

Fla. PC Rules Preoccupy Spraymen At Last Month's HSAF Convention

"The Horticultural Spraymen's Association of Florida and the Florida Pest Control Association will have to band together to protect their interests in legislative matters in the coming year," Dempsey Sapp, State Pest Control Commissioner from Gainesville, told delegates at the opening session of the 1966 HSAF convention and trade show, in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., November 3 and 4.

With all its activities, including speeches, panel discussions, and the annual banquet, compressed into a two-day schedule, HSAF brimmed with predictions of closer cooperation with the FPCA and of a possible legislative battle to defend the newly revised Florida Pest Control Act, and its protective provisions for both public and industry pros.

Sapp traced briefly the background of the law, which became effective July 1, 1965, and which includes lawn and ornamental spraymen as well as structural pest controllers. Basically, the law requires anyone performing pest control work as a business to obtain an operator's license from the five-man state Commission.

To qualify for a license, an individual must pass an examination made up and administered by the Commission, or he may have been included under a "grandfather clause" designed to protect capable practicing applicators at the time the law went into effect.

"The greatest task will be to educate both the public and those in the industry in the provisions of the new law," commissioner Sapp said. Too many operators, prospective operators, and others still do not fully understand its provisions. In its capacity of reviewing complaints against operators, the Commission holds both informal and formal hearings throughout the state. In many cases, Sapp pointed out, corrective action initiated at the hearing has proved sufficient. If necessary, however, the Com-



Bill Murray (left), named HSAF's new secretary-treasurer, acted as registrar for the '66 meet. Here he signs up John Carli, Chase & Co., Sanford, Fla., and Ray Meyers (right), of Orlando. Meyers was later named vice president of the spray group for the coming year.

mission has the power to suspend or revoke licenses, certificates, and identification cards. Chairman of the Commission is Sam Walkup, of Orkin Exterminating Co., Orlando, who introduced Sapp's talk. Larry Nipp, HSAF president, also sits on the Commission.

Enforcement of legal provisions is primarily the responsibility of the Florida State Board of Health. Outlining these regulations to the group was F. R. DuChanos, board member. He stressed that label registrations are "the final word" on which chemicals can be used for lawn and ornamental spraying. Use of any chemicals not registered for this purpose is prohibited, and the operator is required to maintain in his office files specimen labels of those chemicals he employs.

Short But Challenging History

From recognition of damage caused by chinch bugs to Florida lawns; from the beginnings of chemical research; from the discovery of nematodes and such diseases as dollar spot; from the proper use of chemicals and the appearance of chemical resist-

ances, the history of the lawn and ornamental spray industry in Florida is not a long one, but it has been challenging. This was the judgement of Dr. Gene Nutter, veteran turf expert from Jacksonville, as he and Ralph Jones, Wilson & Toomer Fertilizer Co., Jacksonville, discussed new trends in the industry.

Heretofore, most businesses have placed emphasis on residential spraying, particularly for chinch bugs. But, the Florida sprayman is beginning to branch out into other areas and to offer other services, including weed control, lawn renovation, fertilization, pruning, etc. Most spraymen still emphasize curative programs, but interest is growing in selling preventive maintenance.

Spraymen are also finding non-residential opportunities to supplement home lawn and ornamental work. Industrial weed control is a prime opportunity for horticultural spraymen because they already have the necessary labor and equipment, Nutter pointed out. Roadsides, airfields, and military grounds are other areas where spraymen

need to look to see what can be done, Jones added in the back-and-forth exchange of ideas on industry opportunities. Another strong possibility lies in the area of aquatic weed control, and this is particularly true of Florida, the speakers agreed.

Personnel shortages and a highly competitive business atmosphere also face the industry. These problems have been around for some time, but they are likely to become more severe. The individual sprayman will have to shoulder more of the burden of finding and training promising help. And, he will have to realize that "the honeymoon is over in business," Jones said. The sprayman will have to know where his business is making money and where it is not, and then take the necessary steps to correct the situation. Predicting that prices charged will probably come down rather than up, Jones suggested that the operator's living may well depend more on what he can save than on what he can make.

Florida Grasses Reviewed

Kicking off the morning session as the convention moved into its second day of talks, Ralph White, of Ousley Sod Co., Pompano Beach, reviewed for delegates the common Florida lawn grasses. All have their uses and their problems, White emphasized, and the lawn sprayman must know what these are. Otherwise, the customer will not be satisfied and may turn away from lawn grasses entirely, preferring such nonlawns as colored concrete.

Turning his attention to individual grasses, White noted that carpetgrass has no place in southern Florida; centipedegrass



Bringing spraymen up to date on new regulations were (left to right) Sam Walkup, Florida Pest Control Commissioner; F. R. DuChanos, of the State Board of Health; Craig Anderson, session chairman and new HSAF president-elect; and Dempsey Sapp, P.C. Commission member.

is not extremely shade and wear tolerant, can't be managed too closely, and is quite susceptible to brown patch fungus. Bahia-grass is susceptible to weed invasion and produces high, unsightly seed spikes during its reproduction period in fall; nematodes and certain diseases can become a problem in zoysiagrass; lawn caterpillars are the biggest problem in bermudagrass, and nematodes usually appear if the grass has been planted in an area for a long time; St. augustine-grass is apt to be severely damaged by chinch bugs and often accumulates very heavy thatch in well-fertilized and watered lawns.

Tackling the problem of what to do about thatch accumulation in St. augustinegrass, Lew Watson, Broward County Agricultural Agent, advised conventioners that "the key to successful renovation is to do it before too much thatch has accumulated." The secret is not to pull up too much at one time. For this reason, knives of vertical

mowers should be set no closer than about 3 in. apart.

Here is Watson's schedule for successful lawn renovation: 1. Investigate grass closely for insects, nematodes, and fungus, and if found treat this problem first, allowing time for the grass to recover sufficiently before renovating; 2. Fertilize 10 days to two weeks ahead of verticutting; 3. Aerate if possible and practical; 4. Verticut, being careful not to take out too much; 5. Rake, then vacuum, and 6. Apply herbicides—atrazine and simazine work well when applied about 10 days to two weeks after renovating.

No Homeowner Mowers

Lawn mowers for the homeowner are designed to be used about 30 hours per year, Art Griffes, of House and Garden Lawn Service, Ft. Lauderdale, pointed out in his talk on lawn maintenance equipment. For this reason, home mowers are not suitable for a lawn service, since they require too much maintenance. Griffes urged prospective buyers to test machinery under actual use conditions before making the purchase, and once the equipment is on the payroll, the lawn serviceman should keep complete records on each item so he will know just how much it is costing to operate.

When buying lawn equipment, consider first the size and maneuverability of the machine. Griffes suggested that the labor shortage and time savings pos-

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Getting together after an informative educational session were (left to right) Ralph White, Lew Watson, Bill Murray, and Art Griffes. Murray, who chaired the session, was honored at the banquet for boosting HSAF membership in the Lake Worth area.



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sible from using larger equipment make better buys of the bigger item. Consider its design and construction second, he advised. In particular, it should have more than "just enough" power. Third, consider the economy of maintenance. Larger items require more expensive parts, but not nearly as much replacement; small machines often eat up too many parts. Keep in mind, too, the availability of replacement parts. Finally, according to Griffes, consider the initial cost of the equipment; but do it last, not first.

Relay Panelists Answer Queries

Concluding HSAF's educational sessions, a panel of experts, so large it was divided into two sections, took questions from the floor. First team consisted of Dr. John Cabler, Turf-Grass Specialities, Inc., Ft. Lauderdale; Dr. T. E. Freeman, Associate Plant Pathologist, University of Florida, Gainesville; Dr. Stratton Kerr, Associate Entomologist, University of Florida, Gainesville; and Doug Palmer, Junior College of Broward County, Ft. Lauderdale.

What is new for brown patch control? the panel was asked. Rohm & Haas' Fore and Diamond Alkali's Daconil 2787 look promising, was Dr. Freeman's reply.

What new chemicals look good for chinch bug control? Dursban from Dow and Akton from Shell have given good control at the rate of 1 lb. active ingredient per acre, Dr. Kerr said. Akton is available only with an experimental label for testing.

What are the prospects for a fungicide that will control all fungus diseases? Dr. Freeman expressed doubts that such a fungicide will be developed. In all likelihood, various chemicals will still be required for optimum control of the different fungi. Several of the broadest spectrum fungicides on the market now are Fore, Daconil, Thiram, and the organic mercury compounds.

What about reference guides for control of insect pests in Florida? The University of Florida's "Insect Control Guide," covers all

up-to-date recommendations, Dr. Kerr replied. This book can be obtained for \$5.00, which includes supplementary information as it is made available, from James Brogdon, Extension Entomologist, Department of Entomology, University of Florida, Gainesville.

Taking the baton at midpoint in the question and answer session were Dr. Evert Burt, Associate Turf Technologist, Plantation Field Laboratory, Ft. Lauderdale; Dr. Thomas Stringfellow, also from the field lab; Al Wills, Junior College of Broward County, Ft. Lauderdale; Dr. Huey Borders, Plantation; Dr. Tom Kochis, Plantation; and Lew Watson. Questions came thick and fast during the panel session, which was moderated by Ralph White, who was later named a director of HSAF for the coming two years at the business meeting.

Others chosen for key association offices included Larry Nipp, American Power Spray Co., Ft. Lauderdale, who will serve a second term as HSAF president; Craig Anderson, The Professional Sprayer, Inc., Ft. Lauderdale, who moved into the newly created position of president-elect; Ray Meyers, American Power Spray, Orlando, who becomes vice president; and Bill Murray, Greenlawn Spray Service, Lake Worth, who was named secretary-treasurer for the coming year. Selected as new directors-at-large were Robert Perry, Sunset Nursery, Tampa; and Earl Waldman, Earl's Lawn Spray Service, Port Charlotte.

But the convention was not all business, as the large turnout of almost 150 discovered at the annual banquet, the biggest yet, held in the host hotel, Pier 66 in Fort Lauderdale. With longtime sprayman Charlie Johnson, of Charlie P. Johnson Spray Service Co., Inc., Miami, and Willard Fifield, Director of the Florida Agricultural Research Institute, Gainesville, as master of ceremonies and guest speaker, no dinner could end on a dour note. In a genial mood, HSAF members filtered from the hotel to return to the task of improving their industry in the state of Florida.

Trimmings

Topless Illustration. A frequent correspondent of ours has written in to ask what happened to the top of the photograph that appeared on page 24 of WTT's November issue. A group illustration of past presidents of the Northeastern Weed Control Conference, the photo was cropped just above the head of '65 president, Dr. Gideon Hill, of duPont Chemical Co. Now, we could claim that Dr. Hill just happened to be the tallest participant in the photo. And, we might add that we're not in the habit of running pics of walls and ceilings, preferring to leave this to interior decorators' journals. However, in truth, this would only be a half-truth. Those who have seen the ballroom of the Hotel Astor, longtime meeting place of the NEWCC, may recall the semidraped maidens adorning the wall. In defense of our cut, we quote Dr. Homer LeBaron, conference public relations chairman, of Geigy Agricultural Chemicals Corp.: "I might mention in passing that the background of this photograph was somewhat coincidental, but I hope it will not prevent your magazine from being distributed in the U.S. mail." What troubles us is that the background was only "somewhat" coincidental, and we're wondering what we'll run into when the NEWCC meets next January 4 to 6. Of course, the Hotel Astor will be no more, and we assume the maidens will be shipped off to a roadside museum. But then, there's always the possibility they are being removed to the Hotel Commodore, where Northeast weedmen will meet in '67. Shuddering thought.

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Year Round Use for Yule Tree. With the holiday season close upon us, we hear that some cities plan to provide their residents an extra use for discarded Christmas trees. City chippers will chew up trees and homeowners will receive the chips for mulching their trees and shrubs. Sounds like a good idea, but it still doesn't remove the vexing necessity of taking down the Christmas tree, most unpleasant task of the holiday season. Wonder when someone will invent ornaments suitable for mulch?

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Bit of the Auld Sod. Recently received some correspondence from County Down, Ireland, pertaining to the 18th Cen. practice of planting lawns not with grass, but with moss. Seems to have been an aristocratic preference adapted to Ireland's humid climate and highly acid soils. We're told that some moss lawns were of "many acres" and yellowish-golden in color. Just when moss ceased to be cultivated in lawns of the elite, we can't say. But we can say this: the more we travel around the country and view the tremendous strides being made in commercial sod production, the more we realize that an Irish aristocrat of centuries past would have difficulties bettering the cultivated sod readily available on today's market.