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Circle No. 126 on Reader Inquiry Card

## Stewardship: it's not an easy subject to address



*Jerry Roche*

JERRY ROCHE  
Editor-in-Chief

**W**e had originally planned a rather lengthy feature article on "stewardship" this month. Alas, one's best-laid plans oft go astray.

The problem we encountered was that not many people—at least basic pesticide manufacturers—were willing to talk about stewardship "for the record." As much as you hear them boast in private conversation about their product stewardship programs, the subject is still publicly somewhat of a sore spot.

One person admitted that most stewardship responsibility lies with pesticide manufacturers.

But "it goes far beyond the product," he continued. "It goes to how it's applied, and how the applicator conveys himself."

The problem, they are saying, isn't with the manufacturers holding up their end of the stewardship "bargain." It's with applicators, who don't often convey the necessary professional image. And manufacturers don't want to come right out and say so, because then

they'd sound self-serving, they'd probably offend some of their customers, and they could lose business.

Another person was critical of the green industry's low-price consciousness.

"Price isn't everything," he said. "The older chemistry, which is cheaper, has some less-than-positive attributes like higher application rates and staining properties that present the wrong image to the homeowner. People applying products have to look beyond what's cheapest."

Thankfully, at least for this column, one person was prepared to go on record. And he—Jamie Breuninger, a technical service representative for DowElanco—made some interesting and valid comments.

"Stewardship is acting responsibly when mak-

ing a pesticide application, and knowing what can happen if something goes wrong," he said.

"For instance, when it's windy and you're considering an application near a school. If there are any doubts in your mind, maybe you should come back."

The main problem with manufacturing, handling and applying pesticides in what's called an "urban environment," of course, is that the public in general doesn't understand pesticides. And the applicator is the person who must educate, not the manufacturer.

"The most effective people talking pesticides to the public are people at the garden centers and lawn care operators," observes Breuninger. "Unfortunately, when we [manufacturers] start talking about safety, people start turning us off."

Here, then, courtesy of DowElanco, are some messages you can take to your "public," whomever that may be:

- ▶ Only one in 20,000 pesticides discovered and tested ever receives EPA registration and makes it to the market.
- ▶ From discovery to registration, manufacturers spend 7 to 10 years and \$35-\$50 million on research and development.
- ▶ A single pesticide undergoes more than 120 tests for safety, and every year, new criteria make it increasingly difficult for a product to pass the EPA's screening process.
- ▶ The pesticide industry is second only to the pharmaceutical industry in terms of regulation in America.

"These statements are believable," Breuninger notes. "And it's really important that they be stressed."

"Stewardship," we all know, is the full-lifecycle, cradle-to-grave responsibility to see that pesticides: (1) are manufactured and used correctly; (2) do the tasks they were intended for; and (3) not do more harm than good. Stewardship certainly begins with the manufacturer, but it ends with *you*, the applicator. **LM**

**Comments? Contact Jerry at (216) 826-2830 by phone, (216) 891-2675 by fax, or at his e-mail address: 75553.502@compuserve.com.**

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## LANDSCAPE management

### EDITORIAL STAFF

Fax (216) 891-2675  
E-mail jroche\_lm@compuserve.com

Jerry Roche **Editor-in-Chief** (216) 826-2830  
Terry McIver **Managing Editor** (216) 891-2709  
Ron Hall **Senior Editor** (216) 891-2636  
Vernon Henry **Group Editor** (216) 826-2829  
Lisa Lehman **Art Director** (216) 891-2785  
Lisa Bodnar **Graphic Designer** (216) 891-3101

### READER ADVISORY PANEL

Joe Alonzi **Westchester Country Club** Rye, N.Y.  
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Steve Wightman **Jack Murphy Stadium** San Diego

### BUSINESS STAFF

John D. Payne **Publisher** (216) 891-2786  
Leslie Montgomery **Administrative Coordinator** (216) 826-2856  
Judy Miducki **Production Manager** (218) 723-9281  
Donna Pack **Group Business Manager** (216) 891-3131  
Debi Harmer **Production Director** (218) 723-9325  
Rosy Bradley **Senior Production Manager** (218) 723-9352  
Karen Edgerton **Circulation Manager** (218) 723-9280  
Sandy Ollah **Green Book Supervisor** (218) 723-9618  
Lynn Viele **Green Book Coordinator** (218) 723-9393  
Alex DeBarr **Group Publisher** (216) 891-2789

### ADVERTISING OFFICES

**Headquarters** 7500 Old Oak Blvd.  
Cleveland, OH 44130-3369  
(216) 243-8100 Fax: (216) 891-2675

John D. Payne **Publisher** (216) 891-2786  
e-mail: jpayne2222@aol.com

Kerry Jacobson **Southeastern Sales Manager**  
(216) 891-2626

Tom Galligan **National Sales Manager**  
3901 52nd Ave.  
Kenosha, WI 53144-1830  
(414) 653-9523 Fax: (414) 653-9524  
e-mail: tgalligan@aol.com

John Kieseewetter **Western Sales Manager**  
859 Willamette St.  
Eugene, OR 97401  
(541) 461-0022 Fax: (541) 461-0044

Dan Hoke **Classified Ad Manager** (216) 891-2672

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# INSIDE

THE VOICE OF THE GREEN INDUSTRY

# LANDSCAPE *management*



ON THE COVER: A CLEVELAND INDIANS ACE MOWS DOWN ANOTHER OPPONENT AT JACOBS FIELD. PHOTO BY JIM BARON OF THE IMAGE FINDERS.

LAST MONTH'S COVER COURTESY LIED'S OF WISCONSIN.

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JERRY ROCHE



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Effective disease control relies on knowing the requirements of the particular turf and being ready for any kind of weather.

JOHN WATKINS, PH.D.

BRUCE MARTIN, PH.D.

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## Golf course geese

*On our golf course, we have problems with Canada geese. Is there anything we can use to keep them away from the golf course area?*

—PENNSYLVANIA

Canada geese are a problem in many well-maintained turfgrass areas. Large number of geese can cause damage to turfgrass from their overgrazing and unsanitary droppings. In addition, the runoff from these areas may produce a high coliform bacterial count in nearby bodies of water. The damaged turfgrass may be unsightly and may require overseeding.

To manage the problem, consider repellents such as ReJex-It AG-36. This product is a taste aversion agent. Follow the label guidelines for specific rates, mixing and application guidelines. Product efficacy is based on proper rate and application. Consider using a "sticker," which helps the product adhere to the turfgrass.

The label recommends a Bond spreader-sticker. Other brand stickers might also work well.

Thoroughly treat the area and allow the material to dry before entering the treated area. Repeat as needed at four-day intervals.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE: ReJex-It is manufactured by PMC Specialties Group, Inc., of Cincinnati. Phone number there is 513-242-3300.)*

## Cure for dying Taxus?

*We have a row of five mature (5- to 6-year-old) Taxus (yew) plants in a house foundation area. The middle three are dead, and the two end trees are showing foliar discoloration. The client suspects that the cause is lawn herbicides. They want us to replace the dead trees with similar-sized plants. Because of the possibility of diseases, we do not want to do that. What do you suggest?*

—MARYLAND

It is very unlikely that lawn-applied herbicides caused the decline. Generally, if a woody ornamental gets contaminated, it will produce a twisting, cupping of leaves on new growth. The concentration of broadleaf herbicide applied on lawns for herbaceous weed management is not high enough to cause serious adverse effects on ornamentals.

Examine the new growth on non-target plants for possible herbicide injury. Also, check for specific patterns of injury on suspected plants.

Taxus plants are extremely sensitive to poorly-drained soils, resulting in "wet feet" disorders (also known as the "bathtub effect"). This "wet feet" disorder can be caused by excess water from downspouts of homes that does not drain quickly because of sidewalks or nearby roads. This can drown and suffocate the root system. In addition to direct injury from excess soil water, these stressed plants become more susceptible to certain diseases and insects.

Based on the information you have given, there are a few possibilities. Study the dead and declining plants on site. Examine the soil and root system for possible root rot caused by *Phytophthora* sp. and/or *Armillaria* sp. Smell the soil and look for bluish-black roots with a marsh-gas—or methane—odor. This suggests the possibility of root rot disease. These two diseases also establish on poorly-drained, heavy clay soils. Check the soil environment.

For further confirmation, you may need to send root samples to diagnostic clinics for diagnosis and recommendations. For *Phytophthora* root rot disease, a fungicide such as Subdue or Alliette can be used. No fungicide products are available for *Armillaria* sp.

The other possibility is that the damage is caused by black vine weevil. Adult weevils make c-shaped cuts on foliage; larvae feed on roots. Larval feeding can kill the plant. Therefore, examine the needles for possible black vine weevil feeding damage. For this pest, use products such as Orthene around mid-June and provide two more applications at three-week intervals to help manage the adults. It is very difficult to manage the larvae once they become soil-inhabiting and root-feeding pests. **LM**



**BALAKRISHNA RAO**  
 Manager of Research and  
 Technical Development  
 for the Davey Tree Co.  
 Kent, Ohio

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LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT magazine is offering a \$500 first prize to the winner of a random drawing to be held on June 21, 1996. Second prize is \$300 and third prize \$200 in cash. In order to be eligible for the drawing, simply fill out the questionnaire below and return it to LM's editorial offices.

Answers to the questions will be the basis for our "1996 Emerald Awards," to be revealed—along with the contest winner—in our August issue.

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All questions on this entry form must be completed, and all blanks filled. One entry per person. No more than five entries from any one employer will be allowed. Entry forms will appear in the March, April and May, 1992, issues of this magazine.

Completed questionnaires should be mailed to: Emerald Awards, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. They must be received by noon, June 21, 1996.

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