Solving the Problems with Growth Retardant Use

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Since the discovery of naturally occurring plant growth regulators in the 1920's, slow but sure progress has been made in the development of a means to chemically regulate the growth of turf grasses. Maleic hydrazide (MH) was introduced to the market in 1950, then came chlorflurenol (Maintain R CF-125) and fluoridamid (SUSTAR R Plant Growth Regulator) and, in 1978, mefluidide (EMBARK R Plant Growth Regulator) was registered for use on turf grasses.

EMBARK Plant Growth Regulator (PGR) is recommended for use in public, commercial and industrial areas for regulating the growth of various species of turfgrasses and broadleaf vegetation. Mowing requirements are reduced for up to 8 weeks following treatment through regulation of growth and suppression of seedhead formation. Spring applications, in cool season grasses before seedhead emergence, will give season-long suppression of seedheads.

EMBARK PGR may be applied to localized areas with small spray units, such as backpack sprayers, or to larger areas with conventional spray equipment. It is important that the sprayer be accurately calibrated and the spray uniformly applied. When used according to the label, EMBARK PGR represents no hazard to the user or the environment.

EMBARK PGR should be uniformly applied to green, actively growing turf. At the time of application or shortly thereafter the turf should be at the height which is desired to be maintained during the period of growth regulation. Applications should not be made to closely mown areas where most of the green growth has been cut. Turf may be mown up to 1 day before or 3 to 7 days after application. Spray overlaps should be avoided because they may represent an overdose. EMBARK PGR may be applied twice per season on several species, however, an interval of at least 6 weeks should occur before the second application.

EMBARK PGR is especially useful in reducing both the frequency of mowing and the exposure to hazards in hard to mow areas near traffic, on slopes or around obstacles such as tanks, pipes, and fencing. It is also useful as a border or strip treatment in hard-to-mow areas such as along fencing, sidewalks and near buildings.

Several companies, including 3M, are developing new products for the turf growth regulation market. Possibly some of these chemicals will survive the gamut of performance trials, EPA regulations and rising costs and become additional tools for vegetation management.