

turf that is mowed quite frequently in the summer and objectionable seed head production—where these products could save a tremendous amount of labor by slowing down turf vertical and lateral growth,” Hanson says.

Besides labor, there are also the issues of increasing dump fees for clippings, wear and tear on equipment both to mow and edge and haul clippings to the landfills.

Despite somewhat less than resounding successes in developing PGRs, major chemical companies continue to research the subject. “Some very big companies like Scott, DowElanco, CibaGeigy and others continue to believe there is a big commercial potential in PGRs, and they are correct,” says Hanson. “Those of us in the commercial landscape maintenance business continue to face escalating costs and increasing competition while being challenged by our customers to produce a high quality product at lower costs. We must continue exploring the area of plant growth regulators to gain the benefits they offer.”

Hanson says today’s new generation of PGRs has an average effectiveness period of six weeks, “but that does not mean you can stop mowing for six weeks. It means you may be able to skip every other mowing or mow every three weeks.”

Hanson warns that use of a turfgrass plant growth regulator puts the plants under a certain amount of stress and inappropriate sequential applications could well have an adverse effect. “It’s critical to know the product and site you are working with.

“The cardinal sin in using these compounds is applying them when a plant is under stress. One of the problems we had in the early days in using PGRs on bluegrass in the San Francisco Bay area was that when you used a PGR on stressed turf, it resulted in a rust infestation, and the grass turned orange.”

While the new chemistry offers more hope for a widely adaptable PGR, Hanson says they still should be used “only at the right place at the right time.”

“And, evaluation must include cost. There must be a cost-benefit study on each site. It may not be financially feasible to use PGRs on some sites. It may be cheaper to mow more often.”

Article seen in Western Turf Management, February 1993 by Harry Cline.

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