

Turfco's Century of Turf Care



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Being in the same industry for 100 years is an achievement few family businesses can claim. From their grandfather who started National Mower Company in 1919, to the third generation Kinkead executives who run [Turfco](#) today, the Kinkead/Turfco 'family' acknowledges the privilege it is to be a part of the ever-changing commercial lawn care and landscape industry. The Kinkeads and Turfco want to express their gratitude for all the support, collaboration, and partnership that the company has received from turf care industry professionals over the past 100 years.

"Turfco just wants to say 'thank you, turf care industry,' for all the great time spent together working to solve challenges and grow this great industry," say George and Scott Kinkead, National Mower Company, president and executive vice president, respectively, of Turfco Manufacturing in Blaine, Minn.

To celebrate this milestone, the company has launched a "100 Years of Thanks" giveaway for customers in the landscape industry featuring a Turfco T3100 Spreader and Sprayer Applicator (manufacturer's list price \$10,290) as the grand prize. Five GoPro® HER07 Silver cameras will also be awarded over the coming months to customers who register for a chance to win at www.turfcodirect.com/100years between January 30 and October 31, 2019.

"Scott and I have spent our whole careers in this industry, and this is a tangible way to express our heartfelt gratitude for the opportunities and collaborative partnerships we've experienced working with so many great professionals," says George Kinkead.

The family's lineage as makers of turf care equipment dates back to 1919. World War I, the "war to end all wars" had recently ended when Robert Stanard Kinkead, a veteran of the war, founded National Mower Company, based in St. Paul, Minn. He started off making reel-type, sickle bar, and pull-behind lawn mowers that could be hitched to horses or tractors. Robert was an engineer

during the war and he noticed sickle-bar equipment while overseas. Through the years the company continued its growth with power mowers while rising to national and international prominence as an innovator in commercial-grade mowing products for golf clubs, parks, agriculture, sports, and landscaping industries, among others.

Fast forward to 1961 when Turfco, working closely with local turf specialists, created the first mechanized topdresser. That invention brought the chore of topdressing into the 20th century. Topdressing on golf courses and sports fields used to consist of slinging sand from shovels to maintain and repair high trafficked turf areas. The introduction of the topdresser made it faster, easier, and more consistent. John Kinkead Sr, while still working at National Mower, spearheaded the introduction of many other turf innovations at Turfco.

Under the leadership of the Kinkeads, Turfco thrived as it continued to develop and market new product innovations that helped advance the turf maintenance and landscaping industries.

In the early years, John Kinkead would pack up the family station wagon with a disassembled mower, and travel to demonstrate the product to prospects over six-week periods at a time, gaining input along the way. He had to reassemble the mower at each stop.

For sons George and Scott Kinkead life on the road was made easier as they could pack Turfco equipment for demonstration on a 20' trailer, greatly improving their on-the-road productivity.

Both George and Scott were rooted in the turf care industry from their early youths, working summers either at the manufacturing plant or in the field for a landscaping company or golf course, leading to their learning about the lawn and turf care businesses almost by osmosis. As they picked up on various aspects of the business, they were surprised to find out that the "UTVs" they raced around with at the family's rustic cabin were nothing more than souped-up National Mower mowing machines in disguise.

The family perseverance and inventiveness set the tone for how the company would work with the lawn care professionals it sought to serve, to move the industry forward. "We are a company that runs on great customer service, and we get our best ideas for new products from listening to what lawn care professionals tell us are their most pressing challenges, and from observing how turf professionals actually tackle their landscape maintenance programs," says Scott Kinkead.

Both brothers are committed to spending a significant portion of their time watching and learning from their customers—the LCOs and their staffs—who perform the day-to-day work of commercial and residential lawn care and landscaping management. "We do spend a lot of time in the field, working with end users and performing product demonstrations and the like for the LCOs and their staffs," Scott says.

"Working side-by-side with LCOs, we often see problems and how they could be

solved,” Scott says. They’re pragmatic solutions that seem obvious—in hindsight. But the company’s 100-year heritage of turf-care know-how really pays off in the new product development area. “As the leader in this focus area, we challenge ourselves constantly to develop new product ideas that offer our LCOs tools to do their jobs better,” says Scott.

Turfco has always employed people who represent a diverse workforce. One long-time employee, Steve Lazar, stands out not just for the backstory as to how he landed at Turfco, but also for his stalwart longevity as an employee of almost legendary endurance. Hungarian by birth, Lazar came of age in mid-1950s Budapest just in time to participate in his country’s struggle against the Soviet invasion of 1956. Lazar joined in the Hungarian uprising as a freedom fighter, battling to eject the Soviets from his native land. Resistance proved futile against the massive Soviet military assault, however.

Seeing the handwriting on the wall, Lazar decided to chuck it all in and emigrate to the U.S. in search of a better life. His decision to move crystallized on a day when, while leaning against a Budapest light post during a lull in the fighting, an unseen machine gunner blasted the pole in half with a barrage of gunnery fire. Lazar navigated his way through the U.S. immigration system and eventually signed on as a machine assembler with Turfco. Impressed with the young man’s dedication and desire to achieve the American dream, Turfco supported his taking classes at a local university, which led to Lazar landing a high-level white collar position for the regional electric company, even while still working for Turfco. He continued working at Turfco well past retirement because he wanted to contribute to the company he loved.

Recent innovations stem from working closely with lawn care operators.

Turfco calls its focus on continuous innovation the *Turfco Edge*. In every case, the Turfco Edge means “advantage, LCOs.”



Powered by a 22 hp engine with a top working speed of 7 mph, the stand-on XT8™ Aerator can cover 2 acres or more of terrain per hour with a 30" aerating width. The XT8 comes equipped with a patent-pending Auto-Depth Control for setting tine depth that is consistent across a property, regardless of turf conditions. The XT8 is built for hard

use yet handles with zero-turn agility. In addition, its best-in-class high ground clearance conquers most curbs without a hitch. Turfco knows their customers rely on equipment working reliably in the field, so they developed a patent-pending drive design that uniquely positions the drive chains outside the aeration area, keeping soil and debris away. That's a huge advantage as some competitive products are experiencing chains breaking while on the job. With the XT8 operators can feel confident when they go out aerating for the season.

The standing platform rests on heavy-duty, shock-absorbing suspension components that reduce fatigue-inducing shocks and vibrations so workers stay rested and job-sharp longer. The big-performing XT8 is also slim enough to slip through a 48" wide gate, making it a logical choice for residential lawn care in addition to commercial and sports turf jobs.



Crews can get up to speed in less time with the T3100™ Spreader and Sprayer Applicator, a compact and versatile, stand-on riding workhorse. The T3100 can cruise through a 36" gate-opening and hold nearly any hill. The machine provides maximum performance because of its largest-in-class spray capacity of up to 132,000 square feet per fill, available with an add-on 3-in-1 Tank from Turfco.

A new hands-free speed control enables operators to focus more of their attention on spraying and spreading. First-time operators can get up to speed on using the machine quickly, thanks to simplified operating controls and an easy-to-use steering wheel and pivoting front axle assembly that makes handling even on steep and uneven terrain more manageable. Its dual capacity for spreading and spraying makes it a versatile performer for daily use; the adjustable spread system accurately spreads and adjusts to 12' or 18' widths (6' and 9' effectives). The adjustable high-velocity sprayer puts out extra-large droplets for complete coverage over 4', 6', or 9' widths. The T3100 is of special help to operators with multiple crew members and is intuitive and easy-to-learn.

"We're dedicated to making products that help superintendents and LCOs better manage the ongoing tasks of turf maintenance, care, and repair," agrees Scott Kinkead. "We strive to make sure every feature of our machines is focused on how to make them more productive."

"I grew up in the '90s when labor was plentiful and staffing was not an issue for LCOs," says George. "Today, confronted with a massive labor shortage in the U.S., LCOs need help to do their work more efficiently—and so we as a

company are focusing our innovation capabilities on producing equipment solutions that align with the needs to accomplish more work in fewer work hours, while also continuing to find ways to improve the quality of the work that our customers do," says Scott.

"We feel blessed to be working in the lawn care industry," says George. "It's such a pleasure to work in an industry where people love what they do, and love going to work every day."