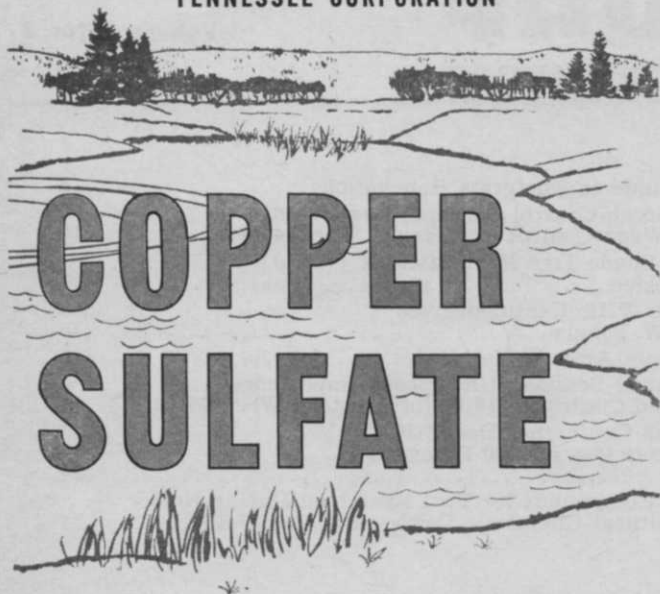




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Not Fair to Midland

We had a telephone call recently from a contract applicator in Midland, Michigan, who was disturbed about a proposed city ordinance, apparently on the verge of enactment, which would:

(1) permit spraying elm trees for control of Dutch elm disease "with effective pesticides such as DDT and methoxychlor" only during the dormant period, which was in turn defined as "that period in the autumn when the elm tree has shed at least 95% of its leaves until March 1st of the following year;"

(2) permit spraying for any purpose during all other times *provided that* sprays contain no DDT, TDE, methoxychlor, chlordane, dieldrin, toxaphene, aldrin, BHC, endrin, or lindane.

While it is probable that the legislators who were about to pass the law meant well, it seems to us such legislation is not in order until specific proof of harm from summer spraying can be demonstrated. As most vegetation maintenance professionals know well, these chemicals are, and have been, under close scrutiny by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, but there has been no label change which would prohibit use of the chemicals (in accordance with the label itself) in the period in question. The applicator who called us was naturally upset, since, as he pointed out, frequently because of weather or other reasons, the applicator must spray after March 1.

Fortunately, the Midland City Council, we were informed, postponed its decision on the bill so that the proposition could be investigated further before prohibiting the chemicals.

The decision to postpone action was, we understand, partly a result of the efforts of the applicator who phoned us, requesting our opinion by wire for presentation to the Council. He also told us he had obtained statements from other organizations which hoped the Midland City Fathers would hold off their vote until methodical, unimpassioned investigation could be carried out. This action by an industryman is commendable, and we urge our other readers to be sure to speak up should local authorities threaten to ban, without thoroughly understanding the facts, the chemicals which are used frequently for contract spraying.

Any action other than postponement on the part of the Council would have been unfair to Midland, and the residents there who have a right to the most effective safe control of vegetation pests currently available.

WEEDS TREES AND TURF is the national monthly magazine of urban/industrial vegetation maintenance, including turf management, weed and brush control, and tree care. Readers include "contract applicators," arborists, nurserymen, and supervisory personnel with highway departments, railways, utilities, golf courses, and similar areas where vegetation must be enhanced or controlled. While the editors welcome contributions by qualified freelance writers, unsolicited manuscripts, unaccompanied by stamped, self-addressed envelopes, cannot be returned.