TREES

Chain saw massacre ends in $17,000 fine

The next time your neighbor trims your tree that’s dropping leaves on his property, show him this story.

Back in 1982, Julie Mattison of Mission Hills, Calif., and her mother were raking leaves in the back of their home when mom asked daughter to trim the neighbor’s tree, an Oriental Orchid (Bauhinia variegata), whose leaves were falling onto the Mattison’s property.

The story, as reported by the Los Angeles Times and reprinted in Landscape Contractor (the publication by the California Landscape and Irrigation Council Inc.), continues:

Julie, now a 17-year-old high school senior, went a little crazy with the saw. By the time she finished the 30-foot, 15-year-old Orchid was reduced to a five-foot dwarf.

“I guess I got carried away,” Julie told the Times.

The Mattison’s neighbor, Carollee Dunson, obviously unamused, decided to prosecute the Mattisons and a Van Nuys jury awarded her $8,753 in actual damages and $100 in punitive damages.

But that’s not all. The Superior Court judge, citing a state law designed to protect trees against “wrongful injury,” doubled the actual damage total to $17,506!

Why such a high total? According to the article, a nursery employee testified that a new Oriental Orchid costs $1,800.

However, planting the 54-inch box containing the tree requires a 100-ton crane with a 210-foot boom at a cost of $6,000, the nurseryman said.

That’s no typo. The Mattison’s attorney couldn’t believe it either.

“Outrageous,” said attorney Robert Priver. “Do you mean to say you need a 210-foot crane to replace a little tree?”

The jury evidently bought the nurseryman’s testimony.

And here’s the kicker: the tree’s original buyer testified during the two-day trial that she paid 99 cents for the two-inch Orchid 15 years ago.

In Dunson’s original suit filed in late October 1982, she had asked $126,259 in damages.

WEEDS

This Weed has good turf

An unlikely name, Weed, but a jewel of a town at the base of Mount Shasta in Northern California. Nice parks too.

Patrick “Pappy” Lobis says its the soot from the old powerhouse that enriches his soil, makes his park turfgrass grow.

Years ago when lumber was a bigger deal than it is now in Weed they carted tons of sawdust from the sawmill to the powerhouse and burned it to generate electricity.

“I think all that soot worked into the soil and helped it,” says Lobis, parks supervisor for the Weed Recreation and Park District.

Whatever the reason, Weed boasts a small but enviable parks system. “Pappy” and his small crew (two fulltime, two seasonal workers) tend four parks, about 30 acres of healthy Kentucky bluegrass.

“We’ve got a great Little League program, co-ed softball, and the high school and college (College of the Siskiyou) use our parks too.”

Steve Feldman, city administrator of Weed, Calif.

City administrator Steve Feldman says Weed has about 3,000 people, but the parks department serves another 2,000 in the immediate area.

Feldman came to Weed almost two years ago after picking up his PhD at Oregon State University. He says he came to Weed in large part because of the beauty of the area. The name Weed?

“The town was named after Abner Weed. He began the lumber mill here,” says Feldman.

The next time your neighbor trims your tree that’s dropping leaves on his property, show him this story.
**TREES**

**Plant wise; reap fuel savings and comfort**

You can save 20 percent of home winter heating costs and as much as 80 percent of summer air conditioning expenses with effective landscaping, says one Northeast expert.

"It's important for homeowners to consider summer and winter energy needs when developing a landscaping plan," says Dr. David R. DeWalle of Pennsylvania State University. The forestry specialist adds, "I've seen more homes with improper landscaping than with proper landscaping."

Dr. DeWalle gives these tips:
- Vegetation should not shade the home in winter. It reduces natural solar heating.
- Shade trees should not be planted on the south side of the home. Shade for east and west walls reduces air conditioning costs more.
- Single or double rows of trees planted upwind from the home reduce wind velocity and cut down on cold air through doors and windows.
- Shrubs planted around the foundation of the home save energy by deflecting winds from the home.

Says Dr. DeWalle, "Landscaping is most beneficial for single-family homes. While homeowners may face practical limitations on their lots, there are still things they can do with landscaping to reduce their fuel bills."

**PESTICIDES**

**Insurance law threatens 1986 spraying in Mass.**

A revision in Massachusetts' pesticide laws will be needed before applicators will be able to spray in that state in 1986. The reason?

Applicators must show, in addition to general liability coverage, evidence of pollution and contamination insurance. But, because of sweeping changes in the insurance industry, that coverage either is or soon will be unavailable.

The National Arborist Association (NAA) and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) are working with the state pesticide bureau to find a solution.

Says Robert Felix, executive director of the NAA: "The lawmakers in Massachusetts have to generate some kind of solution. They're the only ones who can."

Mark Buffone, certification coordinator for that state's pesticide board agrees and he's optimistic they will. But, he says pesticide applicators must also prepare themselves for tighter licensing requirements and stricter enforcement.

"We've been on top of this," Buffone tells WT&T, "probably to the industry's surprise. We know we've got to do something by January 1 or find out who's offering this type of coverage."

Slicing this legal Gordian knot, he explains, might not be more difficult than an "emergency regulation" which would allow applicators to work while giving lawmakers time to study the issue and meet with the insurance industry.

Even so, insurance is secondary to the main issue: the public's confidence, Buffone says.

"Let's have tough licensing standards and let the public know they're
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Circle No. 148 on Reader Inquiry Card

NOVEMBER 1985/WEEDS TREES & TURF 13
Time to strike

God—the lover of all that is natural—will not likely rain lightning bolts onto the heads of the makers or users of artificial grass. As miracles go, that would rank somewhere below (way below) the parting of the Red Sea.

Anyway, we're supposed to do some things for ourselves. In this spirit of doing something, a small cast of respected turfmen gathered at the Midwest Regional Turf Conference last March. Loosening their ties after an afternoon of swapping tales, they mulled the question: "Who decides synthetic turf at the sports fields at our schools? Who are the decision makers?"

Dr. Bill Daniel, Purdue University's imminent turfgrass expert, directed. Galling to those in attendance, particularly Daniel, was the announcement just weeks before that Illinois was going carpet. Purdue stands alone as the only Big Ten school still playing football Saturday afternoons on grass, real grass.

The decision makers? After an hour's discussion, they remained nameless and faceless. Some, however—those who have decided fake over real—are suddenly drawing fire from the popular press. Opinions are being molded by magazines and newspapers at the breakfast table.

Sports Illustrated blistered sports carpets with a 21-page spread in its August 12 edition. Nightline fueled the controversy on national television. Syndicated columnist Jody Powell scalded synthetic turf in some of the nation's most respected newspapers.

But, proponents of synthetic surfaces aren't taking the critical press lightly.

Francis Reining, a Monsanto general manager (Monsanto's Astroturf is the most popular synthetic on the market), responded to Sports Illustrated. In part he wrote: "Opinion is one thing. But when you attempt to unilaterally denigrate an industry, you have a responsibility to present conflicting opinions of acknowledged experts and facts on both sides of the argument."

The controversy heats.

That's good news for us in the turf industry. We've shown we're not good crusaders. We've build a case— injury data and costs—but we can't seem to find, never mind convince, those with the final say.

Now we find ourselves with allies. That small group, as indecisive as it seemed last March, guides us.

Let's find these decision makers while public opinion simmers. Let's present our side of the story again. Soon.
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NOVEMBER 1985/WEEDS TREES & TURF 15
Golf course superintendents. Commercial turf specialists. Lawn care companies. They're all professionals at what they do. Just like the Turf Care® line of products from SDS Biotech. They're real pros at controlling weeds and diseases.

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So team up with the Turf Care line from SDS Biotech. They're professionals at maintaining healthier, more beautiful turf.

Always follow label directions carefully when using turf chemicals.
RESEARCH

Renovation underway at Ga. turf facility

Change marks the turfgrass program at the Georgia Station in Griffin, Ga. The aim? To make that turfgrass research facility one of the finest in the nation, reports Dr. Robert N. Carrow of the College of Agriculture at the University of Georgia.

Here is what’s happening at Griffin:
• Turfgrass research plots of warm and cool season grass species (bermuda, zoysia, centipede, St. Augustine, bahia, tall fescue, and creeping bentgrass) are being consolidated into a 10-acre plot.
• New irrigation systems are being installed at the plot site, and also at a special plot of native soil and at a USGA bentgrass green. These last two areas will be used to study water use, drought stress, and irrigation scheduling.
• Creeping bentgrass research is underway on a 32,000-sq-ft golf green.
• A modern equipment storage and shop building is up.
• A stress physiology laboratory is being developed.
• Two new full-time technicians are being added to the turf program.

The annual turf field day, not held this year because of the work, will return August 12, 1986, Dr. Carrow reports.

ASSOCIATION

Conn. nurserymen putting bloom in state

All 169 towns in Connecticut will be receiving six-to-eight-foot flowering crabapple trees this spring thanks to the Connecticut Nurserymen’s Association (CNA).

Each town will be getting a tree to celebrate the state’s 350th birthday. They will be planted the week of April 25 as an Arbor Day project involving local elementary school children. A grove of crabapple trees will also be planted at the capitol as part of the celebration.

The CNA is comprised of 383 wholesale, retail, and landscape nurserymen.

PEOPLE

Dr. Smiley leaves Cornell; heads west

After 12 years at Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., Dr. Richard Smiley accepted a position in Oregon. On Oct. 15, he became the superintendent of the Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center, Pendleton, Ore. He has also reportedly accepted a courtesy appointment as professor of plant pathology at Oregon State University.

“I view the move as an opportunity for professional advancement,” Dr. Smiley tells WEEDS TREES & TURF.

A Californian, Dr. Smiley studied at Washington State University.

Other news from the Northwest has Dr. Richard C. Skogley being named “Man of the Year” by the Oregon Seed Trade Association. Dr. Skogley, in his 26th year at the University of Rhode Island, is the 11th person to receive the award.

Congratulations are also in order to Jim Green, Oregon State University Extension horticultural specialist. The American Society for Horticultural Science feted Green with its 1985 “Nursery Extension Award.”

Green launched the “Ornamentals Northwest” newsletter series which began as an Oregon Extension publication but grew to include Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia.

Also in the Northwest, the 32nd annual meeting of the Merion Bluegrass Association saw the election of...
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Spread the word.
REBUILDING GREENS......The American Society of Golf Course Architects has reprinted "Evolution of the Modern Green" by immediate past president Dr. Michael Hurdzan, in answer to the demand for information on how to rebuild greens. The 24-page brochure is available from the organization for $5. To receive one, send a check or money order to ASGCA, 221 North La Salle St., Chicago, Ill., 60601.

MOVABLE DOCK......Gary Thornton of Thornton Landscape Management has come up with an interesting concept for receiving nursery and landscape stock: a movable dock. Tractor-trailers making deliveries need only pull into the loading area and park without having to worry about backing into any docks. The heavy steel dock is then put into place by a fork lift. When the goods are unloaded from the truck, they can then be transported via pallet, and when empty the dock can be returned to its storage area.

FREEBIE......A free brochure that helps calculate the costs of mowing grass is available from 3M. It also tells you how 3M's Embark plant growth regulator can affect changes in your mowing budget, of course.

To receive your copy, send your name and address to Agricultural Products/3M, P.O. Box 33600, 3M Center, St. Paul, Minn., 55133-3600, or phone (800) 328-1300.

ARCHITECTS DIRECTORY......The American Society of Golf Course Architects has published a new membership directory. Copies of the directory are available free of charge by writing the organization at 221 N. Lasalle St., Chicago, Ill., 60601.

NEW TURFGRASSES......Finelawn I Turf Type Tall Fescue has been granted a U.S. Patent Variety Protection Certificate. It’s a new-generation tall fescue with a lush green color and narrow tapering leaves that has been highly rated by the USDA's National Turfgrass Evaluation Program. Also, Gator turf-type perennial ryegrass and Houndog turf-type tall fescue—popular North American turfgrasses—are taking a trip overseas. Both will be sold in Germany and France, according to J.L. Carnes of International Seeds, Halsey, Ore.

STMA CONFERENCE......The Sports Turf Manager's Association (STMA) will hold its annual educational conference, meeting, and elections in San Francisco, Feb. 1-3, 1986. It will be held in conjunction with the 57th GCSAA Conference and Show.