

Is direct mail the only way to go?

Lawnmark's Marty Erbaugh thinks so

If you are a chemical lawn care businessman, you shouldn't be using any other form of advertising except direct mail. It offers less risk. It is by far the most effective and efficient media for this business. Done properly, it allows 100 percent targeting of those prime, juicy potential homeowner accounts.

So says Marty Erbaugh, president of Lawnmark Associates. The

company has offices in Peninsula, Ohio, a sleepy town that has the look of New England, but is instead nestled midway between Cleveland and Akron. Lawnmark grossed close to \$1 million last year with additional offices in Milwaukee and Rochester, N.Y.

Erbaugh favors Brooks Brothers-type blazers and button-down oxford shirts. He reads *Sales & Marketing Management* maga-

zine. And he formed his decided preference for direct mail working with his own company, and, prior to that as general manager of Davey Lawnscape, Kent, Ohio. He holds both a law degree and a post-graduate business degree.

Some of his thoughts on direct mail are:

- You can put together a good direct mail piece for 20 cents, including postage.

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Too many direct mail pieces look the same, there is often no differentiation between companies, Lawnmark's Erbaugh says.

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Volume 5, Number 6

JUNE 1981

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving lawn maintenance and chemical lawn care professionals

LCI SURVEY

15-30 PERCENT GROWTH

Industry retains an average of 6 workers

Readers of *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY* employ an average of six full time workers on a year-round basis and an average of 11 employees full time during the busy season, according to a recent survey con-

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FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES

Number of employees	Full-time (all year)	Full-time (busy season)
	FRACTION OF SAMPLE	
0	25%	8%
1	9	5
2	13	11
3	11	6
4	11	10
5	5	6
6	2	8
7	1	1
8	3	11
9	1	1
10	3	5
more	12	23

Source: 1980 LCI Survey

Maintenance firms sharpen bid pencils, ask: 'What recession?'

Although many have had to design programs that "customers can live with financially," major mowing/maintenance lawn care businessmen across the country are reporting that business is up 15 to 30 percent thus far this lawn care season.

Pencils have had to be sharpened on many bids for large accounts, but the business climate is not as severe as it was during the general recession of 1973-74, when many commercial/industrial accounts were asking mowing/maintenance lawn care businessmen to trim budgets in half.

In tough economic times, mowing/maintenance lawn care businessmen told *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY*, property managers want to have their landscapes

looking good so that they can attract the few business dollars that are available.

There have been reports of "ir-

responsible competition" in terms of low bids, but major companies with good reputations in their community can usually overcome this situation.

Construction down. "I wish everything was going as well as our maintenance business," Ron Kujawa, Kujawa Enterprises, Inc., Cudahy, Wis., told *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY*. "Things are looking good, at least for us. We have retained all of our major contracts and have taken on significant new business."

Kujawa is concerned about "irresponsible competition." He said: "Not only in terms of low bids, but these guys don't really know what they are talking about. When you have unemployment at seven percent, there are a lot of guys who want to get into the maintenance business. That is alright on a small scale, they certainly can't do the kind of complexes we are handling. A few of these guys went out

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"I wish everything was going as well as our maintenance business," says Ron Kujawa of Kujawa Enterprises, Inc., Cudahy, Wis.

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COMPANIES

Sears, Montgomery Ward into lawn care nationally

Two of the nation's largest retailers — Sears and Montgomery Ward — have entered the lawn care industry this season and are looking to substantial expansion across the country next year and beyond.

Sears is going at the lawn care market through its national concessions department, according to Chicago-based Mike Campbell, national concessions sales manager. The company has established a position in Philadelphia and has also worked out an agreement with

a Bismarck, N.D. company. Further expansion is planned, Campbell told *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY*, mentioning San Antonio, Texas among other places.

Montgomery Ward, also Chicago-based, has an agreement with a Dallas-area company to handle expansion on a national basis.

40 dealers. Ron Anderson, Solar Cell Industries, Arlington, Texas, told *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY*, he has been working with Montgom-

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Are you making money?

By the time most of you in the lawn care industry are reading this, you should have a pretty good fix on how your lawn care season is going to go. That is, whether or not you are going to be making any money this year.

Chemical lawn care businessmen by now are through with their first application, and well into their second, depending of course on climate conditions. **Mowing/maintenance** lawn care businessmen also are well-along into their season, and when we spoke to a

number of them over the last few weeks, business **seems to be up** in landscape maintenance. What recession? they are asking. As you can see from our lead news story on page 1, many mowing/maintenance lawn care businessmen are quoting increases in business up to a **healthy 25 percent**. Even though dollars are obviously tight, most commercial/industrial and apartment/condominium concerns need to have their landscapes looking first-class to effect a good impression on their clients

and potential clients. So for many of the more substantial mowing/maintenance businessmen, **business is up**, and we think that is just great.

Also on page 1, there is some more good news. Two of the nation's largest retailers — **Sears and Montgomery Ward** — are gearing up for serious entry into the lawn care industry in various parts of the country. Sears had some false starts in Chicago a few years back, but they are working with some experienced businessmen, and all indications point to a substantial effort this time. And that can only mean good things for the lawn care industry as a whole.

Anybody who attended last year's Professional Lawn Care Association of America Conference and Trade Show in Louisville heard **Marty Erbaugh** speak. He is the president of Lawnmark Associates, and leaves no doubt in anybody's mind what form of advertising he thinks is the most effective for the lawn care industry — **direct mail**. Must reading for those of you in the chemical lawn care industry.

Assistant editor Paul McCloskey takes a look at **tree care** in "Inside the Industry." If you are not already providing it as a service to your customers, perhaps you should be. Paul talked to lawn care businessmen across the country and reports:

"Most of the lawn care businessmen I talked to think meshing a lawn care business with a tree business is **very workable**. One of the biggest advantages is that tree work is year-round, and it offers the possibility of being able to keep your good workers on the payroll the whole year.

"The seasons are very compatible too. A lot of the tree work is done in early spring and late fall, with pruning in the winter. It doesn't always cut into the prime lawn season. **It is a moneymaker** too, and that, coupled with the fact that a lawn care businessman could afford to keep his younger workers with a future on the payroll year-round makes tree care very attractive."

Speaking of young guys with a future, Paul certainly qualifies.

Make no mistake about it, **tall fescue** is coming. In "Tools, Tips & Techniques," there is a report on how ChemLawn Corp. regional agronomist for the St. Louis and Kansas City areas — Gary Custis — is working to try to convert those cities to be tall fescue rather than bluegrass markets. The company feels the area is more suited for tall fescue, and with the necessary **renovation** work being done after last year's high heat and drought in those areas, is suggesting tall fescue. Look for a report on the many new **tall fescue varieties** available to the lawn care businessman in a coming issue.

Also in the Kansas City area, John Cazzell, Four Seasons Lawn Care, has established a "hotline" that **customers** and (more importantly) **potential customers** can call in on to ask questions about a particular problem they may be having on their lawn. Cazzell says he doesn't push his lawn care

programs too hard, but gets a lot of customers this way. It is in "Marketing Idea File."

If **increased mailing costs** and the advent of the **nine-digit zip code** are giving you the direct mail blues, check out "Cost Cuttings." Here it is explained how Davey Lawnscape uses **carrier route pre-sort** to cut costs and increase efficiency. Davey's Kim Schaefer suggested the short piece.

And on the **disease management** front, we have included a product report on Mobay's new fungicide — Bayleton. You have been hearing about it at turf conferences for the last few years and now it is available.

Further news on fungicides: Diamond Shamrock Corp. has expanded its Daconil production facilities, and there is a news story on it inside this issue. Also, word is that Ciba-Geigy Corp. has a new fungicide soon to be on the market that is a sister product to Mobay's Bayleton, possibly with some additional claims. And keep on the lookout for the announcement that Mobay is going to be marketing the new **insecticide Oftanol** for next season. Researchers claim it has excellent potential for the lawn care industry.

Around the industry: Small business and farm-industry **borrowers** are sitting on the sidelines when it comes to competing for loans at or around 20 percent, reports the *Wall Street Journal* — and lawn care businessmen are no exception. The **prohibitive prime lending rate** has forced many to simply **postpone** their borrowing.

Is there an **end in sight**? Although forecasters rarely agree, there is an unusually wide variety of opinions today as well as many frank acknowledgements of "I don't know." George McKinney, chairman of the economic advisory board for the Irving Trust Co. says: "Anybody who can go out and say what interest rates will be at the end of the year has rocks in his head."

One of the things many agree on is that **short-term rates** probably will continue to tumble in the near future. The view has gained reinforcement as most major banks are beginning to trim their prime rate gradually. And if there is any consolation in all this uncertainty for the lawn care businessman, it comes from a spokesman at New York's Mellon Bank who said: "When I look at the forecasts of my colleagues, I don't find anybody who has been right." Keep your hats on.

Dates to remember: Professional Lawn Care Association of America Conference and Trade Show, Nov. 18-20 in Louisville; Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show, Dec. 1-3, Columbus.

Next month in **LAWN CARE INDUSTRY** we focus on **irrigation equipment** and **soil amendments** available to the lawn care businessman.

Bob Earley

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Inquiries serviced for 90 days from date of issue. For those countries outside the U.S., please apply appropriate postage before mailing.

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A. CONTRACTOR OR SERVICES:

- Lawn care service business involved primarily with fertilization, weed, and insect control.

Please specify method of application:

10 Liquid 11 Dry 12 Both

- 20 Primarily mowing/maintenance service
30 Landscape contractor/lawn service company
40 Nursery or garden center/lawn service company
50 Pest control/lawn service company
60 Irrigation contractor/lawn service company

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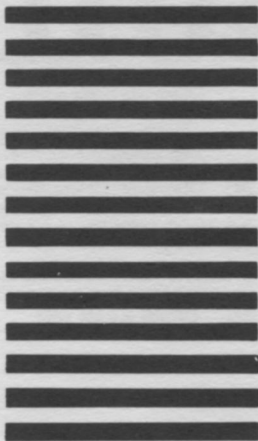
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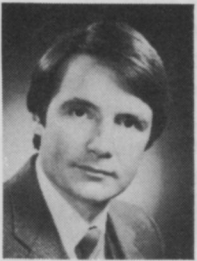


**GET
MORE
FACTS**

Dr. James F. Wilkinson has been appointed general manager of **Old Fox Lawn Care Inc.**, a new subsidiary of **Old Fox Chemicals, Inc.**, by Bernard V. Buonanno, Jr., president.

The new subsidiary, based in East Providence, Rhode Island, will provide regular fertilization and pest control treatment to homeowners at a cost little above the retail price of the chemical used.

Before joining Old Fox, he was director of research for the **Chem-Lawn Corporation**, Columbus, Ohio. Prior to that he was assistant professor of agronomy at Ohio State University.



Wilkinson



Clifford

Mallinckrodt, Inc. has promoted Nicholas B. Clifford from senior business manager for specialty products in the specialty chemicals division to business manager.

Clifford joined Mallinckrodt in 1965. He has held a variety of sales and marketing positions in the specialty chemicals division. He was graduated with a B.S. degree in chemical engineering from Yale University.

Dr. Jack D. Early, president of the **National Agricultural Chemicals Association**, announced the appointment of Paul B. Jacoby as manager of state and regional affairs.

Mr. Jacoby, who holds a law degree from American University in Washington, D.C., will be chiefly responsible for coordinating legislative and regulatory activities associated with state hazardous waste programs.

Harold E. Thayer, chairman of the board of directors of **Mallinckrodt, Inc.**, announced that he will become chairman of the executive committee and that Raymond F. Bentele will become chief executive officer and continue as president. Mr. Thayer, who remains as chairman of the board, has been named chief executive officer since 1965.

Mallinckrodt is a St. Louis-based manufacturer and marketer of specialty chemicals, health care products, food ingredients, flavors and fragrances with 1980 sales of \$442 million.

New officers and directors were elected at the 28th Annual Conference and Show to the **Florida Turfgrass Association**. Serving as president will be James D. Carter, president of **Bingham Seed Company, Inc.**, Jacksonville, FL; vice president is Dan Jones, superintendent at **Banyan Golf Club**, West Palm Beach, FL; serving his second term as secretary-treasurer is Paul L. Deets, marketing manager for **Woodbury Chemical Company**, Mount Dora. Harvey Phillips is the immediate past president.

New board members include: Stephen E. Baeumel, director of

golf course operations for the City of Pompano Beach; Max A. Brown, Ph.D., turfgrass consultant, Plantation; and Michael J. McLaughlin, sales manager of **DeBra Turf and Industrial Equipment Company**, Tampa.

Re-elected were: E. E. "Mack" Baugh, superintendent of **Longboat Key Golf & Tennis Club** and Gerald Millholen, agronomist/sales, **Southern Turf Nurseries**, Brandon.

Returning board members are: Michael T. Ayer, Quandt, **Ayer & Associates**, Tampa; Jim Hamilton, **Zuan Equipment, Inc.**, St. Petersburg; John P. Hayden, **San Jose Country Club**, Jacksonville; W. Timothy Hiers, **Suntree Country Club**, Melbourne; Thomas M. Latta, Ph.D., **Florida Aquatic Weed Control, Inc.**, Fort Lauderdale;

Leroy Phillips, **Green Glove Corporation**, Fort Pierce; Lloyd D. Purdy, Jr., **A Duda & Sons**, Oviedo; Michael Swanson, **Pursley Turf Farms**, Palmetto; and William G. Wagner, **Tequesta Country Club**, Tequesta.

Herb Cole, a veteran salesman and sales manager for **Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co.** has been named vice president of marketing for **Lescoe Products**.

In his new capacity Cole will be in charge of golf course salesmen selling to over 5,000 courses. He will oversee sales, management coordination, training and marketing duties including monthly specials and Lescoe truck displays.

The Associated Landscape Contractors elected and installed their new officers for 1981 at the

association's annual meeting in New Orleans. Allen L. Keesen, **Allen Keesen Landscape, Inc.**, becomes the association's 19th president, and Ray Gaustin III **Gaustin Gardens, Inc.**, becomes president-elect.

Also installed for 1981 are: Vice President David R. Pinkus, **North Haven Gardens**, and J. Landon Reeve, **Chapel Valley Landscape Co.**, Treasurer Rodney L. Bailey, **Evergreen Services Corporation**, and Secretary Irvin Dickson, **Chemlawn**.

Lawnmark, Peninsula, Ohio, is opening an office in Buffalo, New York. It will be managed by Pete Mahler. Other promotions include Harold Olmstead to production manager in Akron; and Steve Bruckner to senior service representative in Milwaukee.

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Finally, An Aid For Teaching Turfgrass

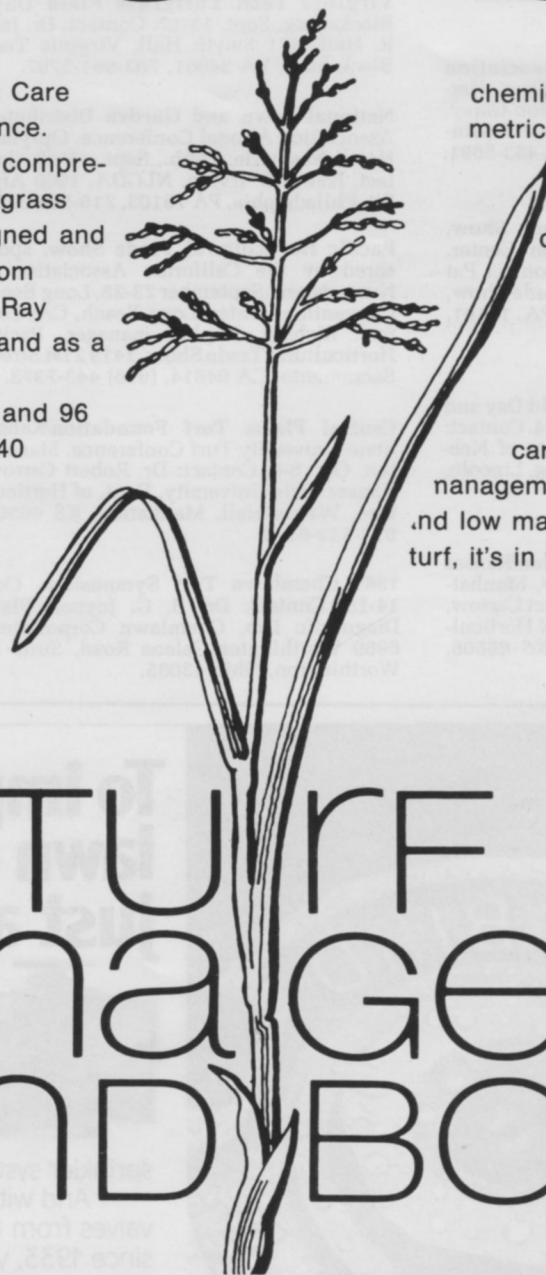
Superintendents, Contractors, Lawn Care Managers, New, On-the-Job Reference. The Turf Managers' Handbook is a comprehensive, organized approach to turfgrass science and care. It has been designed and written by leading turf specialists from Purdue, Dr. William Daniel and Dr. Ray Freeborg, for on-the-job reference and as a text for students.

The book contains 150 illustrations and 96 color photographs. Data includes 240 tables and forms. Included are specifications for rootzones, employment, calculations for

chemical applications, and extensive metric-imperial conversion. Business and technical aspects of turfgrass management are covered in this 424-page book.

Planning, purchasing, hiring, construction, and plant selection are put together for easy on-the-job reference.

Markets covered include lawn care, sod production, golf course management, cemeteries, athletic fields, and low maintenance areas. If it concerns turf, it's in the Turf Managers' Handbook.



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Spring-Green Lawn Care Corporation recently announced the promotion of two employees and the addition of three new members to the management staff.

James C. Gurke will work directly for President William R. Fischer in the area of franchise marketing. Mr. Gurke, a graduate of the University of Illinois, joined Spring-Green in March 1980 as a manager-in-training.

Terry L. Bradford recently joined Spring-Green as a corporate field representative working directly for Vice President Richard G. Gretz. In this position, Mr. Bradford will be involved with training and professional development of franchisees. Mr. Bradford has extensive lawn care management experience with

Greenlawn of Cincinnati.

George M. Steffens has been named manager of Spring-Green's company owned franchise which serves Chicago's western suburbs. Mr. Steffens joined Spring-Green in September of 1980 as a manager-in-training. He previously had gained extensive management experience with Sunbeam Appliance Company. Assisting Mr. Steffens will be Barry F. Matthews and Paul R. Cramer. As assistant managers they will be vitally involved with both customer service and the operational aspects of the business.

Spring-Green is a lawn and tree care company with franchises throughout Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin. It originated and is headquartered in the Chicago area.

MEETING DATES

University of Massachusetts Turfgrass Field Day, South Deerfield, June 24. Contact: Dr. Joseph Troll, Stockbridge Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003, 413-545-2353.

American Seed Trade Association Annual Meeting, Atlanta, June 28-July 2. Contact: ASTA, Executive Building, Suite 964, 1030 15th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20005.

American Sod Producers Association Summer Conference and Field Days, Hershey, Pa., July 15-17. Contact: Bob Garey, ASPA, Association Building, Ninth & Minnesota, Hastings, NE 68901, 402-463-5691.

1981 Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show, Hershey Lodge and Convention Center, Hershey, PA, July 28, 29, 30. Contact Pat Norman, Penn Allied Nursery Trade Show, 234 State Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101, 717-238-1673.

University of Nebraska Turf Field Day and Equipment Show, Mead, August 4. Contact: Dr. Robert Shearman, University of Nebraska, 377 Plant Science Building, Lincoln, NE 68503, 402-472-1143.

Central Plains Turf Foundation/Kansas State University Turf Field Day, Manhattan, August 12. Contact: Dr. Robert Carrow, Kansas State University, Dept. of Horticulture, Waters Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506, 913-532-6170.

University of Rhode Island Turfgrass Field Day, Kingston, August 26. Contact: Dr. C. Richard Skogley, Agronomy Dept., University of Rhode Island, Kingston, RI 02881.

1981 Garden Industry of America Conference and Trade Show, Sept. 10-11-12, Pittsburgh Convention Center, Pittsburgh, PA.

Virginia Tech Turfgrass Field Days, Blacksburg, Sept. 15-17. Contact: Dr. John R. Hall, 421 Smyth Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061, 703-961-5797.

National Lawn and Garden Distributors Association Annual Conference, Opryland Hotel, Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 15-18. Contact: Nancy S. Irving, NLGDA, 1900 Arch St., Philadelphia, PA 19103, 215-564-3484.

Pacific Horticultural Trade Show, sponsored by the California Association of Nurserymen, September 23-25, Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, CA; Contact: Richard Staples, manager, Pacific Horticultural Trade Show, 1419 21st Street, Sacramento, CA 94814, (916) 443-7373.

Central Plains Turf Foundation/Kansas State University Turf Conference, Manhattan, Oct. 6-8. Contact: Dr. Robert Carrow, Kansas State University, Dept. of Horticulture, Waters Hall, Manhattan, KS 66506, 913-532-6170.

1981 Chemlawn Turf Symposium, Oct. 14-15; Contact: Dr. B. G. Joyner, Plant Diagnostic Lab, Chemlawn Corporation, 6969 Worthington-Galena Road, Suite L, Worthington, Ohio 43085.

TOOLS, TIPS, TECHNIQUES

Can tall fescues beat the drought?

Bluegrass is just not the turf for Kansas City. The problem has been getting steadily worse for some time, but last year's heat and drought (the area set seven weather records) drove the point home: as beautiful as bluegrass is, it's just not tolerant enough for that kind of stress. And now, the people at ChemLawn Corp., Columbus, Ohio are doing something about it.

Last fall, Gary Custis, regional agronomist for ChemLawn, together with the operations, advertising, marketing, and specialists staff, met in Kansas City to lay the groundwork for converting Kansas City into a tall fescue market. Their work will be of interest to all lawn care businessmen working in similarly afflicted areas.

Custis seeded approximately 60,000 square feet of home lawns with Falcon, one of the new fine leafed tall fescues. Seaboard Seed Company, Bristol, Ill. provided the seed and Monsanto provided Roundup to clean the seed beds prior to renovation. The lawns ranged from full sun to shade and one lawn was seeded with bluegrass to check the compatibility of the two grasses. So far he plans to use Falcon, Rebel, Hounddog, and hopes to obtain Olympic in order to give him a reliable comparison on how each turf will respond to the climate.

And, to help boost customer awareness in the Kansas City market, ChemLawn called each account and inquired if they would be seeding their lawns in the spring. If they were going to seed, they were placed on a special Tupersan program. The program consists of a seeding rate of a complete fertilizer and Tupersan as the pre-emergent. They used Dacthal on the non-seeding customers. Four weeks after receiving the seeding application, those customers received a full rate of Dacthal and the regular customers a back-up rate.

Since they want to encourage their customers to switch to tall fescues, ChemLawn is offering to spray Roundup at cost on anybody's lawn who is reseeding. Also, each branch has purchased six verticutters and are offering them to their customers at a minimal maintenance charge.

Those of you in drought-stricken parts of the country will be interested in taking note of ChemLawn's renovation and conversion program. We will keep you posted of their results.

Florida Turf-Grass Association Conference and Show, Orlando, Oct. 18-21. Contact: Nona Murphy, Florida Turf-Grass Association, 1520 Edgewater Dr., Suite E, Orlando, FL 32804, 305-425-1581.

The 69th Annual Grounds Management Conference and Trade Show, Portland Marriott Hotel, Portland, Oregon, November 1-5, 1981. Contact: Allan Shulder, Executive Director, Professional Grounds Management Society, 7 Church Lane, Pikesville, Maryland 21208: (301) 653-2742.

National Institute on Park and Grounds Management, Kansas City, Mo., Nov. 1-6. Contact: National Institute, Box 1936, Appleton, WI 54913, 414-733-2301.

Missouri Lawn & Turf Conference, Ramada Inn, Columbia, MO, November 2-4. Contact: Dr. John H. Dunn, Dept. of Horticulture, University of Missouri, 1-40 Agriculture Building, Columbia, Mo. 65211, 314-882-7838.

New York Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, Empire State Plaza, Albany, N.Y., Nov. 16-19. Contact: Ann Reilly, 210 Cartwright Blvd., Massapequa Park, NY 11762, 516-541-6902.

Professional Lawn Care Association of America Conference and Trade Show, Commonwealth Convention Center, Louisville, Ky., Nov. 18-20. Contact: Jane Stecker, PLCAA, Suite 1717, 435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611, 312-644-0828.

Ohio Turfgrass Conference and Show, Columbus Hyatt House, Dec. 1-3. Contact: Dr. John Street, 1827 Neil Ave., Columbus, OH 43210, 614-422-2592.

Texas Turfgrass Conference, College Station, Texas, Dec. 7-9. Contact: Dr. Richard L. Doble, 349 Soil & Crop Science Center, Texas A & M University, College Station, TX 77843, 713-845-4826.

Nebraska Turfgrass Foundation Conference & Trade Show, Holiday Inn Convention Center, Omaha, January 12-14, 1982. Contact: Paul Bergman, 2428 W. 11th, Hastings, Nebraska 68901; (402) 463-5055.

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Proper disease management helps boost customer growth

When the lawn care profession began, most customers were well satisfied — if not ecstatic — with the results of fertilizer and chemical weed control. But today most lawn care professionals agree things are quite different.

In the Northeast, particularly southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, lawn care professionals face some pretty tough disease problems. The major culprits are leaf spot and dollar spot — diseases problems that have gone virtually unnoticed until recently.

While customer demand for green and healthy lawns is on the rise, turf care specialists are fighting harder than ever to keep customers satisfied. "We've got the easy problems solved, but other diseases are now in the forefront," says Jim Kelly, a Lansdale, Pennsylvania lawn care consultant.

To his clients not engaged in disease control, Kelly recommends a thorough examination of suspected diseased areas. More often than not, the extent of the problem is grossly underestimated.

"Studying a company's strategy for handling diseases," says Kelly, "can offer some big surprises. In most cases, out-of-pocket costs for fungicides are merely the 'tip of the iceberg' compared to hidden costs of service calls, lost customers, and a tarnished reputation." Much of this could have been avoided with a preventive approach to disease management.

Disease management. Disease management is a phrase suggesting that lawn disorders can definitely be minimized, though never eliminated. "Realistically, you can't expect to eliminate all problems, but it's sure nice to hold them down," says Kelly.

Lawn care professionals are discovering that many defensive techniques can be used against diseases. For example, fertilizer programs are now being designed to give optimum results without antagonizing diseases. The use of improved grass varieties also aids in controlling disease.

Unfortunately, many well-meaning lawn service companies have been misled into believing that improved fertilization, better grasses, and more mowing and watering are the only steps needed to eliminate diseases. Consequently, they have not benefited from the use of fungicides in their programs. Fungicides are a valuable tool in the lawn care business, offering big opportunity for both improved lawns and a better 'bottom line'.

Before embarking on a program to handle lawn diseases, Kelly urges careful planning. Deciding when to treat, what to treat, and how to charge are only a few considerations. A good place to begin is by categorizing the known diseases in a given service area. To help set priorities, list the major problems and the minor ones.

Write 107 on reader service card →

Leaf spot. Case in point: in virtually all Northeast lawn care markets, leaf spot is the number one disease, followed closely by dollar spot. Together they represent the major disease problems and highest priorities. Surprisingly, many companies let minor diseases such as Fusarium blight or Pythium fool them. Too much time is spent worrying about problems which affect relatively few lawns.

Kelly encourages lawn care or landscape clients with leaf spot and dollar spot problems to implement a specific program to thwart these major diseases. By

using his Minimizer Program, customers are offered an optional service consisting of well-timed fungicide applications to keep diseases in check. Field experience confirms the program's success.

Here's how the program works: established customers are advised of the optional service and the benefits of minimizing leaf spot. Generally, two applications of Du Pont Tersan LSR fungicide are made.

One application is made with the regular service visit during late April through May. The other application is made when leaf spot appears. A similar program can be offered for dollar spot, either alone or in conjunction with a leaf spot program.

Another company that utilizes the Tersan program for leaf spot is the Perf-A-Lawn Corporation in New Carlisle, Ohio. Ron Wilson, vice president of franchising for the company, acknowledges the



Jim Kelly is a Lansdale, Pennsylvania lawn care consultant who believes that in many cases the extent of turf disease is grossly underestimated.

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most important part of the program has been the field training and support that has been provided. Mr. Wilson also believes that this program will further enhance his franchise sales by offering a more well-rounded franchise package.

By September, 1980, the program had contributed an extra \$50,000 in sales for Perf-A-Lawn. With an overall chemical cost of 27 percent, they recognized the profit potential as well as the increased side benefits of a quality fungicide program.

This program consists of using two applications two weeks apart at the rate of four ounces per one thousand square feet. Mid-April to late May is the optimum season for this preventive program.

Don't oversell, says Kelly. While the program will minimize leaf spot, it will never eliminate it. A few lawns may require retreat-

ment, but that's part of the lawn care business and making the job right. Keep in mind, too, that the program won't control a minor disease such as Fusarium blight, so avoid calling it a fungus or disease control program. It's better to avoid confusion by calling it what it is — leaf spot minimizer.

Last, but not least, Kelly reminds his clients to be positive and maintain an optimistic outlook for a minimizer program. Properly executed, it's not uncommon to have 20 percent of the customers agree to this additional service. Repeat business can also improve profits nicely over the years.

"Look at it this way," says Kelly. "Disease handling service provides a competitive edge for retaining customers and adding new ones. Best of all, it's a service that can be highly profitable since fungicide applications can be combined with regularly scheduled calls.

The ingredients of a successful

minimizer program are planning, customer education, an effective fungicide for the problem disease, and a proper attitude.

GOVERNMENT

P.C. research needed to offset farm drain

Adjustments in federal pest control research policies are mandatory to help restrict U.S. agricultural production losses currently estimated at \$35 billion a year, a leading spokesman for the agricultural chemicals industry said.

"The need for pest control research and extension in agriculture is of paramount importance since pests continue to cause farm production losses equal to 30 percent of the total sales value," Dr. Jack D. Early, president of the National Agricultural Chemicals Assoc., said in testimony before

the House Committee on Agriculture's Department Operations, Research, and Foreign Agriculture Subcommittee.

"Pests that are inadequately controlled," he added, "can diminish the potential value of otherwise significant advancements in production technology in crops, livestock, forests and aquatic resources."

Dr. Early told the panel that current government regulations constrain agricultural research scientists by diverting them away from their essential activities to provide defensive information for products whose value has already been demonstrated.

"There is an obvious need for readjustment and realignment of research efforts nationally," he said, "and such readjustment must include reemphasizing the effective and efficient control of agricultural pesticides as a principal ingredient in pest management programs."

He cautioned the panel that such pest control strategies as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) should not be studied as separate entities but in the context of pest control needs in a total crop production system.

The NACA executive said that the industry supports increased research for application technology, basic research in biochemical processes of pests that could be exploited for control purposes, cooperative research assistance from state experiment stations and extension services for determining potential pest control value of new materials, and crop loss research for allocation planning of resources in developing pest control strategies.

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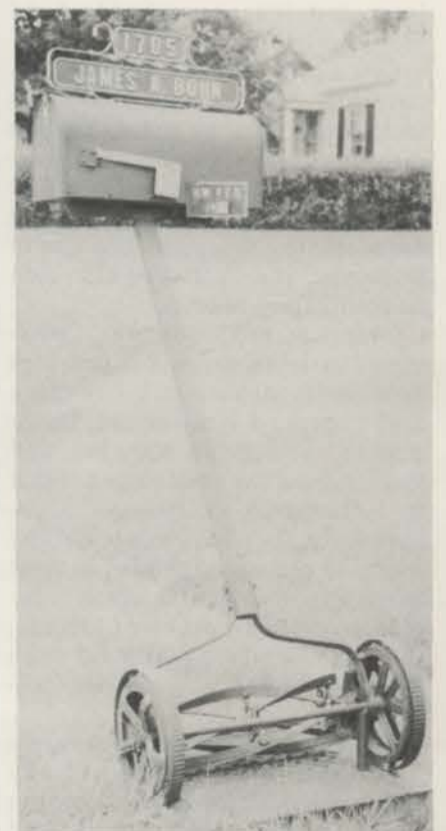
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Is employe discrimination hurting your business?

Here are some facts you must know

By Richard I. Lehr

There were important developments last month in the wage and hour and employment discrimination areas. In particular, the Minimum Wage Study Commission has recommended eliminating the minimum wage and overtime exemptions for employes of small retailing service establishments, which include many lawn care employers.

In the employment discrimination area, juries throughout the United States are awarding considerable damages to individuals between the ages of 40 and 70 who were terminated, allegedly because of their age.

Wage and Hour. The Minimum Wage Study Commission was created by amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1977 to issue a report on a number of subjects relating to minimum wage, including a youth sub-minimum wage, and minimum wage and overtime exemptions. Though its final report is not expected for a few months, the Commission has recommended removing the wage and hour exemptions from minimum wage and overtime requirements for retail or service establishments who have a gross volume of annual sales of \$325,000 or less (to be raised to \$362,500 in January, 1982.).

If this recommendation is enacted, at least one million employers will be affected negatively by it.

Approximately 28 percent of those employers who use the tax exemption would face wage increases of 10 percent or more if the exemption is eliminated. Clearly, the elimination of this exemption would negatively affect many lawn care employers, unless those lawn care employers are not claiming the exemption at this time. We will continue to monitor developments concerning this exemption. Regardless of whether the Commission recommends elimination of the exemption, it is unlikely that a Republican Senate would follow that recommendation in the foreseeable future.

Age discrimination awards. The Age Discrimination in Employment Act forbids discrimination on the basis of age against individuals between ages 40 and 70. Unlike other equal employment statutes, the ADEA provides that the individual claiming discriminatory treatment has a right to jury trial.

This is a significant disadvantage to the employer. A jury of 12 men and women, many of whom may be between ages 40 and 70, would naturally empathize with an individual between ages 40 and

70 who claims he was treated improperly because of his age. For example, the former manager of the sales division of the Whirlpool Corporation was awarded \$52,000 by a jury on his claim that he was demoted in responsibilities and salary because of his age, even though the employer demonstrated that problems existed with his job performance.

In other cases, where juries have

awarded whopping verdicts contrary to the evidence presented at trial, the judge has intervened at the end of the trial by reducing the verdict substantially. In either situation, the point should be clear: age discrimination cases are increasing and the lawn care employer needs to prevent age issues from arising.

As I have discussed at other times in this column, a lawn care

employer's best defense to a discrimination allegation is preventing discrimination claims from arising in the first place by documenting decisions and counseling with employes. Lawn care employers who regularly document employment decisions and decide employment questions on the basis of objective factors, such as merit and seniority, will have the important foundation of the paper fortress of documentation to resist discrimination attacks.

On the other hand, the lawn care employer who is sloppy or careless about documenting his employment decisions or who does not explain his decisions to employes will have a far more difficult time defining the nondiscriminatory nature of those decisions if called upon to do so.

Texas versus Burdine. In the recent case of Texas Department of Community Affairs v. Burdine, the United States Supreme Court dis-

to page 12

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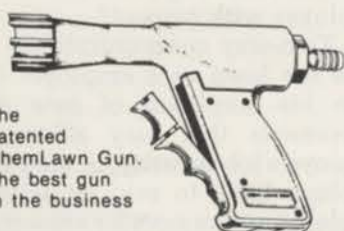
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cussed technical matters regarding the burden of proving the existence of discrimination in a claim based on Title VII in the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The technical aspects do not affect lawn care employers on a daily basis. However, it is important to note that the court unanimously agreed that if two applicants are equal, and one of those applicants is a minority or female, the employer is not required to hire the minority or female applicant.

It is the employer's discretion to decide which of the equally qualified candidates he chooses to hire, so long as his decision is not based on race or sex. "The fact that a court may think that the employer misjudged the qualifications of the applicants does not in itself expose him to Title VII liability," stated the Supreme Court.

Unionization. The 650,000

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member Service Employees International Union and Working Women, an organization of women office workers, have announced a joint effort to begin organizing the country's 20 million secretarial and clerical workers, most of whom are female.

These efforts know no boundaries; though they will focus primarily on banks and insurance companies, any office environment is vulnerable to a unionization effort. This is indicative of a trend toward a "raises not roses" attitude among female clerical workers. Traditionally employed at lower paid and only entry level positions, many women are seeking employment opportunities equal to those of men.

As 90 percent of all union activities involve employers with 50 or less employees, the lawn care employer who has an office staff of at least five employees should be aware of this trend, and follow those procedures to prevent a unionization effort from occurring in his office.

Steward's Assistant. The United States Supreme Court ruled in 1975 that an employe has the right to have his union steward present at an investigatory review where there was a possibility of employe discipline, such as suspension or demotion. A recent case held that an employe has the right to request the presence of his union steward at an investigatory interview even if management and the employe are certain that no disciplinary action will be taken at the end of the interview.

In this case, the supervisor approached an assembly line worker and requested a meeting to discuss the worker's difficulty with assembly line duties and his slow work. The employe requested that a union steward be present at the meeting. The supervisor explained that the steward's presence was unnecessary, as the meeting was intended to improve the employe's work performance, and not to discipline him.

The National Labor Relations Board and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals held that a meeting whereby the supervisor simply wishes to show a worker how to improve his work performance has the potential for leading to discipline because of unsatisfactory work performance and, therefore, the employe has the right to request the presence of his union steward at such a meeting. The court stated that "an interview may well be investigatory and may well reasonably include the risk of discipline even though the employer is not seriously contemplating discipline at the time the interview is conducted.

Furthermore, an interview in which work related questions are asked of an employe, but which the employer does not intend to result in discipline, may nevertheless result in discipline if the employe surprises the employer with an answer which the employer finds unsatisfactory or threatening.

Union Interference. This decision further exemplifies how a union, if selected by a lawn care employer's employees, can intrude and interfere with the lawn care employer's and his supervisor's business decisions. Imagine a



Stanley Sablak of the Farms Country Club of Wallingford, Conn., is richer one American double eagle gold coin worth over \$1,000. He won first prize in a special gold rush drawing conducted by the Rain Bird Sprinkler Manuf. Co. Congratulating him is Rex Dixon, Rain Bird turf marketing manager.

situation where a supervisor wished to meet with a production employe, to discuss the employe's slow production or improper spraying techniques. Imagine further that the production employe refused to meet with his supervisor, unless his union steward is present. Thus, a meeting between the supervisor and employe designed to improve the employe's job performance, is transformed into a three way session with employe's union representative.

Remaining union free is not only the better economic course for a lawn care employer to pursue, but it also eliminates the threat of individuals with little knowledge or interest in the lawn care industry interfering with a lawn care employer's and his supervisor's efforts to manage a lawn care business. Lawn care employers are "campaigning" daily to remain union free; those efforts may make the difference by isolating intrusive unions from lawn care employers. The lawn care employer who seeks to remain union-free should follow these key principles:

- Job security — A lawn care employer should convey to his employes that they will have a job tomorrow so long as they continue to do a good job today.

- Favoritism — The lawn care employer's "favorite" employes should attain that status on the basis of merit or seniority and not friendship, family relationship, or other factors unrelated to job performance.

- Supervisors — Are they attentive to employe needs, do employes trust their supervisors, and do the supervisors treat employes with respect?

- Two-way communications — Does the lawn care employer inform his employes of new developments that may affect an employe's job security, or does the employe have to rely on fellow employes and rumors for answers?

- Complaint system — How can an employe gripe or complain? Is there a periodic gripe session, or must employes only complain to each other?

- Pride and rewards — How does the lawn care employer dem-

onstrate his satisfaction with employe attitudes and job performance? Does the lawn care employer help promote pride among employes, such as by distributing hats, jackets or shirts with the company name and or logo?

- Wage and benefits — This is listed last because it is not a primary reason why employes seek or join unions. Is the lawn care employer's wage and benefits program competitive with other chemical spray companies?

Richard Lehr is a lawyer in the Birmingham law offices of Sirote, Permutt, Friend, Friedman, Held & Apolinsky, and a frequent contributor to LAWN CARE INDUSTRY.

MERGERS

Jacklin acquires Gold Coast Seed Co.

Jacklin Seed Company, Division of Vaughan-Jacklin Corporation, has announced the purchase of the Nezperce, Idaho, operating facilities of Gold Coast Seed Company. Officials at Post Fall, Idaho-based Jacklin Seed said it would be operated as a department of that division. The acquisition complements Jacklin's seed and fertilizer operations, at the Post Falls and Salem, Oregon plants.

Jim Henderson, currently the general manager of the Nezperce facility will continue in the same capacity for Jacklin.

The Vaughan-Jacklin Corporation is a nationwide wholesale distributor, manufacturer and grower of professionally used horticultural products and home/garden supply items. Its varied product lines are offered through seven operating divisions. The Jacklin division grows, processes and markets proprietary and patented varieties of Kentucky bluegrass, environmental recalculation and other grass seed.

The Gold Coast facility is located approximately 50 miles southeast of Lewiston, Idaho, in the city of Nezperce. It consists of several recovery buildings, elevators, a chemical warehouse and an office building.

Mobay introduces fungicide

A new fungicide for the control of a variety of turf diseases has been introduced by the Agricultural Chemicals Division of Mobay Chemical Corp. At turf conferences across the country for the last few years, lawn care businessmen have been hearing many favorable test reports about this new fungicide. Now it is finally labeled and available.

Bayleton 25% Wettable Powder is a new systemic fungicide which has the capability to control, as well as prevent, several diseases affecting turf, including brown patch, copper spot, dollar spot, powdery mildew, red thread, rusts, striped smut, *Fusarium* blight and gray and pink snow mold.

Many in the lawn care industry are particularly interested in using the fungicide as a new tool against *Fusarium* blight. The company recommends that outbreaks of *Fusarium* blight can be prevented by applying four to eight ounces of Bayleton per 1,000 square feet. The first application should be made in early summer, with subsequent applications at 25- to 30-day intervals, depending on disease pressure.

Applied at a rate of one ounce per 1,000 square feet as a preventative measure, or at two ounces per 1,000



square feet as a curative treatment, Bayleton will control brown patch, copper spot, dollar spot, powdery mildew, red thread and rusts. The specified dosage should be mixed in two to four gallons of spray per 1,000 square feet, and applied at the preventative rate of seven- to 21-day intervals as needed.

Bayleton is absorbed rapidly and works systematically from within the plant, without causing unsightly residues on foliage. It is also compatible with most registered turf insecticides and fungicides.

Mobay Chemical Corp. is a highly diversified manufacturer of basic chemicals for the turf and agriculture industries. The Agricultural Chemicals Division manufactures a variety of pest control chemicals for the turf industry, including Baygon, Dasanit and Dylox insecticides, Dyrene and Lesan fungicides and Nemacur nematicide.

Other new turf protection chemicals are presently undergoing research and are expected to be registered for commercial usage soon.

Further detailed information is available on Bayleton. Please write in the number below on the reader service card to obtain this information.

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MARKETING IDEA FILE

Customer hotline keeps the door open

"Hello . . . Hotline? . . . I've got so many grubs in my lawn they're starting to hold elections . . . What should I do?"

Not an unusual question considering the problems lawn owners are having in some parts of the country. But there are others. Questions about establishment, cutting heights, disease, wash-outs, burn-outs, all occur to homeowners who in most cases don't have recourse to an answer man. And now, at least in the Kansas City area, they do.

John Cazzell started his hotline in 1979 in order to establish a



Four Season's John Cazzell - his hot line keeps the phones ringing in the Kansas City market.

personal link to his market area. The summer of '79 was beautiful. The weather was great — lawns were green and lush — and grubs had a field day. In the spring of 1980 his telephones were jangling with questions about turf care. "We had to put in a rotating second line to handle the volume," said Cazzell, who is president of Four Seasons Lawn Care. "If you've got a market of 750,000 potential customers, and just one percent of them decides to call, the response can be overwhelming."

Four Seasons is a full service lawn care company with a nursery, a landscaping division, and about 4,000 accounts. When a call comes in on the hotline, it is routed through the receptionist to either Cazzell, his partner, or one of the two horticulturists on his nursery staff. "The people get a human being on the other end they can discuss their problems with," said Cazzell. "We try to pinpoint the problem and analyze it without putting sales pressure on the caller."

The hotline, nevertheless, generates a good number of business leads and new customers. Cazzell explained that one caller couldn't keep turf established on the side of their house. By asking the right questions, he found out they had a downspout placed to drain right through the plot. "We made 500 dollars by designing a new drainage system," he said. "Just like that."

The hotline number is advertised through Four Seasons' regular newspaper ads, radio spots, and door hangers. That way, it's all tied together and the customer gets the message whenever they see or hear the ads. It may be a good idea for those of you in areas touched by drought or severe disease problems. As an information service first, it opens up lines of communication and can also lead to valuable new accounts.

If you're in the business of beating lawn diseases,



Daconil 2787[®] fungicide could be worth a small fortune.

Homeowners depend on you for the very best lawn care advice, service and products.

Healthy, vigorous lawns mean healthy, vigorous sales.

And that's where Daconil 2787 comes in. It's the best fungicide on the market because it delivers the most effective broad-spectrum disease control.

A regular spray schedule with Daconil 2787 provides unsurpassed protection against the most common and most serious lawn diseases, such as Dollar spot, Brown patch, Stem rust and Copper spot...even in hot, humid weather.

Daconil 2787 from Diamond Shamrock. Give your customers the best because it's best for your business.

Find out more about Daconil 2787 effectiveness on turf and ornamentals. Write, Diamond Shamrock, Agricultural Chemicals Division, 1100 Superior Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44114.



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INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

How do you keep business up and employe turnovers down? Tree care.

The main thrust of lawn care marketing in the past several years has been on developing the ability to lock up a market area in such a way that a solid core of accounts builds up.

Once that has been accomplished a decision has to be reached on whether to stick with one service or to become more elastic. And reports from around the industry suggest that there's few better ways of adding accounts and keeping your business versatile than adding a tree care program.

Also, there are dangers in standing pat. Since more and more lawn care companies are getting involved in sidelines like pest control and landscape construction, the company that chooses to maintain just one well-rounded service may be faced with the likelihood of being disregarded by a customer with multiple needs.

Other dangers are internal. In many parts of the country the lawn care season is limited to six or eight months. Once winter creeps up, many companies are left with employes who have little to do. Can these people be laid off? And if so, can you get them back?

A solution many are turning to in the lawn care industry—to solve both problems is a growing involvement in tree care services. In many respects, it provides an ideal solution to the twin liabilities of a limited program and excessive employe turnover.

According to many of those interviewed, an employe with a solid lawn maintenance background can be trained in-house within at least six months to handle a variety of tree maintenance problems. Also, the tree care season neatly complements the typical lawn care season, with a tree feeding in early spring, a dormant feeding in the fall, and possible pruning and take-downs during the winter months.

Year round business. Here's how Robert Milddin of the Tree Lawn Corporation in El Paso, Texas sets up his tree and lawn care season: In January they provide a deep root feeding with a hydro nozzle using a slow-release fertilizer. February and March, still before the lawn care season begins, are taken up with a dormant spraying and general shrub spraying. When their lawn care season starts in late March, Milddin applies his first liquid pre-emergent herbicide spraying.

During the peak lawn care season months of May, June, and July, Tree Lawn Corp.'s crews apply insecticide (MSR systemic on trees) and also lay the foundation for outside roach control

using Sevin. In June and July they have a liquid lawn seeding and a webworm spray, and in August another liquid weed control application.

Then the tree maintenance resumes in September, after the peak summer lawn care months. Again there's a pesticide application to the trees. In October, they have a de-alkalization program, and in November and December they put down yet another herbicide and do their last tree feeding at year's end. "Our tree care program allows us to be very stable," says Milddin. "And we'd just as soon sell our customers either one or the other or both services."

Milddin trains all his personnel in-house. "We can't turn them loose until they've had at least six months in the office," he said. Then they go out with more experienced tree care personnel to use the high-pressure rigs necessary for shade tree pest control. Using a John Bean rig with piston pumps allows then on some occasions to turn down the pressure for routine lawn spraying.

It's unusual when so many agree on the plusses of adding a tree care service. Those interviewed have done it with many rewards.

The compatibility of the two services allows Milddin to keep his workers on practically all year round. The effect is that his personnel become seasoned applicators at the same company and therefore tend to know both the company and the market in El Paso extremely well. And the savings in terms of turnover is extensive.

A natural extension. Other features of a tree care program make it accessible to the lawn care businessman. Says Gordon Ober, general manager of Davey Lawnscape in Kent, Ohio: "First of all he (the lawn care businessman) has the in. I think it's a natural extension because he already has that person as a client. So that client will be receptive to him if he's satisfied with his lawn care work." But, warns Ober, the lawn care businessman must address his capital where-withal before seriously considering branching out. "You have to have the expertise and the capital in order to follow through. It does take more specialized equipment."

The real advantage of starting a tree care division is the possibility of warding off the competition. "We're finding that as the industry gets more and more competitive you've got to find more and more ways to get the business out of the customer and not let the tree care go to somebody else. Do everything possible for that homeowner. He has different needs and you must be able to find out if you can address them within your existing structure," said Ober.

Ober is well acquainted with the lawn care market. And, he says, times have changed with respect to the typical tree market. Whereas in times gone by, the person who wanted tree care was essentially in an upper-income bracket, "We find that even they are moving down in their (market) segments because there are more people in that middle income that see the value of tree care on their property."

Closing the gap. In other words, Ober sees that the two market segments of tree and lawn care are merging and the time is right to tie into both markets. But in a large operation such as Davey has, it is necessary to separate the two divisions with separate managers as well. "It was decided that it was easier to form a completely separate division. We said to ourselves, 'let's get our expertise in lawn care, in marketing, and in servicing the lawns, rather than trying to incorporate both into the tree care office.' Specialization is the overriding reason we decided to separate the two divisions."

Davey Tree and Lawnscape is a big operation and it only seems reasonable that separate corporate divisions are necessary. But for those considering tree care on a smaller scale, total separation may not be practical.

Separate managers. Instead, most agree that a different manager supervising each service is absolutely essential. Says Roger Finn, president of Antietam Tree and Turf, Inc., in Hagerstown, Maryland, "No matter which way you decide to go, you've got to set up areas of responsibility and let the managers manage their own department."

Finn stresses the need for quality personnel. "You've got to get the right people because finding qualified ones is very hard. Our guys have at least a high school education, many of them have college experience. We send them to an arborist course to train those we want to keep and develop. And, we

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always check the references of those we hire."

At Antietam, all phases of tree care are handled, from chemical maintenance, pruning for disease, and shade tree take-downs. They have three 1,000 gallon hydraulic sprayers, a split tank rig, and two 500 gallon John Bean sprayers.

What should I charge? One of the most difficult aspects of integrating a tree care business into your lawn care operation is estimating the tree job, says Finn. Lawn care jobs are easier to estimate than tree maintenance because lawn applicators usually have ready charts they can refer to.

Estimating a tree maintenance program, on the other hand, requires a sophisticated knowledge of the amount of fertilizer, insecticide, and fungicide a tree will need per cubic foot. Depending on the diameter of the tree at breast height and the areas enclosed in the drip line, different application rates must be determined. Also, trees which border one another have overlapping root systems and require rate adjustments.

Some companies make an educated guess based on experience and others use a formula for making precise requirement readings. Neither method is infallible and the best method seems to be a mixture of experience and technology.

In his classic study of tree care, *Tree Maintenance*, P. P. Pirone writes: "Opinions vary on how much commercial fertilizer should be applied. Recommendations range from one to eight pounds for each inch in diameter of the trunk at breast height. Probably a figure about midway between those extremes is the best general recommendation."

Other hazards spring up when estimating a tree job, however. John Cross, owner-partner of Spray Green Tree and Lawn Service says that one time his crew was sent into a subdivision to spray for cankerworms. The estimate had been made, but the crew didn't get out of the subdivision for almost two weeks because the subdivision lined up to a forest. And the worms were bringing in their reserves, with the result that the demand for his men was furious.

Don't undersell. The lesson Cross learned during that job is that a tree care job should never be undersold. "When you go out with a 500-gallon tank and you hit a subdivision with large trees and there's wood in back of the subdivision, you pump that 500 gallons out in a hurry," he said.

Cross says he has his crews carry a tree care fact sheet with them when a job is estimated explaining how much it would cost to replace a neglected tree. It's a dramatic comparison aimed at wiping out buyer fear. "It may cost them 500 dollars to replace a tree when a 60-dollar charge can save all their trees," he said.

"Never undersell the job," says Spray Green Tree and Lawn Service's John Cross. "When you go out with a 500 gallon tank and hit a subdivision, you pump that 500 gallons out in a hurry."



Cross decided to expand his lawn care operation for tree maintenance when he found that during a regular eight week lawn spraying schedule, his crews sometimes finished in six or seven weeks. There was a one or two week lull before the next application, "So we put them on the tree truck in order to generate some income without having them idle. Now it's got to the point where we start our tree truck in April and they run

right through until September."

Spray Green offers what they call their "A" and "B" spray programs. The "A" program is a bi-annual spray that includes a full-year guarantee, while the "B" program provides thirty day coverage for one time spot sprays whenever a customer wants just one spray.

Their tree business represents an industry success story. Although initially begun as a sideline, this year Spray Green will field two separate divisions to handle their lawn and tree care responsibilities.

Rick White of Village Green Ltd., in Chicago, Illinois, started his tree care business in much the same way and feels that the two services are compatible. "It's attractive to the customers because when they have fewer people to contact the better. And during the lawn care season low period in the fall, the program fills in well."

Hasty estimates. White finds the demand for light fall pruning "unbelievable" and can switch some of his lawn care people over during the fall lag months. One thing he doesn't encourage, however, is hasty estimates. "We don't make it real convenient for a person to have an estimate for tree care because people started to call when all they really wanted was lawn care estimates." Because tree care estimates are time consuming and complicated, they must make a separate tree appointment.

Charles McGinty of McGinty Brothers, Inc., in Long Grove, Illinois agrees. "We spend all together too much time quoting for tree trimming," which, he says, returns the least profit margin. "But, it keeps people going,"

Says Davey Lawnscape's Gordon Ober: "We're finding that as the industry gets more competitive, you've got to find more and more ways to get the business out of the customer."



he said. One of the reasons tree trimming is marginally unprofitable for some companies is that the cost for trimming equipment can be prohibitive. McGinty says that it costs at least \$50,000 for a claim loader, \$45,000 for a tower, and \$12,000 for a chipper. "But," he says, "It does help sell our other services."

McGinty Brothers runs three separate divisions: a lawn care department, a tree care department, and a crew for trimming and removal. He says he keeps the branches distinct because, for one thing, the equipment is so much different between tree and lawn care. "We would be very leery of using a truck that had herbicide on it or 2,4-D for any kind of tree spraying," he said.

The tree removal business requires very costly labor. McGinty cites the added expense of worker's insurance for the occasionally high risk tree take-down jobs. He says that whereas lawn care insurance may cost him about \$4.65 per \$100 of income, tree work insurance is as high as \$10.09. "The men are very expensive," he said. "Mainly we have it as an added selling feature."

Selling the spoils. One of the ways some outfits allay the high cost of tree removal is by selling chip refuse as mulch and lumber as firewood. Dave Elias of Blanchard Tree in Toledo, Ohio has six acres of property for his company and finds that he uses every bit of it to store equipment, lumber and chip debris. Blanchard presently has 1,300 lawn care accounts and is expecting to add another 700 shortly.

They offer a 10 percent discount to customers who contract for both tree and lawn care and usually try to sell both jobs at once. "We try to sell the job right over the phone," he said. And, when one of their customers signs up for a pruning in the spring or fall for

disease control, Blanchard reps can step right in and recommend a total feeding and fungicide program.

Elias is troubled by the recent public sensitivity over pesticide use and fears that in a few years, tree spraying will be banned outright. "The state agents are on our backs all the time," he said. His remark brings up one of the daily risks of the tree care business: you can't spray a tall shade tree in winds over

"It's attractive to the customers," says Village Green's Rick White, "because when they have fewer people to contact the better. And during the low period in the fall, the demand for pruning is unbelievable."



10 miles per hour in most areas. And in the midwest particularly, this can result in expensive down time.

Down time. That's the right way to spray under windy conditions. But often local ordinances prohibit spraying tall trees on such days. And that's when an integrated tree and lawn care operation can benefit you. Says Roger Albrecht, president of Nitro Green Lawn & Tree Care, in Bismark, North Dakota, "On windy days we send our tree people over to work on the lawns. We keep those people on all year round as they're so hard to get."

Albrecht agrees that it's a little tougher for his lawn care applicators to make the transition to tree spraying and maintenance. "Estimating is tough for lawn care guys," he said. Most of his tree applicators have training in either biology or horticulture, but he will take experienced people without formal training and train them on the job.

Although he doesn't service trees for pruning because of the large investment needed, he says that if there are a lot of trees in your market area, the financial rewards are excellent. "It's a lot more profitable per account," he says, "and it fills in well."

Their services are so compatible, Albrecht says, that sometimes they can use regular lawn care fertilizer on a tree if there is no grass within the drip line. "Depending on what you use," he said, "lawn care fertilizer is just as effective as deep root feeding since tree feeder roots are closer to the surface anyway."

There is one area in which the two services must always be kept separate however, says Albrecht, and that's the individual inventories. "You never want to put yourself in a position where you're going to grab some herbicide to use on trees. You could easily use the wrong stuff and kill the tree immediately."

Conclusions. It is unusual when so many agree on the advantages of adding on a tree care service to your existing lawn care establishment. All those interviewed have done it with success and many business rewards. However, not everyone has chosen to follow the same course of development. Some started slowly and even inadvertently with the ideal of keeping their crews busy between lawn spray applications.

Others, already established in the tree business, chose to add a lawn care department to their mainline business. Tree care requires a large capital investment and many middle range lawn care companies just don't have the resources to develop pruning and take-down services.

However, all have said that profits are excellent in the tree business even if it's only chemical spraying and fertilizer maintenance. And, while it helps generate cash flow in the off months, it also keeps valuable employees working year round, a benefit that can't be ignored.

— Paul McCloskey

SEED

International Seeds to produce, market Regal, Enmundi

International Seeds, Inc., Halsey, Ore., has announced it will take over production and marketing of Regal perennial ryegrass and Enmundi Kentucky bluegrass. The varieties had previously been marketed by North American Plant Breeders, Inc., Mission, Kans.

Hal G. Dickey, marketing manager for North American Plant Breeders, will begin work for International Seeds, it was announced by International Seeds' product manager Harry Stalford. Dickey will continue to work out of the Kansas City area.

Regal and Enmundi join International's stable of grass seed varieties: Derby perennial ryegrass, Emerald creeping bentgrass, Merit Kentucky bluegrass and Vantage Kentucky bluegrass.

Montana, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska.

The creation of the seminars on ornamental pests has been a special concern of Norman E. Ehmann, the company's general manager for pest control sales. Work on the program began three years ago.

"We wanted to give the customer something back of an added value," Ehmann said. "It was our way of saying 'thank you' for doing business with us." From beginning when five people "who came just to see what was going on" gathered in the back of a company warehouse sitting on cartons, the seminars have become a library of reference guides and are still growing.

When Larry A. Allen, a registered entomologist, joined the company three years ago, Ehmann knew he had found the

right man to help him create the new seminar series. A graduate of California State University, Long Beach, Allen had five years of field work in Washington state with special attention to pests that attack ornamentals and agricultural crops.

Allen was soon to be trained by Stennett Heaton, one of the finest photographers of insect life cycles. Now retired, Heaton's work created a library of color slides numbering in the thousands which are used to illustrate the seminars.

Just the beginning. The three-hour seminar on insect pests which attack ornamentals utilizes 250 color slides. For a \$20 fee, attendees receive the first volume of a Pest Control Library guide which represents an introduction to aphids, cicadas, leafhoppers, spittlebugs and treehoppers. Volume Two is

currently in progress. It will deal with mealybugs, scale insects and others.

Allen identifies the Mediterranean fruit fly as the chief threat as an insect pest because it attacks over 200 varieties of plants. Of continuing concern as well are the gypsy moth and Japanese beetle.

The seminars provided by the company represented attendance of more than 11,000 people in 1979-80, ranging from three to 12 hours each, and more than 50,000 man-hours invested by people intent on improving their knowledge and skills.

For further information on how one can secure volumes from the Van Waters & Rogers Pest Control Library or attend any of the seminars, write: Norman Ehmann, Director of Marketing, Van Waters & Rogers, 2600 Campus Dr., San Mateo, CA 94403. — Alan Caruba

COST CUTTINGS

Save thousands with carrier route presort

The Post Office's plan to institute a nine-digit zip code sometime this summer may prove to be more of a task than a savings to lawn care mass mailers since the planned penny-a-piece discount is geared more toward first class mail. But Kim Schaefer, division sales coordinator for Davey Lawnscape in Kent, Ohio says that by using a method called 'carrier route presort' a mass mailer can save as much as 4¢ a piece on bulk mail. Herewith are his findings:

Davey Lawnscape has converted its entire mailing list over to



Davey's Kim Schaefer says that by using carrier route presort, lawn care companies can save as much as four cents a piece on bulk mail.

carrier route presort. This means that prospect lists are broken down into the actual route the postman travels. Beginning this year, the rate of bulk mail postage was 8.4¢ per piece. The bulk mail rate has since risen to 10.4¢ per piece. The rate for carrier route presort at the beginning of the year was 6.7¢ per piece, and on March 22, it was lowered to 6.4¢ per piece. Now there is a savings of 4¢ per piece for sorting your mail by a carrier route. A small lawn care business doing 200,000 mailings could save as much as \$8,000.00 in postage.

The next question naturally is: how do I convert my list to obtain the savings? The government provides tapes for all regions of the country that lists every postal patron by carrier route. The tapes are provided free of charge. These tapes are then matched to your prospect list to convert your list into carrier route sequence. You must have 10 prospects in each carrier route to qualify for the discount. If there is less than 10 prospects in a carrier route, they do not qualify and must be mailed at the bulk rate. It is not unusual for a list to qualify 90 percent of its prospects. This could amount to a savings of 4¢ per piece for 90 percent of a company's mailings. The savings involved are staggering.

Schaefer believes that at this time that by using the carrier route presort there is no need for the nine-digit zip code. Both systems accomplish the same end. The nine-digit zip code aligns more with the speedy delivery of first class mail, whereas the carrier route presort is designed to hasten the delivery of bulk mail. For mass mailings carrier route presort is the course to follow.

FUNGICIDES

Diamond Shamrock expands Daconil production facilities

The Agricultural Chemicals Division of Diamond Shamrock Corp., Cleveland, has announced a major expansion of its chlorothalonil production facilities at the division's Greens Bayou Plant in Houston.

Diamond Shamrock markets chlorothalonil, a contract turf fungicide, under the trade name Daconil 2787.

The company's management recently approved the project. Environmental permits have been applied for and, subject to approval, construction is expected to begin this summer with the expansion scheduled for completion next year.

The company's announcement of the chlorothalonil expansion follows completion of isophthalonitrile production facilities at the Greens Bayou Plant. Isophthalonitrile is the basic raw material for chlorothalonil.

Engineering for the expansion is being done by Diamond Shamrock's engineering department.

VAN WATERS & ROGERS

Ornamental pest control is new seminar topic

For 27 years, the pest control seminars offered by the sales representatives of Van Waters & Rogers have become a widely respected education forum. Now, a whole new series of seminars have been created to focus on "Insect Pests of Ornamental Plants."

The seminars are available throughout the 12 states served by Van Waters & Rogers, which has headquarters in San Mateo, Calif. There are four offices in Texas and other offices in Washington state, Oregon, Idaho,

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Frank Timmons: "Dynamite . . . up 25 to 30 percent."



Herman Carruth: "Our accounts want showplaces."



Rod Bailey: "It's nothing like it was in 1973 and 1974."



David Frank: "25 percent up in signed contracts."

MOWING/MAINTENANCE from page 1

of business last year, more will go out this year. But a lot of them were not getting enough for the jobs

anyway. In this economy, they drive the prices down so low, that it is hard to get them back up again."

Construction is down in

Kujawa's Milwaukee area, but he looks for his maintenance business to be up in the range of 15 to 20 percent. Most of his existing accounts are very understanding on

pricing, but he says he has had to stay responsive to legitimate competition.

"But when you get down to apples against apples, there is usually no problem with good professional buyers," he said. "Some of the people with new business cannot understand why there is so much difference between bids. We have participated in some public bids, and we are trying to get the buyers to look beyond bonding and insurability and low price. Low pricing wears very thin."

Kujawa has upgraded his equipment this year, adding to his Hustler line, some pickup trucks, and converted a Toro Workmaster to a boom spraying unit for large spray jobs. He looks for construction to be up by the third quarter, "but that will be just about too late for this year."

Budget-tightening. Rod Bailey, Evergreen Services Corp., Bellevue, Wash., says that the general landscape construction market has tightened in his area, so installation work is down, but that "we are coming off of a construction boom, so there is quite a bit of maintenance work available.

"It is becoming very competitive though, there used to be three pages of maintenance companies in the Yellow Pages, now there are eight or 10," he told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY. "They are coming out of the trees."

He says there is some budget-tightening going on, financial institutions particularly are down. "We have had to go back with a sharper pencil in some cases, because they have told us they are watching the figures," he said. "Some of our national corporate clients are dropping down, but it is nothing like 1973 and 1974, when companies were asking us what we could do with half of the budget."

He added a lot of new equipment last year, and about the biggest things he bought this year were 36-inch Bobcat mowers. He is looking for 20-25 percent growth in his maintenance business, and looking to increase work in areas where he already has business, to increase his density. Most of the new business is coming from commercial park developments, large downtown office buildings and shopping centers in outlying areas of Seattle.

New equipment. Frank Timmons, Landbug Industries, Jacksonville, Fla., when asked about

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RADNOR VALLEY SLICED TWO-THIRDS OFF CREEKBANK MOWING BILLS.

Mark Curtin
Superintendent
Radnor Valley Country Club
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You don't have to be a golfer to appreciate the job EMBARK plant growth regulator did on these creekbanks.

Mark Curtin, grounds superintendent of this 18-hole golf course, used to catch a lot of flack about lost balls if he wasn't constantly cleaning up these creekbanks. And the way he tells it that used to cost quite a piece of change. About \$3,200 a season.

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his maintenance business, has a one-word reply: "Dynamite. "We'll be up 25 to 30 percent this year," he told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY. "The economy is not hurting in Jacksonville, we are more industrial and less tourist oriented. The home market is not depressed here, construction is up."

Timmons purchased some new Hustler riding mowers this year, and also some new Jacobsen reel and gang mowers. He says that most of his clients have increased their budgets this year, not all of them, but across the board on an average.

David Frank, David J. Frank Landscaping Contracting, Inc., Germantown, Wis., told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY that while business is up, he has had to go back and adjust specifications and frequency of service in many cases to get a program that his customers

can live with.

"This is something I don't like to do," he said, "but you have to if you want to do business with them, you have to sharpen your pencil."

He has noticed that if commercial businesses find their workload slow, they have been allowing their payroll workers to handle some of the routine work such as mowing and cleanup, but leaving the chemical work to Frank's company.

He has added two new crews for maintenance, bought some new Hustler mowers and a Toro GMT, and is looking at the year with "guarded optimism. In signed contracts, we have increased our business 25 percent so far, and that is coming off a year when our maintenance business was up 40 percent."

Looking good. Herman Carruth, AAA Lawn Industries, Inc., Tucker, Ga., will do \$3 million in

maintenance work this year with his 28 crews, 25 percent up over last year.

"We have taken on a number of new accounts," he told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, "we have a sales contest every winter with our people. But of course anybody could make it in the maintenance business in Atlanta."

"The economy might be hurting some of the companies, some of the leasing companies are cutting back," he said. "But if they have limited spaces they want to lease, they have to have them looking good. They have to have them looking like show places."

Carruth has added some new Hustlers and Jacobsen Turfcats and also a new Wang 2300 computer. "We have it up and in basic language, and we have everything on it, we don't even have a checkbook anymore." —Bob Earley

ducted by the magazine.

By far the single greatest percentage of employers polled (25%) retain no employees on a full-time year-round basis. This is offset in the survey by those (23%) who employ an average of 10 or more workers full time during the busy season.

The gap is a crude indication of the highly seasonal nature of many lawn care businesses which rely on a beefed-up staff during the working season and then cut back to an off-season skeleton crew.

Upon closer examination, however, the study reveals that most lawn care businesses (35%) keep an average of two, three, or four employees on a year round basis; only 12 percent keep between five and nine employees year round; and another 12 percent keep 10 or more employees on a full time basis.

Those that keep a sizeable staff throughout the year are most likely involved in other cold-season industry sidelines such as pest control, tree maintenance, or snow removal.

Based on the results of the survey and a measure of the size of the lawn care industry as a whole, the total number of workers in the industry was projected to 58,000 serving on a full time year round basis, and 110,000 on a full time basis during the busy season.

The results of the 1980 survey are based on a 53.6 percent response to 500 questionnaires mailed to readers of LAWN CARE INDUSTRY last year. For a copy of the survey, contact Bob Earley, editor/publisher, LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, 757 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

SEARS from page 1

ery Ward for 1½ years on the agreement for the lawn care business. His company markets hydromulch and hydromulch equipment, and now is also handling lawn care chemicals and fertilizers.

Anderson has the nationwide agreement with Montgomery Ward and has thus far set up 40 dealers in Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma and Minnesota. They are also working with people in California and the Chicago areas. Most of the dealers are in businesses such as landscaping, pest control, insulation and fencing, he said.

Anderson said that his company sets up the dealerships, and then the separate dealers pay a certain percentage of business to Montgomery Ward.

Sears test markets. Campbell said that lawn care is one of the 60 network of concessions Sears has established across the country. In the Philadelphia and mid-Atlantic region, the concession is being handled by Bob McCaffrey, RGM Services, Inc.

"We are in a test mode right now," McCaffrey told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY. "It is difficult to read it right now, but it is a good business with potential." RGM handles cleaning services work for Sears in eastern portions of the country.

Roger Albrecht, Nitro Green, Bismarck, N.D., told LAWN CARE INDUSTRY he has been working

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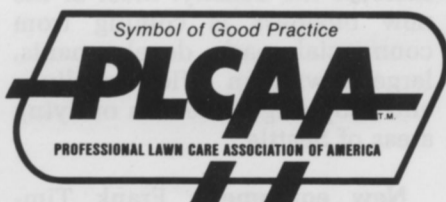
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Professional Lawn Care Association of America

with Sears for about a year on an agreement. The company is also experimenting in pest control services in five states — Wyoming, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Colorado. Offices have been set up thus far in Billings, Mont.; Bismarck, Fargo, N.D./Moorehead, Minn.; Denver and Rapid City, S.D.

DIRECT MAIL, from page 1

• Too many direct mailers in the chemical lawn care industry look the same, there is often no differentiating between companies.

• The best direct mail campaigns are successful because hand-developed mailing lists have been used.

Ringling phones. "When we talk about advertising, we are talking about systems employed by us to get non-users to use our lawn care service, to give us an opportunity to sell them," Erbaugh said. "Advertising in our business is inquiry generation. Translated, it is what we all do to keep the telephone ringing, to keep the cards and coupons flowing in."

He says that in analyzing advertising costs, it is very important to distinguish between an inquiry and a sale. "Say that you and I as lawn care competitors spend the same amount of money on ads, and we both generate exactly 1,000 inquiries. You sell 600 jobs, and I sell 500," he said. "In that case, we have been equally effective as advertisers; our cost-per-inquiry is exactly the same. However, you have out-performed me from a selling standpoint; your cost-per-sale is lower, you have had a higher 'closing ratio.'"

Erbaugh said that advertising objectives are just one part of a company's overall marketing strategy. A company's marketing strategy can be defined either informally or formally, and is of course grounded on funds available for marketing.

Some lawn care companies have a no-growth strategy, they are essentially satisfied with their level of customers at present. Their objective might be to increase earnings through productivity gains. Their advertising objectives would be defined accordingly, perhaps by limited dollars spend on promotion in areas where a company already has much business.

Steady growth. Other companies have a slow, steady growth philosophy. They plan on adding some equipment, they are confident in their ability to generate a degree of sales. Essentially, their advertising strategy, following from overall marketing strategy, is to add enough customers to meet those objectives, and to replace lost customers.

Then there are those companies that are extremely aggressive. They have 10 trucks and they are going to add 10 more, and they have the financing for an aggressive growth strategy, built upon aggressive advertising to meet those objectives.

Erbaugh uses as an example a company that has 2,000 customers, but would like to get to 3,000 customers in one season. If the company has a past experience of 20 percent attrition, this means

that it will retain 1,600 of its present customers. To get to the 3,000-customer level, the company will have to develop 1,400 new accounts. The company is in a position of needing almost as many new customers as it will retain.

Say, again for example, that the company's historical cost ratio has been 60 percent on all inquiries generated. On that basis, its advertising is going to have to generate 2,400 inquiries. "I suggest an analysis of the situation should not be based on how much money I might have to spend on advertising. Rather, it should be based on how much business I can realistically do, given the characteristics of my company and my financial backing. The issue then becomes, how much do I have to spend on advertising to get to that point?" Erbaugh said.

Market competition. He says the whole issue of knowing what can be accomplished in a particular

The classic example of not doing anything is where there is a competitive market and lawn care advertising features a white tank truck, professional service claims and a do-it-yourself price.

market is becoming increasingly difficult as the lawn care industry grows. Several years ago, he developed a method which relates the number of potential customers in a marketing area to relative competitiveness of that area.

"This can be very crucial," he says, "because from an advertising standpoint, we must always position ourselves properly. To do this, we have to have a feel for the market. Is it competitive or non-competitive? Is it an educated or uneducated market? The answers to these questions are relevant to media decisions, and to a company's general marketing objectives."

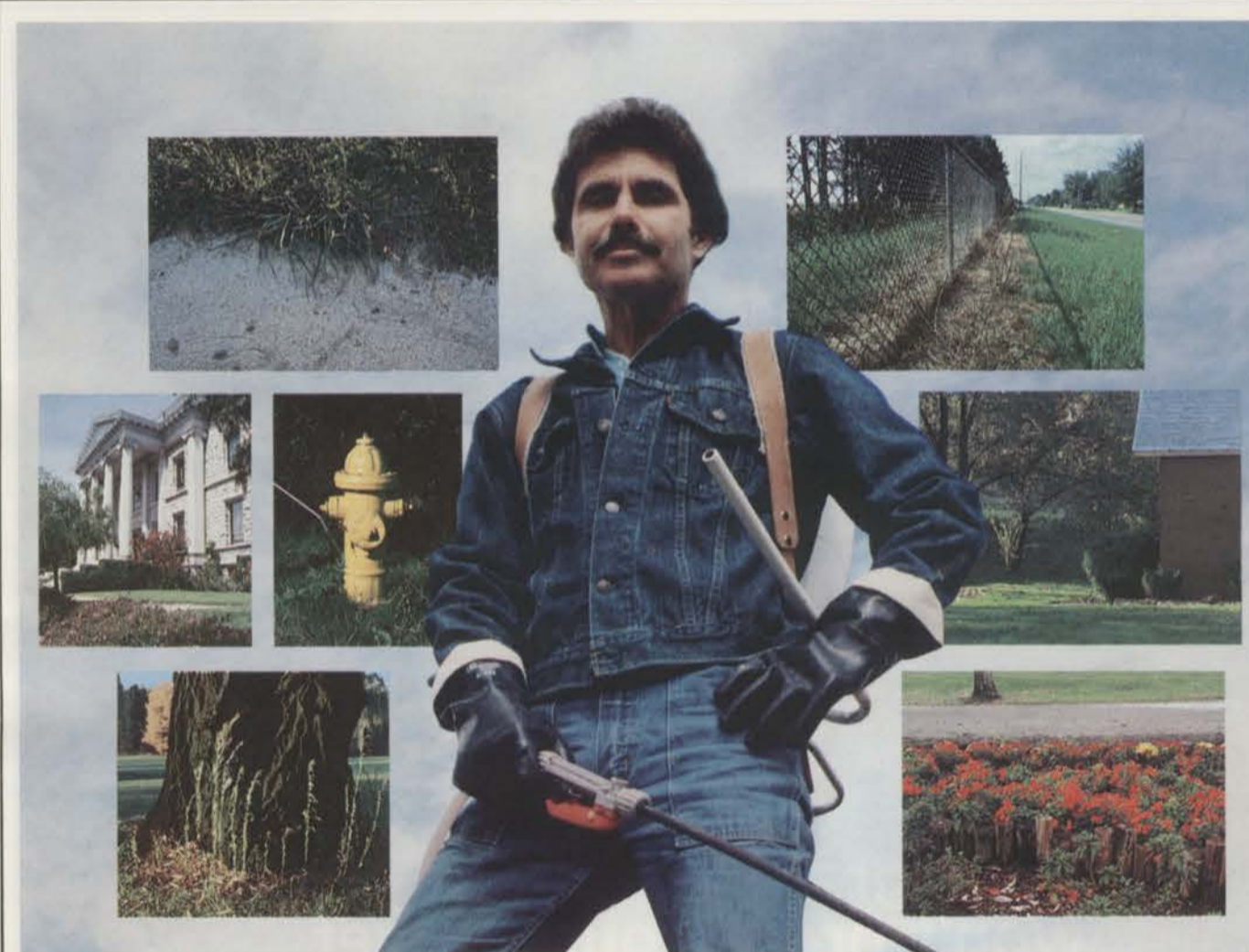
In Erbaugh's opinion, the classic

example of not doing anything is where there is a competitive market and lawn care advertising features a big, white tank truck, and claims of professional servicing at a do-it-yourself price.

"That is the signal and the message that has been sent the last 15 years," he said. "When this type of campaign is used in a competitive market, and when a lawn care businessman tells me he didn't have a successful direct mail campaign, I say there has been no differentiation on the part of the direct mail user. The user blames non-success on direct mail when it is actually his fault for not differentiating."

Market analysis. Erbaugh uses

to page 24



Roundup[®] makes him a one man army to fight weeds.

One man with Roundup in a backpack sprayer can handle many weed control jobs that once took several people.

General weed control. Edging. Trimming. Small renovation jobs. Roundup[®] herbicide helps make all of these a one man job.

Sprayed on the foliage of tough, actively growing weeds, Roundup goes right down to the roots, controlling the entire plant. Treated weeds won't grow back. So there is less need for repeat treatments, mowing and hand weeding.

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More than 1,200 guests attended the 5th Reinders Turf Conference held recently at the Waukesha County Exposition Center in Wisconsin. Sponsored by Reinders Brothers, Inc., Elm Grove, Wis., the conference offered more than 25 educational seminars on turf and irrigation management, including many lawn care seminars. There were 35 manufacturers exhibiting at the show.

DIRECT MAIL from page 23

the Rochester area as an example. The metropolitan area has 300,000 households. Of this number, only 60,000 meet the requirements of being owner-occupied and having a buying income of \$25,000 or more. These are prospective users of a lawn care service.

He then discounts that market even more. He feels 10 percent are diligent do-it-yourselfers who will always do the work themselves. Another 10 percent will never do anything for their lawn. And still another five percent have the funds to pay for a full-service gardener. This reduces the market down to 45,000 homes.

In Rochester in 1977, 3,000 of these homes were serviced by a lawn care company. In 1978, the number jumped to 8,000. In 1979, it was up to 14,000. And last year, the figure was 21,000. In four lawn care seasons, the market went from less than 10 percent penetration of

these primary households to about 50 percent.

He calls Rochester a marginally competitive market. When the penetration figure reaches 75 percent, he would then call a market competitive. If it is below 30 percent, he would call the market non-competitive.

"There is no question that a company's long-term success is a function of its service," Erbaugh says, "but in a market that is not that competitive, there is much more room for an aggressive strategy, and it also implies that it is an uneducated market. If it is a marginally competitive market, at some point you will have to differentiate yourself from the other guy. If it is an extremely competitive market, real growth is going to essentially come from the other guy. And you better be able to tell the customer why he should come to you. And be prepared for a higher cost of inquiry and a higher cost of sale."

Triggering behavior. He says that once a lawn care businessman has a grasp of market size and the relative degree of competition in that market, he can begin to get to the point where he can set marketing objectives which translate into customer addition requirements.

"Knowing your close ratio, your attrition rates, you can begin to get a feel for what you are going to have to do to get those inquiries, as far as advertising is concerned," he said. "The way I look at advertising, we are talking about the delivery of a message that is designed to trigger behavior to a prospective buyer at the right time."

He says the classic example is a husband and wife, home on a Saturday morning. The wife tells the husband that their lawn looks terrible, its full of weeds, and that he has never done a good job taking care of the lawn. They go back into the house and turn on the radio or television, or the mailman shows up with a direct mailer. The message comes through: "Does your lawn look terrible? Is it full of weeds? You can have a nice-looking lawn without work and worry. Call us now and we'll be right over."

The message was to-the-point, it was delivered at the right time to the prospective buyer, and it was seen or heard in the buying environment.

Shaping ad programs. Erbaugh feels it is difficult to get the proper sequence of claims and positions stressing the benefits of a lawn care company into a television or radio ad because there is not enough time. With newspaper and direct mail, it is possible to set forth extremely strong positions. He says that because direct mail offers 100 percent targeting, there are less wasted impressions than with newspaper advertising.

He assumes an ad budget of \$5,000, and then goes through a cost analysis of different advertising media.

"With direct mail, you have to consider in the cost list development, list purchasing, label typing, creative work on the mailer, printing of the mailer, you have to get it labeled and bundled, and you have to get it organized for

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mailing, you have to get it dropped off, and you have the cost of the return card back," he says. "In my opinion, you can do a good job for 20 cents apiece, including postage. With our \$5,000, we can get 25,000 mailers out the door."

His experience has shown that he can expect a two percent return on a direct mail campaign that is organized properly. That would mean a generation of 500 inquiries. Cost per inquiry is \$10. Assuming a close ratio of 60 percent, that means 300 sales. Cost per sale is \$16.

He then takes the same \$5,000 and determines what he can expect with newspaper advertising. A newspaper in the Akron area has a circulation of 150,000, and for \$5,000 he can purchase 10 newspaper ads that are nine inches wide by four inches. His ads would generate 1.5 million impressions, at a cost of four-tenths of a cent per impression.

Active readership. But, he says, five out of six of the impressions are going to non-prospective buyers, using his Rochester ratio. There is also a marketing principle that says that only one out of six readers actually are concentrating on a particular newspaper ad. With all of these discounts, effective exposures are knocked down to 19,000.

"Now will you get a two percent return on that?" he asks. "Maybe yes, maybe no. Are the inquiries going to come from service areas where you want business? Maybe yes, maybe no. Will they be qualified buyers? Maybe yes, maybe no. All in all, the cost for an effective exposure with newspaper advertising is 38 cents versus 20 cents for direct mail."

He does the same thing for radio. For that \$5,000 you can buy 75 thirty-second spots. Marketing experts estimate that one out of four listeners are active. Again, five out of six are going to non-prospective buyers. Also, most radio signals are received in the non-buying environment (given the fact that most companies buy radio spots during drive-time hours). Thus, he feels that you essentially reduce your effective exposures through radio to a point lower than can be tolerated.

"Now again radio, like newspaper, is effective in combination with direct mail or other advertising, no doubt about it," he says. But I'm talking about purely the expenditure of a set level of dollars on one media versus another."

Television. He says television stacks up pretty well using the same type of analysis. For \$5,000 you can buy 12 thirty-second spots. You will get 100,000 exposures for each spot, 1.2 million all together. The active viewer involvement with television is greater than radio or newspaper, and using the same discount factors, television is the least expensive media per impression.

"However, you have to figure in the high cost of creating an ad for television," Erbaugh says. "When you take that into account, the cost per effective impression for television becomes prohibitive for most of us in the lawn care business.

There are many common mistakes he finds lawn care com-

panies making when they use direct mail campaigns.

"First, make sure you know what you want," he says. "And have it down in writing prior to approaching somebody to help you with the machinery. I see people who go to an ad agency first without really analyzing what their objectives are and what the character of their company is. Agencies can only work with the input they receive. They can of course provide sophisticated market research, but most of us cannot afford it. Usually, they simply ask for the brochures of your competition, and they essentially come up with a better version of the same thing your competitor is doing. In my opinion, dollars spent with ad agencies on direct mail pieces are often wasted.

"You know your market, you must define your positioning, then of course there is a place for layout and design assistance from a sophisticated ad agency," he said.

Differentiation. If your market is competitive, you must offer the reader of your direct mail piece, through your message, a reason why he should call you instead of another lawn care company.

"For the last four or five years, I have received six mailers at my home that are identical for all practical purposes," he said. "They all have a big white tank truck, they all have a nice-looking young man working on the lawn, they all have a beautiful-looking lawn, they all promote do-it-yourself prices. They all essentially are piggybacking on ChemLawn's initial efforts in advertising." ChemLawn Corp., based in Columbus, Ohio, is the largest lawn care company in the country.

"Why should a buyer distinguish between these six?" Erbaugh asks. "Maybe one piece is bigger, one might have an orange return card instead of white, but basically what is the difference between any of them? What will

make the homeowner call your firm before he calls one of your competitors?

His point again is differentiation. It does not have to take the form of an actual literal comparison of your company with another. Judge the character of your company. One of the most effective pieces he has seen was one of a small company that promoted itself as "one company where you will meet the owner."

List creation. Other common mistakes he has seen made are in the area of list creation. It is easy to purchase labels from a mailing house. He says mailing houses are getting more sophisticated, but you again have to consider the waste principal.

"When you purchase an entire zip code list from a mailing house, you are getting a lot of fat," he said. "Any direct mail expert will tell you the secret of success is the quality of the list you are using.



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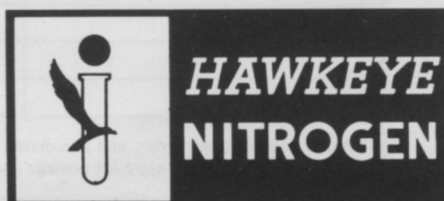
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DIRECT MAIL from page 25

You must constantly cull and update your list. I think it has to be done by hand, with most of the work done in the winter. You have to have your people out driving the streets within a zip code area, picking and choosing where you want to mail."

If you as a lawn care business-

man are limited to use of one advertising media, there is no reason to use anything other than direct mail, Erbaugh says.

"At \$16 per sale, with the average customer being with your firm three years, that is \$5.50 per year — or \$1.35 per application — to obtain that customer. You can't beat it," he said. — *Bob Earley*

PESTICIDES

Problems of tank-mixing herbicides

At a recent lawn care seminar, the subject of tank-mixing the herbicides 2,4-D, mecoprop (MCP) and dicamba arose as a possible way of saving money. The lawn care businessman who asked the question was considering mixing the three herbicides, but had had several bad experiences in the past and was hesitant.

According to Urban Wessling of PBI/Gordon's research and development department in Kansas City, Kans., who cited the seminar instance to LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, "To answer this type of question, it is necessary to give some background about tank-mixing.

"In farming situations, it is common to tank-mix chemicals as

directed by their label. For example, a farmer may tank-mix the agricultural herbicides Lasso and Treflan. He is mixing two compatible chemicals which perform two distinctly different jobs — broadleaf weed control and grassy weed control.

"On the other hand," Wessling continued, "it may not be possible to combine other herbicides without encountering major problems. For instance, the objective of a three-way compound such as Trimec is synergism, or a 'more-than-additive' effect, resulting in broad-spectrum weed control."

Trimec is manufactured by PBI/Gordon Corp., and contains 2,4-D, mecoprop and dicamba.

"The problem with tank-mixing these three herbicides is chemical incompatibility, poor herbicide activity, or even worse, turf injury," Wessling said.

University reports. Attempts by lawn care businessmen to tank-mix these three herbicides is sometimes caused by misunderstanding university reports, he said. Traditionally, university researchers have avoided using trade names such as Trimec, instead referring to its generic ingredients — 2,4-D, mecoprop and dicamba.

Herbicide users do not realize that the university is reporting about the synergistic activity of Trimec in this instance, and certainly do not recommend tank-mixing the three ingredients. Dr. Euel Coats, of the Department of Pathology and Weed Science at Mississippi State University, said:

"The universities do not use trade names in order to prevent favoritism and in no way are the reports meant to direct operators to tank-mix 2,4-D, MCP and dicamba."

In order to attain the best possible herbicide activity and at the same time attain a wide margin of turf safety, the correct herbicide-to-herbicide ratio must be carefully constructed, Wessling said. When a lawn care businessman is mixing a 200-gallon spray batch, he must be sure that each drop leaving the spray nozzle contains the correct herbicide ratio. Furthermore, each spray drop must contain the precise amount of the least-concentrated herbicide in the three-way product.

Assured precision? Can the lawn care businessman be assured of precision when tank-mixing three herbicides, the least-concentrated at four ounces to a 200-gallon tank of mixed spray? Will the four ounces distribute uniformly in the tank without chemical reaction with the other herbicides or fertilizers?

"Complete homogenization of a three-way compound can only be arrived at when the manufacturer reacts the three herbicide acids to form the dimethylamine salt of a new product," Wessling said. "Trimec is the best example."

Lawn care businessmen can use these ad slicks and add their own message. They are available from Allied Corp.

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PBI Gordon's Wessling says that potential problems on tank-mixing 2,4-D, mecoprop and dicamba include chemical incompatibility and poor herbicide activity.

There are other barriers to tank-mixing. The chemistry of a three-way combination is extremely important. Solvents of differing chemical properties are used in making 2,4-D, MCP, etc., each having varying abilities to absorb the herbicide acid. When the solvents clash, the herbicide falls out as useless crystals at the bottom of the tank or act to plug up spray screens and nozzles. Some incompatible solvents are the prime cause of turf injury.

Dr. Roger Funk, vice president of research for Davey Lawnscape Co., Kent, Ohio, explains that when directly mixing different herbicides, a distinct probability exists that solvent imbalance may cause crystallization of the herbicide acids. He said: "The



Mississippi State's Dr. Euel Coats: "In no way are the reports meant to direct operators to tank-mix, 2,4-D, mecoprop and dicamba."

Davey Lawnscape Co. has used Trimec since 1975 without any incident of turf damage."

This is testimony to the effectiveness of a balanced herbicide content and a compatible solvent system, Wessling said.

Importance of pH. The pH of a solution is also of utmost importance. When the pH is not in a range of 8.0 - 8.5 the same problems of solvent compatibility will occur. Wessling points out the problems lawn care businessmen may encounter using a single herbicide/fertilizer application. This practice adds another dimension to chemical compatibility. He said:

"The pH must be made higher by mixing excess amine solvent to withstand 'abusive mixing.' This is done with Trimec. Furthermore, unless a lawn care businessman adds the additional amine solvent to a three-way herbicide mixture, incompatibility of chemicals will cause 'salting out' when an acidic fertilizer

is added."

Other problems related to tank-mixing are not immediately obvious. Involvement with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) can occur if labels are misused. Furthermore, if a lawn care businessman tank-mixes products which do not have tank-mix instructions on their label, he waives all recourse from manufacturers in the event of customer complaints resulting from turf damage.

As Wessling points out, it is a direct infringement of the patent protecting Trimec to tank-mix 2,4-D, MCP and dicamba.

Minimize callbacks. Efficiency is the key to any successful lawn care operation. William R. Fischer, president of Spring Green Lawn Care Corp., Plainfield, Ill., says:

"We spray thousands of lawns in the upper Midwest area with approximately 50 spray trucks.

We absolutely must service as many lawns as we possibly can every day — and we must do it right the first time to minimize callbacks. So, we can't afford to burden our lawn technicians with any responsibilities for tank-mixing when one product is measured in quarts, another in ounces and still another in pints.

"We know that Trimec does the job, and since we rely a good deal on word-of-mouth from our present customers to help us get new customers, we're not about to take any chances."

ORGANIZATIONS

Canada landscapers to form education group

Landscape Ontario Horticultural Trades Association announces the formation of a Professional Horticultural Sprayers' Group under

the chairmanship of John Wright of Wright Lawn Spray Service, Ltd., Bloomingdale, Ontario.

The aim of the group is to educate members of Landscape Ontario who are in the spraying business on business practices, new technology and to raise the level of professionalism in the horticultural spraying industry in Ontario.

As a group they can obtain a better voice with government, insurance programs and achieve a good working liaison with the Ontario Ministry of Environment.

An educational program has been started with 66 people in attendance at the first seminar held at the University of Guelph on February 18th, 1981. Business management and the 2,4-D issue were the two main topics of discussion. Future programs are to consist of a field day in July and a seminar in November. For further information contact Bob Cheesman: (416)276-6177.

Get the edge on yellow nutsedge in your turf.



As a turf professional, you know how yellow nutsedge can compete with desirable grasses for water and nutrients. This tough weed reduces the attractiveness of residential turf, golf course fairways and tees. It can lower the value of sod crops as well. And you don't want to risk using a herbicide that might damage your turf. But you don't have to live with these problems.

This year get the solution. Basagran® herbicide. Applied according to label directions, Basagran is the only post-emergence herbicide that effectively controls yellow nutsedge, without turf injury.

So, for the proven combination of toughness on yellow nutsedge and gentleness on your turf, use Basagran herbicide. And get the edge on yellow nutsedge.

BASF Wyandotte Corporation, Agricultural Chemicals Division, 100 Cherry Hill Road, Parsippany, New Jersey 07054.

You know you're going to
get 'em with Basagran.®
herbicide



Follow label instructions.

BASF



MEMOS

New directions. National Agricultural Chemicals Association president Jack D. Early told a House agriculture panel that adjustments in federal pest control research policies are mandatory to help restrict U.S. agricultural production losses currently estimated at \$35 billion a year. What with chemical regulation on the rise, Early's comments carry precious freight for the lawn care businessman.

Early told the panel that current government regulations constrain agricultural research scientists by diverting them away from their essential activities in order to provide defensive information for products whose value has already been demonstrated. "There is an obvious need for readjustment and realignment of research efforts nationally," he said, "and such readjustment must include reemphasizing the effective and efficient use of pesticides as a principal ingredient in pest management programs." He cautioned, however, that such pest control strategies as Integrated Pest

Management should not be studied as separate entities but in the context of pest control needs in a total production system.

Bulk mail discount. Lawn care businessmen mailing more than 588 first class letters can expect a one-half cent discount on each piece displaying the nine digit zip code once the change is approved, the Postal Service has reported. By a unanimous vote the Postal Service's Board of Governors endorsed the controversial system, which is still waiting approval from the independent Postal Rate Commission.

The discount would be in addition to rate reductions already allowed for businesses that presort and prepare their mail for automatic processing. The Post Service contends that the nine digit plan will improve the efficiency of mail deliveries and hold down costs. Postal officials say the system would direct mail automatically to a letter carrier's route rather than to a particular post office, and would save \$571 million a year.

CLASSIFIED

RATES: 40¢ per word (minimum charge, \$15). Bold face words or words in all capital letters charged at 60¢ per word. Boxed or display ads charged at \$40 per column inch (one inch minimum). Agency commissions will be given only when camera-ready art is provided by agency. For ads using blind box number, add \$5 to total cost of ad. Send ad copy with payment to Dawn Anderson, LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, 1 East First Street, Duluth, MN 55802.

BOX NUMBER REPLIES: Mail box number replies to: LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, Classified Ad Department, 120 W. 2nd St., Duluth, MN 55802. Please include box number in address.

HELP WANTED

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Hawkeye Chemical Company, a leading Midwest nitrogen products manufacturer, has an excellent opportunity for a Sales Representative, specialty fertilizers. Duties include solicitations and servicing of liquid fertilizer blenders and distributors and lawn service companies in the sale of FORMOLENE™, low-burn liquid nitrogen fertilizer for turf. Sales area covers eastern half of United States with concentration in Mid-

west. Degree in agriculture and experience in formulation and application of liquid fertilizers for turf are essential. Hawkeye offers car, expenses, salary plus commission, and an excellent employee benefit program.

Send resume in confidence to:
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HAWKEYE CHEMICAL COMPANY
P.O. Box 899
Clinton, IA 52732
An Equal Opportunity Employer M/F

BRANCH MANAGER Chemical Lawn Care firm is accepting applications for Managerial position. Must be experienced in route and service type business, responsible for sales personnel and administration. Must be willing to relocate in Ohio, Indiana or Kentucky areas. Write LCI Box 52. 11/81

Experienced Lawn Technician. Excellent opportunity for person experienced in chemical lawn care. New company with growing pains. Excellent promotion possibilities. Salary, bonus, benefits. Send resume and salary requirements for further information. All inquiries held in complete confidence. Tuckahoe Lawn Care, P.O. Box 27, Slocum, RI 02877. TF

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Increase your profits this year with "Garden Tips", the monthly customer newsletter with your company name/phone. Proven response . . . cements customer relations, gets them to spend more, opens new doors expertly in new expansion areas. Low cost, effective profit building. Call today 516-538-6444, we'll send complete information or write: Garden Tips, Box 117, Garden City, NY 11530. TF

FOR SALE

KELWAY® SOIL ACIDITY TESTER, used by PROFESSIONALS nationwide. Direct reading, lightweight, portable, fully serviceable, no power source. Model HB-2 reads moisture too. Available through distributors. For brochure contact Kel Instruments Co., Inc., Dept. T, P.O. Box 1869, Clifton, N.J. 07015. 201-471-3954. TF

Finn lawn seeder—800 gallon mounted on 1971 F600 Ford with 300 cubic inch 6 cylinder engine. Unit used very little. \$9,000 complete. 816-331-7441. 6/81

Logos for Lawncare — special offer. Buy 1 Introductory Tee Shirt (It's your lawn)/(And we care) \$5.99 + \$1.00 shipping and 1 Lawn Care of America Cap \$4.50 + \$1.00 handling and get free wholesale price catalog. Limited time only. Rush order to: Box 67, Jamesport, NY 11947. 6/81

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A Pat on the Bark

It's funny how many people don't really appreciate trees. Besides providing shade on a hot sunny day or shelter on a windy cold one... trees make cities more enjoyable places in which to live.



Strong healthy trees provide oxygen for our planet. And they give us a chance to get away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

Next time you see a tree, a really majestic tree, stop for just a moment and think of all the things trees do for us every day.

You may just want to pat it on the bark.



Make your city greener, prettier, more enjoyable by becoming a TREE CITY USA. For information on TREE CITY USA, send in this coupon or contact your state forester.

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ADDRESS _____ CITY _____
STATE _____ ZIP _____

The National Arbor Day Foundation
Arbor Lodge 100, Nebraska City, NE 68410

New absorbent meets EPA, RCRA regulations

Oil-Dri Corp. of America has introduced Safe 'n Dri, a new absorbent for hazardous waste solidification.

With the advent late last year of the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA), lawn care companies face serious financial penalties from the federal government if they do not properly dispose of any hazardous wastes they might be dealing with in their lawn care operation. Pesticide spills and waste from tank fills are prime examples of hazardous wastes in the lawn care industry.

The company says that Safe 'n Dri is a proven waste absorbent material for most hazardous liquids. It also meets Environmental Protection Agency and RCRA regulations for containment of toxic liquid wastes. The company also says that Safe 'n Dri costs less per cubic foot to use than other liquid waste absorbents available presently on the market. The product is available in 50-pound bags or bulk. Further detailed information is available from Oil-Dri Corp. of America.

Write 702 on reader service card

New no-drift herbicide applicator

Vandermolen Corporation announces availability of the Driftmaster — a completely new applicator that applies liquid herbicides without drift for the lawn care businessman.

The Driftmaster rolls-on liquid herbicide. The weed killer is applied to the ground by a ribbed roller right alongside shrubbery or



flower beds with no possibility of drift onto adjacent plants.

Other benefits of the Driftmaster are even application and better results with less chemicals. There is no waste.

Write 703 on reader service card

New rotary tiller lawn aerator combo

Feldman Engineering & Manufacturing Co., Inc. introduces the new combination rotary tiller/lawn aerator machine for the lawn care businessman. Powered by a two-horsepower Briggs & Stratton engine, the lightweight, compact tiller/aerator allows easy handling for garden cultivation and lawn aeration.

Its tough, spring steel tiller tines

Write 114 on reader service card →

self-sharpen in use and dig deeply for finely tilled seed bed. Easy rearrangement of tilling tines for smooth cultivation and tilling width variations. The tiller con-



verts quickly to the walk behind power lawn aerator which penetrates the turf to allow air, water and fertilizer to reach root, while promoting thatch deterioration for healthy, lush, green lawns.

Chain drive. Wheels 7 inch diameter. Depth stick with handy tine fastener wrench. Automatic single lever hand safety release clutch for forward and neutral. Fold down handle for auto trunk transport and compact storage.

Write 704 on reader service card

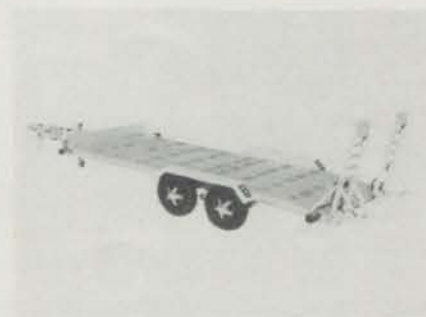
Pocket sized microscope developed

Micro-Mike is a new line of agricultural-use, pocket-sized microscopes, ideal for the identification of plant diseases and pests in the field. A precision, four-lens optical system gives distortion free, razor sharp magnification without focusing or adjustment. It has no moving parts, is virtually indestructible and carries a life time guarantee. Available in 10X, 20X, 40X, or 50X power magnifications. Manufactured by the DuMaurier Company, Virginia Beach, Virginia.

Write 705 on reader service card

Smooth riding with tandem axle trailer

Snowco Division of Beatrice Foods Co. has announced the addition of a new 4200 pound capacity trailer to their existing utility trailer line. The new Model 20-016 features as



standard equipment: a 76 inch by 180 inch steel deck; 7:00 by 13C tires; tandem axle; hydraulic brakes; adjustable loading ramps; cargo tie-down loops; screw-jack tongue stand and adjustable hitch height.

Write 706 on reader service card

TECUMSEH Symbol of Value

Throughout the world the familiar indianhead trademark has come to mean engineering excellence, product reliability and responsible business conduct.

Tecumseh's dedication to product quality is clearly expressed in the construction features of the Model TVS105XL (xtra life) heavy duty commercial rotary mower engine.

The TVS105XL design embodies components of proven durability - -
Cast Iron Cylinder Liners,
Bronze Main Bearings,
Hardened Crankshaft Journals,
Solid State Ignition,
Twin Element Air Cleaners

Components and design so rugged that in-warranty time has been extended to eighteen months.

Easy topside accessibility encourages routine maintenance.

Tecumseh's TVS105XL - Today's better long-term engine value for the commercial user, rental service, and discriminating homeowner.



TECUMSEH PRODUCTS COMPANY — ENGINE DIVISIONS
GRAFTON and NEW HOLSTEIN, WISCONSIN

WIPE OUT GRUB PROBLEMS WITH PROXOL®

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PENETRATES THATCH

Readily penetrates thatch to concentrate in the soil at the zone of larval activity.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND

Proxol does not produce a long-term residual buildup. At recommended rates it controls principal damage-causing insects as listed on the label without significantly affecting beneficial insects.

LOW CONCENTRATIONS

Proxol is effective at 1½ oz. to 3¾ oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. for cutworms and sod webworms. 3¾ oz. per 1,000 sq. ft. is required for grubs.



Division of The Upjohn Company

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Proxol is highly soluble in water. Easily applied with conventional ground equipment. Can be tank mixed with other non-alkaline pesticides. Low effective rates offer economy.

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A TUCO broad spectrum fungicide, long used by golf course professionals, to stop turf disease problems before they start.

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Armyworm

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