

UI Turf Management Program – Quick Facts

July 2021

Philosophy

- Landscape Services follows an organic-based, holistic and comprehensive approach, using the best management practices to promote and maintain a healthy turf including:
 - Continuously and proactively review practices and implement leading edge and ecofriendly methods and products while balancing the varied needs of the campus.
 - Cultural practices
 - Mowing weekly at 4” height
 - Bi-annual aeration
 - De-Thatching
 - Soil Testing
 - Using grass species (e.g. tall fescue) that tolerate drought, heat and higher foot traffic
 - Water management in areas that have irrigation.

Management practices

- 85% of the main UI campus is 100% organically maintained through healthy turf practices like mowing, aeration, de-thatching, etc. (209 of 244 acres)
- 13% of campus in designated priority areas receive organic and organic-synthetic mix products as needed to control pests and weeds.
- The use of organic-based products helps build healthy turf and reduces usage rates of herbicides and nitrogen fertilizers by 50%.
- “Restricted Use” pesticides are NOT used on UI campus turf.
- None of the herbicides used on areas of campus managed by Facilities Management contain 2-4-D.
- Starting in 2018, most products applied are foliar, not granular, meaning they absorb into the plant directly through the plant tissue and not more slowly through the root system. This greatly reduces any chance of transfer or leaching.

Location and frequency

- For the portion of campus that receives treatment, organic-based or organic-mix applications occur three times throughout the season.
- Areas that receive application of products include the following:
 - Priority Service Level A areas including the Pentacrest, President’s Residence, Hancher, Hubbard Park, Pappajohn Biomedical Discovery Building courtyard.
 - Service Level B areas with high visibility including the Medical Campus, Gibson Square, Boyd Law and Art Building West.
 - Service Level C areas such as open space or areas of little interface with the public receive application every two to three years as needed to avoid overpopulation with weeds.

- Applications are scheduled during low-traffic time periods whenever possible.
- Landscape Services does not apply any products between the Iowa River walk areas and the riverbank.

Signage

- In accordance with Iowa Agriculture and Land Stewardship policy, the UI is required to provide signage after any application of product, regardless of the coverage area or concentration/toxicity level. If one spot treatment is applied, the entire area is signed.
- The University of Iowa does not use “restricted use” chemicals; however, this does not eliminate the requirement for signage after the application of a product.

Shared governance

- A number of departments and colleges have a stake in the appearance of the UI campus landscape.
- Landscape, including healthy campus turf, provides an important welcoming environment, supports recruitment, and facilitates the use of outdoor spaces for a number of activities throughout the seasons.
- Any decision to change priority areas and turf management practices would need to be made within a shared governance context with input from across campus.