

## 5<sup>th</sup> Field days of the European Turfgrass Society (ETS) at Brno, Czech Republic: Turfgrasses in accordance with changing nature

by Claudia de Bertoldi, ETS Secretary

On September 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> 2017, the Scientific Society of Mendel University in Brno organized and hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> ETS Field Days 2017. Every two years, ETS runs its Field Days in one of the member countries, to promote the exchange of information among turfgrass specialists and this was the fifth event of a successful sequence started in Valencia, Spain (2009), Ghent, Belgium (2011), Monte Carlo, Monaco (2013), and Copenhagen, Denmark (2015).

The convener Dr. Stanislav Hejduk and ETS president Dr. Stewart Brown welcomed all the participants at Mendel University Campus (Brno) on the morning of September 12<sup>th</sup> with a pleasant welcome speech.

**Syngenta** (<https://www.greencast.co.uk>) was the Main sponsor of the ETS field days, and **DLF** (<https://www.dlf.com>) was a Major sponsor.

### Other supporters of the event:

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The seminar keynote theme was: “**Turfgrasses in accordance with changing nature**” and the focus lied on discussion of turfgrass water conservation, low input turf management, reduction of agrichemicals inputs and some experiences of concrete applications. Presentations have addressed interesting issues and innovations relevant to the turfgrass industry and research, among which irrigation research progress, optimal turf nutrition, alternative plants for enhancing of biodiversity in extensive turfgrass, no-pesticide management of sport fields, and sustainable approach for green areas.

Work opened on the morning of September 12<sup>th</sup> with the invited speaker presentations given by Professor **Bernd Leinauer** (New Mexico State University, USA), **Christian Spring** (STRI, UK), **Christine Lung** (Green Planet, Germany), **Paul Baader** (Baader Konzept, Germany), **Stanislav Hejduk** (Mendel University), **Jan Mládek** (University Palacky, Olomouc, CZ). Practical examples of experiences regarding low input management and sustainable greenkeeping were provided by **Kamil Pečenka**, **Jiří Kapeš** (greenkeepers, Board members of CGA), and **Michal Voigts** (greenkeeper, president of CGA, CZ). Discussion with questions to the speakers followed presentations.

The ETS General Assembly was chaired by Alex Richter (Richter Rasen sod farm) and saw the presentation of 2016 activities, balance and budget by ETS Secretary Claudia de Bertoldi (Turf Europe). During the General assembly of ETS members, Claudia also introduced the next ETS Conference that will be held in Manchester, UK in 2018. The first day was closed with a pleasant dinner at the Campus of Mendel University where all participants could talk and relax all together.

Day two was dedicated to field visits. The tour started at **Golf Course Kaskáda**, Kuřim, 15 km north of Brno, a perfect place where to discuss on “spoon fertilizing” and turf quality with near nature approach. **Lednice Castle Gardens**, declared as UNESCO world heritage site, was the second stop of the field tour and participants could enjoy the wonderful views of the gardens and the well maintained turfgrasses and flower beds. Last visit of the day was at **Richter Rasen sod farm** (Závod, Slovakia), a producer well known for the hi-quality sod, where a delicious goulash soup was served for lunch and was much appreciated.

In conclusion of the day, convener Dr. Stanislav Hejduk and ETS president Dr. Stewart Brown gave their warmest thanks to all attendants for their participation.

Some 70 delegates from 16 different European Countries and from USA attended the ETS Field Days, with a welcome mix of academics, practitioners and turfgrass industry delegates.

All presentations can be downloaded here: <http://www.turfgrassociety.eu/documents/>