

# HOME, LAWN & GARDEN

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Good taste; less waste  
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THE INDEPENDENT  
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Community Newspaper

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Special pullout section

Wednesday, June 21, 2006

8 Pages

Circulation 21,220

## Turf trial under way at sports park

### Two-year program will see use of organic products to maintain field

Soccer Field #1 at Trafalgar Sports Park (17 Sideroad and Trafalgar Road) is the site of a two-year organic turf management trial.

The turf trial was approved by Halton Hills council and will be carried out by the Recreation and Parks staff in support of Halton Region's "Naturally Green" campaign promoting public awareness of alternatives to pesticides. H.O.P.E (Healthy Options for People and the Environment), a local community group, had brought forward the idea last December of an organic turf trial that would focus on the use of natural products and practices.

Field #1 at the sports park is seen as an excellent location for the trial. According to Warren Harris, Manager of Parks and Open Space for the Town, some of the factors that resulted in this site being chosen are that it is situated side-by-side with another field, for ease of comparison, and it is used by many young people, providing educational opportunities for both kids and parents. The trial is being undertaken without any increase to the core operating budget.

Earlier this month, the field was marked with a large "Naturally Green" banner, on loan from the Region. As the turf trial continues, signage about products and methods used will also be posted on site.

Christine Upton, president of H.O.P.E., is delighted to see the project get under way.

"We're looking forward to working in conjunction with the Town on this trial," she said.

So, what will it mean for the field to be cared for organically?

- Three aerations of the field during the season, rather than the standard two
- Top-dressing with a triple-mix in the spring, and a compost in the fall
- Overseeding done spring and fall, using a hardy, pest-resistant seed mix specially formulated to stand up to the beating a busy soccer field takes



Jason Brown of the Town's Public Works Department explains the benefits of aerating the soccer field to Mayor Rick Bonnette and Christine Upton of HOPE (Healthy Options for People and the Environment). One of the fields at the sports park will be part of a two-year organic turf management trial. *Submitted photo*

- Three applications of organic fertilizer

Parents of children using the field will be glad to know that the fertilizer being used is 100% plant-based so there are no chemical fertilizers and no animal-based ingredients. Organic fertilizers are slow-release, meaning there's no chance of causing the fertilizer burn that homeowners may see if too much high nitrogen fertilizer is applied.

Staff will monitor the cost of materials and staff time and equipment, together with the success of the turf, to evaluate whether or not the trial could be extended to other sites, and if so, at what potential cost.

For more information about the organic trial call Christine Upton at 905-877-4414 or e-mail at: healthyoptions@sympatico.ca

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