

Briggs & Stratton – Green Space

Challenge

Briggs & Stratton Corporation, headquartered in Milwaukee, is the world's largest producer of air-cooled gasoline engines for outdoor power equipment. Its brands include Brute, Snapper, Simplicity, Ferris and Murray.

The company conducts extensive performance testing on its products. The company has historically used off-site testing locations for its landscaping products, but looked for possibilities to carry out the testing on site at the Wauwatosa facility. At the same time, analysis revealed that a large area (5 acres) of its asphalt parking lot was being underutilized.

Strategy

The business, engineering, and environmental teams decided to convert the parking area to turf. Working with an engineering firm, they removed and recycled the asphalt, made particular efforts to minimize the amount of soil hauled off-site, and brought in locally sourced topsoil. They incorporated hills and slopes in order to meet industry testing standards and provide visual appeal.

To provide water to the area, Briggs & Stratton hooked up an irrigation system to the facility's two existing cooling ponds, which are used to collect non-contact cooling water and storm water from the facility. Previously, the excess water from these ponds was discharged into the city's storm sewers.

Results

The green space project has provided a number of benefits to Briggs & Stratton. First, as a brownfield renovation site, the project turned a previously underutilized space into productive business use.

Second, the converted green space provides transportation savings, since Briggs & Stratton can now do testing at the Wauwatosa campus instead of transporting equipment and personnel to their off-site testing locations.

Third, the green space provides benefits in terms of water use, diverting about 7.4 million gallons of storm water runoff per year from entering the city's storm sewers. Infiltration of rain water through the turf grass accounts for 4.1 million gallons while the cooling ponds provide an additional 3.3 million gallons of water per year for irrigation purposes. In total the project saves about \$3,800 annually.

Finally, Briggs & Stratton is hoping to take advantage of the green space's properties as a pleasant, aesthetically-pleasing gathering place, and is planning to host company or employee events there.

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