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**Horvath Named TOCA Environmental Communicator of the Year**

MAY 8, 2014, NEW ORLEANS, LA – Brandon Horvath, an assistant professor in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of Tennessee, has been named the 2014 Turf & Ornamental Communicators Association (TOCA) Environmental Communicator of the Year.

Horvath was named at the annual TOCA conference held recently in New Orleans. The program is sponsored by Project EverGreen. The program is in its 16<sup>th</sup> year of recognizing individuals in the Green Industry for outstanding communications efforts regarding environmental issues.

“Brandon, through his daily work with students and industry stakeholders in the industry, epitomizes this award,” said Den Gardner, executive director of TOCA. “His commitment in environmental communications to consumers across the country and beyond helps spread the word on the importance of preserving turf and ornamentals for generations to come.”

Horvath was nominated for the award by Ciara Ahern of Global Prairie. “Brandon focuses on the writing process and develops oral and written communication exercises for his courses,” Ahern said. “Through his research and involvement in the field of plant health and environmental stewardship, Brandon extends his reach beyond the next generation of turfgrass professionals – touching a broad array of industry stakeholders and benefitting the industry holistically.”

Dr. Frank Wong, technical specialist for the Bayer Green Solutions Team, readily endorsed Horvath’s achievement. “He stands out as a clear-thinking and articulate individual who communicates equally well in both verbal and written form. He engages, inspires and educates not only his students, but also many others in the industry – from superintendents to distributor sales reps and many others.”

Wong added that Horvath's "authentic enthusiasm and propensity for communicating the benefits of environmental stewardship to an industry audience is clearly evident."

"Project EverGreen is committed to sponsoring this communications award because it aligns with our mission of enhancing green spaces in our communities where we live, work and play," said Cindy Code, executive director of Project EverGreen. "Clearly disseminating the benefits of green spaces helps build thriving neighborhoods and communities where people congregate and unite."

Horvath said it is important to communicate with industry professionals so they can make real-time adjustments in their practices, and also to communicate with the future of the industry, the students, what those best practices are now and to teach them what may occur in the future and how they can communicate those changes to a broad audience.

"Students need to develop a sense of understanding that communicating effectively about the continued environmental improvements that our industry will make will lead to a sustainable, greener future, and that is what Project EverGreen, TOCA, and this award represents," Horvath said. "It is something I am humbled to be recognized for from TOCA."

Previous winners have included: Mark Welterlen, Bill Love, Tim Doppel, Doug Fender, Allen James, Rod Dodson, Jeff Gullickson, Kevin Trotta, Helen Stone, Allied Golf Associations of Colorado, Drs. Larry Stowell/Wendy Gelernter, Christopher Gray, Anthony Williams, Dr. Frank Rossi and Phil Fogarty.

The End