

Stauffer Patents New Herbicide

Stauffer Chemical Company has been granted a patent on a herbicide that, although still in the advanced stages of field testing, may turn out to be a significant market competitor to Monsanto Company's Roundup herbicide in the next two years.

Herb Day, sales manager — specialty products, confirmed that Stauffer has received a patent covering two classes of com-

pounds for use as herbicides, but he added that no commercial decision has been made on the product.

Continuing research

"The product sits right now in the research department, where it began, and where it will be for the next couple of years," he told *Lawn Care Industry*.

Stauffer declined to make further comment on the commercial plans of the herbicide or the chemicals it contains.

Since Monsanto Co.'s Roundup herbicide was introduced in 1976, it has grown to be one of the company's most important products. It also holds a patent position that is not due to expire until 1991, at which time the market for it may open up. "There are many new



Herb Day

to page 20

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving lawn maintenance and chemical lawn care professionals

BUTZ TO SPEAK AT PLCAA SHOW

Former secretary of agriculture, Earl L. Butz, will be the principal speaker at the PLCAA annual convention in Indianapolis, Nov. 16 to 18. He will address the topic, "Populism, Politics, and Progress."

Butz served as secretary of agriculture from 1971 to 1976, and is currently dean emeritus of agriculture at Purdue University.

Butz served as assistant secretary of agriculture from 1954 to 1957 during the Eisenhower administration. Following this he returned to Purdue as dean of agriculture. In 1971 he became U.S. secretary of agriculture until 1976.

Butz has been honored with the American Farm Bureau Federation award for distinguished service to agriculture.

MARKET COMPETITION HEATS UP; BUSINESSMEN REPORT THEFTS

Tales of Larceny Blight Industry

The law of the street is replacing standards of fair play in some lawn care markets across the country. To wit:

In southern California, corrosive chemicals were slipped into a lawn care truck tank, disabling the system and causing \$16,000 worth of damage. Company officers claim a competitor was responsible for the sabotage.

In Naperville, Ill., lowballing is a common practice according to one lawn care businessman — quoting prices so low that service and quality lawn care cannot possibly be rendered.



Bob Parmley

In Chicago, the offices of Tempo 21 Lawn Beautiful were ransacked and invoices, receipts, and mailing lists were taken including the names of about 10,000 lawn care customers. The chief suspect is a local competitor.

Other reports from around the

Thief Makes Off With Customer List

The offices of Tempo 21 Lawn Beautiful in Carol Stream, Ill., were broken into late last March and 11 boxes containing lawn care invoices, receipts, and IRS documents removed, according to Tempo 21 president Robert Parmley, including, he said, data on at least 10,000 of the company's 20,000 customers in the Chicago area.

"They didn't even bother some cash that was on the desk," he said, adding that customers whose records were stolen have been notified to beware of anyone offering lawn services without first measuring their lawns.

Parmley said that he has already spent about \$3,000 following up the investigation of a suspect, and that a grand jury is scheduled to



Raymond Blackburn of R. A. Blackburn Equipment Corp., Kensington, Md. advises a customer. A profile of this experienced dealer is on page 10.

BONUSES TAKE PRECEDENCE

Maintenance Workers See Wage Budgets Tightening

With the rate of inflation rising and mowing/maintenance businesses tightening up their overhead costs, mowing/maintenance workers are feeling the pinch. A pinch that means more competition for jobs, fewer bonuses, and heavier reductions in wage budgeting. Yet, as one businessman in Aurora, Colo., said, "At least the work is still out there."

True, the work is out there, but as the industry continues to battle imposed economic burdens, the workers themselves are being taken to task.

Larry Shelton, president of Classic Landscape, Raleigh, N.C., says, "We have to be careful now, we really don't know what is going to happen tomorrow. No longer can we give a raise to a man after seeing he works hard for three or four days. The economy just won't allow it."

Starting wages dip

Across the country, employers shared Shelton's opinion. Not only could many employers not give raises, but many could not increase their starting wages over

to page 19

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UPFRONT



Is it five years already?

The date was **July 25, 1977**. I know because I have a plaque on my wall that commemorates the date.

As the first issue of **LAWN CARE**

INDUSTRY rolled off the presses, the skeleton staff that produced it sipped **cheap champagne** out of paper cups. The champagne may

LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

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have been cheap, but it sure tasted good.

Has it really been five years since **Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.** started publishing **LAWN CARE INDUSTRY**? Yep.

The front-page headlines were:

- "Predict Industry Growth Will Hit 25% in 1977."
- "Sears Enters Market with 7,000 Customers."
- "Certification Programs to Be Effectuated Oct. 21."
- "Rust-Free Ryegrass a Real Possibility."
- "Lawn-A-Mat Emerges from Chapter 11 Soon."
- "ChemLawn Irrigation Section on the Upswing."

In some ways, being on the front page of our inaugural issue was the **kiss of death**. Cases in point:

The story on Sears started out by saying "Sears' entry into the lawn care business took off fast with an initial 7,000 customers signing up from March to May 1977." That sears outlet in Chicago may have taken off fast, but the company went **belly-up** soon after that.

And the ChemLawn irrigation story started out like this — "Poseidon, ChemLawn's new division for the installation of irrigation systems in residential lawns, continues to prosper, according to vice president of operations Bill Grant." Like Sears, ChemLawn's novel idea was **deep-sixed** soon after our story ran.

Our editors wrote about **certification** by saying, "Just who may or may not apply restricted pesticides, a question that has been an enigma until now, will become all to comprehensible Oct. 21. This is the deadline when only certified applicators or people under their direct supervision will be able to use them. The edict is a result of the amendments to the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act signed into law in 1972." Has certification been with us only five years? It sure seems like longer than that.

Of the rust-free ryegrass we wrote — "Out in the seed-bountiful Willamette Valley of Oregon, **Dr. Bill Meyer**, president of Pure-Seed Testing and technical director for Turf-Seed, Inc., both of Hubbard, Ore., is working on perennial ryegrass species that resist rust while keeping and improving the grass' good qualities." Dr. Meyer is still breeding in Oregon, working on perennial ryegrasses of all kinds, along with other seed varieties.

Moving inside the first issue, one headline read: "**Green Lawn To Expand, Accounts Jump 40%.**" We wrote, "Green Lawn's success with openings in Oklahoma, Nashville and Memphis this year has precipitated company execs to plan two new openings in 1978," with Knoxville, Chattanooga and Richmond being the front-runners." The Louisville-based company was then a liquid-based company, now it is dry.

Under a headline that said "**Rollins Tests Market Potential in Atlanta,**" we wrote — "A giant in commercial pest control and home security systems, Rollins Services, Inc., is testing the lawn care

market in Atlanta." Rollins Lawn Care now is a multi-million dollar company operating throughout the Southeast.

Also in that issue, then ChemLawn research director **Dr. James Wilkinson** wrote that lawn care companies should not remove clippings from home lawns to maximize fertilizer effect. Dr. Wilkinson is now with Old Fox Lawn Care in the Northeast.

We wrote that **housing starts** in 1977 would top out at more than 1.7 million. A far cry from the 300,000 that are projected to be built this year. Those were the days.

ChemLawn was expected to open 20 **new offices** in 1977, and 15 to 30 more the next year.

On **thatch**, we wrote: "Whether you provide full lawn maintenance or chemical application service only," you should be on the look-out for thatch build-up. Any applied material — is useless when it is prevented by thatch from reaching the soil." The thatch problem is still with us, with no industry-wide solutions in sight.

Charter advertisers in **LAWN CARE INDUSTRY** were: Adelphi Kentucky Bluegrass, American Pelletizing Corp., E. F. Burlingham & Sons, Crown Chemicals, Derby Tiller Co., Diamond Shamrock, Dobbins, Inc., Dountz Equipment Co., Du Pont Co., Essco Mfg. Co., Garfield-Williamson, Inc., Hanson Equipment Co., Hercules, Inc. (now BFC Chemicals, Inc.), Heritage House Products Corp., Hypro Div., Lear Siegler, Inc., International Spike, Inc., F. D. Kees Mfg. Co., Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co., Loft's Pedigreed Seed (now Loft's Seed), Moody Sprinkler Co., National Mower Co., New Roots Publishing, Pest Control Supplies Co., Reinco, Inc., Rockland Chemical Co., Snowco, Inc., Southern Mill Creek Products, Swift Agricultural Chemicals Corp. (now Estech, Inc.), Thomson Publications, The Toro Co., Tuflex Mfg., Velsicol Chemical Corp. and Yannar Diesel, Ltd. These and other advertisers have supported us strongly over the years.

Since that champagne-filled day five years ago, we have published **58 issues** in total. That is well over **2,000 pages** of magazine for anybody who has all 58 of the issues, and about **25 million** total magazine pages when you figure in every issue that has been mailed. It took an awful lot of trees to produce that much paper.

It has been a **labor of love** for all of the people who have staffed **LAWN CARE INDUSTRY** over the years, particularly present staffers including myself as editor and group publisher, associate editor Paul McCloskey, national sales manager Jim Brooks, and regional sales managers Ron Kempner and Bob Mierow. A labor of love indeed.

Bob Earley

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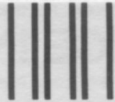
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Board Sides With Employers In Chemical Disclosure Suits

In three recent cases, *Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co.*, *Borden Chemical*, and *Colgate-Palmolive Company*, the National Labor Relations Board considered whether or not unions have the right to request lists of chemicals to which workers are exposed, in addition to other health, safety and medical information.

These cases arose from efforts of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union to gather information concerning work place hazards. This was prompted by a discovery in 1977 which linked a pesticide to sterility in male employees.

The union requested a list of generic names of all chemicals, results of toxicological investigations, a list of raw materials, and other health related data. The employers refused to comply with the union's request for two reasons. First, the employers argued that complying with the union's request would compromise the employers' interests in the confidentiality of proprietary and trade secrets.

The National Labor Relations Board concluded that the employer does not have an absolute obligation to provide this information to unions. Rather, the employer must "bargain in good faith over the request for such information, including the feasibility of disclosing such information in a manner that will adequately safeguard its legitimate proprietary interests."

Thus, the decision to disclose these materials will be made at the bargaining table. However, the employer will have the burden of establishing that there is no feasible way to disclose the materials without damaging the employer's proprietary or trade interests.

Employers eyeball test

In an equal employment development of interest to many lawn care employers, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Washington held that an employer owed a female truck driver over \$18,000 in back wages for not hiring her because of their results of a discriminatory test.

A female applied for a job as a truck driver, which would include loading and unloading the rig. An important element of the employer's test was whether, based on the employer's visual perception, an applicant was physically capable of handling the job.

No actual job-related test was given, such as asking an applicant to lift objects of the same weight and size which would be required to do if she were hired. The applicant in this case had experience as a truck driver, but she was short and weighed slightly more than 100 pounds. A man was hired for the job, instead of the woman, because "he appeared to be strong."

The problem for the employer in this case was not that he hired the man instead of the woman. Rather,

strength test, then there would be no legal problem with the employer's selection of a man to

Employers hold burden of proof

the employer's problem was the failure to base his hiring decision on an objective test which considered reasonable factors related to the essential duties of the job. Had the employer requested applicants to lift objects of similar weight which they would have to lift on the job or take some type of

fill the position.

However, basing a decision on the stereotype that small women are physically incapable of handling a job requiring considerable strength is discriminatory, even if the employer's assumption is correct.

Many lawn care employers

interview and hire women as applicators. At no time should a lawn care employer base a decision not to hire a female for that job on the basis of her sex. If each applicant is judged according to his or her objective ability to perform the tasks essential to the job, then no lawn care employer should face a discrimination allegation based on sex.

Recent developments

A bill has been introduced (H.R. 6103) to amend the Fair Labor Standards Act, which covers minimum wage, overtime, Belo plans, exemptions, and other wage and hour issues. The bill would require those employers who violate the Act to pay three times the amount owed.

Richard Lehr is an attorney with the Birmingham law firm of Sirote, Permutt, Friend, Friedman, Held & Apolinsky and a frequent contributor to *Lawn Care Industry*.

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INSIDE THE INDUSTRY



Douglas Blackburn

When a mowing and maintenance businessman spends \$8,000 for a commercial mower, he's made a tremendous investment. If that machine is down for want of a \$25 part, you can be pretty sure the principal owner will begin to rant and rave. Will he stop? Only his dealer knows for sure.

Second only to perhaps his partner, a maintenance businessman's equipment and service dealer is his most important professional contact. If that dealer knows the market well, is a good businessman himself, and is professionally organized to service his professional customers, a maintenance businessman can save thousands in unapplied labor and equipment costs.

One of the reasons maintenance businessmen in the Washington, D.C. area do less raving than others across the country is the R. A. Blackburn Equipment Corp., located in Kensington, Md., and run by Raymond and Douglas

LCI DEALER PROFILE:

The R. A. Blackburn Corp.

Getting to Know Your Dealer Just Might Save Your Business

Blackburn. Dealers primarily of Gravely, Lawnboy, Echo, and Yazoo mowing equipment, the Blackburns devote about 70 percent of their business to the professional maintenance market in the area.

"This is a sophisticated commercial market," said Doug Blackburn, Raymond's son and heir. "If it hadn't been for the commercial business, we would have been very hungry for work."

Overstock parts

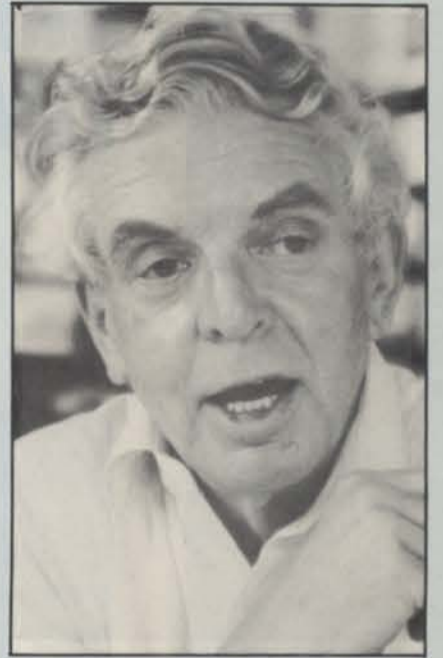
One of the reasons for the Blackburn's success as dealers is their attitude toward servicing their commercial clients. Although it is costly to keep large inventories in these days of high interest rates, Blackburn overstocks almost all his essential machine parts. "If there was a better way you can bet we'd do it," said Doug Blackburn. "But there's nothing worse than reaching for a

part and coming up empty-handed."

Blackburn says that if he sells a particular machine he expects to have the parts to service it. But that does not mean he doesn't make an effort to counsel his customers in service and maintenance efficiency. "We encourage our customers to stock key replacement assemblies — starter assemblies, for example. They are easy to replace and he can go back later and replace the damaged one."

The Blackburns also hold service schools for their commercial accounts at no cost to the customer, even providing a free lunch during the break. Blackburn says that it helps in the long run. "It's all the more help to us if our accounts know their machines inside and out. We don't make money on servicing equipment, we make money on selling it."

However, the two go hand in hand. When a commercial customer brings in a machine to



Raymond Blackburn

repair, he knows exactly what part his machine will be outfitted with. "Every part we sell is a genuinely original manufacturer's part," says Blackburn. "And for a commercial customer that is very important. We sell absolutely no gypsy parts."

Arbiters of the market

Blackburn is not unaware of the tremendous influence dealers have as arbiters of the marketplace. A case in point is the 20 inch Lawnboy, a light weight mower with plastic shrouding, a small gas tank, and relatively inexpensive.

"The benefit of the mower is that it has a commercial engine," said Blackburn. "But you can buy two of them for the price of a commercial 20. They are now sold in the discount houses, and we can't compete with that."

They can, however, put a serious crimp in the marketing of machines that are not profitable. He says a tremendous influence of the parts availability of those machines can make them very difficult to service.

Units vs. dollars

Blackburn says that the market for the Lawnboy, recently adapted to the consumer market through the introduction of staggered wheels, is wide open for someone who introduces a similar machine with a straight wheel assembly. He adds that Gravely machines are becoming very commercial oriented.

One of the discrepancies he sees between the dealer and his relationship with the manufacturer is their relative philosophy of sales. "They look at units sold," said Blackburn. "We look at dollars."

Blackburn says that all dealers are currently in the midst of a controversy that is threatening to upset the entire commercial mower market. Recently, the Consumer Product Safety Commission has issued a standard, due to go



The R. A. Blackburn Equipment Corp. showroom holds full lines of professional cutting equipment.

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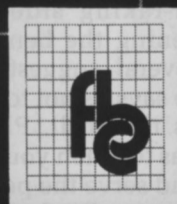
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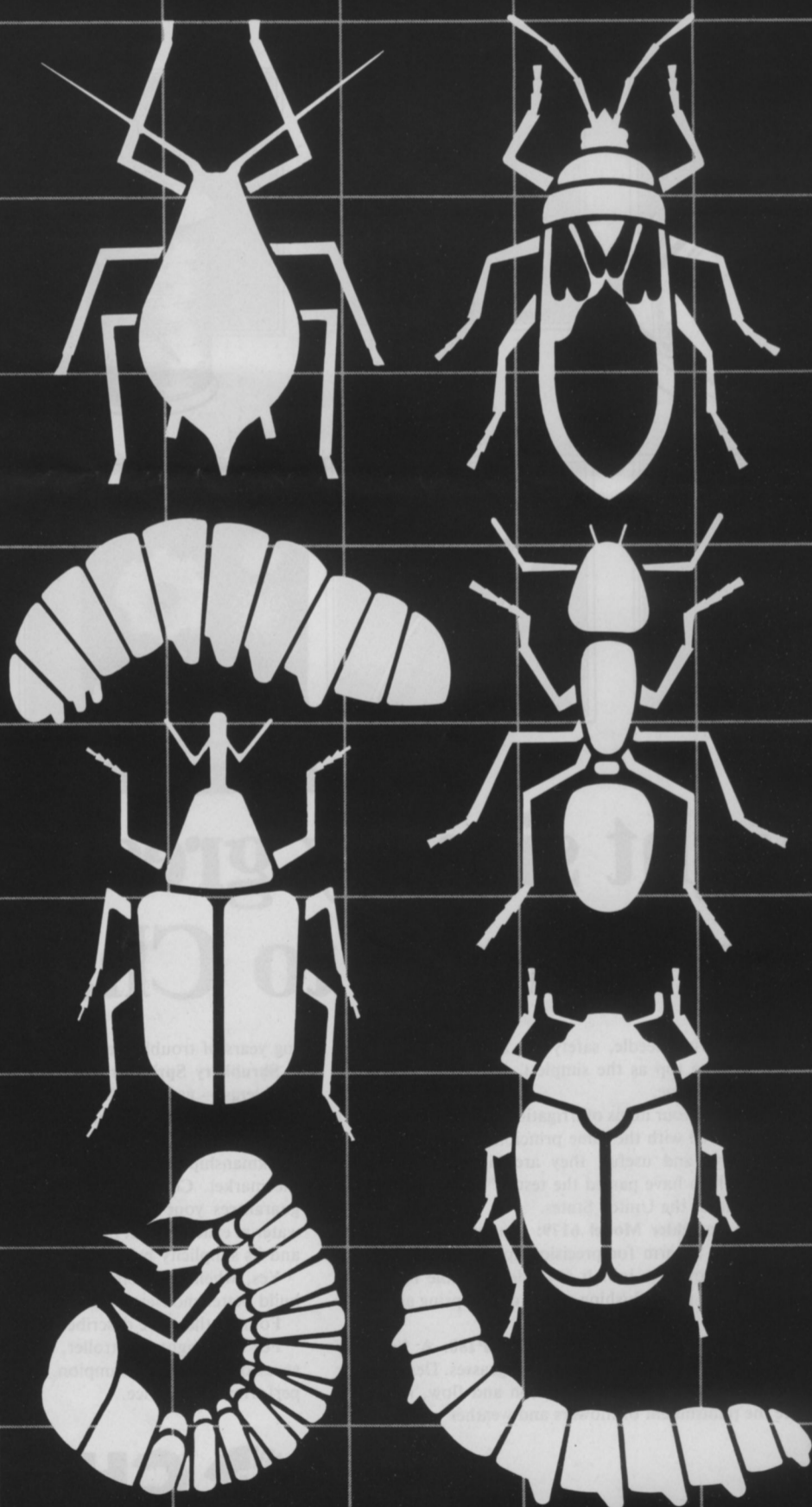
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Leaf-Raking Business Key To Winter Cash Management

All of Lloyd Kuhn's lawn care personnel will be employed this winter. No, his company, Tulsa Lawn Care, will not move to southern California, but will remain in Oklahoma, where from November to January, dry leaves fall like snow.

Kuhn, who operates a lawn care business during the spring and summer months, runs a leaf-gathering and raking business during his off season.

A relative new comer to the trade, Kuhn says he finds it a needed service and a successful business enterprise. In August of

last year, after moving from Springfield, Ill., Kuhn says he looked for something that might sustain his lawn care business through the winter months.

Built-in opportunity

After talking to several community citizens, he says he realized that falling leaves in Tulsa were a burden to many of them. He found that they are not allowed to burn them, and that the city had stopped their leaf pick-up service several years ago.

"Some of these people have 300

bags of leaves, and they just don't know where to put them. So, I decided if the city wasn't going to provide the leaf-gathering service, I would," he explained.

With \$7,000 invested in equipment, including a Giant Vac Leaf Loader, a one-ton dump truck converted from his lawn care rig, and several back-pack blowers, Kuhn says he began his business praying for customers.

In November, Kuhn mailed advertisements, explaining his service. The next day he received 150 requests.

Two services are provided by

the company. The customer can either rake the leaves to the curb of the property line, whereupon Kuhn will gather them, or Kuhn and his workers, using their pack blowers, can rake and gather the leaves.

The leaves need not be bagged, because of a 15-foot hose, 12 inches in diameter, that is attached to the leaf loader. The leaves are then vacuumed into the leaf loader where they are mulched to one-fifth of their original size. They are then dumped into the truck, carried to the dump, or in some cases a horse stable.

Kuhn has set the average charge for gathering at between \$40 and \$50. There is a minimum charge of \$25 for this service and the average charge for raking and gathering leaves is \$150 to \$300. Kuhn says one yard took an entire week for a charge of \$600, and this year they have a contract for a \$900 operation.

Last year Kuhn had four full-time employees and four part-time workers. This year he will double the size of his operation.

Kuhn admits much of his work was done in affluent neighborhoods, contributing to his success. However, he adds, "we raked a lot of lawns for little old ladies who just couldn't do it themselves."

Word to the wise

He also warns that a business of this sort may not work so well in other areas of the country. "Although the business has been very good for me, it could not be as successful in other areas. Maybe they can burn their leaves, or just don't have the number of trees we have. Also, we have so many maples and maple leaves fall so gradually that many of our customers were repeaters."

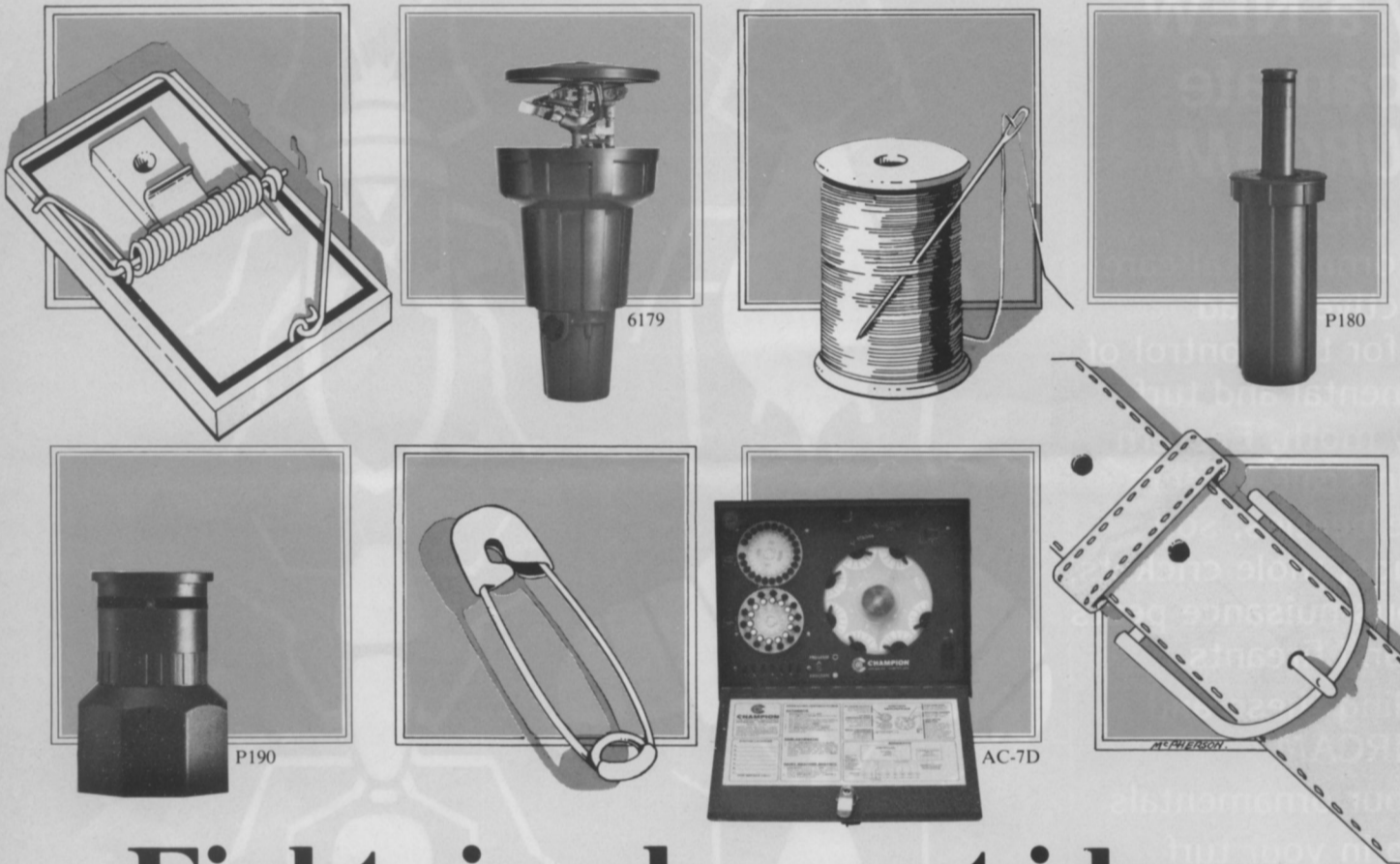
For those who have the right conditions, the rewards of this sideline can be great. The first benefit, he says, is the added revenue and cash flow the business provides, especially at a time when most lawn care businesses are strapped by the cost of money and high interest rates. Also, the fact that an employe can work with the company all year-round is both a major benefit to the company and its personnel.

The leaf raking business also provides an opportunity to gain new customers for the spring and summer months. Kuhn took advantage of the fact that he was meeting prospective lawn care clients and left a brochure with everyone he served. "We picked up some good solid customers this way," he said.

Strict schedule

As a final benefit Kuhn found many people will remit their bills right on the spot. Last year he had 100 percent on-time remittance.

In order to prevent the costs of starting a leaf-raking side-line from overburdening the benefits, Kuhn offers several suggestions. Number one, he says, is not to take on everyone as they call. Plan a strict schedule as to when you will be in an area, and serve the people in that area on a regular day on a regular basis. "This way you will not be travelling from one side of town to the other."



Eight simply great ideas. Four belong to Champion.

The mousetrap, sewing needle, safety pin and belt buckle have always ranked near the top as the simplest, least expensive, most useful inventions of all time.

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Spring Retractable Pop-up Sprinkler Model P180: A full 2½" pop-up allows the sprinkler to rise above longer grasses. Designed for easy, unlimited adjustment of spray direction and flow, it is engineered to take the punishment of mowers and weather while deliver-

ing years of trouble-free service.

Shrubbery Sprinkler Head Model P190: Those special watering problems — gardens, flower beds, shrubbery and ground cover areas — are solved with this durable plastic, distance-adjustable sprinkler.

Controller Model AC-7D: Simplicity of operation and quality of workmanship set this new controller apart from countless others on the market. Complete automatic watering of seven separate areas guarantees your installation will receive just the right amount of water at exact, pre-set times. Its all-metal cabinet provides durability, and its simplicity brings peace of mind.

Yes, when you come right down to it, Champion continues to build better mousetraps for the irrigation industry.

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Pop-up sprinkler eliminates flow-by

A new pop-up sprinkler with a four-inch pop up height for unobstructed spray distribution and an exclusive co-molder wiper seal to eliminate flow-by has been introduced for the lawn care professional by Rain Bird, Inc.'s Turf Division.

Designated Model 1804, the new sprinkler clears low ground covers and taller turf grass cuts recommended for better root development and improved drought resistance.



The patented co-molded, multi-function wiper seal cleans the stem as it pops up, flushes debris away as it retracts, and keeps debris from entering the unit at the nozzle/wiper seal interface.

Arresting flow-by at a low eight psi, the superior sealing characteristic of the exclusive seal allows the use of extra strength stainless steel retract springs, assuring positive pop-down even in sandy soils and eliminating the possibil-

ity of damage from lawn mowers and hazards to foot traffic. Additional features include a filter screen located under the nozzle to prevent clogging and a fully open one-half inch threaded inlet to facilitate case flushing and speedier installations.

Circle No. 150 on Reader Inquiry Card

Brochure for lawn care irrigation controllers

Griswold controls has announced the publication of their new "2000 Series Irrigation Control Systems," a 20-page, color brochure that describes and illustrates a line of Griswold Control's irrigation controllers, solenoid valves and pressure reducing valves.

Controllers are capable of managing 12 or 24 stations with separate seven day programs for each station, thus maintaining each area's own precise watering requirements. Programs are entered or changed by simple manual switches or insertion of pre-marked cards.

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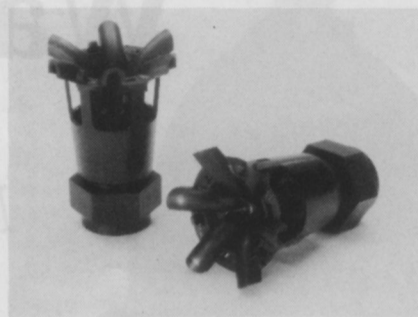
Circle No. 151 on Reader Inquiry Card

Commercial turbine has only one moving part

The Clearman Company has added a new, efficient, and trouble-free wobbling turbine head to its line of

sprinklers for the lawn care industry. The new 5F Series is designed for commercial applications, made of black, sun resistant nylon and has only one moving part.

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0.062 inch to 0.220 inch. These result in flow rates from 0.5 gpm to 5.0 gpm at 20 psi.

The use of injection molding for all parts plus a unique snap-together assembly technique result in a low production cost and a correspondingly attractive price.

Circle No. 152 on Reader Inquiry Card

Six station solid state lawn sprinkler control

Richdel, Inc., manufacturer of irrigation valves and controls, has introduced its new line of electronic irrigation controls for use in the lawn care industry. The new additions include three models: R416 six station, R418 six station, and the \$420 12 station control.

The R416 six station is designed for indoor mount complete with United Laboratories approved plug-in transformer.

Circle No. 153 on Reader Inquiry Card



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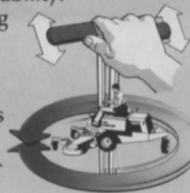
The exclusive HUSTLER 3-way mower deck allows for side or rear discharge. Or, with blade dividers in place and all deck

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Other year-round attachments for the HUSTLER 261 include a side-mounted edger; grass vac; grass compactor; utility scoop; 60" dozer blade; 60" V-blade; and 60" rotary broom.

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MOWING/MAINTENANCE MARKETPLACE

Washington, D.C.

*No lack of work,
No lack of competition*



In Washington, D.C., there is an ordinance on the books that prohibits property owners from letting their grass exceed 12 inches in length. Violators are charged 130 percent of the amount the city is billed for having the job done for you. Not bad if you happen to be in the mowing/maintenance business in this well-kempt city. In the nation's capitol, Big Brother's on your side.

The attention paid to landscape appearance in the Washington metropolitan area is second to none. As the country's showcase to visitors from around the world, little expense is spared to make public property look its best. And the attitude seems to have trickled down to area residents as well.

"This is a fairly recession-resistant town," said David Lyons, president of J & L Landscaping Inc., Derwood, Md. "We've so many government employees in this area and they all have a guaranteed income, so they can budget pretty consistently for maintenance work."

But if Lyons isn't lacking for work, he's not lacking for competitors either. In the business for nine years, the first five were years of market abundance, when Lyons could confidently predict the outcome of most maintenance contract bids. Now, however, company start-ups have narrowed the gap.

Mad dash

"When we win a bid now," says Michael Lyons, vice-president of the company and manager of contracts, "there's usually a mad dash to find out where I screwed up."

Lyons said that jobs that he got handily two years ago he cannot come close to getting today — thus the fear that when he does win a job easily he immediately fears some essential cost has been overlooked. "The commercial maintenance work is becoming extremely competitive in this town," he said. "Companies that I've never bid before are taking jobs away from us."

Attributing the overcrowding in some degree to companies coming from out of state when their home market has dried up, the Lyons's decry the higher incidence of lowballing and price undercutting prevalent in maintenance bid markets today.

"There are two kinds of lowballers," said David Lyons. "There are the cutthroats and then there are those that don't know what they are doing and win jobs by default." Although he doesn't fault companies for trying to get honest work, he says that there are companies doing huge volumes at very low profit margins who are driving down market prices.

J & L Landscape Inc. obviously takes considerable interest in the costs of doing contract commercial maintenance. For that reason they also scrutinize the machines they use to handle the requirements of volume mowing and maintenance. According to Michael Lyons, the best machine to use is the one with the least number of controls. "If there is an extra screw or bolt to

turn on a machine, you can bet that it will be turned and the machine will not run," said Michael Lyons. "We have found that we have a very good dealer network in this town and can be pretty selective about our orders and choices."

Some of the properties of cutting machines that Lyons's have found to be a nuisance on many units are: small wheels that can't jump curbs easily and tend to tear, inadequate deck strength on some of the larger mowers leading to deck warp and uneven cuts, and, unnecessarily sophisticated throttles and starters which seem always to break down.

Bigger and simpler

"Time is of the essence in this business," says David Lyons. "We need rugged machines that can make money for us. For that reason we don't use hand machines and stick with the bigger and simpler machines. Some of our Lawn Boys are four years old and still running beautifully."

Tom Farley, district manager of Theodore Brickman Companies in Washington agrees that Washington metropolitan area is a competitive market, but that the emphasis on property management in the area can provide the repeat business that mowing/maintenance companies look for.

The Brickman companies, known for their study and concentration of maintenance cost analysis, employ a costing and estimating system. One of Farley's jobs as Washington district manager is providing the local adjustments that can be used to make the system effective in the Washington metropolitan area.

No perfect system

However, Farley warns that any system used to analyze job costs can only approximate the real costs of doing business: there is no perfect system. "The numbers are an approximation," he said. "Every company has so different an overhead structure and defines them so differently, that any system developed can only be a guide."

As a new entrant in the Washington market, Farley was pleased to discover that the local suppliers are a professional bunch.



Michael Lyons



David Lyons



Tom Farley



Litz Beavers



Jim Johnson

"No matter where a company chooses to expand, it's very important to establish a good relationship with these people. After all, they know the market as well as anyone."

When asked about the possibility of government contract maintenance in a market so heavily funded by the federal government, he finds that in general, government contract maintenance is an inevitability. "As government budget constraints become greater, any public agency will be forced to consider contract maintenance in order to stay within the budget."

Government efficiency

"There is a natural reluctance to resist private sector contracts," he added, "because of the system. Nobody wants to be in the business of having to tell people they aren't doing their job right, but government efficiency is very low."

Although Brickman Companies use a software system, for many routine business functions, Farley warns that customizing software

ago when he worked for the Robert Kennedy's full time and through contacts made working on their properties, developed his own residential maintenance business.

Although he does take on commercial work because there are less "headaches," most of his 75 to 100 accounts around the metropolitan area are currently residential.

He finds that one of his biggest headaches in the maintenance business is finding qualified helpers who are committed to the business. "I just can't seem to find the help," he said. "My main interest is to stay small, do well, and make a buck. And you just can't do that if your help just likes to daydream."

Beavers tells of the old axiom in the maintenance business that goes: There's two ways of doing a job, the customer's way and the right way. He says that although working for residential accounts supplies him with more tips on doing it the customers way than he can afford, residential work affords him the opportunity to keep his company streamlined. And he

fleet and switched to a bike and buggy arrangement. "I went out and bought 32 cycles and designed wooden buggies for them to haul and made them in my shop. We cut down on our accounts and made our routes more efficient."

Johnson said that the bike and buggy system was successful, but that after a while some of his

personnel opted for using their own vehicles for the job. And now most of his crews are using their own transportation to get to and from the job sites.

Johnson operates his residential maintenance system on what he calls a "progressive point system," in which each job is assigned a difficulty rating. The crew is paid a

to page 16

A uniform costing system for lawn maintenance is only as useful as the information supplied.

for the lawn maintenance industry has to be very delicately approached. "Some systems can be very good," he said, "but the danger of them being very bad are considerable."

Farley said that in any attempt to construct a uniform costing system for lawn maintenance, the system is only as useful as the information supplied. "There is hardly any job that doesn't require some mixture of machinery," he said. "You have to categorize the information so that you end up with a notion of the cost of a particular man on a particular machine. The more diverse the information the more complicated the feedback."

As to the future of the mowing and maintenance industry in the Washington area, Farley says that a more professional industry overall is going to help everyone. "The industry as a whole can offer new insights into the possibility of what a landscape site can be," he said. "The whole business will then be that much more enjoyable to work in."

One maintenance businessman who obviously enjoys his work as much as Farley is Litz Beavers, president of Beavers Landscaping, Inc. in Washington. Beavers began his maintenance business 10 years

hardly ever gets a call back.

Beavers insists that the Washington market is a healthy one. "The value of real estate isn't getting any cheaper," he said. "What turned this industry into a real professional one is that husbands and wives are both working now and don't have time to do it themselves."

1,000 lawn goal

Another Washington area residential mowing/maintenance businessman who has put a grip on the residential maintenance market is Jim Johnson, president of Johnson's Landscaping in Bethesda, Md. Johnson started his residential mowing business in 1972 and his goal over the next two years was "to shoot for 1,000 lawns." Indeed, he just about hit the mark in his second year, but was forced to drop 400 accounts like a hot potato in 1974.

"Our grass cutting division was our biggest money-maker," said Johnson, "but it was also our biggest overhead burden. We lost nearly \$20,000 dollars that year." In 1974, the gas crunch hit the D.C. area and Johnson was forced to make radical changes in his mowing operation.

What he did was drop his entire

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ChemLawn May Lose \$6M in Second Quarter

ChemLawn Corp., Columbus, Ohio, expects to post a loss for its fiscal second quarter, ended May 1, that could be more than double the year-earlier deficit of \$3 million, Jack Van Fossen, president, said.

Despite the projected loss, the company expects earnings for fiscal 1982, ending Oct. 30, to be more than 25 percent higher than fiscal 1981's \$7.9 million, or \$1.30 a share.

Van Fossen predicted a similar gain in sales from fiscal 1981's \$142 million. Sales in the second quarter were about 11 percent higher than the year-earlier \$29.7 million, he told the Wall Street Journal.

The second quarter loss reflects the seasonality of ChemLawn's business, but is not a concern to management, Van Fossen said.

"We take a longer-term view of the business," he said. "One week of bad weather can shift our revenue from one quarter to another, but it does not have anything to do with how you finish the year."

The improved earnings outlook partly indicates that the recession is not any longer biting into the company's customer base, Van Fossen said. In some ways, he added, the prolonged recession may even be helping ChemLawn's business.

"Many of the customers who

were on the fringes of using their disposable income to purchase our service probably were eliminated from our customer base in fiscal 1980 and 1981," he said. At the same time, consumers who deferred purchases of durable goods had more money available for discretionary items such as lawn care, he said.

Aggressive stance

With that in mind, Van Fossen said ChemLawn decided to be more aggressive in marketing its lawn care services. "We believed that with the economy the way it was, the better thing was to take a more aggressive stance, rather than running for cover," he said.

ChemLawn anticipated some moderation in the price of chemicals and did not boost its prices. It also implemented a sales incentive program for its personnel and asked each unit to set specific goals for increases in customers.

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Irrigation contractors who specify and install any Safe-T-Lawn sprinkler irrigation components — plastic heads, brass heads, ball-drive rotaries, impact sprinklers, valves, and controls — are eligible for bonus gifts of their choice from the "Spec-N-Get" Catalog.

Until August 31, 1982, contractors will be awarded points for all Safe-T-Lawn products purchased according to a point schedule. The contractors send Safe-T-Lawn copies of invoices, and gift certificates are returned. The gift certificates are redeemable, for brand name merchandise from the Safe-T-Lawn "Spec-N-Get" catalog, everything from cameras to television sets, food processors to chain saws.

MARKETPLACE from page 15

'Cutting most profitable'

rate that is multiplied by the number of points they accumulate at the end of the week.

It provides a built-in production incentive, says Johnson, because the crews are really doing piecework. "The rate is higher in the spring," said Johnson, "and lower in the summer because the grass is easier to cut." However, he adds,

obviously a varied one. Although most businessmen interviewed say the market has become crowded to the point where underbidding is a serious threat to business survival, all contend that mowing/maintenance is a big money maker in this market. One of the most cited reasons for the relative prosperity of the market is

One reason this market is so prosperous is the guaranteed income of federal employes.

an employe will keep on getting his rate boosted the longer he stays, providing the incentive to return to the job year after year.

Because his business, which also includes a landscaping division, is so maintenance intensive, Johnson's Landscaping has gone through hundreds of mowers. He says his first experience was with the old 21 inch Toros. "They had the best system for dispensing grass ever invented, but they weren't built for production."

Heavy duty models

He said he was buying mowers every year and therefore decided to go with the heavier-duty Jacobsen mowers, but with a light-weight homeowner chassis. "They lasted quite a while," said Johnson, "but you couldn't gun them too much."

Because he had trouble getting parts for the Jacobsens, Johnson switched eventually to Lawn Boys, which he says are well serviced in the Washington area and more cost-effective in the long run.

"Grass cutting is still our most profitable division," said Johnson, adding that it has become tougher than ever to get the jobs he used to get readily. "With the amount of one-truck operations out there, it is very easy to get underbid in the market today."

The Washington metropolitan mowing/maintenance market is

the guaranteed income of government employes. That combined with a professional maintenance supplier relationship has made Washington an active and aggressive maintenance market.

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MONEYWISE

Getting Around The Lending Window

Lawn care businessmen who have a house, an acre or two of personal or commercial real estate, or even a vacant lot might find it a lot easier to finance their business expansions. Many small business owners are re-mortgaging personal property holdings and plowing the money into their companies, according to a report in *Inc.* magazine.

"The lending window is often closed to small business operators," said William Hobson, president of BA business Credit Corp., a BankAmerica Financial Service Company in Allentown, Pa., one of a growing number of lenders who are providing such second mortgages for small business owners. "And the terms are often prohibitive even if they find a lending source. Since mortgages are secured loans, we can offer financing at lower interest rates, on more flexible repayment terms."

The volume of second mortgages on personally owned real estate has risen 200 percent over the past five years.

DEALER PROFILE from page 10

into effect this month, which they hope will significantly reduce the number of mower-related accidents to consumers.

The standard calls for a dead-man control at the handle of all mowers, which upon release by the operator, will cause the blade to stop within three seconds. Two separate actions on the part of the operator are required to reengage the blade.

Service dealers affected

Although the standard applies predominately to consumer purchasers, service dealers will be affected in several ways. To disassemble the engine — or in many cases just to remove it from the mower — a brake/clutch must be removed and then re-installed. The problem with all of this is that the service dealer may become a

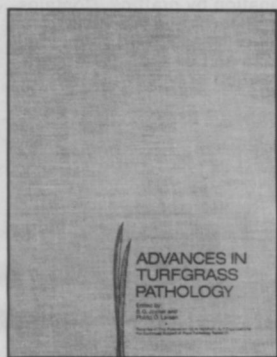
party to a liability action if someone gets hurt once the unit is worked on.

The dealer may have to check every unit to make sure it meets the safety standard when it leaves his shop and keep a record of that inspection. Blackburn says that many commercial operators may be tempted to disengage the braking mechanism to save on wear and tear and machine efficiency. "But we're the guys that are going to hang on the deal. We could be held ultimately responsible for an accident."

The Blackburns, Raymond and Douglas, are professionals that make the Washington maintenance market one of the most well supplied areas of the country. They are concerned about what their professional customers need and know their market well. They are good at what they do and, in the words of Doug Blackburn, "If you are a good salesman, you want to sell good machines."

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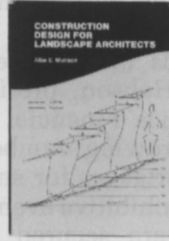
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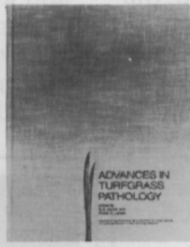


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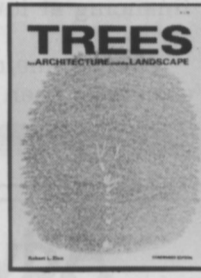
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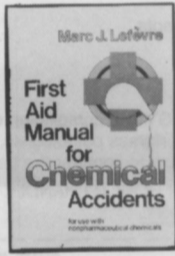


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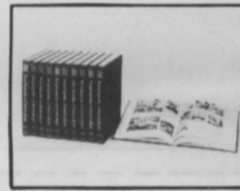
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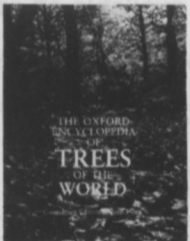
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Wage Pinch Motivates Scramble For Bonuses

last year's and one employer decreased the wages of his starting workers from four dollars to \$3.35.

However, despite the gloomy picture, benefits still exist for the mowing/maintenance worker. In fact many employers are searching to find out just what they can give without sinking company profits.

Clarence Davids, Sr., who has been in the lawn industry for 31 years and is owner and manager of Clarence Davids and Sons, Inc., Blue Island, Ill., says, "We used to give our workers an eight to 10 percent cost of living pay raise ever year, but sometimes our company profits were not keeping up with the cost of living, so we decided to reevaluate, and see how we could get the most from our workers, yet still pay them a fair salary."

Davids says they set up a program in which a worker's productivity and dependability are evaluated. At the end of the evaluation, it is determined how much of a raise the employe should receive. At that point he will receive exactly half. Two to three months later, if he continues to perform well, he will receive the full amount.

Cash awards

"We feel the program gives our workers more incentive," Davids said. "The days of giving to be giving are gone. Today, you have to earn whatever you get."

The company has also set up a program to award cash bonuses for those employes who safely and responsibly handle the equipment given to them. In the past, Davids said, the awards have been between three to five hundred dollars, this year they will be determined by the profits of the company.

Joe Stout, manager of Complete Lawn Service Inc. in Arlington, Va., said he felt the economy had been good to him. "Actually the lack of jobs has helped our business, we can pay less for the work we need," Stout says.

Last year Stout paid his starting wage earners \$4 an hour and this year is paying starting workers at \$3.35. "This does not mean they will continue to make less," Stout explains, "in fact, usually they are promoted to the same salary as last year, just as fast. What it has done is enabled us to find out who will work good and hard for us, without paying a lot of money to those who will not."

Starting wage lowered

Lowering the starting wage, Stout said, actually has helped his workers. To those who deserve raises there is more money to pull from.

Burton J. Harrington, general manager of Contra Costa Landscaping, Inc. in Martinez, Calif., awards productivity bonuses to those employees he feels have put in extra time and effort.

"If the company is doing poorly, you just can't award raises to everyone. However, usually it is not the laborer's fault, he may be

'If the company is doing poorly, you can't award raises to everyone. That's when bonuses come in.'

working twice as hard, yet profits just don't show it. This is when productivity bonuses are awarded," Harrington explains.

The productivity bonuses are awarded on an individual basis. Usually they are given at the time of a performance review that is

conducted twice a year. This review evaluates the productiveness of an employee.

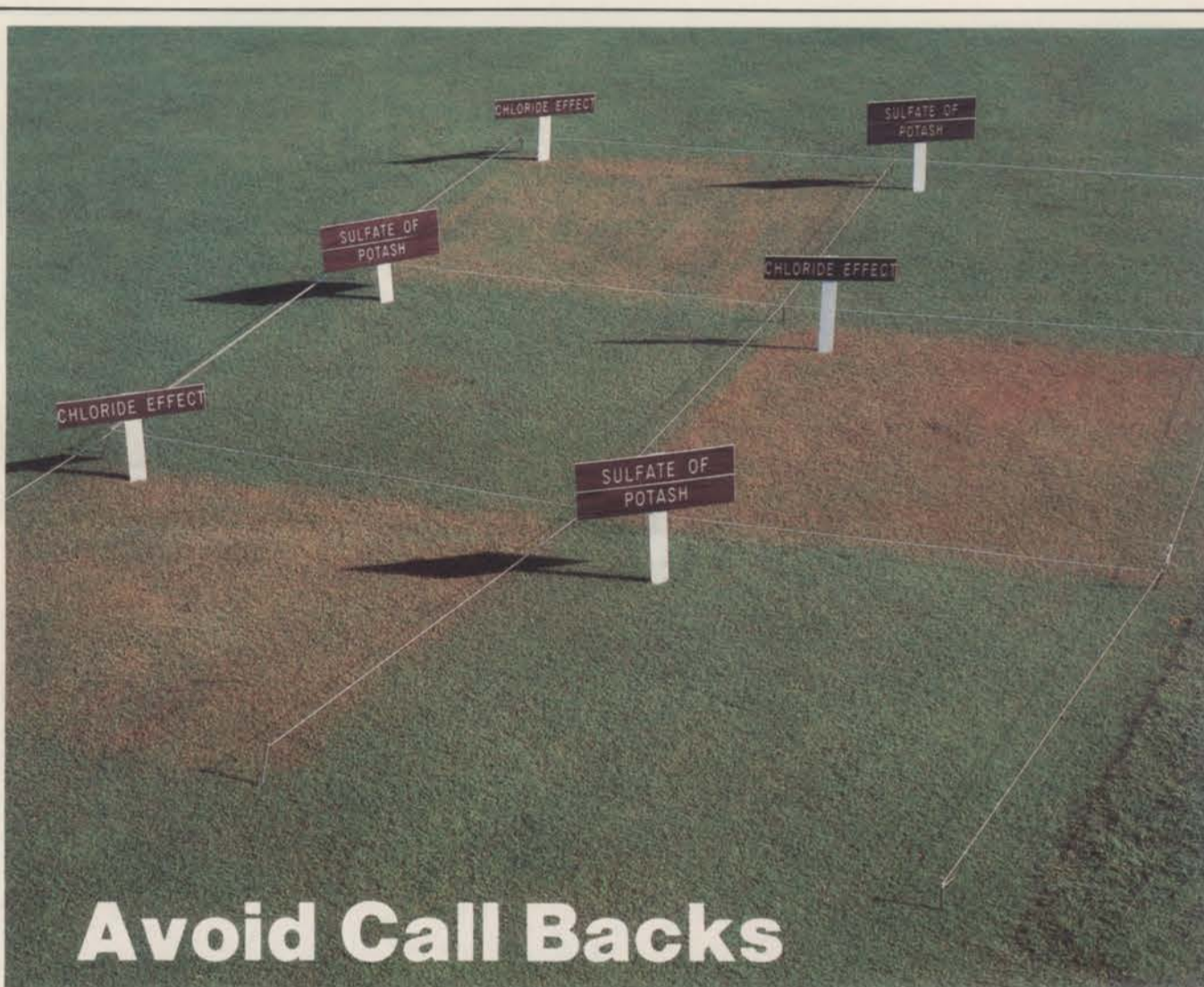
Art Hall, an owner of Clearwater Landscaping in Sun Valley, Idaho, said he felt the state of their business, especially at this time, determined the wages of their workers. "This year we have had to hold some raises, workers have had to return at the same wages as last year, and some have had to take a reduction. They have been affected as much as we have."

Rod Keppel, an owner of Arbor Heights Nursery Inc. in Webster, N.Y., takes a different side than other company managers. Keppel, whose company did raise their starting wages this year by 25 cents, says he feels for a job to be done right, you have to pay for it.

Paying for good help

"If we need good help, we realize that we are going to have to pay a fair price. Many of our workers are college students, and if we expect them to return with their experience, we have to give a raise," he commented.

Most maintenance workers this year will not be receiving substantial raises, yet with the benefits and bonuses employers are offering, salaries can increase. Maybe, the time of giving to give is gone, but with its departure seems to have come a new attitude . . . reward the deserving.



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products out there, new chemicals, and new research," said Day. "And we are all going to be competing for the market pretty soon."

David Crosson, manager of public relations for Monsanto Agriculture Products Co., commented that if new chemicals are used in the Stauffer product, open competition cannot be restricted. But, reading a prepared statement issued by Monsanto, he stated, "An examination of Stauffer's patent clearly shows that the prospective herbicide is dependent on the same active ingredient as is Roundup, a compound known as glyphosate. Monsanto has world-wide patent coverage on

glyphosate as an active herbicidal ingredient and any attempt by Stauffer to commercialize a product under the patent recently issued to it would be an infringement of Monsanto Co.'s Roundup herbicide patent protection."

If lawsuits occur, it will be the result of infringement, said Crosson. Day responded that Stauffer has not yet concerned itself with possible lawsuits, as the product will not be on the market for another three years.

Still a dream

As of December 31, 1981, Roundup has been marketed in 115 countries, Crosson said, and for the past five years it has been at the top of the marketplace. According to Day, that is where the product will likely stay, at least for the next few years. Stauffer's prospective herbicide is still in the making. "Right now it's a dream," he said. "Right now it's a dream," he said.

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Adikes is in the process of conducting a number of research projects to document and substantiate the initial observations concerning the variety resistance to these insects.

As far as the production outlook is concerned, the variety appears to have a good rust resistance, is early maturing and should give a reasonably good yield.

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meet to decide whether enough evidence exists to bring the case to trial.

Customers of Tempo 21 have received letters since the theft that Parmley says could only have come from their files. "The letters have unlisted phone numbers, rental information, and even misspellings that could only have come from information contained in our files," he said.

Unsavoury incidents

Parmley said that this is the latest in a long line of unsavoury incidents that the company has had to contend with this past year, including free lawn analyses stolen from client's mailboxes, dumpsters and trash bins outside his offices rifled through at night, and his crews being tailed during scheduled rounds.

"This has been a year of turmoil in the Chicago area," he said. "There are currently about 55 lawn care businesses in the area, we have the third highest unemployment in the market, and people are bargaining for prices like used-car salesmen."

Thief stopped short

Evidently, his notification of customers may have stopped short the thief's plans to use the information more fully, for recently it was reported that the names of several thousand lawn care customers were offered to another lawn care service.

"Some guy called and asked us if we wanted to buy several thousand names," Glen Bailes, who heads the Lombard, Ill., office of Excelawn Corp. of America, told Crain's Chicago Business newspaper. "Of course, we said no and notified Tempo 21."

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'People think this business is easy'

country have lawn care trucks tailed, mail boxes rummaged for invoices, and estimates stolen right off client property.

"Yes," said Charles McGinty, president of McGinty Brothers, Inc., Long Grove, Ill., "there are a lot of us in the market right now. But no one has to stoop so low as to what is going on in the business today."

George Meeley, vice president of Chem Turf Inc., in Anaheim, Ca., reported that although there are only five lawn care companies in his area, he has dealt with some very serious competitive tactics.

"I have had my trucks sabotaged, sugar put in the gas tanks, incompatible chemicals put in the spray tanks, phone calls to the I.R.S. and Water Works accusing me of things I have not done, and our bills and estimates stolen. There is no doubt about who is doing it, he said.

Call system

Meeley added that because the theft of their lawn estimates has become such a problem, they always contact the customer 48 hours after estimates have been submitted. "When they haven't gotten it," he said, "it is often very obvious where our's went to by the one that replaced it."

ChemLawn of Chicago has experienced the same problem: Stealing lawn invoices, estimates, and receipts left for the customer.

Ed Stolon, regional agronomist for ChemLawn says that "because this is happening more and more frequently, we have started a system where we call our customers that night to make sure they have received their notices.

William Fischer, president of Spring Green Lawn Care Corp., Naperville, Ill., says his company has also been forced to contend with the rip-off artists. "When a customer complains that they have not received an estimate we tell them the day it was delivered and the estimated price. Then we ask them if anyone has quoted this price or lower to them," he said. "Usually, they can figure out what happened and will go with us."

Appearance vs. reality

Jeff Nolen, director of Excelawn Corp. in Wheeling, Ill., said that his company also has experienced thefts of this nature. But, he did not feel it generally the fault of his competitors and said, "Many things 'seem' to happen in the market that are not as serious a problem as believed."

What is going on in the business today and what is to be believed? Are the examples given extreme, or do they reflect an industry beginning to resort to ruthlessness?

ChemLawn's Stolon says that the overcrowdedness of the market, which some see as a major cause of the problem has led to some, but not all, of the problems.

"There are a number of newer companies in the business right now. I think people look at this business and think it is easier than

it really is," he said, adding, "but the newcomer is not usually the only one responsible, it can be those companies who underbid their competitors, hoping to win their business, that worry us."

The competitive tactic of these businesses, according to Stolon, lies in unscrupulous price negotiation. A company inclined this way might employ a flexible pricing system, wherein he sometimes offers unrealistically low prices — those that cannot possibly cover the costs of goods and services.

When the market does become competitive, Stolon says, prices do tend to drop. "We point out to our customers the quality and service we provide, and because our customers are of value to us, we sometimes will lower our price,

but there is a point below which you just cannot go."

Spring-Green's Fischer agrees. "Lowballing and price negotiation have been a tactic of new industries all along, but what is alarming to me and of grave concern are the larger industries that are using them," he said.

Unstructured policy

Fischer said that many of the larger companies can afford to use an unstructured pricing policy. "Because they have outlets all over the country, they can afford to take cuts in profits in one area for a while," he said.

It is corporate strategy, he suggests, that is causing some of the problems in the market today.



Ed Solon

He added that if a company sets lower prices than his competitor, it can be fairly administered, but when a competitor willfully drops his price on individual accounts, it is very disturbing. "This isn't the automobile industry," he said.

Not only is lowballing hurting the industry right now, but it is

to page 22

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going to harm the industry in the long run, says Rick White, president of Village Green, Ltd., in Chicago. "When companies offer such ridiculously low prices, they are cutting corners all along the way," he said. "They use cheap materials, provide their help with little or no training, and provide low-quality service."

"Soon, with all this price negotiation," he claims, "customers are going to start asking, 'Is lawn care generic?'"

White contends that lowballing will hurt the industry in two major areas. First, the industry's image will be cheapened. Second, once people realize that poor materials are being used, they will begin to do the work themselves to get the quality they desire.

Perf-A-Lawn in Lafayette, Ind., has not been affected by price negotiation, but faced a different

problem this past year — short staking. This occurs when two adjacent lots are undermeasured and an extremely low price results. "We felt they had an unfair business going," Vern Wilson, owner of Perf-A-Lawn said.

Asked if fears of recession and less-than-robust economic outlook have exacerbated the problem, Chem Turf's Meeley believes that the problems experienced are being blamed on the recession merely as an excuse.

Solid economy

Bob Otley, president of One Step Landscape, Inc., in Rochester, N.Y., says his business has not been affected by the recession. "Our economy is very solid, although it is always more solid than in other parts of the country," he said.

However, despite the recession or the overcrowdedness of the market, most lawn care

businessmen agreed that there is no real excuse for the shabby practices being employed in some markets. Many would like to see some form of enforcement of ethics by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA).

Glen Bostrom, executive director of the association, says the PLCAA is aware of the problem and discussions concerning the industry's ethics have taken up a tremendous amount of time.

"The subject is foremost in our thoughts," Bostrom said. "But you and I cannot legislate morals, we can only hope to lead people to understand good business practices."

The PLCAA currently has a code of ethics and all members before joining the association must make a commitment to abide by the rules. Bostrom said several of their members distribute a printed copy of the code to their customers so they too will know what is expected of a PLCAA member.

Concerning lowballing, Bostrom says, he feels it is purely bad business, but the law prohibits the association from in anyway regulating prices. "We are aware of the business tactics being used to get customers, but the government does not allow us to become involved in price standards or to go into collusion against them."

Raise next year

"I tell them first of all that an operator who starts out with extremely low prices is going to have to raise them next year to stay in business, which will only make his customer realize that he did not get such a good deal," said Bostrom.

"Secondly, an operator who tries to do more work than he can handle will go out of business. It is not good business to sell below your established price, and in the end the good businessmen who keep their prices stable, are the



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MEETING DATES

University of Rhode Island Plant and Soil Science Dept. Turfgrass Field Day, Aug. 25, Turfgrass Research Farm, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, R.I. Contact: Dr. C. R. Skogley, Plant and Soil Science Dept., Woodward Hall, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, E.I. 02881. (401) 792-2570.

Alabama Turfgrass Conference, Sept. 9-10, Auburn Conference Center, Auburn, Al. Contact: Kim M. Sheffer, Extension Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, Al. 36849. (205) 826-4985.

Virginia Tech and Virginia Turfgrass Council Turfgrass Research Field Days, Spet. 14-16 (tentative), Turfgrass Research Center, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Va. Contact: Dr. John R. Hall III, Agronomy Dept., Virginia Polytechnic and State University, Blacksburg, Va. 24061. (703) 961-5797.

Northwest Turfgrass Conference, Sept. 20-23 (tentative), Conference Center, Yakima, Wash., Contact: Dr. Roy L. Gross, Western Washington Research and Extension Center, Payallup, Wash., 98371.

Florida Turfgrass Association Annual Conference and Show, Oct. 3-6, Curtis Hixon Convention Center and Hilton Inn, Tampa, Fla. Contact: Elizabeth M. Eyman, Executive Secretary, 1520 Edgewater Drive, Suite E, Orlando, Fla. 32804. (305) 425-1581.

Southern California Turfgrass/Landscape Equipment & Materials Educational Exposition, Oct. 6-7, Orange County Fairgrounds, Costa Mesa, Ca. Contact: Ed McNeill, Executive Secretary, Southern California Turfgrass Council, 1000 Concha St., Altadena, Ca. 91001. (213) 798-1715.

Professional Lawn Care Association of America Convention and Trade Show, Nov. 16-18, Indiana Convention Exposition Center, Indianapolis, In. Contact: Alfred Van Horn, 435 North Michigan Ave., Suite 1717, Chicago, Ill. 60611. (312) 644-0828.

New York State Turfgrass Association Conference, Nov. 16-18. Empire State Plaza — Albany Hilton, Albany, New York. Contact: Ann Reilly, Executive Director, 210 Cartwright Blvd., Massapequa Park, N.Y. 11762. (516) 541-6902.

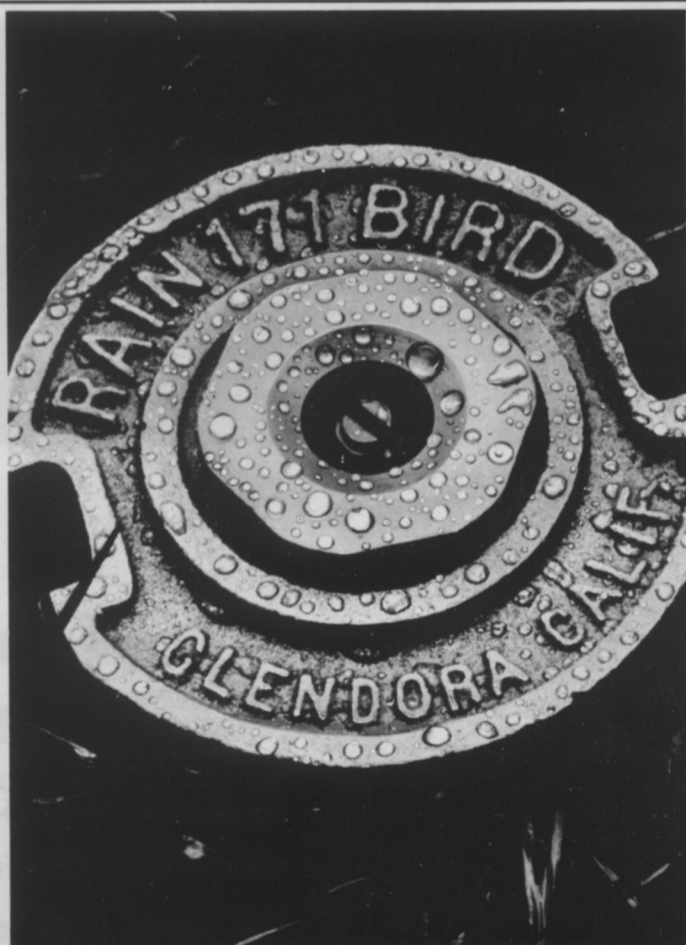
Delaware Turfgrass Association Conference, Dec. 6, Hercules Country Club, Wilmington, Del. Contact: W. H. Mitchell, Plant Science Dept., University of Delaware, Newark, Del. 19711. (302) 738-2531.

Texas Agricultural Extension Service Turfgrass Conference, Dec. 6-8, Rudder Center, College Station, Tx. Contact: Dr. Richard L. Doble, Soil and Crop Sciences, Texas A & M University, College Park, Tx. 77843.

Rutgers University and New Jersey Turfgrass Association Turfgrass Expo '82, Dec. 6-9, Cherry Hill Hyatt House, Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Contact: Henry W. Indyk, Soils and Crops Dept., Cook College, New Brunswick, N.J. 08903. (201) 932-9453.

Illinois Cooperative Extension Service Turfgrass Conference, Dec. 7-9, Prairie Capital Convention Center, Springfield, Ill. Contact: Dr. Tom Fermanian, 1707 S. Orchard, Urbana, Ill. 61801. (217) 333-7847.

Ohio State University and Ohio Turfgrass Foundation Conference and Show, Dec. 7-9, Ohio Center, Columbus, Oh. Contact: Dr. John R. Street, Dept. of Agronomy, Ohio State University, Columbus, Oh. 43210.



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What's going on out there?

Our front page story on unscrupulous competition did not exactly shock the editors of *Lawn Care Industry*. We had heard reports concerning lowballing over the phone and across the conference table. We had treated the subject in various forms editorially — always approaching

the topic gingerly. Most of the time we heard that, sure enough, it was going on in most markets. It was a fact of business life. Most knew who was doing it.

But it wasn't until a lawn care office was actually broken into and client records stolen that we commissioned an editor to find out to what extent those disposed to lowball were crossing over the stingy moral line into larceny.

Freelance editor Carrie Phippen got on the phone to lawn care businessmen from New York to Los Angeles and found to our surprise that more than a few companies had had their trucks tailed routinely, tanks sabotaged, and billings and estimates stolen. In Chicago finally, some wayward soul — heart pumping and eyes lit up — broke into an office and burgled company papers.

What was a shock to us was that some lawn care businessman would risk a term in jail in order to get ahead of the competition. From past conversations with you we had understood that most markets were not, in fact, saturated — that

there was plenty of work for everybody. To get a leg up all one needed was intelligent marketing people.

While the story that Phippen got described some extremely bad examples of competitive scruples, they did make us wonder if the market was as elastic as many said it was. Are these unrelated incidents — the work of crackpots — or do they indicate an impacted marketplace? We'd sure like you to let us know.

Paul Shocloshey

ADVERTISERS

Reader Inquiry No.	Page No.
101 Aquatrols Corporation of America	16-17
102 Balcom Special Products	17
103 BFC Chemicals, Inc.	11
104 BFC Chemicals, Inc.	28
105 Champion Sprinklers	12
106 Diamond Shamrock	7
107 Dow Chemical, U.S.A.	2-3
108 Excel Industries	13
109 Great Salt Lake Minerals & Chemicals Corp.	19
110 Lakeshore Equipment & Supply Co.	20
111 Monsanto	8-9
112 PBI/Gordon Corporation	26-27
113 Pickseed West	15
114 Rain Bird Sales	22
115 Spraying Systems Co.	22
116 Turf-Seed, Inc.	21
NEW PRODUCTS	
150 Pop-up sprinkler eliminates flow-by	13
151 Brochure for lawn care irrigation controllers	13
152 Commercial turbine has only one moving part	13
153 Six station solid state lawn sprinkler control	13

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1981 Used Spray Units For Sale — 1250 gallon tanks. John Bean F.M.C. 20-20 pumps. Steel beds. 16 HP Kohler engine. Ford F600's. Call 502-241-7341. TF

For Sale - Used spray trucks; 1979 Chevy C60, 12,000 miles 2 spd axle; 1979 1250 gal. split tank (Prof. Turf Specialties), Hanney electric hose reel - Meyers pump, \$15,000.00. 1981 Prof. Turf Specialties, 300 gallon tank. Ideal for pickup truck; new 18 hp B&S cast iron engine, put on in April, \$2,500.00. Call 314-221-6344. 7/82

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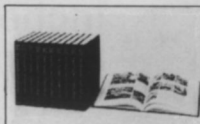
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LCI 72



George Toma discusses the reasons why the Chiefs and the Royals are so gung ho on immaculate turf:

His comments will make every turf pro feel a sense of pride.

The Truman Sports Complex in Kansas City is unique in all the world. A 78,000-seat stadium specifically designed for football, and a 42,000-seat stadium specifically designed for baseball. Indeed there is not a bad seat in the house. Without exception, visiting media who have occasion to see every stadium in the land are universal in proclaiming it the *most beautiful sports complex in the world*.

Obviously the physical construction is a major factor in its charm. But surveys show that the landscaping on the perimeters and traffic islands plays an

important role in attracting attendance.

Turfmen of the world, take a bow!

But if immaculate turf and ornamentals help attract crowds, they also help sharpen the skills of the athletes. "The management of both the Chiefs and the Royals know that football and baseball are games of inches," says George Toma, groundskeeper of the complex, "and so they are concerned with even the smallest details that could have a bearing on victory . . . and they believe that environment has a psychological effect on professional athletes."

The role of turf

Toma goes on to say that the Chiefs know that football players have a deeper appreciation of perfection if they practice on immaculate turf, "and so we keep the practice field absolutely perfect."



The Royals on the other hand are primarily concerned about the turf on the slopes beyond the centerfield wall adjacent to the scoreboard. It's against this backdrop that the Royals hold batting practice, and they don't even want a gum wrapper on the grass, let alone an extraneous weed that would affect the concentration of the hitter.

Remember, we're talking about batters who have such remarkable eyesight that they can count the seams on a base-



ball coming at them at 90 miles per hour. You better believe they could see a weed in that turf beyond centerfield... and you also better believe there better not be any weeds out there.

Toma's secret weapon

How does Toma keep the Truman Sports Complex immaculate and still find the time to have prepared the playing fields for all 16 Super Bowls and all 16 Pro Bowls that have been played?

"Well, for one thing, we plan on doing everything right the first time," grins Toma, "and Trimec is our secret weapon for controlling weeds totally, completely, in one fell swoop. Trimec does it right the first time. Over the years we've experimented with virtually every herbicide on the market, and nothing works like Trimec... nor is any other herbicide so economical when you consider all factors."

"On the outside perimeters of the parking area we've got about 35 acres of non-irrigated turf," continues Toma. "Heaven only knows what variety of weeds it can harbor and blow in to the area we manicure. But we've never found a weed that Trimec won't control."

At the Chiefs' summer camp in Liberty, Missouri, and on the Arrowhead practice field at the sports complex where Toma can use a boom sprayer, he uses professional Trimec. But in smaller, manicured areas he uses Acme® Weed-No-More®, which is a *homeowner* formulation of Trimec.

The truth about Trimec® that every Pro should know

Trimec is a patented herbicide manufactured by PBI/GORDON Corporation (Patent Number 3,284,186).

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ing Trimec product has unparalleled strength and breadth of spectrum, caused by the synergism that occurs from uniting acids into a Complex.

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The Trimec Complex is available in many different formulations for many different purposes. You'll find it in granular weed-and-feed products; in herbicides designed to be mixed with liquid fertilizer; in both professional and homeowner weed control products; and in professional agricultural and homeowner brush-control products.

Trimec Complexes have the name Trimec on the label and, beginning next year, they will carry this seal. Be sure to look for it on any broadleaf herbicide or brush killer you buy. It is your guarantee of professional quality.

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