

Detroit paper takes aim at chemical lawn industry

Detroit-area chemical lawn care businessmen — already beset with problems stemming from auto worker layoffs — had some explaining to do to customers after publication of an article in late May in the *Detroit News*.

The article, which ran on the front page of the May 19 edition on Michigan's largest newspaper, was entitled "Sprays Called

Hazards." Above the headline were the words "Agent Green," and below the headline was the phrase "Group Charges Lawn Chemicals Cause Cancer."

The use of the words "Agent Green" was an obvious reference to "Agent Orange," the defoliation herbicide used in Vietnam which has come under fire recently because of charges claiming it causes

"... someone dressed like a space invader came into your neighborhood with a tank truck, spraying everything in sight?"

cancer in former soldiers.

The article quoted 2,4-D detractors who:

- Criticized the "green lawn mentality" many homeowners have.
- Suggested that organic lawn care methods should be used for weed control.
- Criticized the casual attitude taken in ads promoting chemical lawn care treatments.

• Characterized lawn care applicators as persons dressed as "space invaders . . . spraying everything in sight."

There were quotes in the article from one lawn care businessman and one extension agent who explained that 2,4-D is not a dangerous chemical when used properly.

Staff writer Douglas Ilka began his article by writing:

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LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

Serving lawn maintenance and chemical lawn care professionals

DROUGHT BACKLASH

Customer retention down, new sales up, lawn businessmen say

Economists say that there is an "invisible hand" that guides the life of business and finance. This hand either shoves or shelters a market according to a formula of supply and demand. And the lawn care market is no exception — but the hand is a fist.

Reports from around the industry suggest that new sales in 1981 are as strong as ever, with retention of old accounts holding steady. The exceptions are areas hit last year by drought, disease, and insect activity, where first-year customers seeing slow or poor green-up have chosen either to stop service all together or just shop around.

The trend has been offset by a surge of new sales in the West and South — areas traditionally unspoiled by drought or water short-

ages. "Our business is way up," said Dale Jones, co-owner of High Country Lawns in Grand Junction, Colorado. "And we maintained a little over 90 percent of our first year customers."

Although High Country Lawns is the only lawn care business in Grand Junction, their track record is no less significant. Denver has been the capitol of the lawn care industry in Colorado, but as the industry percolates away from regional centers, it has begun to establish itself in "new-money" centers.

On the other hand, companies operating in the East and Midwest have felt a slight drop-off in sales retention percentages. "I think it's the first-time lawn service users," said Neal Katz, owner of Hydro-Green Lawn Service in Warmins-

ter, Pennsylvania. "They bought the service but didn't see much for their money."

Katz doesn't believe it's an overall trend, however, but more of a weather-related phenomenon. Since its inception, the lawn care industry has had to cope with customers who fail to understand that chemical treatment is a supplement and not a replacement for natural controls. And this is especially true of first-year customers.

Accepted as a needed service

But Hydro-Green's overall sales portfolio was up this year and Katz attributes it in part to the industry's growing public acceptance. "The industry is building," he said, "and is becoming accepted as a needed service. When you have the (name) companies like Sears and ChemLawn in the market, you further the industry's visibility."

Since rainfall in the Pennsylvania area has been adequate so far this year, Katz feels that his first-year sign-ups will stay with him. "It's becoming easier to sign-up

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MOWING/MAINTENANCE

Average reader has seven walk-behinds

The average reader of *LAWN CARE INDUSTRY* who handles mowing/maintenance jobs owns about seven walk-behind mowers, a recent survey by the magazine shows.

About four out of five readers of the magazine (78.8 percent) own an average of 6.8 rotary walk-behind mowers, the survey indicated. About 30 percent (29.4) own an average of 3.6 walk-behind reel mowers.

For rotary riding mowers, 55.5 percent of the readers said they own an average of two units. For reel riding mowers, 15.2 percent said they own an average of 1.4 units.

For tractors, 26.2 percent of the readers said they own an average of two units less than 10 horsepower. The largest percentage, 44.7 percent, said they own an average of 1.5 units between 10 and 20 horsepower.

For tractors between 21 and 30 horsepower, 20.1 percent of the readers said they own an average of 1.5 units. For tractors between 31 and 50 horsepower, 25.3 percent of the readers said they own an average of 2.1 units. And for tractors larger than 50 horsepower, 19.9 percent of the readers said

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September: Mowers/tractors, seed outlook
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EQUIPMENT INVENTORY

Equipment	% readers owning	number per owner	projection to LCI readership
Walk-behind mowers, rotary	78.8%	6.8	50,000
Walk-behind mowers, reel	29.4	3.6	10,000
Riding mowers, rotary	55.5	2.0	10,000
Riding mowers, reel	15.2	1.4	2,000
Tractors			
Less than 10 h.p.	26.2	2.0	5,000
10-20 h.p.	44.7	1.5	6,500
21-30 h.p.	20.1	1.5	2,800
31-50 h.p.	25.3	2.1	5,000
Over 50 h.p.	19.9	2.3	4,300

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UPFRONT



Agent Green? Space invaders?

Last month we had "Confessions of An Ex-Lawn Sprayer," an article that ran in a New York newspaper. This month we have "Agent Green: Sprays Called Hazards; Group Charges Lawn Chemicals Cause Cancers," which ran recently in the *Detroit News*, Michigan's largest newspaper.

Question: When will it all end?
Answer: It probably won't. As long as lawn care companies are using the necessary pesticides to control weeds, insects and diseases in lawns, as long as there are com-

munity groups and **environmental groups** who oppose use of these pesticides, and as long as spokesmen for these groups can pick up the telephone and whisper in the ear of a **newspaper reporter** looking for a front-page story, there are going to be stories like the *Detroit* one that carried quotes like this:

- "The 'green lawn mentality' of chemically ridding your lawn of weeds may be hazardous to your health. . . ."

- "The herbicides most commonly used in lawn sprays can

cause cancer, birth defects and nerve damage. . . ."

- "You don't need a herbicide of that strength to **kill off a few dandelions**. . . ."

- "What upsets . . . is . . . the **casual attitude** taken in ads promoting chemical lawn treatments."

- ". . . someone dressed like a **space invader** came into your neighborhood with a tank truck, spraying everything in sight."

It is not the newspaper reporter's fault in cases like this. In fact, for the most part, the *Detroit News* reporter in this case did a **fairly objective** job of reporting both sides of the story. But the point is, newspaper reporters should not have to go out of their way to hear both sides of the story. It is up to each and every lawn care businessman who is applying pesticides to **make the facts known** about the chemicals he is using in his lawn program.

With that in mind, a group of manufacturers and users of pesticides met in Chicago recently to form a "**coalition for a reasonable policy on 2,4-D**." Dr. Robert Miller of ChemLawn Corp., Columbus, Ohio is *pro tem* chairman of this group which was organized in large part by Dow Chemical Co., Midland, Mich. As he told a group of lawn care businessmen recently, "Pesticides are now a political issue."

Membership is open to anyone who uses 2,4-D, including professionals in the turf, forestry, wheat and commercial applicator areas, formulators, farm cooperatives and associations, in addition to major manufacturers.

Objectives of the newly formed group will be to **cultivate** congressional "friends," **invest** in a public relations effort, **print** a newsletter and literature on pesticide use and cultivate and **provide background** on the issues for newspaper reporters across the country.

These efforts, plus those of the **National Agricultural Chemicals Association 2,4-D Task Force**, hopefully will begin to put a more realistic perspective on use of the herbicide 2,4-D and other pesticides.

These efforts will help on a broad-scale basis, but what can you do in the meantime? **John Davidson, Dow's expert** on regulatory affairs, told another group of lawn care businessmen recently:

"2,4-D is coming under **attack** by those opposed to pesticides. To prevent a sudden loss of the product as occurred with silvex in 1979, all users should have a few facts **readily available** for those who inquire about its properties. A positive response documented by recognized experts will do much to allay the concerns of those who make inquiry about the safety of 2,4-D."

The Chicago-based **Professional Lawn Care Association** of

America has such information on file, that is available to members and non-members alike.

In addition to the front-page piece on the *Detroit News* article, page one of this issue of **LAWN CARE INDUSTRY** carries a story by assistant editor Paul McCloskey on **retention of customers** this spring by lawn care companies. **Cancellations** are up, to be sure, but many lawn care businessmen feel that many of these cancellations are people who were **first-users** last year. And, because of **drought** and **heat stress** problems across much of the country, many of these first-users were left with less-than-desirable lawns in some instances. So they cancelled.

But many lawn care businessmen are also saying that **new sales** are up, perhaps because of more **aggressive marketing**, and perhaps because some of last year's first-users are moving to another company. McCloskey reports that new sales seem to be up even greater percentages away from the major metropolitan areas.

McCloskey has two other major stories in this issue. Around the office, we have been calling the first one the "name game." Around the industry, there has been a rash of **law suits** to get a company name registered to protect a lawn company from one of these law suits. He reports that most name infringement is not malicious, but that the law suits come from simple ignorance of the correct way to get your company name registered.

He also traveled to Winston-Salem, N.C. to interview **mowing/maintenance** businessman Abron Griffin. As Paul said, "Abron is an example of a **self-starter**, what one has to be to get ahead in the lawn care industry. And he is also a good example of the fact that you don't have to be big to be professional."

Another part of professionalism is **personnel management**. And that is the topic that Birmingham, Ala. lawn care businessman Ronnie Zwiebel tackles in this month's "Inside the Industry."

Ronnie says: "Perhaps a better word than 'management' would be '**motivation**.' Because it has always been my contention that is a person is properly motivated, the management will fall easily into place."

Dates to remember: National Fertilizer Solutions Association Roundup, Indianapolis, July 7-9; Alabama Turfgrass Conference, Auburn, September 14-15; ChemLawn Corp. Turfgrass Weed Symposium, Columbus, Ohio, October 14-15; Missouri Lawn/Turf Conference, Columbia, November 3-4; Professional Lawn Care Association of America Conference and Trade Show, Commonwealth Convention Center, Louisville, Kentucky, November 18-20.

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REGAL

The Grass Cutter: A small pro thrives in North Carolina

It was the military life that might have convinced Abron Griffin he should go into the lawn care business. Writing reports, following orders, long days of metal and dust — and a platoon sergeant who had an interest in horticulture.

Now his days are still long and the paperwork keeps mounting, but these days Abron Griffin takes orders from customers only: about 35 of them in the Winston-Salem, North Carolina area where his 'The Grass Cutter' offers mowing and maintenance, pruning, and installation services.

Griffin started The Grass Cutter after taking a two-year associate degree in horticulture from nearby Forsyth College. He now employs

a crew of four men (a couple of them ex-service men like himself), has four E. J. Smith & Sons push mowers, one Gravely and one Gilson riding mower. "They call that Gravely the Cadillac of riding mowers," he said.

One of the things that strikes you about Griffin is how much he enjoys his work. On the job at seven, giving instructions, making runs for nursery products, lunch en route to the next job — it's all part of his typical mid-season day. "I'm in the business simply because I like the work and being outdoors," he said. "And I always have."

The Grass Cutter can be described as an all-purpose mechanical maintenance com-



The Grass Cutters: Abron Griffin (left), Phillip (P.J.) Jeffrey (right), Ben Stevenson (kneeling), and Wayne W. Young (not pictured.)

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pany. While most of the jobs involve mowing and edging, Griffin's crew also prunes to specification, applies spot weed control, handles landscaping and design jobs, and in the fall offers a full renovation program: dethatching, aeration, granular fertilization, liming, and re-seeding.

"And that's when we really get strung out," says Griffin. "If we get rained-in for two days and have to handle 30 or 35 jobs by the end of the week, we'll work 'round the clock and on Saturday too."

A stitch in time. One of the risks of running a small mowing and maintenance business like The Grass Cutter is the cost of time and labor. When jobs are big and the staff is small, every man-hour counts. And because the relative labor contribution of each worker is so great, a run to the nursery or a mid-morning sales call can be expensive — especially when the side trip doesn't pan out.

And then there's the unavoidable time that slips by with customers who just want to chat and prattle — the elderly or widowed who have a lot to talk about. "We call them Abron's girls," said Ben Stevenson, who's worked with Griffin since the start of The Grass Cutter over three years ago. Griffin shakes his head and says, "The public relation's a part of business that eats up a lot of time."

But that's in the nature of a small business. Much of a company's organization is fixed in the mind of the manager or owner, and with the exception of bookkeeping necessities, is not processed through difficult accounting formulas or complicated ledgers. Griffin is labor and management, sales representative, PR man, accountant, comrade, and cost-cutter. And he has to be.

Benefit planning. The term 'small business' can be deceptive, however. It should really refer to the size and not the needs of the company. Griffin is about to arrange for his workers to be able to receive benefits, for example, and it will naturally end up costing him money.

But he believes in it. "I know I'd want some benefits for myself if I were in their shoes," he said.

"You've got to have some incentive for them to stay with the company. And, I'm very interested in the man that's working for me."

Employee turnover plagues mowing and mechanical maintenance companies throughout the industry, and The Grass Cutter is no exception. Last year Griffin hired 17 different people and many of them were gone in a matter of weeks or even days. In a few cases he was stuck with the unemployment insurance receipts.

Employee benefits will help to offset this trend. "I realize I have to have benefits for the guys and workman's compensation for myself. Now, it's just a matter of time."

Griffin pays his crew by the hour and will pay them in the event of downtime. It's a fair policy that rewards the crew for time they could have spent earning wages. "It averages out," says Griffin. "We may lose some money by the

hour if we work very hard, but I'll still pay them if it rains and we can't cut grass."

On the other hand, Griffin says that if the work week has been disrupted in the case of rain, he expects his men to come out on a Saturday — something he usually tries to avoid — in order to keep to

You can tell that The Grass Cutter will someday be a bigger and even more diverse operation. The professionalism is there — and the grist of good business sense.

their schedule.

The give and take. Sometimes a customer's attitude about how a job should be done can lead to adaptations in his standard mowing procedures. Griffin says for instance that most customers believe that clippings should always be bagged during mowing. "If it's

done right, you really don't have to use a catcher, and when I've got the catcher on, the job can take twice as long to finish."

But you have to give in a little to customer notions. Griffin would like to solve the problem by adding a Bobcat 1700 self-propelled mower to his inventory. With a 48

inch cut and an extra wide deck, the cutter could hold up to two or three bushels of clippings and save the company the valuable time it takes to unhitch, empty, and re-hitch a standard mower's catcher.

That's a short-term goal. When he looks further down the road, however, Griffin sees changes in

his business that are better suited to both his company's needs and his personal interests.

Now he works out of his home, but someday he'd like to have a shop where he can abide his interest in horticulture. "I envision a shop where I can propagate some plants and maybe run a small nursery. I'd also like to do more design work on paper and then be able to go out and do the job."

You can tell that The Grass Cutter will someday be a bigger and even more diverse operation. The professionalism is there — and the grist of good business sense.

"Yea, looks like we're going to be really strung out come Thursday and Friday," he said, eyeing some mowers gummy from use. "This rain's a mixed blessing, but it gives us time to pop the blades on these cutters and get 'em clean."

Well — time is money.

— Paul McCloskey



Waiting out the rain: "I'm in business simply because I like the work and being outdoors," says Griffin.



The Grass Cutter's inventory includes four E.J. Smith & Son's cutters, one Gravely and one Gilson riding mower.

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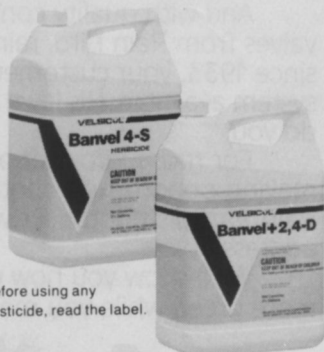


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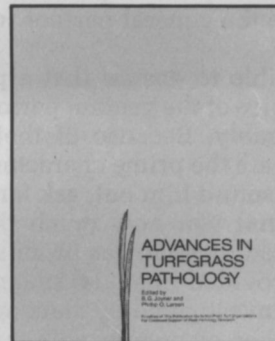
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The name game: Register yours before someone else does

A competitive fission is taking place in the lawn care industry. Companies once small and enterprising are expanding, dividing, and subdividing — and in the process are entering the business orbits of other, less active lawn care markets.

All in all this is a good thing. Business expansion helps carry new marketing ideas to the industry. It fosters creativity in advertising and makes for an aggressive market. But when this fission becomes too hot — watch out — you may be subject to trademark violation, the “big bang” of stiff competition.

There are currently a number of

so-called “misappropriation” suits being decided within the lawn care industry. The most common example of it is when a company, in most cases unaware of another company’s registered trademark, goes ahead and markets its service under a similar or even remotely similar handle.

When this happens, the offending company can stand to lose not only its trade name, but thousands of dollars in legal fees. “It doesn’t make business sense,” says Thomas Collin, an attorney with the Cleveland law firm of Thompson, Hine & Flory. “You should take the proper steps to legal protection.”

If you’re about to start a lawn care business of your own, it is important to choose a name that won’t lead to confusion when it comes to name identification. So here’s a list of procedures to go through in order that you can provide yourself with legal protection.

- First, choose a name that is as unconventional as possible. “Kodak is a classic example of that kind of trademark,” says Collin. “It’s become associated with a particular product and has no significance beyond that.”

Under normal circumstances, you’re not going to run into someone else that has a similar mark. If you do, chances are they’ve borrowed it from you. That’s called misappropriation and under normal circumstances, it’s legally wrongful.

- But even before selecting a distinctive name, it’s important to

registered.

Virtually all states have provisions for registration of trademarks and service marks. Once you’ve passed that hurdle, you should next check with the United States Patent and Trademark office.

“There are different ways to do this,” said Collin. “One way is to go to the public library and look up a book called the *Register of Trademarks*. The United States Patent and Trademark office puts this out once a year and it lists all the patents and trademarks under different categories of goods and services.”

“Look under Class 42, which is *Miscellaneous Services* to see if anybody else has already registered the name you’ve selected. It would also be appropriate to look under some additional classes to make sure that the mark hasn’t been registered under a trademark for a particular product, like fertilizer for instance.”

- After doing all that and if you’ve convinced yourself that you haven’t found anyone that’s got a name that is either identical or so close as to be confusingly similar to another name, then you may as well go ahead and start using that name.

“It might be a good idea to keep a

MONEYWISE

Checking out your general partner

Over a tenth of all lawn care businesses in 1979 were forged through a handshake between committed partners. The partnership usually includes a ‘limited’ partner — one who puts up a major block of capital — and a ‘general’ partner whose role is managerial. Depending upon the level of trust and combined experience of the principals, a partnership can run quite smoothly. But beware the general partner whose tracks are too well covered.

While it is impossible to ensure that a partnership will be profitable, careful choice of the general partner can at least stack the chips more favorably. Because of their access to funds, honesty and integrity are the prime character traits to look for in a general partner. To sound him out, ask for names of previous investors. They can tell you how much they invested, what returns were (compared to what was promised), how promptly the general partner provided financial statements, and whether the partnership was investigated by state agencies or the IRS.

“An amazing number of people will put up thousands of dollars before taking a few hours to see what they’re getting into,” says Ray Jeffrey Cohen, a Chicago attorney with Ray Jeffrey Cohen & Associates. Caution is the key.

When this happens, the offending company can stand to lose not only its trade name, but thousands of dollars in legal fees. “It doesn’t make business sense,” says Thomas Collin, a Cleveland attorney. “You should take the proper steps to legal protection.”

know whether or not any one else is using it. So you pull the name out of the air and hopefully, it’s fanciful enough or sufficiently distinctive to be entitled to trademark protection.

Before you start painting your name on all your trucks or spend thousands of dollars on advertising, call the Secretary of State’s office and inquire whether they have any record of that name being incorporated or whether they have that trademark or service mark

record of your investigation,” said Collin. “After you’ve satisfied yourself that you’ve got a perfectly good mark you can use, then you can go ahead and start using the name on your trucks and advertisements. Then go ahead and register it with the Secretary of State’s office in the state in which you reside.”

This may cost 20 or 25 dollars depending on the state you’re in. Also, enclose a sample of your promotional material along with your application for registration.

- If your business reaches the stage where it’s operating in more than one state, then an application to register the trademark can be filed with the U.S. Patent and Trademark office. There, the examiner will compare the mark and make a determination about whether or not it can be registered.

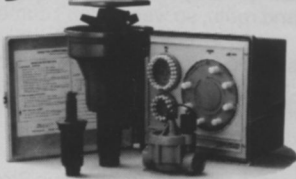
“If it’s sufficiently distinctive,” said Collin, “the examiner will permit it to be registered in the trademark office. But because of the backlog of applications, it may take as long as a year or two. You simply have to be prepared to wait for that.”

At the end of that period a certificate of registration will be issued. This will give you the right to exclusive use of that particular mark nationwide and it’s your strongest protection. “But it’s not going to enable you to go back and eliminate small businesses in various parts of the country which were unknown to you when you began to use your name.”

“Your trademark operates prospectively,” says Collin. It’s not an infallible protection against legal suits, but it is proof and record of your good intention to follow up the letter of the law.



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Subminimum wage unlikely under present congress

The past month was an active one in the wage and hour and occupational safety and health areas. In wage and hour matters, it is a "good news, bad news" situation.

The bad news is that it is unlikely that this Congress will pass a youth subminimum wage. The good news is that it is also unlikely that the minimum salary levels for the administrative, executive and professional exemptions from the minimum wage and overtime requirements will be raised during this Congress.

Additionally, the EEOC personnel will be reduced in response to budget cuts, all of which means greater difficulty in the agency's ability to enforce various equal employment statutes.

Finally, in a new Occupational Safety and Health Act development, courts are requiring more information before issuing an OSHA inspector a warrant to search an employer's place of business.

Not before '83. The Reagan administration has cautiously endorsed the concept of a youth subminimum wage, but it has not endorsed one of the three subminimum wage bills currently before the Senate. Senator Orrin Hatch has proposed a 75 percent wage differential payable to individuals under 20 years of age for six months.

Senator Percy proposes an 85 percent differential, and Senator Nickles proposes to exempt those under 18 years of age from all minimum wage provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

The difficulty that inhibits the Reagan administration from endorsing a specific legislative proposal is that there does not appear to be evidence that a minimum wage differential would have much of an impact on youth unemployment or on inflation. Without this economic base for revising the minimum wage standard, it is unlikely that the Reagan administration would give its full support to this type of legislation.

Salary tests dubious. It is unlikely that the Reagan administration will permit the Department of Labor to increase the salary tests for executive, administrative, and professional exemptions to the minimum wage and overtime provisions. Currently, if a non-exempt employe works 40 hours a week at the minimum wage, he will earn \$140.00. The minimum salary level for the "long test" exemption for executive and administrative employes is \$155.00, and \$170.00 a week or more for professional employes.

The "short test" is \$250.00 a week or more for all executive, administrative and professional employes. Thus, there is only a \$150.00 difference in the minimum salary level for the exemption compared to the minimum wage multiplied over a 40 hour work week.

Historically, the minimum salary levels for the exemptions have usually been twice the minimum wage for a 40 hour work week. Employers are getting a fair deal from the Department of Labor on the salary levels. On the other hand, more complaints are made to the Department of Labor regarding an improper claim of the executive, administrative, or professional exemption.

In sum, though it is likely that lawn care employes will have at least two years to claim these exemptions at the low salary levels, lawn care employers should critically analyze the other factors which are required for these exemptions.

OSHA Developments. If an inspector from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration knocks on a lawn care employer's door, the lawn care employer has every legal right to ask the inspector to get a warrant from a United States magistrate. The amount of time it takes an OSHA inspector to get the warrant may make the difference between the lawn care employer identifying a potential violation and remedying it before the OSHA inspector returns.

A recent case discussed the amount of information an OSHA inspector must submit to the magistrate for the magistrate to issue a warrant. A federal magistrate issued a warrant on the basis of a written affidavit, which reported complaints about respiratory equipment, safety belts, hard hats, and faulty tires at the Horn Seed Company of Oklahoma City. The OSHA inspector could not

identify the complainants as employes and was not certain who from OSHA received the initial telephone complaint.

The court held that although the standard for issuing a warrant in OSHA cases is not the same "probable cause" standard as in criminal cases, "there must be some knowledge of the facts surrounding the receipt of a complaint by the affiant, and showing of the standing of the complainant as an employe or employe representative of respondent employer."

In essence, a lawn care employer who requests the OSHA inspector to obtain a warrant is not going through a fruitless motion. Such a request will force the OSHA inspector to disclose enough information to a United States magistrate so that the magistrate determines that a warrant is appropriate before the OSHA inspector intrudes into the lawn care employer's business. Some



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employer's have asked whether or not it is a better strategy to try and accomodate the OSHA inspector, instead of asking him to get a warrant. Remember that the OSHA inspector who shows up at the lawn employer's work place is not there to help the lawn care employer. Furthermore, if there is a possibility that the OSHA inspector does not have a justified legal basis for searching the lawn care employer's place of business, then why should the lawn care employer permit an inspection without a warrant?

In next month's issue, we will discuss what a lawn care employer should do if he sees the Teamsters or another union passing out authorization cards or literature in front of his door as he arrives at the shop or office in the morning.

—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.

TURF MAINTENANCE

ChemLawn begins renovation program to halt mounting damage

While the lawn care industry continues to grow at an annual rate of 15 to 20 percent, ChemLawn of Columbus, Ohio, has turned an innovative approach and an unconditional guarantee into a 42 percent growth rate and a nationwide clientele of more than 800,000 homeowners.

One of the strongest contributors to ChemLawn's success has been its interest in specialization. The firm's lawn care specialists do not mow, seed, or perform any of the more labor intensive lawn care jobs. Rather, they concentrate their time and energies on doing the best possible job of herbicide, fertilizer and insecticide application.

"A good looking lawn is our best advertisement," says Jack Van Fossen, ChemLawn's 41 year-old president. "We are willing to stand behind all the work we do and will go to any expense to insure the satisfaction of our customers. I think the fact that we are well-established and willing to stand behind our work has played a large part in our success and growth," he said.

ChemLawn has research centers in Columbus, Atlanta, and Boynton Beach, Florida to provide support for their regional agronomists. These agronomists represent the company's quality control and are themselves highly qualified. Gary Custis, St. Louis

regional agronomist, for example, holds degrees in both Agricultural Engineering and Plant Science from the University of Delaware and a M.S. degree in Agronomy from Virginia Tech.

A good understanding. Along with his formal education, Custis spent a year "on the truck" as one of the company's lawn specialists before settling into his office. "That year out in the field gave me an understanding of our customers' problems and needs," Custis said. "It gave me a good sense of how I would be applying what I had learned."

Custis's region covers St. Louis, Kansas City, Topeka, Quad Cities, Springfield, Lincoln and Omaha, and a large part of his job is working with lawn specialists to help insure that their programs meet the specific needs of each area and each customer.

"In the St. Louis area, we go with two well-established programs, a warm season program and a cool season grass program," he said, adding that weather conditions, grass variety, and other variables are considered carefully in choosing correct chemical application rates and timing. The spring program is a preemergence application of Betasan and Dacthal for annual grass control. Like all other chemicals, the Betasan and Dacthal are applied from either an 800 or 1,200 gallon tank.

Combined with a complete application of fertilizer, viewed by the company as the "backbone" of good lawn care, is a tank mix of 2,4-D and dicamba for dandelion and broadleaf control. In late May or early June, another fertilizer application is made, this time mixed with Dursban for control of sod webworms, cutworms and armyworms. ChemLawn's applicators also apply Diazinon for grub control on an as-needed basis.

In early fall, another complete fertilizer application made in combination with 2,4-D and Dicamba for broadleaf control kicks off the program. A follow-up application of fertilizer is then made as late in the fall as possible to complete ChemLawn's eight month season, lasting from April through December.

Educating the customer. According to Custis, most customers contact them due to problems with weeds. "As a result, they are usually pleased with us the first year when there's a dramatic reduction in their weed problem," he comments. "But, it becomes harder to show them results year after year. We have to educate our customers," he said. "Lawn care is an ongoing maintenance effort. It's when we stop doing it that they really see the difference."

One perhaps more visible service that certainly holds great promise for the company's future growth is turf renovation. "We are stressing either spot or complete renovation for many of our customers," says Custis. "The idea is to provide them with a grass that is better suited to this area than what they might be having trouble with now."

In most cases, Custis recommends a tall fescue in place of the

to page 30



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Moreover, Rugby possesses a high level of resistance to most of the common and current turfgrass diseases. This is another factor which may well result in significant savings in turf management costs.

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For more information on Rugby, write Rugby Kentucky Bluegrass, P.O. Box 923, Minneapolis, MN 55440.



INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

Keeping employees motivated

by Ronnie L. Zwiebel, President
Chem-Care Lawn Service of Alabama
Birmingham, Alabama

Personnel management is perhaps the most difficult aspect of managing a lawn care company. But perhaps a better word than management would be motivation. It has always been my contention that if a person is properly motivated, the management will fall easily into place.

What motivates people? In a recent survey at my company, these items were mentioned, in order of importance:

- Money
- Job satisfaction
- Job security
- Position or title
- Hours to work
- Chances for advancement
- Benefits
- Retirement program

Money was the big leader of this group. This of course brings us to our next point. How do we pay our people? Without getting into great detail, let's outline some of the options available.

Four pay systems

Basically, you can pay one of four ways: (1) by the hour; (2) on a salary system; (3) on a commission based on productivity; or (4) a hybrid combination of two or more of these options.

How do each of these systems work? The hourly rate is the easiest for the employee to understand. They are paid a set figure for each hour they work up to 40 hours per week, and then 1½ times that rate for each hour over 40 hours. For 1981, the minimum wage is \$3.35 per hour for regular hours. Although this is a positive pay system for hours spent at work, it offers no incentive for increased or improved productivity other than raises in the future, based on the employer's decisions.

The salary type of pay can be divided into two types — a flat salary such as most owners and managers are paid and the fluctuating work week. We all know about the flat salary, but what is a fluctuating work week? Let's assume for a minute that Sam Sprayer is paid \$200 per week on a fluctuating work week program. This means Sam will be paid \$200 for all hours up to and including 40 each week. He earns a regularly hourly rate of \$5 per hour based on 40 hours.

Fluctuating pay system

But last week it rained several days and poor Sam could only work 20 hours. On the fluctuating system, he must still be paid the same \$200. This applies even if he only works one hour.

Next week if the weather is good Sam will need to work overtime to catch up. He has to work 50 hours. Now how is he paid? The \$200 is for regular hourly pay. That means \$200 divided by 50 equals \$4 per hour, regular time for all 50 hours. Since Sam worked over 40

hours in a given week, he must be paid half time for overtime only. His hourly rate was \$4. Thus, \$4 divided by two or times one-half equals \$2 per hour half time still owed. Two dollars times 10 hours overtime means Sam will be paid an additional \$20 for the week he worked 50 hours.

With this system, the computed regular hourly rate must not fall below minimum wage. If it does, the minimum rate would apply. The fluctuating work week provides better budgeting stability. The hourly rate is easier for employees to understand and the flat salary in some instances is not allowed by the Department of Labor.

Increasing scale of commission pay

I can't say one method is better than another, but I can relate to you what happened at Chem-Care. We were having many problems with our applicators until about four years ago. We went to our people and said that we only had X amount of dollars that could be paid out for work levels. Then we asked them what method of pay they wanted, and how we could make it serve as an incentive to do more and better production.

We came up with an increasing scale of commission pay based on monthly productivity. The way it works is the more production a worker does, the higher the percentage the worker is paid for each level of productivity. Thus, he and the weatherman have almost complete control over how much he sprays and more importantly, how much he earns.

The one problem we have experienced is that it is difficult to get the applicator interested in generating and making truck sales. Some of them feel our bonus system for truck sales does not adequately compensate for lost production — while others are adding much to their income through selling new accounts.

Health and life insurance

Another lawn care businessman I know has an agreement that states a guaranteed salary based on so many hours of work per week plus a small percentage of production done by the applicator. These employees have two ways to increase their income. One is by spraying more and the other way is through an increased base level by job quality, length of time employed, experience, etc.

What are the more common benefits being provided by employee-concerned companies? Health insurance would seem to head the list. Some companies allow access to and provide administration of group plans only, while others have a cost-sharing program. Some companies such as ours elect to pay 100 percent of the expense in an effort to increase the non-taxed job benefits and not reduce the after-tax value of the employee's income.

Along these same lines, and usually on the same insurance policy, falls life insurance. The amount of insurance is usually a flat rate per employee, or a flat rate based on the level of responsibility, or a rate based on the income level of the employee. At Chem-Care our program allows for up to four different levels of insurance coverage with the coverage being based on a level that is approximately each group's average salaries.

Intangible factors

What about all of the intangible factors that affect the personnel who are responsible for managing? I think that it is interesting to note that in our survey, job satisfaction and job security were important considerations of a job.

The important point to remember is that a good attitude must start at the top and work its way down through the ranks. What is it that makes a good attitude important? The best example of a person with a good attitude is a person with pride. Pride in himself first — pride in the way he looks, pride in his work, pride in his equipment and pride in his company.

Look around you. Aren't the people that come in every morning on time, that are fresh-looking and ready-to-go the people that you have the least problems with with poor quality work and probably have the least equipment breakdowns. It has always been my observation in our type of business that a person who has a sloppy truck will usually do poor quality work.

Compensation based on merit

If he takes pride in his equipment, he will care for it. It will function better, thus increasing his production, thus increasing his income, thus increasing his job satisfaction, thus increasing his pride — well, you get the picture.

That same person is the one that usually has the least service calls and complaints for human errors such as missed areas or leaving the gate open or stupid things like that. Let's face it, the intangible things and the way you as a manager handle them, is what is going to make or break you as a supervisor. What can you do to encourage the development of these intangibles such as job satisfaction, job security and personal pride in your fellow workers?

Employees should know that you the lawn care employer is sincerely committed to making the company a good place to work. This commitment emphasizes working together as a company to prosper, initiate programs and resolve disputes. Communicating with them is a key part of the overall plan.

Salaries and wages are important in this area also. Equally significant is favoritism in

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compensation, which gnaws at employee morale. Salary differences should be based on the objective factors of merit, productivity or seniority, but not favoritism. Employees compare pay stubs. Make sure you don't have any surprises waiting for them.

Supervisors as the good guys

Many employees today generally project poor morale and a low feeling of self-worth. Many employees feel that they are replaceable and unimportant as individuals. To begin reversing this negative mindset, lawn care employers should let employees know about their essential contributions to the overall success of the lawn care business.

If an employee does something extraordinary, recognize him for that with a small bonus. The combination of the recognition, money and attention expressed to an employee in that situation is worth more dollars in the future by either inspiring greater employee productivity or by reinforcing that employee's company loyalty. If a bonus is awarded, the supervisor should make the presentation. Too often, supervisors are perceived as carriers of bad news, such as disciplining or layoffs. A supervisor who gives a bonus will contribute to good relations with those employees.

What can you as a manager of a company do to encourage good attitudes? At Chem-Care we take two major approaches and a bunch of little steps to show our employees that we respect them as individuals and want to encourage them to better themselves within our organization.

Four days each year, two in the fall and two in the spring, are set aside for classroom training. We pack up our projectors, slides, people and notes and head for the Holiday Inn meeting room and get down to some serious learning. We have invited people from local trade schools, the Extension Service and chemical representatives to participate and offer their views on varying subjects from insects and disease to safe pesticide handling procedures.

Promotion from within

We also encourage all of our employees to give at least one 15-minute talk on subjects such as rebuilding a pressure relief valve or trouble-shooting a pumping system, in a session. We have found a better-trained employee is more enthusiastic and in many cases, more efficient because he can save another person a trip to the lawn because he is able to answer questions for a customer that he might otherwise have been unable to do. In addition to this, we provide each employee, when he starts, with a Chem-Care training manual.

We make an effort to promote from within our ranks rather than just hiring middle management positions from college graduate ranks. As many of you know, based on the number of graduates, getting a quality graduate is next to impossible. With this in mind, the training program is a two-fold program. It gives our people the opportunity to participate and improve themselves, plus it gives the company a better-trained base to expand from.

Salt on the wounds

During our spring session we show our employees our cash flow projections for the upcoming year. This serves two purposes. It lets them realize what is expected of each of them and makes them realize their salary is not the only expense to come out of the dollars of production they bring in.

Sometimes our applicators lose sight of the fact that just because they may bring in \$10-11,000 in one month's production and only take home \$1,200-1,400, the other \$9,500 or so is not being used just to fatten the boss's wallet. Truck expense, chemicals, other people's salaries are just a few of the major expenses.

Periodically on rainy days, we try to update our people as to what was projected to date



Personnel management 'Zwiebelisms'

Salary differentials should not be based on favoritism. Employees compare pay stubs. Don't surprise them.

If an employee does something extraordinary, recognize him with a small bonus. This will pay for itself by inspiring greater productivity.

Competition among applicators is encouraged by a posted chart comparing quotas and actual production.

We show our employees cash flow projections for the year. It lets them know what is expected, and shows them that their salary is not the only expense coming out of production dollars.

and what has actually been spent in each category. This gives them and us an opportunity to see our shortcoming either in productivity or as in projections of expense and shows all of us where adjustments are needed to make projections more accurate.

Competition among applicators is encouraged through the use of a chart showing how much production is expected of each applicator to date and how much he actually has done for the month. A chart is also posted showing the company goal and progress to

date. Most of the applicators don't particularly like being behind the "to-date" amount for the month but hate to be behind some of the other applicators.

Since our applicators' pay system is based on a commission system, at the end of the month, to further throw salt on the wound, we note each applicator's gross pay for that month on the chart for all to see. In addition, each day an applicator works after reaching his personal monthly goal, he will receive a winter day off with pay as encouragement to exceed the goal.

'Spray, Gypsy, Spray'

To reduce the "Spray, Gypsy, Spray," attitude, each applicator is responsible for correcting his errors such as missed areas or sloppy applications and customers that question whether they got the application or not are handled by the applicator.

Good personnel management should start before these points. Before filling out an employment application, an applicant should be given a job description that includes hours, duties and responsibilities. A salesman should know his job requirements, hours and where and what he will sell. Production employees should know their conditions of work, such as long hours during the hot summer. Job descriptions are essential because some individuals will eliminate themselves from consideration before filling out an application. This way, potentially dissatisfied employees do not even enter the work force.

Pre-hire screening

Assuming that an individual still wants to apply for a job, the application must solicit information for making a non-discriminatory employment decision. The use of objective factors must also be job-related. That is, the factor of a college education, while objective, must be absolutely unrelated to one's ability to work as a general laborer.

An employment application should request only that information which is relevant to successfully performing the job. For example, applicator job-related questions for production personnel may include their past driving record, and drinking and driving related offenses, etc. Remember, this would not be an acceptable question to ask a potential secretary, since driving will not be part of her job-related responsibilities.

Other job-related questions on an application include what duties were performed at the last job, the number of days absent or late at the last job, and why the applicant is applying for the production job.

Let employee know what to expect

Once the decision has been made to hire an individual, the personnel policy should be explained to him. The individual should sign a slip that is attached to the policy which states he has read the policy and understands its terms. At this point, the personnel file will include the employment application, tax withholding information, and the slip.

Look at the person before he is hired. Look at the image and attitudes you and your company project. Does the potential employee know what is expected of him prior to accepting the job? Does he know and understand what he or she can expect from the company? Does the applicant possess the mental capabilities to do the job you will be expecting of him?

The pre-employment introduction does not have to be lengthy and detailed but it must be complete. We have pre-employment introduction to Chem-Care that covers 18 different points in paragraphs covering topics such as working schedule, including Saturdays, tools furnished by employees, paid holidays and vacation, all the way through our position on jury duty. The point is that they are covered and misunderstandings have been greatly reduced. Nobody likes bad surprises — neither the employee or the employer. This has helped us.

MEETING DATES

Ohio State Research Field Day, Ohio State University Turfgrass Research Field Facility, Columbus, OH, August 4. Contact: Dr. Keith J. Karnok, 1827 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43210, 614-422-2591.

University of Missouri Turf Field Day, University of Missouri South Farms, August 4. Contact: John H. Dunn, Horticulture Department, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211

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.

Garden and Outdoor Living Division of the 1981 National Hardware Show, McCormick Place, Chicago, IL, August 17-20. Contact: Samuel Black, Ted Black, Inc., 535 N. Fifth Street, Reading, PA 19601, 215-373-4267.

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.

Annual Alabama Turfgrass Conference, Auburn, AL, September 14, 15. Contact: K. M. Sheffer, Extension Hall, Auburn University, AL 36849, 205-826-4985.

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.

Symposium on Turfgrass Weeds — 1981, Sheraton-Columbus Hotel, Columbus, OH, October 14, 15. Contact: Dr. B. G. Joyner, Plant Diagnostic Lab, ChemLawn Corp., 6969 Worthington-Galena Rd., Suite L, Worthington, OH 43085, 614-885-9588.

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.

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.

Professional Grounds Management Society Annual Conference and Trade Show, Portland Marriott Hotel, Portland, OR, November 3, 4. Contact: Allan Shulder, Executive Director, PGMS, 7 Church Lane, Pikesville, MD 21208, 301-653-2742.

21st Annual Missouri Lawn and Turf Conference, Ramada Inn, Columbia, Missouri, November 3, 4. Contact: Nicholas Palo or Cathy Martin, Conference and Short Courses, 344 Hearnes Bldg., University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211.

National Institute on Park and Grounds Management Educational Conference and Trade Show, Muehlebach Hotel and Convention Center, Kansas City, MO. Contact: National Institute on Park and Grounds Management, P.O. Box 1936, Appleton, WI 54913, 414-733-2301.

Atlantic Seedsmen's Association Convention, Biltmore Plaza, Providence, R.I., November 4, 5, 6. Contact: Margaret Herbst, Executive Secretary, ASA, 230 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

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. Dubble, 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.

1982 A.L.C.A. Trade Exhibit, Riviera Hotel, Palm Springs, CA, Jan. 26, 1982. Contact: ALCA Exhibit Manager, 1750 Old Meadow Road, McLean, VA 22102.



“They should have used Sulfate of Potash.”

Lawn burn! A result of high summer temperatures and too much chloride. That's why you should fertilize with GSL's Sulfate of Potash. Sulfate of Potash is nearly chloride free and has a salt index of 0.85 vs. 1.94 for Muriate of Potash so there is far less chance of burning lawns and gardens if mistakenly over applied or spread unevenly.

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In addition to its low salt index, GSL's Sulfate of Potash contains 18%

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Circle No. 122 on Reader Inquiry Card

EXCEL HUSTLER 261



New, big machine performance in a compact size, low price.

EXCEL'S economical new HUSTLER 261 with 60" deck offers unparalleled performance with a surprisingly low price tag. Superior engineering also gives the 261 features that keep productivity up and operating costs down.

The HUSTLER'S exclusive, dual-hydrostatic system powers both drive wheels independently. Twin levers, one actuating each drive wheel, control forward, reverse, ground speed, turning and braking action to give the operator one-hand control to move the unit at infinite speeds, in any direction.

This infinite maneuverability plus the floating action of the 3-way deck and short wheelbase lets you cut trimming time around any obstacle.

Designed for year 'round productivity, 261 attachments include 60" 3-way deck, edger, 60" dozer blade, V-blade, utility scoop, rotary broom, tilt-deck trailer and more. There's four season productivity with the 261.

Call toll free 1-800-835-3260, or write for the name of your EXCEL distributor and free literature. He'll be glad to set up an EXCEL HUSTLER field demonstration for you.

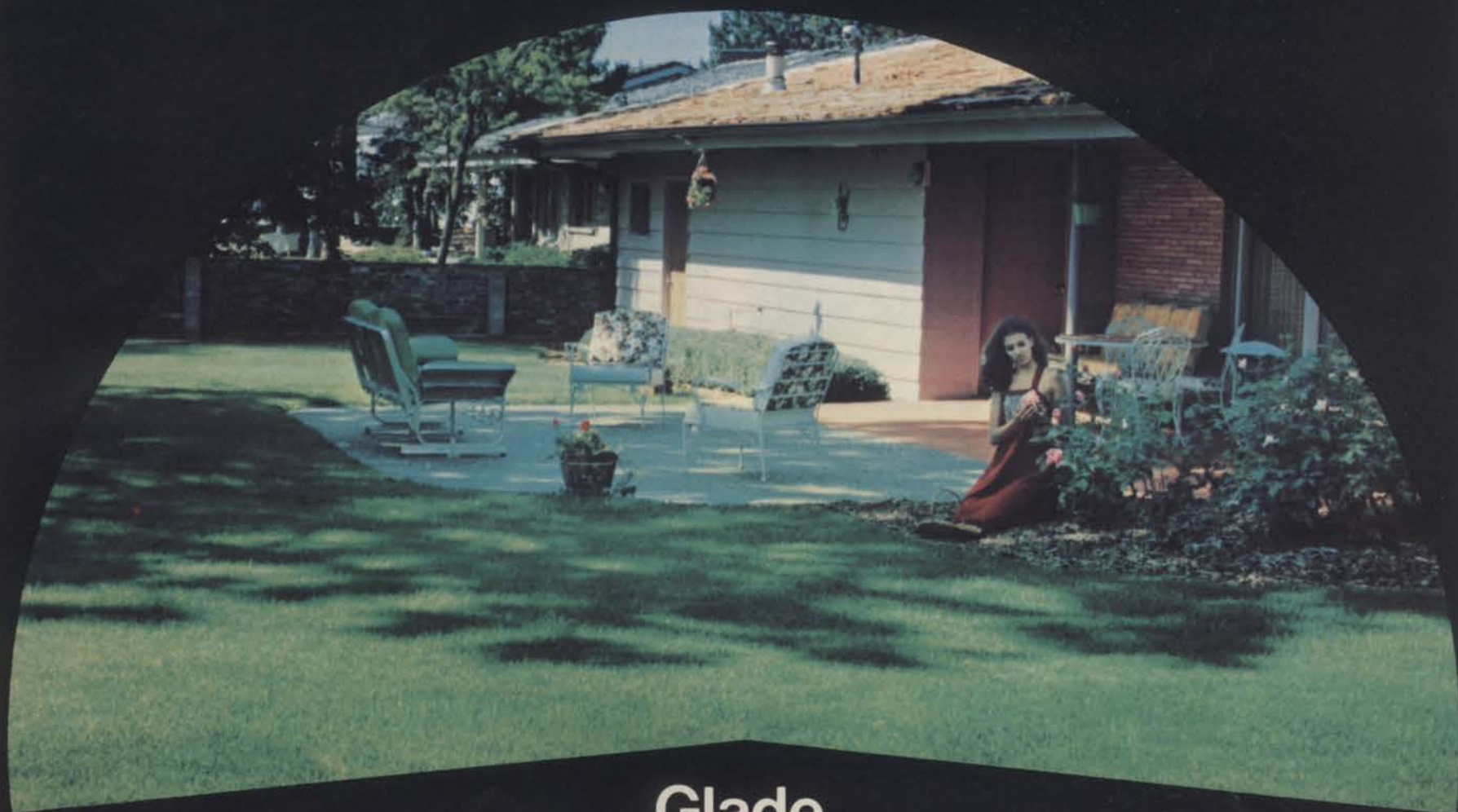
Infinite maneuverability within its own radius with total control in the palm of one hand!

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GM-5-181
Circle No. 109 on Reader Inquiry Card



Glade grows in up to 60% shade

What's your problem—trees with only a straggle of grass? Near sides of buildings with bleak tufts of pale green?

Maybe Glade can help! Sow it under trees and beside buildings. Glade will grow in up to 60% shade because of improved resistance to powdery mildew. Glade has a better-than-average resistance to Fusarium blight, making it a prime ingredient in professional turf-grass mixes.

and in 100% sun.

Open sunny stretches are equally perfect for Glade's deep green turf. Glade's rhizome and root system form a deep, close-knitted sod. Low-growing, Glade germinates and establishes quickly.

A Rutgers selection (tested as P-29), Glade Kentucky bluegrass is your guarantee of physically pure and genetically true seeds.

Ask for Glade at your local wholesale seed distributor.

Another
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product of
Jacklin
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Company.

Glade
Glade
Kentucky bluegrass
U.S. Plant Patent 3151

Circle No. 112 on Reader Inquiry Card

PRODUCTS

Lawn care irrigation equipment

Irrigation without removing soil or turf

The Pipe-Piper Model 180 from Turfco Sod Master simplifies the installation of sprinkling systems. Trenches, backfilling and lawn repair are a thing of the past because the Pipe-Piper buries flexible and semi-flexible pipe as large as one and three-quarter inches in a single operation.

One man can do the complete job, burying pipe at speeds up to 75 feet per minute. The Pipe Piper is easily maneuvered around trees, shrubs, walks, and other obstacles — thus eliminating a great deal of splicing.

The Pipe Piper burying method, employing an oscillating tunnel-

ing element, pulls the pipe underground. No turf or earth is re-



moved. Only a barely noticeable slit in the turf remains after the pipe is buried, which usually disappears in a few days.

Circle No. 150 on Reader Inquiry Card

Program your irrigation needs

The 900 series controller from Batrow Inc. contains the features to satisfy all your irrigation requirements: Individual station control — timing in unlimited combinations of watering durations — 0-60 minimum per station — terminal strip for ease of installation — circuit breaker — master valve — pump circuit — new program started every hour.

Circle No. 151 on Reader Inquiry Card

Spray jet irrigates areas at low volume

A new low-volume spray jet is now available from Olson Irrigation Systems. The Geor-Jet operates at low pressures ranging from five to 30 psi, distributing water in a 300 degree spray which minimizes water on tree trunks and foliage while covering a wide surface area. Output capacities range from



1.4 to 27.1 gph.

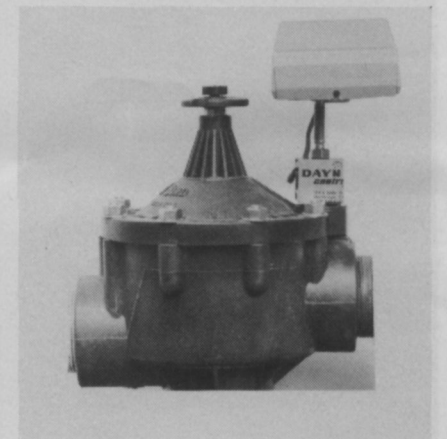
The Geor-Jet features one-piece nylon construction which eliminates assembly labor and possible problems with "popped tops." Its threaded stem provides quick, positive attachment to tubing or pipe.

Circle No. 152 on Reader Inquiry Card

Battery operated solenoid systems

A new battery or electric solenoid system that can automate any manufacturer's irrigation valves is being marketed by Dayni Controls for the lawn care businessman.

The Dayni Solenoid system can automate from one to five valves



ranging in size from 3/4 to 24 inch at a reasonable cost. It has solid state reliability and is easy to install. The system features advanced technology and offers versatile irrigation capabilities.

It can be easily incorporated into existing irrigation systems.

Circle No. 153 on Reader Inquiry Card

Deliver your water on time

Time-A-Matic from Melnor Industries is an automatic discharge timer for lawn sprinklers which will help you beat the water shortage problem facing much of the industry today.

The new Time-A-Matic line includes the #101 improved water timer that offers more features at a lower cost. It has 48 settings, each an exact amount measurement of water and delivers up to 1600 gallons in a single setting. It includes a continuous flow setting when a non-timed water delivery is needed, so it never has to be removed from the faucet. On this setting, flow rate can be adjusted from high to low.

The #101 is sold alone and in combination packages where it's paired with Melnor's best selling oscillators. Two pulsator

to page 25

WE'RE GROWING!

Building and maintaining a business on a profitable basis depends upon KNOWLEDGE and EXPERIENCE. PLCAA can give you that knowledge and experience. Grow with us!

- Attend Regional Seminars and Conventions — where small groups get together to exchange ideas and share experiences. Reports are that members attending these seminars "find out what does and does not work."
- Control your Business Costs — Members now have PLCAA's Standard Chart of Accounts for better accounting to control costs. Accountants can adapt their records to allow for comparison of members' operating expenses with those of the industry average.
- Put Industry Technical Resource Information to Good Use — PLCAA is now completing a reference manual which will include valuable material covering:
 - Glossary of Terms
 - Regulatory Contacts
 - Turf Contacts
 - Waste Control
 - Pesticide Safety
 - Handling and Storage of Pesticides
- Participate in PLCAA's Insurance Plans — Our casualty and workmen's compensation plans alone can save you many dollars.
- Add your Voice to Industry — when regulatory matters at federal, state and local level impinge on members' operations. The more members, the stronger the voice!

Don't stand alone. Participating in your trade association's growth can save you valuable time and money. Invest now and be one of the top profitable businesses in the lawn care market. Grow with us!

ARE YOU?

Tell me more.

The Professional Lawn Care Association is growing! Together we can make things happen. Grow with us. Complete this application for further information and mail it today.

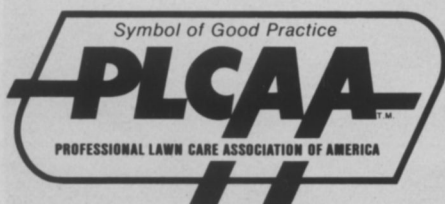
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COMPANY _____

STREET _____

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Mail to: PLCAA, Suite 1717
435 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611



Professional Lawn Care Association of America

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READER SERVICE INFORMATION CARD 7-81 2

For more information on products or services mentioned in this issue, circle the corresponding numbers below, fill in appropriate information and mail today.

101	108	115	122	129	136	143	150	157	164	171	178	185	192	199	206	213	220	227	234
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103	110	117	124	131	138	145	152	159	166	173	180	187	194	201	208	215	222	229	236
104	111	118	125	132	139	146	153	160	167	174	181	188	195	202	209	216	223	230	237
105	112	119	126	133	140	147	154	161	168	175	182	189	196	203	210	217	224	231	238
106	113	120	127	134	141	148	155	162	169	176	183	190	197	204	211	218	225	232	239
107	114	121	128	135	142	149	156	163	170	177	184	191	198	205	212	219	226	233	240

PLEASE CHECK BELOW YOUR PRIMARY BUSINESS AT THIS LOCATION:

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

B. GROUNDS CARE/MAINTENANCE AT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF FACILITIES:

- 110 Private or public estate

- 120 School, college, university, hospital, or similar facility
130 Condominium housing development or industrial park
140 Government grounds; parks, around municipal buildings, military facilities
150 Cemetery or memorial garden
190 Other (please specify) _____

C. SUPPLIER

- 210 Chemical dealer or distributor
220 Equipment dealer or distributor
230 Seed broker/dealer
240 Sod grower

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items of
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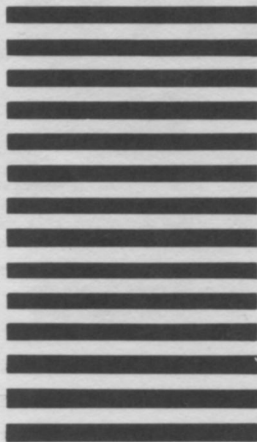
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**GET
MORE
FACTS**

sprinklers and three revolving sprinklers form the heart of the new Time-A-Matic line with all the features of the 101 timer built in.

Circle No. 154 on Reader Inquiry Card

Handlebar and trencher in one

Ditch Witch has introduced the Model 1810, a compact riding trencher for the lawn care businessman that falls in a category between handlebar machines and 18 horsepower-class trenchers.

It offers the compactness of a



handlebar and the convenience of a riding trencher. A hydraulic backfill blade is available as an option.

The 1810 is built on a rigid one-piece frame. It has hydrostatic ground drive to all four wheels, including a 20,000 pound test digging chain and will dig trench to depths of five feet and to widths of 12 inches.

Circle No. 155 on Reader Inquiry Card

Pump fertilizer through your lines

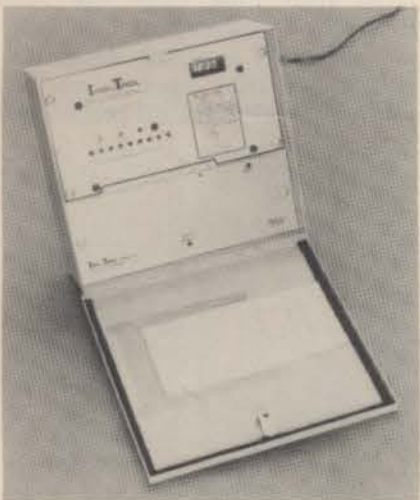
Turf N' Jector injector pumps are used for injecting fertilizers and other materials into the water on irrigated turf grasses. Manufactured by Inject-O-Meter Manufacturing Company, Inc., the Turf N' Jector is a valuable management tool for concerned and responsible turfgrass managers.

The unit is available with various power drive options as well as being constructed of 316 stainless steel on the wetted pump parts.

Circle No. 156 on Reader Inquiry Card

Solid state water controller

Irri-Trol Manufacturing, Inc. offers an advanced line of solid state controllers for the lawn care and



irrigation industry. The controllers come in four, eight, 12, 18, 24, 30, and 36 station configurations with many features not normally available.

Circle No. 157 on Reader Inquiry Card

Meter senses turf and plant water needs

The Irrrometer Irrigation Control System from the Irrrometer Company operates by sensing soil moisture and signaling the lawn care businessman when irrigation is necessary. The simple probes allow the manager to set his controller once and after that, the Irrrometer System allows needed irrigations to take place with unnecessary irrigations being eliminated.

Circle No. 158 on Reader Inquiry Card

Clean your tubes with Lakos Separators

Protecting all types of water systems from the abrasive and damaging effects of sand and grit, Lakos Separators from the Claude Laval Corporation are popularly chosen to protect irrigation sprinklers and center pivot nozzles from excessive wear.

Circle No. 159 on Reader Inquiry Card

Soil amendments for turf

Turf penetration with new wetting agent

As part of a lawn care program, Aqua-Gro from the Aquatrols Corporation of America, Inc. compensates for the variations in soil type,



compaction, thatch, undulations and irregular irrigation that exists from lawn to lawn.

Aqua-Gro is a 100 percent active non-ionic wetting agent that is

effective on all soils, has a residual, and is available in liquid concentrate or spreadable granular. Aqua-Gro works as a soil wetting agent ensuring rapid and uniform dispersion of water throughout the rootzone area, thus distributing nutrients and pesticides uniformly in the rootzone.

Aqua-Gro can be used as a very effective spreader to ensure uniform coverage of foliage rather than a beaded effect. And Aqua-Gro works as an activator by improving penetration of foliar applied materials into the turf blade.

Circle No. 160 on Reader Inquiry Card

Gypsum works like millions of tiny hoes

Sof'N-Soil lawn gypsum from the United States Gypsum Company, effectively and economically aids plant growth by loosening and

to page 26

FALCON

PVP applied for

Tall

Fescue



New turf-type tall fescue of the 80's

You'll like this new, fine-textured variety with higher density than most of the currently available tall fescues. Falcon is a leafy, moderately low growing turf-type variety with pleasing green color and tolerance to heat and drought. It's a good performer under minimum maintenance programs, too. Throughout its area of adaptation, mature stands of Falcon have shown tolerance to wear and moderate shade which makes it useful for home lawns and play areas such as athletic fields and parks.

Contact us for more information.



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Circle No. 106 on Reader Inquiry Card

TOOLS, TIPS, TECHNIQUES

Paying attention to your cut

The conventional "flush cut and paint" method of pruning may leave trees and shrubbery defenseless against internal disease, according to Dr. Alex Shigo, research pathologist, US Forest Service, Northeastern Forest Experiment Station, Durham, NH.

Dr. Shigo's research has revealed that at the base of every branch there is a collar or chemical zone that blocks the spread of decay into the trunk. Once branch decay reaches this collar it stops, the branch falls, and callus is formed. But if the collar is cut during pruning, the chances of infection by decay and canker bearing microorganisms are greatly increased.

To prevent this from happening, Shigo suggests the following steps should be taken:

- When making a cut, place the saw or shears in front of branch bark ridge in the branch crotch.
- Cut down and out slightly from the outer portion of the ridge to prevent injury to or removal of the collar.
- Do not paint the wood, except for cosmetic reasons, and then only use a thin coat.
- Always use sharp shears and never leave stubs.

PRODUCTS from page 25

improving soil structure. It is particularly effective in alkali and heavy clay soils. It breaks down hard-packed soil to allow air, water and nutrients to reach grass and plant roots.

This improved soil permeability allows more efficient application of fertilizers and water, and enables root systems to grow deeper — an especially important benefit during drought conditions.

Circle No. 161 on Reader Inquiry Card

Stunning tone-up with turf colorants

Two turf colorants from Malinckrodt, Inc. have different properties and uses. Auragreen is a short-lasting dye which can be used as an indicator dye in a spray tank mixture or to tone up off-color turf on a temporary basis. The color from Auragreen will fade in two to three days. Auragreen is a soluble green powder available in

one and five pound containers.

Vitalon is a long-lasting vinyl acrylic preparation designed to provide a natural green color to the off-color or dormant turf. Vitalon



is a highly concentrated material which can be diluted with up to 70 parts water depending on the color desired. Malinckrodt, Inc. also markets Aqua-Gro, a turf wetting agent, in association with Aquatrols Corporation.

Circle No. 162 on Reader Inquiry Card

Anti-transpirants offer total protection

Wilt-Pruf anti-transpirant from Nursery Specialty Products acts as a protective coating which substantially reduces water loss during periods when excessive evaporation occurs. Wilt-Pruf protects

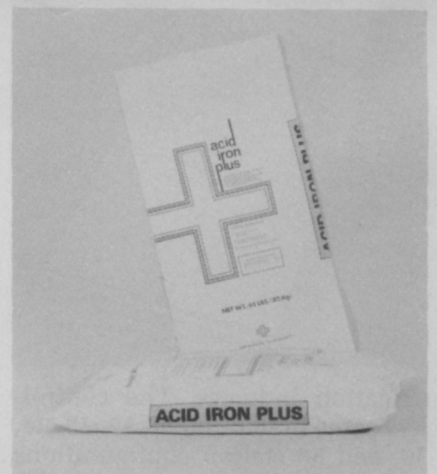


against plant damage due to winter kill, transplant shock, wind burn, and drought. Available in pints, quarts, gallons, five-gallon pails, 30-gallon drums, and 55-gallon drums, Wilt-Pruf is pre-diluted to 1:10, ready to apply.

Circle No. 163 on Reader Inquiry Card

Treat your turf with Acid Iron Plus

Acid Iron Plus from the Soil Products Development Company is a naturally occurring deposit of sulfur and iron used to correct improper soil chemical conditions



and mineral deficiencies for the lawn care businessman.

Bookstore

TURF MANAGER'S HANDBOOK
by Dr. William Daniel & Dr. Ray Freeborg
This specially designed manual by leading turf specialists is a comprehensive, organized approach to turfgrass science and care. An easy-on-the-job reference for planning, purchasing, hiring, construction and plant selection.
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Essential information for identifying more than 650 insect pests and the injuries they cause. More than 200 color illustrations.
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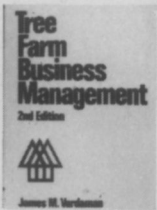
DISEASES OF SHADE TREES
by Terry Tattar
Because shade trees require specialized maintenance rarely used in the forest, this text seeks to aid the arborist in providing necessary care to maintain vigor and prevent shade tree diseases. An in depth look at infectious and non-infectious tree diseases.
Plant pathology not necessary.
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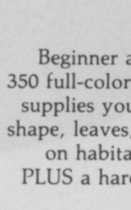
TURF IRRIGATION MANUAL
by James Watkins
A guidebook for engineers, architects, designers and contractors. Keeps pace with the latest developments in turf and landscape irrigation. Specific chapters devoted to rotary sprinkler design systems, golf course design systems and expanded engineering and reference material.
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A guide to help you increase profits from tree farming. Major problems confronting large and small tree farms and how to meet them including recommendations for seeking out accountants, lawyers and other professionals. \$20.50



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TURF SCIENCE

1980 season provides clues to 1981 growth

One way to find out how the '81 turf growing season will turn out, according to Dr. J. E. Kaufmann of the Michigan State Crop and Soil Science Department, is to review the 1980 growing season carefully.

The weather during the summer of 1980, says Kaufmann, can be characterized as very unusual, but then, what weather has been normal? Temperatures were well above normal with several periods

where night temperatures were above 70-75 degrees for much of the lower Michigan peninsula, and rainfall was above normal.

The three month period from June 1 to September 1 is usually six to seven inches below the one inch per week required by turfgrasses. This year, however, many areas of the state averaged well over one inch of water per week. Many golf courses and other intensively maintained turf areas required only two to three short periods of irrigation throughout the summer.

In many areas, intense storms resulted in heavy wind damage. Trees were heavily damaged often altering the appearance and use of the areas.

In addition to high rainfall, the humidity was higher than normal. Since there were few drying days, thatch and other debris in the understory did not dry out.

This was a prime micro environment for disease development. Soils on many turfgrass areas were saturated for a long period during the summer. This resulted in low oxygen levels and loss of rooting. Areas inadequately drained became apparent due to loss of turf and from soil displacement due to vehicle traffic.

Total solar radiation was very low for the summer due to cloudy days, cool season grasses are quite well biologically adapted to reduced levels of solar radiation, however, compared to warm season grasses, and should not suffer ill effects from low light intensity alone.

Low, wet areas became pronounced on several courses. In efforts to keep the courses open, traffic was directed away from these areas.

These conditions throughout the summer give rise to a number of problems.

The Aphodius and Atacnius beetles became a problem farther north in Michigan turf than previously reported. Superintendents in the Saginaw Valley area were reporting problems. Beyond insects and diseases, injury occurred due to scald where turfgrass plants covered with water were heated to intolerable levels.

People became aware of a yellowing problem on turfgrass areas

in 1980. While the problem was more pronounced in 1980, it has been described over the past several growing seasons.

Known causes of yellowing in the turfgrass plant include nutrient deficiency, root anoxia, light exclusion and scalping. Yellowing can be described in another way. Growth problems associated with poor growth, and those associated with too rapid growth.

The yellowing problem is likely associated with too rapid growth rather than too little. Thus scalping and light exclusion are of prime consideration.

Having many cloudy days certainly has resulted in a loss of solar radiation. However, only in a few cases has the problem found to be more severe in shady areas that obviously receive even less light.

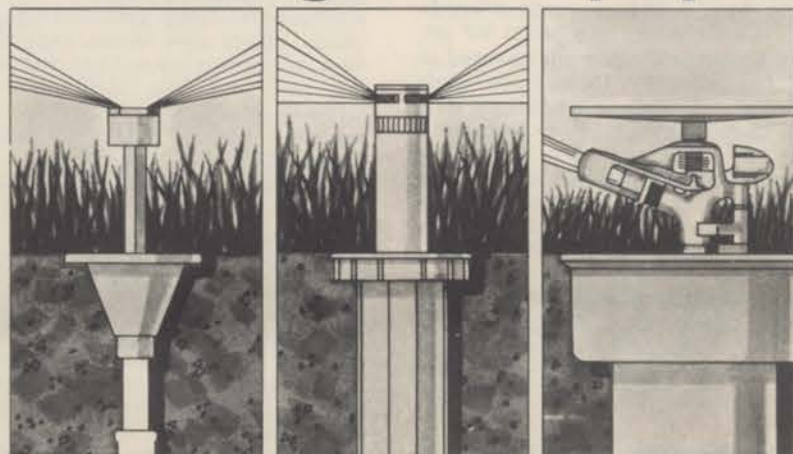
It is more likely that the problem is associated with scalping. Turfgrass growth is very fast when moisture and nutrients are constantly available.

Grass growth often gets ahead of mowing during rainy conditions. Wet wilt and limp, succulent leaf tissue will also occur frequently at these times. Thus traffic over long, wilted grass will result in uneven mowing, and in grasses growing too fast in recovery of a close mowing.

Another factor that likely interacts in the problem is growth occurring fast enough to cause an internal micronutrient deficiency. High soil moisture conditions, shallow rooting, low, but not normally deficient soil micronutrient levels and rapid growth could combine to cause the yellowing problem.

Will the problem occur in 1981? It's difficult to predict. However, if you have the problem, be sure to analyze it as carefully as possible. Remember, healthy turfgrass is the result of the well-considered analysis of growth and soil conditions on a year-to-year basis, not just the result of quick controls.

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COST CUTTINGS

Starting your computer handbook library

Computers are beginning to streamline lawn care ledgers, timetables, and accounts. But for many, the tyranny of the transistor is still a mystery. Here are three new books designed to help you buy and understand your first computer.

So You Are Thinking about a Small Business Computer (Canning Publications; 100 pp., \$12.50), a large-format paperback, emphasizes consumer education in software and hardware systems so the would-be user learns what to expect from a complete setup and how to go about acquiring the right one. A modest glossary and listing of major suppliers is included.

The Small Computer in Small Business (The Stephen Greene Press; 143 pp., \$12.50) offers a more detailed but still intelligible review of how data processing works, leading to specific descriptions of various software applications within a typical business: accounts receivable, inventory control, payroll, word processing, and so on. Omits brand names.

Understanding Computers (John Wiley & Sons; 266 pp., \$21.95) patiently lays out the A's to Z's of computer language. The business manager will be rewarded with a solid grounding in the whys and wherefores of computers.

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new customers," he said. "We no longer are a suspicious industry and are knocking down those bad images."

And the indications from one of the brand-name lawn care companies like Montgomery Wards is equally positive. Bill Fell, who operates the Montgomery Wards lawn care division in Baltimore, Maryland is bullish: "We started about two years ago in the Baltimore area and practically the only people that stopped service where those who died."

Now that may be hyperbole, but it does point to a curious twist to lawn care marketing — that turf stress from climatic conditions can often rebound to the industry's advantage. "The drought we did experience did help us in a lot of ways," said Fell. "We had no way to go but up."

Just as some customers may stop service due to poor color or desati-

vation, others may be convinced of the need to stem turf degradation by turning to a lawn care company in times of drought. What Montgomery Wards has done to keep a sizeable working base during such times is to lower their minimum area requirements to 2,500 square feet in order to garner those middle and lower income range customers.

Drought boosts sales

"It's turned us right around," said Fell. "Since then we've had very few cancellations." One of the ways that a big department store can keep up their working base is by letting customers pay for the service with their credit cards. And it might be something to consider for other, unaligned lawn care companies. "People will settle a lot quicker if they can just charge it," says Fell.

Most agree, however, that last year's drought and water shortages

have given this year's sales campaign an added boost. "About 60 percent of our calls for new work have come from people who already had another lawn care service and were just hopping around," says Jim Hoder of Liqui-Green Lawn Care-DuPage in Wheaton, Illinois. "And roughly 40 percent were from people who were doing new service shopping."

Hoder brings up a point that may also be the effect of last year's bad weather — that those who may have cancelled their program with one company are not necessarily abandoning the idea of lawn care, but are just moving to another company. In this way the market doesn't leak away, but just redistributes itself.

"We experienced a rush of new work we hadn't expected," he said. "We could hardly handle it." He attributes some of the rush to the fact that last year's early spring put many lawns in a stress situa-

tion and that the extended fall made the turf susceptible to disease. And this may help the industry's image as a defender rather than a promoter of healthy turf.

But an analysis of cancellations versus new sales within the industry has to take into account the statistical void that holds when a company receives a spate of calls for new service in a given season, but doesn't have the resources to handle any new accounts. In other words, when the demand outstrips supply.

The point was brought up by P. J. Lenihan, owner of Lawn Medic of the Triad in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. "A company may look smaller than another because it handles fewer accounts," he said, "but you really don't know for sure unless you consider the income he's getting."

But as an indication of the demand for lawn care services — what the market will bear — the signal is positive. Charles Austin, who runs Liqui-Lawn in Hygiene, Colorado says that although his cancellation rate ran to about 20 percent last year, his new sales received more than compensated.

"We probably lost 400 of our 1,800 customers," says Austin. "But we increased up and over that about 30 percent. We now have about 2,400 customers this year."

Austin says that most of his cancellations were due to the rough winter in his area last year and the fact that they experienced a lot of winter-kill. "Better than 90 percent of them were first year customers. Also it has been a funny year in terms of the economy, but our overall gain of 10 percent was normal for the kind of year we had."

Even with a winter in which the turf suffered, the demand for lawn care service is gaining overall. It is likely that although some companies may lose accounts over a particularly rough season, the overall business volume within the industry has continued to rise.

Some of the redistribution has been caused not by drought or weather related stress, but through channels of competition within certain area markets. This was particularly true in the Richmond, Indiana area where Gary Kitchel operates the E-Z Lawn Corporation.

When Kitchell started his business, the Richmond market was wide open for him. But a year later ChemLawn began canvassing the area and decided to run crews over from nearby Dayton. When this happened, the combined increase in prices, in addition to the insect damage that has traditionally afflicted Indiana, drove off some 200 of his accounts.

Since that time the market has become steadier, but Kitchell finds that his new sales have not been booming. "It's not up a lot," he said. "We're now going into our seventh year, and over a period of time the people just weren't that happy with the results. Luckily, this year we've had a tremendous amount of rain and are quite optimistic."

So it seems that although there are still trouble spots within the industry — mostly associated with unusually bad weather over the past couple of years — most areas report sales are up.

— Paul McCloskey

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This seems to be associated in part with the expanded profile the industry has received since coming into its own in the past few years. Also, lawn care is developing into new markets away from the larger metropolitan centers. Eventually, the marketing linkage between rural and metropolitan areas will give the industry even more visibility.

Cancellations seem to be up a bit in most of the areas hit by drought and water shortages. But this for the most part seems to be the result of new customers overestimating the technology of lawn care. Few long term customers have stopped service on this account.

All in all, the market seems lively — lawn care in 1981 rooted and aggressive. But the year is only half over and markets are fickle instruments of change. Hopefully the balance of the season will prove as vigorous as the first half.

— Paul McCloskey

"It's a case of the suburban green lawn mentality and that value system that keeps the chemical sprayers in business. A green lawn is considered a status symbol."

there is no danger. Most people don't like dandelions on their lawn. There is no substitute as good as 2,4-D for broadleaf weed control.'

"Mrs. Cohen is particularly upset with a television ad showing happy children playing near a short-sleeved worker who is dousing a patch of dandelions with a nationally franchised chemical lawn treatment spray. 'The State Agriculture Department recommends that sprayers wear goggles, respirators, hats, boots and long-sleeve shirts,' she says.

"But what would be the reaction if someone dressed like a space invader came into your neighborhood with a tank truck, spraying

everything in sight? It would put them out of business because people would see that there is a hazard.'

Paul Tombolian, a chemistry professor at Oakland University, said in the article that potential exposure to chemicals sprayed on lawns can come in two forms: Ingestion through wind drift and food or water contamination. He said:

"These chemicals do not have a long lifetime, so the main worry would be for little children or pets." He said in the article that using chemicals to cure one problem, such as weeds, creates an ecologically unstable lawn that will require continued use of

chemicals to maintain a lush green growth. He said:

"It's a case of the suburban green lawn mentality and that value system that keeps the chemical sprayers in business. A green lawn is considered a status symbol. But you can have that simply by keeping after it with labor rather than chemicals."

The article said that GRO was formed a year ago after a neighborhood potluck supper turned into a serious debate about chemical lawn sprays and the lack of information provided to members by commercial operators. — Bob Earley

SURVEY from page 1

they own an average of 2.3 units. For a copy of the complete report, contact: Bob Earley, Editor/Publisher, LAWN CARE INDUSTRY, 757 Third Ave., New York, NY 10017.

DETROIT from page 1

"The 'green lawn mentality' of chemically ridding your lawn of weeds may be hazardous to your health, warns a Detroit group of ecology-minded homeowners. The herbicide most commonly used in lawn sprays can cause cancer, birth defects and nerve damage, charge members of the Grass Roots Organization (GRO) formed in the city's northern subdivisions and Greenacres and Sherwood Forest.

"At issue is the use of broadleaf weed control herbicides that contain 2,4-D, a chemical compound similar to 2,4,5-T, the active ingredient in Agent Orange, a jungle spray used to defoliate guerilla strongholds in Vietnam and now subject to charges that it causes cancer in former soldiers and birth defects in their children. The use of 2,4-D is banned in and near Paw Paw because of its threat to grape vines and the subsequent livelihood of the state's main wine-producing area.

A member of GRO who favors using organic lawn care methods, Mrs. Jeannine Cohen was quoted in the article as saying, "You don't need a herbicide of that strength to kill off a few dandelions."

Casual advertising attitude

Ilka went on to write: "Professional lawn care specialists, a business that blossomed in the last 10 years, insist their products and application methods are safe, with the exception of some damage that might occur to more sensitive plants such as tomatoes, grape leaves and flowers.

"What upsets GRO, a coalition of young professionals, attorneys and teachers, is what the group regards as the casual attitude taken in ads promoting chemical lawn treatments. They are also concerned about the lack of legal regulations and the hazards faced by children, pets and people who might inhale fumes from commercially applied sprays carried by winds as much as 50 miles away.

"But state extension experts and landscapers say GRO exaggerates the dangers of the sprays. Bill Olsen, owner of Green World Lawn Spray in Ferndale, said: "The health fears are blown way out of proportion. When properly used,



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MEMOS



They spray insects, don't they?

An article in the April 19 issue of *The Washington Post* entitled, "The Bugs in Lawn Care Services" carried this venturesome lead: "Many area homeowners have unwittingly hired unlicensed lawn services to spray toxic pes-

ticides on their yards."

The piece goes on — in somewhat wildcat fashion — to compare the attitudes among lawn care managers in the Washington, D.C. area to pesticide use, its impact on the environment, and the proper

licensing of spray applicators.

"Personally, I try to stay away from them (pesticides)," Mike Randolph, owner of Bethesda Lawn Service, told the *Post*. "I value my health more than using highly toxic substances."

"The chemicals we use in pest control are not harmful," said Mike Kiser of ChemLawn. "They can be bought at most hardware stores."

"A lot of people are getting ripped off with unnecessary applications of pesticides," said Nick Raimis, owner of Georgetown Lawn and Yard Maintenance. "We stay away from it."

"Everything we use is passed by EPA," said Bob DeKraft of Lawn Doctor. "We tell the homeowner how to water the lawn after we've applied pesticides."

And so it goes: Readers are lead

to believe that out of respect for the environment mowing and maintenance companies steer clear of toxic pesticides, while chemical care companies massacre insects at the expense of public health.

Both views damage the industry as a whole. Chemical and mowing/maintenance companies would do well to present a common front when expressing views in advertising and public relations releases. The two sides of the industry are compatible and can help boost each other's receipts. Removing the 'bug' of misinformation from lawn care companies can only benefit both ends of the industry.

Paul Shochley

RENOVATION from page 13

common bluegrass in the St. Louis and Kansas City markets. "Renovations are a pretty new line of service for us," Custis explains. "The only reason we have gotten into it is because we found a chemical that makes it a manageable operation."

In case of a lawn requiring total renovation, ChemLawn usually recommends a two percent solution of Roundup herbicide applied to the entire lawn. The client is then advised to wait two weeks before de-thatching and re-seeding to allow the chemical to "translocate" down through the emerged grass and into the underground root systems. "This assures optimum weed control, ideal for renovation," Custis says.

"We didn't want to get into renovation because we were concerned about working with chemicals that had soil activity and might leach into desirable areas," Custis said. "And, that's precisely why we feel Roundup is excellent for renovation work. It allows renovation of the existing lawn without our having to worry about spraying on slopes above desirable grasses. Since the chemical doesn't leach, and has no soil residual activity we can even spray right around the bases of trees."

ChemLawn specialists have also applied Roundup selectively with a hand-held wick applicator to control tall fescue grass protruding above zoysia. "The wick absorbs the Roundup and brushes it selectively onto the fescue without affecting the zoysia," Custis said.

Renovations are just one of the new areas ChemLawn is exploring. The company is also currently providing a service called ChemScape, which sprays trees and plants for an additional fee. In addition, they have begun to enter the commercial and industrial markets in Atlanta and Indianapolis and have instituted a farmer service called Ag-Vantage that offers a full range of services for total crop management.

See page 22 for
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