how they can be managed best without using chemical pesticides. We will also discuss some of the newer allowed materials that we can fall back on to assist us in managing insects, weeds, and disease.

**4:00 – 4:30 Q & A**