



Weeds around light standards are killed before they grow with Simazine pre-emergent herbicide.

## Raceway Job Draws Harder to Weed Control

**A**RE you a pest control operator hoping to expand your business? The growth of Harder Tree Service, Inc., shows one way to do it.

Harder, located in Hempstead, Long Island, is an offshoot of Harder Extermination Service, Inc., also in Hempstead. It operates what is reported to be the largest custom weed control service in the metropolitan New York area. Headed by Bob Felix, vice president and general manager, Harder is a well-managed enterprise whose main problem has been to keep abreast of rapid growth and expansion.

Active primarily in New York's five boroughs, lower Westchester County, all of Long Island, and parts of New Jersey, Harder's principal operating area contains countless industries, many large government facilities, an assortment of petroleum installations, and numerous miscellaneous customers needing weed control.

Many of its customers use chemical weed control to achieve a neat appearance lasting all season at a cost lower than with older methods. Roosevelt Field Shopping Center, Sperry Rand, and race tracks, such as Aqueduct, Belmont Park, and Roosevelt

Raceway, use Harder's weed control services.

Some customers must prevent all weed growth to reduce fire hazards at tank farms, bulk plants, refineries, or around combustible dry materials such as lumber piles. It is not sufficient in such circumstances to kill weeds, because dead weeds are also a fire hazard. The strategy here is to prevent any weed growth from getting started in the first place. Harder accomplishes this with pre-emergence applications of chemicals before any weeds have emerged, early in the spring.

Government installations need weed control for several reasons: controlling fire hazards, improving visibility by eliminating interfering vegetation, and sprucing up appearance.

### Treat Brooklyn Naval Yard

At the New York Naval Shipyard (Brooklyn Navy Yard), Harder used Simazine to control weeds growing close to some desirable ornamentals. "We prefer Simazine in such situations because it does not move sideways in soils to endanger cultivated plants," explained Bob Felix, adding that it has a long residual effect, keeping the area free of

most annual broadleaf and grassy weeds for an entire season.

Harder sprayed an extensive marsh area at the Naval Air Station, Floyd Bennett Field, with the chemical Radapon, to kill a rank growth of reeds 10 to 12 feet high that was obstructing the view and making air operations more difficult. At other locations, Harder has found the combination of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T to be best for controlling brush.

Numerous municipalities and school districts in Nassau County, and the Long Island Park Commission, are all customers for Harder services.

An intimate knowledge of costs and a carefully worked out system of bidding on new business has permitted Harder to bid successfully on jobs as far away as Baltimore. This happened in competition with a contractor in the Baltimore area.

Harder's approach to estimating a job involves both on-the-site examination and a detailed examination of blueprints of the site. The total area to be treated is calculated by using a polar planimeter, an instrument that automatically measures the area of irregularly-shaped figures. The history of past weed control efforts

on the job is carefully considered. In examining the site, Bob Felix carefully notes any potential problems, with reference to wind direction, valuable cultivated plants, mechanical obstructions, and any operational difficulties.

The profitability of the operations and, equally important, the absence of claims for damage, testify to the careful evaluation Harder conducts. Freedom from claims also results from careful training for the foremen who are knowledgeable about their work.

#### Roosevelt Raceway Was First Job

The operations that are today known as Harder Tree Service began in 1954 as a modest diversification effort of the parent, Harder Extermination Service, Inc., a 40-year-old concern. In that year the organization began caring for Roosevelt Raceway's shade trees and the areas where weeds were troublesome. In 1957, Harder decided to go into industrial weed control in a big way. Two years later, in 1959, the shade tree and weed control work was formally organized as a separate corporate entity, Harder Tree Service, Inc.

The weed control clients are confined to industrial, commercial or governmental units. The shade tree work includes those, plus private residential clients, also.

Since 1957, growth has been steady. Later this year, Harder will add a \$25,000 extension on its main building at Hempstead for additional office and equipment area.

Harder uses three hydraulic sprayers to do its herbicide spraying. A small outfit, delivering 4 gallons per minute, is equipped with a spray boom, and is manufactured by H. D. Hudson. This tank holds 150 gallons. Two larger sprayers deliver 15 and 20 gallons

per minute, respectively. The latter is considered ideal for general purpose spraying. These two units, made by John Bean, hold 300 and 500 gallons. Inasmuch as many sites have areas inaccessible to vehicles, the sprayers are equipped with 1200-foot hoses to reach all parts of a job site.

All weed spray equipment is painted yellow to avoid using it to spray valuable plants. No weed control chemicals are ever used in equipment set aside for controlling insects and diseases. Equipment and chemicals are kept locked to avoid errors. Only two people have the keys.

#### Tree Work Goes on All Year

The equipment is used heavily from March 15 until September 1. Harder is able to retain good help by diverting men to shade tree work, which goes on all through the year. There is, consequently, no threat of seasonal layoffs for conscientious employees.

There are no special problems in weed control in public amusement areas, Felix says, but the public often reacts unpredictably to bare soil during midsummer, when it fully expects to see wisps of grass or weeds contributing green to the view.

#### Dead Weeds Look Odd in July

This reaction is even more evident if chemicals have been applied as a contact, instead of a pre-emergent, treatment. In this case, the dead, brown vegetation characteristic of late fall seems out of place in mid-July. While the overall effect is not one to cause any concern (especially when compared to the benefits that accrue), operators might want to give extra consideration to pre-



Herbicides must be selected with great care. Proper chemical in this application allows Harder to kill weeds but leave the tree unharmed.

emergent treatments which prevent this brownout.

Species of plants which are particularly troublesome in raceway jobs, Felix says, are quackgrass, crabgrass, plantain, dandelion, horsetail, and sorrel.

#### Touchup Jobs in June

Bob Felix believes in doing a complete job for Harder customers. After an initial spraying early in the spring, Bob visits the job to determine the control accomplished. If re-treatment or touchup sprays are needed, they are applied early in June.

Harder maintains a completely separate crew for weed control and tree work. To make sure everything is up-to-date, Bob puts his insatiable appetite for information to work for him. Constant references to the literature, including periodicals, attendance at weed control meetings, and close contact with the Nassau County Extension Service keep him technically qualified to guide this important Harder division.

#### Customers Vague about Weed Work

Because of the newness of chemical weed control, customer education is a very important task. Many potential customers are not yet aware of what chemical applications can do for them, and how low the cost is, compared with other methods. Harder's steady clients have discovered those facts.

The steady growth of Harder Tree Service activity indicates more clients are becoming aware and enlightened.



Mowing around parking lot poles and fire hydrants is time consuming and therefore expensive. Harder helps Roosevelt Raceway eliminate this expense by killing the weeds before they spring up.