

THE TWO YEAR LAWN CARE TECHNOLOGY
PROGRAM AT MSU

E. D. Miltner
Department of Crop and Soil Sciences
Michigan State University

The Institute of Agricultural Technology and Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Michigan State University are pleased to offer a new two year instructional program in Lawn Care Technology. This is the first program of this type in the country dedicated solely to academic and on-the-job training of lawn care professionals.

The university has offered a two year turfgrass management curriculum for over twenty years, and this program has produced many excellent turfgrass managers. Historically, this program has concentrated on educating students in preparation for a career in the golf turf industry. In recent years, however, the lawn care segment of the turfgrass industry has grown dramatically, and there is now a shortage of well-trained, qualified personnel to enter the workforce. Consequently, this industry demand for trained and qualified personnel has prompted the creation of the new Lawn Care Technology Program. Initial funding for the program has been provided by a grant from Mr. Walter Wilkie.

Students in the program enroll in classes on the MSU campus for four terms. Between the second and third term, students participate in a two-term placement training experience, in which they are placed with established and successful lawn care companies and learn "hands-on" the day-to-day operations of the business. This experience is supervised by the academic coordinator of the program and the appropriate manager of the employing business. Training includes not only proper administration of the company's services, but also an understanding of the agronomic basis for the management practices employed, and experience with the company's business and management operations. The academic curriculum includes courses in basic agronomy and turfgrass management, various business subjects, horticulture, and several other topics. The result is a well-rounded education which should prepare students well for management positions in the lawn care industry.

Anyone interested in acquiring more information on the program, either in reference to participating as a student, or providing students with placement training or permanent employment, may contact the author at the Department of Crop and Soil Sciences, 154B Plant and Soil Science Building, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824-1325 [(517) 355-0207].