

Standards for the International Turfgrass Society Research Journal (ITSRJ)

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1) Background

- a) The International Turfgrass Society (ITS) runs, through the efforts of the host country, an international conference every 4 years. The ITS is responsible for publishing the papers presented at each conference in a peer-reviewed format. Acceptable papers will be published in the International Turfgrass Society Research Journal (ITSRJ) or at least one additional journal that have an Impact Factor. This/these additional journal(s) shall be announced by the ITS publishing committee at least two years before conference.
- b) Papers submitted to the Impact Factor Journal(s) in conjunction with the ITS conference shall be written and submitted according to the standards for that /those journal(s)
- c) This standards document provides authors and ITSRJ Editorial Board members information on:
 - i) the types of papers that will be acceptable for submission to the ITSRJ;
 - ii) a set of instructions to authors, which are specific to the ITSRJ; and
 - iii) the system of refereeing used by the ITS Editorial Board for submitted manuscripts.

2) Types of Journal Articles

a) Scope

- i) ITSRJ is a quadrennial publication of papers in turfgrass science and management that may involve, but is not limited to, plant genetics; breeding; metabolism; physiology; ecology; weed science; entomology; pathology; soil science and management; multifunctionality and ecosystem services provided by turfgrass
- ii) While the most common type of paper to appear in the ITSRJ is the standard research paper, the Journal is also open to publish other sorts of papers. The following categories are acceptable formats for publishing in the ITSRJ. Descriptions of each category are summarized below.
 - (1) Research Papers (volunteered)
 - (2) Review Papers (invited but may also be volunteered)
 - (3) Issue Papers (invited but may also be volunteered)
 - (4) Case Studies (volunteered)
 - (5) Short Communications (volunteered)

b) Research Papers

- i) Articles reporting experimentation or research in turfgrass will be accepted for review as papers. These papers will be original works of research that describe the background and justification for the work, how the work was conducted, and its significant findings along with appropriate interpretations and conclusions.
- ii) Most guides to authors from scientific journals provide clear direction on article structure relative to the type of research: field, greenhouse, laboratory, etcetera. The general article structure describing experiments includes an Abstract, Introduction (including literature review), Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion (or Results and Discussion sections combined), and References. There may be cases where this structure should be altered based on article/research content and examples of this can be found in numerous journals. Any authors choosing to deviate from a traditional structure for a

paper must be able to provide documentation of that structure being used elsewhere by a recognized scientific journal to the Editor, Technical Editor, and/or reviewers.

- iii) As a general rule, more repetition of experiments is required when there is less control over conditions. Field studies should be repeated in space or time to reflect appropriate or expected environmental (season, soil, etcetera) influences. It is generally expected that field experiments will be repeated for more than one year. Exceptions to this general rule must be justified by the author(s). For example, some research questions may be more appropriately answered by repeating a trial in the same year under different temperature conditions rather than repeating in different years under similar temperature conditions. Authors must provide a brief and clear rationale regarding decisions on the repetition of trial work that might be unusual to reviewers and many readers.

There is less need to repeat greenhouse/glasshouse experiments depending on how well the conditions have been controlled. A single run for experiments conducted in a fully controlled environment (e.g. flowering, temperature effects) should be adequate. For research involving controlled environments, see https://www.crops.org/publications/forms_resources/ for guidelines.

c) Review Papers

- i) Articles reporting reviews or interpretation of experimentation or research in turfgrass will be accepted for review as papers. Review papers are usually less formal than full-length articles and may be longer than a research paper but should generally not exceed 16 pages in the Journal including reference list. Plenary papers are often of this category. Such papers should provide a synthesis of existing knowledge and give new insights or concepts not previously presented in the literature, or at least not with the same level of detail. These articles should not be considered exhaustive reviews of the literature but should instead include enough literature review to provide a basis for understanding and interpretation of the topic under consideration.
- ii) A good review is often one of the most important ways to advance an area of science. Readers expect a review paper to:
 - (1) deal with an important subject that needs a scholarly review,
 - (2) cover the entire spectrum of the subject, not just the segment about which the author of the review paper has published articles,
 - (3) present a balanced coverage that is fair to all the work it reviews,
 - (4) add a perspective to the entire subject and contribute significantly to understanding, and
 - (5) identify knowledge gaps and needs for further research.

d) Issue Papers

- i) The intent of these papers is to stimulate discussion and possibly a rethinking of current views. They may be provocative and controversial. These papers may give a broader and often more personal perspective on a subject than a review paper. Papers discussing contemporary environmental issues may present a combination of scientific, political, legislative, and regulatory perspectives. These papers will often have more of a philosophical bent to them, but must still be based on a foundation of good science. Although most are invited by the Editor, volunteer submissions should be welcomed. Plenary paper may also be of this category. The length of these papers should be limited to 16 pages in the Journal including reference list.

e) Case Studies Papers

- i) Case studies should provide thorough documentation of an activity or series of activities that involve turfgrass science or management. These papers should provide all the relevant information or material gathered about the activity. Arrangements of these papers will probably be varied because of the diverse and unique subject matter for papers in this category. The arrangements, however, should serve as an organized record and have analytical value for a scientist, educator, student,

manager, etcetera. The length of these papers should be similar to that of research papers. The same criteria for originality of work and review process apply to papers in this category as for other categories.

f) Short Communications

- i) Short Communications represent a category of manuscripts that describe recent results and experiences from research that is still in progress and not necessarily repeated, but that has been validated and discussed in a scientific context. Authors could be graduate students or scientists that have only one year of field data. Papers on new experimental techniques and apparatus fall in this category if presented in a scientific context. Company representatives are welcome to submit results from in-house research of non-commercial character as long as data are analyzed statistically and interpreted in light of the peer-reviewed literature.
- ii) The short communications will be published in the same ITSRJ volume and under the same thematic area as full papers, but each paper shall normally not occupy more than three printed pages in the journal.
- iii) Authors submitting papers to ITSRJ must fully understand the consequences of publishing data in this category. All reputable scientific journals expect that any submitted work is original and unpublished or not being considered for publication elsewhere. If portions of a paper have been submitted or published elsewhere, the authors are required to disclose that fact at the time of submission and to provide copies of relevant prior publications. In general, publication as a short communication /technical paper in an issue of ITSRJ will be considered prior publication only if substantially all of the data and conclusions have been published.
- iv) Occasionally, the Editor of ITSRJ may believe a paper submitted as a full paper will better fit this category, or vice versa. If the author agrees, the manuscript can be transferred to or from this category of papers.
- v) The criteria for originality remains paramount and the Short communications will be subjected to peer-review involving a Technical Editor, an Associate Editor and at least one Reviewer. Compared with full papers, the deadline for submissions will normally be closer to the conference and the Editor shall – as far as possible - facilitate a rapid review to allow inclusion of recent results.

g) Technical papers

- i) This category is suitable for concepts, ideas for new projects and experiences from advisors and practitioners reflecting the benefit of turfgrasses and turfgrass management in real world situations. It has been set up to encourage participation and communication among various segments of the turfgrass industry at the conference.
- ii) Papers in this category will not be subjected to peer-review, but they will be assigned to a Technical Editor who will check the English language, ensure that the paper is not of commercial character, and offer his/her advice for improvement of the paper.
- iii) Technical papers will be published in a digital annexe to the ITSRJ designated 'Non-reviewed technical papers'. The length of a technical paper shall normally not exceed three printed pages.

3) Instructions to Authors

a) General Requirements

- i) Papers must be either reports of original research, critical reviews, issue/interpretive articles, case studies, or short communications/technical papers. Submissions to ITSRJ must not be previously published in or simultaneously submitted to any other scientific or technical journal.

b) No Prior Publication, No Simultaneous Submission

- i) Except for reviews or issues papers, publications in the ITSRJ must be original reports of research, case studies or practical experiences. Submission of a manuscript for review is understood to imply that the work is original and unpublished and not being considered for publication elsewhere. If portions of the paper have been submitted or published elsewhere, the authors are required to disclose that fact at the time of submission and to provide copies of relevant prior publications. Whether publication in nontechnical outlets constitutes prior publication is decided on a case-by-case basis. In general, publication in nontechnical media or as a short communication / technical paper (e.g. in a previous issue of ITSRJ) will be considered prior publication only if substantially all of the data and conclusions have been published.

c) Eligibility of Authors

- i) Papers are published on the condition that at least one of the authors will attend the ITRC with an oral or poster presentation of the paper.
- ii) At least one author of each paper presented to the ITSRJ must be a member in good standing of the International Turfgrass Society. For full members, an author cannot be the sole member on more than two paper submissions. Student members cannot be the senior or first author or sole member on more than one paper submission. Authors presenting plenary papers may be the sole member on two paper submissions in addition to the plenary paper. For information on ITS membership, visit <http://www.turfsociety.com>

d) Length of the Printed Paper

- i) Manuscripts should be as concise as possible to reduce to a minimum the number of pages of the ITSRJ. As a general rule the maximum recommended length of an invited paper is 16 pages and of a submitted oral paper or poster is 8 pages, including figures and tables, except for short communications / technical papers which should be no more than 3 pages. An average page of text will contain about 800 words. Manuscript reviewers may recommend eliminating unnecessary information and will advise on the number of pages each manuscript should have taking into account its content and characteristics. ITS will have the right to charge a fixed charge per page exceeding a certain length to be announced at the call for paper submissions.

e) Language

- i) English is the official language for the Journal. The ITSRJ has no preference whether English or American spelling (fertilizer-fertiliser, center-centre, etc.) is used although uniformity within each paper is required. Latin words or phrases are in italics, with the exception of very common expressions such as "i.e.," "e.g.," "et al.," "in vitro," "ex vitro" and "etc." The expression "etc." for "and so forth" should be used only with series, such as 1, 2, 3, etc. The authors' instructions used by the International Society of Horticultural Science (ISHS) contain useful suggestions for preparing a manuscript for an international audience; see <http://www.ishs.org/wri/pap1.htm>.

f) Units

- i) Use the metric system exclusively. Use abbreviation L for liter, mg/L for milligram per liter, ml for milliliter, and t for tonne (metric ton). SI units can be used where appropriate.

g) Arrangement of Manuscripts

- i) Manuscripts of research papers prepared for ITSRJ are normally arranged in the following order:
- (1) Title and byline.
 - (2) Author–paper documentation (addresses/affiliations, e-mail of the corresponding author, etc.).
 - (3) Abstract.

- (4) Introduction (including literature review).
- (5) Materials and Methods.
- (6) Results. This section is sometimes combined with the discussion.
- (7) Discussion. This may include a subsection for conclusions. No separate summary section is used, because it would duplicate the function of the abstract; a summary statement may, however, be given as a closing paragraph.
- (8) Acknowledgments (optional).
- (9) References. (The reference format used by Crop Science is recommended; it provides a comprehensive list of journal name abbreviations to use).
- (10) Figure captions, then tables, then the figures themselves.
- ii) Authors are encouraged to review the <https://dl.sciencesocieties.org/publications/cs/author-instructions#manuscriptsubmission> for details on arrangement of papers. Deviations from this order are acceptable if based on a structure that is consistent with the subject matter content; it is preferred that the arrangement be based on one used by a recognized scientific journal. For the cases where the arrangement of a manuscript is highly unusual, the corresponding author should consider providing an example paper using such an arrangement along with the submission or the Editor and Technical Editor may request this from the corresponding author.

h) Statistical Design and Analysis – Research papers

- i) A description of the statistical design and analysis is expected so that readers can judge the results for validity. The particular statistical method used and its appropriateness depend upon the type of research, theoretical assumptions, sampling design, and type of observations. The reporting of the results from each analysis should include a brief description of the statistical method and a literature citation providing its full detail, and descriptions of sampling design and experimental observations in relation to the statistical analysis. In all cases, a measure of the statistical confidence used to interpret the data in relation to the research question(s) should be reported by the authors.
- ii) More details on reporting of statistical design and analysis can be found in the guidelines for authors of many scientific journals; for example, see <https://www.crops.org/files/publications/style/chapter-04.pdf> Additionally, the following textbooks provide detailed discussions of the principles and procedures of statistics for research.
 - (1) Little, T.M., and F.J. Hills. 1980. Statistical methods in agricultural research. John Wiley & Sons, New York.
 - (2) Steel, R.G.D., and J.H. Torrie. 1980. Principles and procedures of statistics: A biometrical approach. 2nd ed. McGraw-Hill, New York.
 - (3) Steel, R.G.D., J.H. Torrie, and D.A. Dickey. 1997. Principles and procedures of statistics: A biometrical approach. 3rd ed. McGraw-Hill, New York.

i) Description of Soil

- i) Authors should use the system that applies in their country for describing the soil used in an experiment that will be published in ITSRJ. If feasible, authors are also encouraged to provide the equivalent description in the US soil classification, at least at the broader level.
- ii) In the cases where turfgrass will be grown on a man-made profile, the profile should be properly described and a soil type will not be stated. Some countries have terms for such soils; for example, anthroposols in The Australian Soil Classification (Isbell, 2003) and there is similar terminology in other systems around the world, which authors should use.

j) Chemical Names

- i) Authors should use the simplified common name of chemicals based on standard on-line databases.

k) **Plant Species and Cultivar Names**

- i) The scientific and common names of plant species and cultivars should be stated at first appearance in the paper, and then scientific names thereafter. This is the preference for an international audience given the often parochial nature and use of common names. The botanical authority should be stated the first time only or in a list in a table.
- ii) There is often confusion about names of plant varieties. Full and correct names should always be used. For example, the registered name of the hybrid bermudagrass is ‘Champion Dwarf’ (PP9888) not ‘Champion’ as is often stated. Moreover, plant varieties are sold with formal cultivar names or under a trademark, either registered or unregistered. These need to be differentiated clearly and used accurately. For species names, use single quotation marks around the cultivar name only; TM or [®] should be used with a varietal name at first use only, and simply the name thereafter. FloraDwarf is a trademark used with ‘FHB-135’ (PP9030), and TifSport is the trademark use to market ‘Tift 94’ (PP10079). If these names are unregistered in the country of the research, these names should be referred to with a trademark: as FloraDwarfTM and TifSportTM. If the name is a registered trademarks, a superscript [®] should be substituted for TM: for example, *Paspalum vaginatum* SeaDwarf[®].

l) **Ethical Responsibilities**

- i) Issues such as plagiarism and not giving proper credit to others will not be tolerated in ITSRJ. **Evidence of plagiarism and similar misconduct are immediate grounds for rejection of a manuscript and loss of membership in ITS.**

4) System for Refereeing Manuscripts Submitted to ITSRJ

a) **Editorial Board**

- i) The ITSRJ will have both an Editor (for the current Conference) and an Assistant Editor (normally the designated Editor for the next Conference) that are selected by the ITS Board. The Editor and Assistant Editor will propose a broad international group of Technical and Associate Editors reflecting the diversity of the ITS membership.
- ii) The selection of Technical and Associate Editors must also be matched the wide range of topics in the ITSRJ including, but not limited to, soils, nutrition, breeding and molecular studies, plant physiology, ecology, weeds, pests, diseases, economics, education and ecosystem services
- iii) Manuscripts should be assigned to Technical and Associated Editors with appropriate expertise.

b) **Review Process**

- i) The editorial process for ITSRJ is described for the benefit of improving consistency in refereeing standards for all submitted manuscripts. The review process is provided to all Editorial Board members (Editor, Assistant Editor, Technical Editors, Associate Editors and reviewers). It also available through the ITS website and is included in all calls for papers.
- ii) All manuscripts are to be submitted electronically to the submission platform decided by the Editor. The Editor will make an immediate determination of each manuscript as it is submitted regarding its readiness for review. The Editor may ask the Assistant Editor for a second opinion regarding the readiness of a manuscript but this action should not substantially delay the decision. If the manuscript is ready, it is immediately assigned to a Technical Editor with the appropriate expertise. The technical Editor has the authority to may make suggestions and provide the authors an opportunity to revise the manuscript accordingly and, should time allow, resubmit the manuscript for review.
- iii) The Editor along with the Assistant Editor will assemble an appropriate number of Technical and Associate Editors that will be representative of the membership of ITS. Once assembled, a listing of Associate Editors will be reported to the ITS Board for approval. The ITS Board has authority to

- request modifications in composition of the Associate Editors. The assembly of Technical and Associate Editors should be completed and published on the ITS website before the call for papers.
- iv) The Editor will be responsible for monitoring all Technical Editors and assuring an expedient and fair review process. The Assistant Editor may assist the Editor with this duty but this should be limited and full responsibility for all manuscripts lies with the Editor.
 - v) The Editor is responsible for handling all appeals. The Editor may assign an appeal(s) to the Assistant Editor in the case of conflict of interest or an extraordinary number of appeal cases.
 - vi) Plenary and invited papers should be refereed by the Editor and the Assistant Editor or a Technical Editor qualified to review the subject matter. The Editor may select a reviewer other than the Assistant Editor or an Associate Editor if expertise outside the Editorial Board is required.
 - vii) Each Associate Editor will handle no more than five manuscripts. Associate Editors will solicit two additional reviews for each manuscript. All reviewers agreeing to review for ITSJR will be sent the Standards for ITSJR by the Associate Editor.
 - viii) Any recommendations from the Associate Editor for each manuscript to the Editor should be based on a minimum of two reviews.
 - ix) See the document – *Guidelines for ITSJR Reviews* – for more information on review criteria and recommendations of reviewers, Associate Editors, Technical Editors and the Editor.

c) Appeal Process

- i) Authors will have the option to appeal any result of the review of a submitted manuscript.
- ii) Authors and the Editorial Board must adhere to all submission and review deadlines for the appeal process to be effective. If timelines are not met, there may not be sufficient time to process appeals.
- iii) All appeals are made to the Editor. Immediately upon appeal, the Editor and/or Assistant Editor will identify at least one representative from the author's region or country to assist with the appeal. The country/regional representative does not need to, but may, be a Technical or Associate Editor or ITS Board member. The appeals board will be a three person including the Editor, Assistant Editor, and country/regional review representative. A majority vote by the appeals board constitutes a valid decision on the appeal.
- iv) The Technical Editor that handled the appealed manuscript may be queried for information about the appealed manuscript but will not deliberate or have a vote on the decision of the appeal.
- v) The Editor and Technical Editor should be prepared to report on any appeal to the ITS Board for the purpose of monitoring the integrity of the process with the expectation that this would be rarely done, if at all.