

CIBA-GEIGY CONTRIBUTES \$50,000 to GCSAA ENDOWMENT FUND

A \$50,000 contribution to the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America's (GCSAA) scholarship and research fund has been made by the Turf & Ornamental Department of the Ciba-Geigy Corp.

The Robert Trent Jones, Sr. Endowment Fund, established by the GCSAA in August, makes scholarships available to outstanding students enrolled in college turfgrass management programs nationwide. The fund works to encourage future leaders among professional golf course superintendents.

"We're pleased and excited about the opportunity to make a significant contribution to the endowment fund," says Bill Liles, director of Ciba-Geigy's Turf & Ornamental Department. "Furthering turf research through scholarships for college students is an excellent example of industry, education and the GCSAA working together."

John Schilling, GCSAA executive director, says the endowment fund enables the association to support research in such areas as drought and disease resistant grasses, environmentally sound turf management, and effective water and soil resource conservation.

Director Gerald Faubel, CGCS, chairman of the Scholarship and Research Committee, says the timing and generosity of Ciba-Geigy's contribution to the endowment fund "indicates the kind of leadership needed to keep our profession strong."

Liles adds that Ciba-Geigy looks forward to making additional contributions to the turf industry in the years ahead. "We are committed to taking a leadership position in the development of products that prevent disease, insects and weeds from harming our turf. This contribution is the first of many steps we intend to take."

Ciba-Geigy also has re-organized into a new Turf & Ornamental Department to better meet the needs of turf professionals. Key members of this group include Director Bill Liles, Sales Manager John McLeod, Product Manager Joe Prochaska and Dr. Doug Houseworth, senior technical support manager.

Ciba-Geigy recently introduced two products to the turf market — Triumph insecticide and Banner fungicide. The company also markets Subdue fungicide and diazinon for turf use.

FIRE ANT BIOLOGICAL CONTROL EFFECTIVE IN SOUTH AMERICAN FIELD TESTS

By: Julie Graddy

GAINESVILLE — A fungus applied for the first time on fire ant nests in Brazil has killed the pest, says a scientist who has been searching for biological agents to control the imported fire ants.

Jerry Stimac, an entomologist with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), who has been working with the fungus in the laboratory for over a year, said this is the first time that researchers have introduced the fungus into the soil of a fire ant nest and observed positive results.

The fire ant-killing fungus was isolated from another site being monitored in the north Brazil state of Mato Grosso where soil samples collected from empty nests revealed that the soil was "loaded with fungal spores," noted Stimac.

"This is significant because we have been able to take the fungus from an area where it naturally occurs, culture it and introduce it into uninfected fire ant nests. The fungus grew inside the nest and killed the fire ants. This leads us to believe that this fungus can be adapted to Florida conditions," Stimac stated.

The imported fire ant is well established in the southeast and has rapidly displaced native ant populations, he noted. Over \$200 million has been spent in the southeast in an unsuccessful attempt to control or eradicate the imported fire ant with chemicals.

"Some of the chemicals previously used have been banned by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. This fungus is non-toxic to fish and mammals," Stimac said. "It appears to be a time bomb in the nests," he noted, adding that several strains are possible fire ant control candidates.

"Chemicals haven't been successful. We're trying to adapt what appears to be the natural control mechanism for fire ants in their homeland and make that control suitable for introduction here," Stimac said.

The IFAS research was conducted under a recently signed five-year agreement with the University of Sao Paulo Agricultural School for mutual scientific and technical cooperation in biological control of pests.