Becoming a 'Certified Turfgrass Professional'

University of Georgia's Helen Mills: certification candidates go at their own pace

can be known as CTPs.

They can wear the distinctive new green-and-white patch on the sleeves of their uniforms.

John Robinson, PLCAA's immediate past president, says certification will help confirm to the public that lawn care companies have better trained technicians in the field.

Adds Steve Derrick, Orkin Pest Control, "We in lawn care knew we had to increase the quality of service and also the perception of quality that our customers had of us." That, says Derrick, is why PLCAA sought help in administering and managing the program. "We wanted an outside credible source so it wasn't us training us."

When Derrick contacted Dr. Keith Karnok, professor of agronomy at UGa, he found a ready ear. Karnok, author of "Principles of Turfgrass Management" with more than 17 years experience in both warm- and cool-season turfgrasses, directed PLCAA to Helen Mills, U.Ga. Center for Continuing Education.

The Center, Dr. Karnok and PLCAA then collaborated on building the independent study course that technicians must complete and pass to earn certification.

Mills says the home correspondence course is based on the notebook "Principles of Turfgrass Management." It is divided into sections on the classification of turfgrass, growth and development, diseases and pests, and fertilization and irrigation. Mills will grade the tests, and PLCAA will confer the certification.

A partnership between the University of Georgia and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. Lawn care technicians, once they meet specific requirements, can wear the distinctive new green-and-white patch on the sleeves of their uniforms.

Think you're busy? Then LM advises you compare your schedule with that of Dick Ficco, one busy person. Ficco, the president of Partners Quality Lawn Service, Easton, Mass., heads the Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals, serves on the boards of both PLCAA and the Massachusetts Turfgrass Advisory Commission, is the resident lawn care spokesman on WBZ Radio, and is a frequent guest on local television. Last year, he also accepted an appointment to the national EPA Pesticide Users Advisory.

A long-standing friend the green industry, Bill Culpepper, is starting his own business. Culpepper, formerly of DowElanco, will manufacture and market three control products—Arest, Pipron and Sonar—through the new company, SePro. He will also be the exclusive U.S. distributor of Rubigan to the specialty horticultural markets. Culpepper was formerly on the board of directors of RISE, the PLCAA and the GIE. "We'll address the more specialized markets within the green industry," Culpepper tells LM. "Frankly I love it. I like to put together a whole lot of little pieces and make it make sense." You can contact SePro at (317) 580-8282.

FX-10 is the new "miracle" turfgrass in Florida. According to a press release received in the LM offices: "during the 'storm of the century...on the shores of Tampa Bay...homes landscaped with FX-10 received little or no erosion damage while homes in the same development without FX-10 had entire lawns washed away. Bobby Bonilla, the New York Mets outfielder, uses FX-10 for his lawn and helicopter landing at the mouth of the Manatee River, says Jim Anderson of Anderson & Son Nursery, Ruskin, Fla. For more info about FX-10, phone (800) 532-7006.

Dr. Bruce Ames continues his crusade against seemingly unfair EPA requirements and the glut of professional environmentalists. An LM staffer, en route to a state turfgrass conference was reading a recent issue of Forbes magazine. He noted this quote from Dr. Ames: "I think the EPA kills people. I knew lots of good guys who went to work for the EPA because they were idealists, but it's run by lawyers, and the institutional incentives take over. The scientists on the committee...keep putting out lousy reports" because of the pressure to conform to established government risk standards.