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for Landscape Professionals



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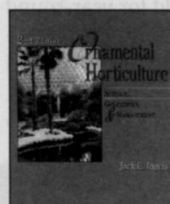
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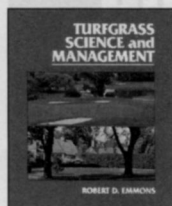


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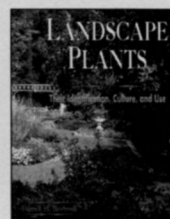
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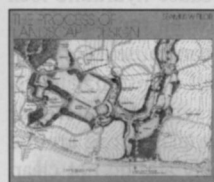


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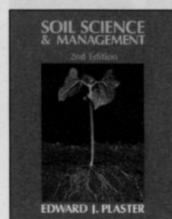
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by Thomas L. Watschke, Peter H. Dernoeden & David J. Shelton

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Minimizing your time for diesel engine maintenance

by Tom Kane

■ Although a tractor is build for year-round performance, mid-season maintenance checks are needed to ensure minimal downtime repairs.

Maintenance checks are particularly

important in the hot weather, which taxes an engine. Checks are also important during the peak season, when engines are running 8 to 12 hours a day.

Air system—Diesel engines use 8,000 gallons of air to every gallon of fuel. In contrast to a gas engine, no throttle plate or

choke plate restricts air flow into the combustion chamber of a diesel engine. The three most basic and important steps to maintain the air system are:

- 1) Check the air cleaner element every 100 hours.
- 2) Periodically check for leaks and cracks.
- 3) Examine the hoses for hardness, cracking and loose connections.

It is also important to use care when replacing a filter. Improper replacement can cause an engine to ingest dirt and dust which can lead to wearing out pistons and rings, and cause valves and rings to stick.

Be certain the caked dirt that builds up on the filter does not fall into the hose as the filter is removed. When replacing the filter, the sealing gaskets on both ends must be in proper position to direct the air through the filter. Check that it is securely fastened and free from any cuts, nicks or distortions.

Before your filter is in place, look in the downstream host to be certain no appreciable accumulation of dust or dirt can be found. If so, check for defective clamps or hoses.

In determining when to clean and/or replace a filter, keep in mind that a somewhat dirty filter actually operates more efficiently than a brand new one, as the dirt already trapped in the filter prevents the smaller particles from entering the system. Therefore, establish cleaning and replacement schedules according to your equipment's operating manual.

And remember, cleaning the engine itself with a high-pressure washer or hose must be done carefully. If water enters the intake system, it can cause hydraulic lock by filling the space between the piston and the head. This in turn can cause a connecting rod to bend or result in piston damage. To assure the engine remains water-free while cleaning, fasten a plastic bag around the entire filter assembly and do not clean with water while the engine is running.

Fuel system—Cleanliness and quality are the two most important fuel factors. Dirt and water are the chief contaminants of diesel fuel. Diesel fuel actually lubricates the injection pump and nozzles, which is one reason a diesel engine will outlive a gas engine. Water, even the slightest amount, can cause bacterial growth on the fuel filter element. Rusting problems are also created by water, beginning with corrosion of valves and plungers. Operation of injection nozzles and injection pumps can be disturbed—again by only the smallest amount

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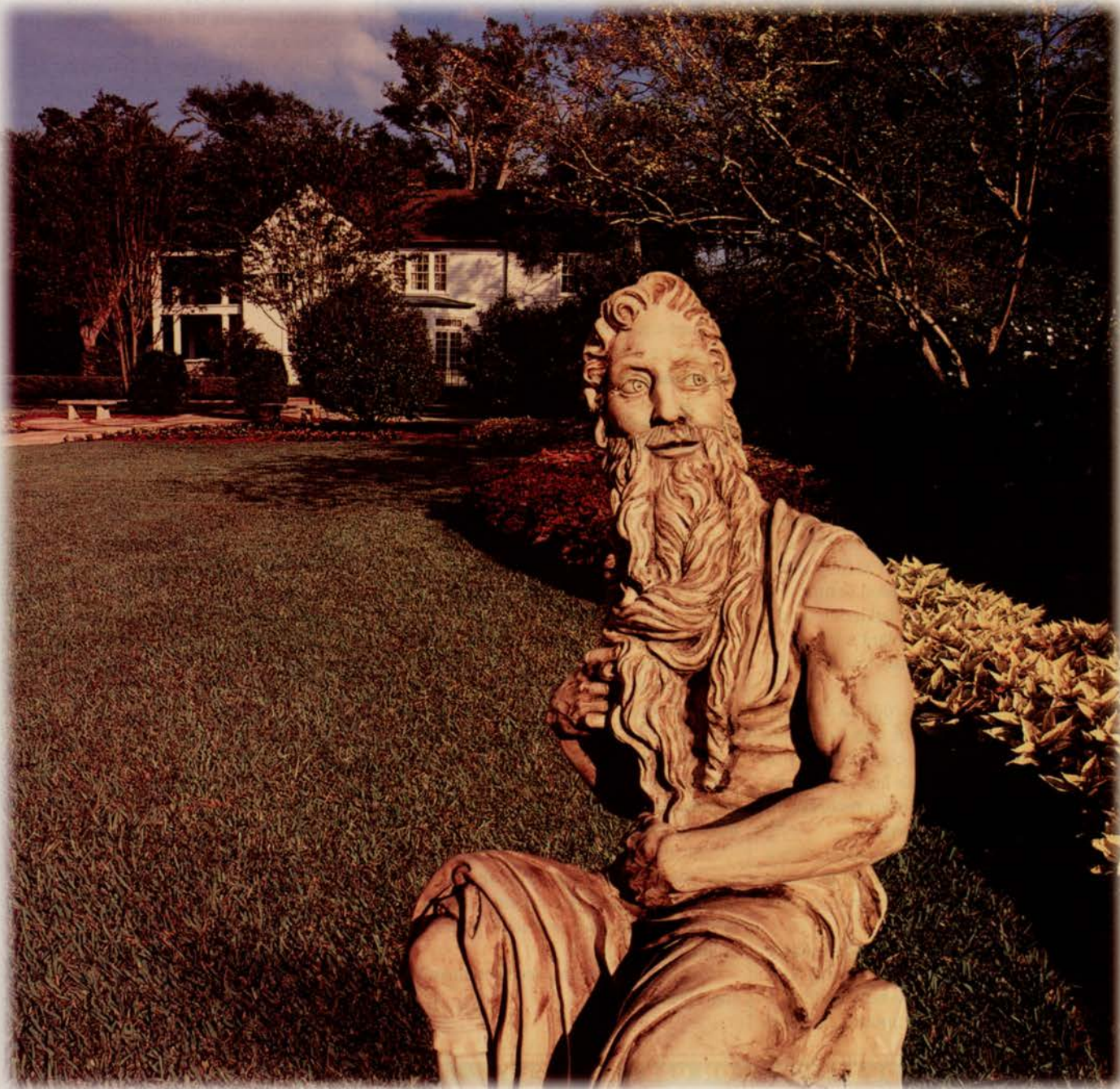
- Steve Renko and Tom Turley,
Mid-American Sports Complex, Shawnee Mission, Kansas

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 Team

of water.

To prevent condensation from forming in the fuel tank, keep it full at all times when not in use. In addition, condensation and other types of contamination can enter the system from the fuel storage tank.

Quality is another key for diesel fuel users as fuel contamination is a major concern. The following fuel factors must be considered to keep on top of this potential problem:

- Cetane number: reduces lag time. A longer lag time means a harder start engine, especially in cold weather. It is also more likely to smoke and knock.
- Flash point: the temperature at which fuel ignites. If too low, white smoke will appear.
- Cloud point: approximately 10-15° F.

when wax fuel appears. As long as fuel system components do not plug, the fuel is usable.

● Sulfur content: should not exceed 0.5 percent. Levels above that may contribute to acid build-up on the lubrication system.

Proper storage of diesel fuel is imperative. The following guidelines should be followed:

- 1) Be certain fuel is stored with as little moisture as possible.
- 2) Be certain fuel is stored where there are no dramatic temperature changes.
- 3) Only store what can be used in a reasonable amount of time. Storage tanks should be kept full, too.

Diesel fuel engines will smoke at the initial start-up. However, smoke that continues after a complete warm-up may be an

indicator of potential problems. A diesel engine's condition can often be read by the color of its smoke, as such:

White smoke, Type 1: water vapor or steam that appears but doesn't linger. This indicates a cooling system leak.

White smoke, Type 2: caused by low temperature. If it is a low ambient temperature, the smoke will disappear. If it is a low combustion chamber temperature, the puffs of white smoke will continue and may indicate low pressure, ring or piston problems, or leaky valves.

Black smoke: caused by unburned fuel. This may indicate nozzle problems of injecting more fuel than can be properly burned with the given horsepower and time.

Gray smoke: caused by excessive amount of oil in the combustion chamber. It indicates worn rings or valve guide wear.

Refer to your operator manual for specific tractor or equipment models. In general, the fuel filter should be checked and cleaned every 100 hours, and changed every 400 hours.

—The author is national training manager for Kubota Tractor Corp.

Treating oak leaf spot

■ During the past two years, leaf spot (*Tubakia dryina*) has increased in container-grown oaks, according to Dr. Jim Strandberg, plant pathologist at the Central Florida Research and Extension Center.

The fungus produces small lesions and a blight that deforms the plant's leaves. It affects many species of oak, including the popular laurel oak.

Tubakia spores reproduce best in humid, damp weather. At one time, this devastating disease was common only in Eastern states. Severe oak leaf spot losses, however, recently have been recorded in several Southeastern nurseries.

Strandberg has studied the fungus since 1989. In addition to investigating its biology, he has so done a comparison of control products.

"Traditional control methods include copper fungicides," says Strandberg. "But these aren't always effective because they're non-systemic. Oaks may produce several

growth flushes a season, so there's a constant chance that young, susceptible foliage may need protectant sprays.

"Ornamental nurseries are at particular risk because sprinkler irrigation spreads tubakia spores," he adds.

Strandberg tested seven fungicides in three classes: systemic, copper and non-systemic. Efficacy was determined by measuring the percentage of leaf area damage (indicated by "LAD") on new foliage of infected one-year-old laurel oaks. Overhead irrigation was performed nightly for two months, and fungicide applications were made bi-weekly.

"All the fungicides reduced leaf damage," Strandberg notes. "Only the systemic fungicides reduced the damage enough to satisfy the strict requirements of nursery production."

For his test results, see accompanying chart below.

FUNGICIDE EFFICACY ON OAK LEAF SPOT

Percentage of leaf area damaged (LAD) on new growth of one-year-old *Tubakia*-infected trees.

Fungicide	June 14		July 25	
	Rating	%LAD	Rating	%LAD
Banner	1.8	6.4	1.6	5.1
Bayleton	2.3	9.3	3.3	33.2
Copper hydroxide	1.6	14.7	2.7	24.4
Daconil	2.5	20.3	3.4	31.8
Control	3.5	17.6	4.3	51.4

Source: Strandberg, 1991

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A cost-saving way to control fire ants in your landscapes

by Bill Cobb
and Pat Cobb, Ph.D.

■ The cost of controlling red imported fire ants (RIFAs) can be decreased by using a program similar to the one used at the Colonnade in Birmingham, Ala.

RIFAs are among the most expensive landscape pests to control in the South. Although damage to turf is minimal, fire ants usually build mounds that detract from a landscape's appearance. Mounds are also a reminder that their occupants can inflict painful stings on visitors who disturb them.

Usually, a whole property is scouted regularly and visible mounds are treated with a contact insecticide. This takes time that could be spent on other jobs. Also, colonies that are still small and do not project above the turf are usually overlooked. This results in additional mound treatment throughout the season.

The following study represents an attempt to minimize costs (including labor) while maximizing RIFA control in a commercial landscape.

It is based on the fact that RIFA winged reproductive females and males fly, mate and new colonies are established during warmer months, primarily in the spring. Mated queens can fly several miles if assisted by a tail wind. However, they do not always move that far.

Background—The Colonnade is a 106-acre business complex encompassing 54 landscaped acres. The landscape is man-

aged by professional horticulturists. Red imported fire ant control before 1992 consisted of mound treatment only, with acephate (Orthene TT&O). One person needed at least one working day weekly to treat mounds.

The Colonnade grounds and adjacent unmanaged land was scouted in June 1992 to map areas most heavily infested with RIFA. Six highly visible acres that were the most infested were chosen for the study.

It was also an area that, based on previous records, labor and insecticide costs for RIFA control could be calculated.

Three perimeter plots were selected for treatment and three were left untreated. Plots ranged from 2,000 to 6,000 sq. ft. Strips 30 feet wide were treated only in 1992 in adjacent unmanaged areas from which RIFA were believed to migrate into the landscape.

The process—In 1992, Affirm fire ant bait (avermectin) was applied to treatment plots and strips with a Solo backpack mist blower equipped with a converter for applying granules. In 1993, Award fire ant bait (fenoxycarb) was applied similarly.



Both baits were applied at 1 lb./acre. Ants were observed picking up bait particles in the treated plots and moving from outside areas into treated areas to collect bait.

Both baits disrupt colony reproductive potential. Worker ants depend on immature stages to digest solids into liquids, the only form of food on which they can feed. Once "immatures" become adults, they can no longer digest solids into liquids and are thereafter themselves dependent on other immatures for digesting solid food. Immature "digesters" feed liquids into workers; workers subsequently feed liquid into each other and into the queen.

Visible mounds in bait-treated areas were treated with a contact insecticide (acephate as Orthene TT&O) within five days after bait applications. This was done to eliminate stinging worker ants quickly rather than waiting six to eight weeks for them to die. Applications were made in June 1992 and August 1993.

Treated plots with the six-acre area totaled 16,000 sq. ft. Not all RIFAs were eliminated, but they were removed from critical locations (treated test plots and surrounding areas). In fact, six acres of control was achieved by treating perimeter areas only. Control costs for the six acres are summarized in Table 1.

What we learned—We learned three important lessons about RIFA control from this experiment:

1) RIFAs could be mapped. The maps

TABLE 1

Year	Insecticide \$\$	Labor \$\$	TOTAL
1991	\$129.50 (10 lb.)	\$85.00	\$214.50
1992	\$77.70	\$51.00	\$128.70
1993	\$12.95 (2 lb.)	\$8.50	\$21.45

—Source: Dr. Cobb

continued on page 28

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Ants were observed picking up bait particles in the treated plots and moving from outside areas into treated areas to collect bait.

represented areas of highest concentration, which included surrounding unmanaged sites from which migration probably occurred. In this case, the landscaped areas were also among the most highly visible parts of the property.

2) Perimeter treatments were adequate. Total property treatment, or even treating the six-acre area, was not necessary for acceptable control (based on number of visible mounds).

Baits controlled colonies, including young, not-yet-visible colonies. This eliminated the need for continuous mound treatments throughout the season.

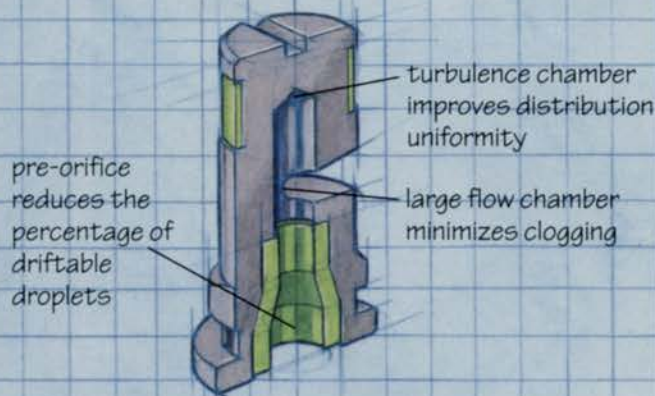
The contact insecticide applied to visible mounds after bait application controlled workers quickly. RIFA workers already present are excellent predators on new queens that fly into an area. Perhaps by leaving a few colonies in less visible areas, new queens were controlled.

3) Monitoring, mapping and perimeter treatment reduces control costs.

RIFA control is insecticide-dependent because of the lack of naturally-occurring predators and pathogens. Amounts of insecticide applied were reduced even more with perimeter treatments. Labor costs were reduced because—even though weekly scouting continued—the need for weekly mound treatments was eliminated.

The future—Excessive rainfall in 1994 resulted in RIFAs getting a slow start. Fire ant colonies increased dramatically in many areas of the South during late summer and fall. However, only minimum treatment was done at the Colonnade because of the few colonies throughout the season. The 1995 program will be determined after the property is again monitored, mapped and “acceptable” (threshold) levels of RIFA colonies are determined.

—Bill Cobb is operations manager for Environmental Design Group, Birmingham, Ala. Dr. Cobb is professor and extension entomologist at Auburn University, Ala.




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A wide-angle photograph of a golf course. The foreground shows a lush green fairway with a winding path. In the middle ground, there are rolling green hills and a cluster of trees. The background features a range of mountains under a sky with soft, white clouds. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

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