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Dr. L. C. Chadwick, Executive Director
International Shade Tree Conference
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Lost Identity

One day last month we sat in the office of a sales manager for a large chemical company who was anxious to become better acquainted with the "contract applicator" group he'd heard so much about lately. He wanted to learn what its members buy, how they buy, where they buy, what their problems are, and how his firm could offer useful customer service that would help the CA build business and, ultimately of course, buy more chemicals. The supplier asked us for the information we had on this unorganized and little-recognized segment of the vegetation maintenance and control market in which the combined purchasing value of its members accounts for vast quantities of insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, and equipment. "If only CAs were 'contactable,'" the supplier sighed. "If only there were an organization we could speak to and work with!"

This true experience points up another important argument in favor of forming a national association of spraymen. If manufacturers and suppliers could more easily be in conversation collectively with contractors in this industry, these suppliers would develop formulations, application equipment, and other tools that would better fit the needs of commercial spraymen who are in the vegetation business to do the best job possible and still make a reasonable profit.

In other industries, research funds and projects have been established by individual suppliers, and administered through their customers' trade associations. Everyone has benefited. When new pesticides are to be offered, often an organized trade group is given a prior chance to field test them for effectiveness and safety before they are put on the market for anyone to use.

An organized trade association of contract spraymen would become recognized and could provide a showplace for new equipment through a national convention supported by exhibiting suppliers. It's easier to obtain eminent speakers for a national meeting than to ask them to appear at a number of regional or state meetings.

If some selfless industry men in this field don't contribute and volunteer their time towards truly organizing a national association of spraymen, the identity of CAs as an important and influential service group may be lost. Another allied trade organization may form an affiliated subdivision of its own association to absorb CAs looking anywhere for someone willing to represent them. When this happens, CAs may well come off second best and lose their identity.

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, sod growers, 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.