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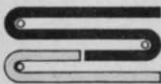
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Let's tell the Homeowner

We attended the 37th Annual Michigan Turf-grass Conference this month and saw lots to be impressed with. New research is exciting as always, and people in the industry are dedicated and businesslike in their approach to their problems. And the business is growing. People generally are spending more for sod. It's the status thing for the family moving into a new home.

And there are lots of landscape contractors on hand to serve the needs of this growing market. Generally, they are doing a good job as attested by the fact that a bigger percentage of the population is demanding the quality inherent in an "instant" lawn. More and more contractors in the business are learning the value of selling the customer the quality type of job which will serve him well and will be a credit to the industry. Proper grade, aeration, adequate fertilizer, and quality laying of freshly harvested sod will continue to help the market grow.

But it's at the point just beyond the sale that contractors could generally improve their service. They need to get together on recommendations for getting the new sod established and for maintaining it through the coming seasons. True, most tell the homeowner to water it heavily and to fertilize it well. But just telling the homeowner doesn't insure communication with him. Contractors need to write out the recommendations, along with any guarantee. County Extension Agent Donald D. Juchartz of the Detroit area put it best at the Michigan Conference when he said that contractors need to provide a garage sheet, something which can be posted and easily referred to. Include the watering recommendations for the new sod, or for the seeding when this is the case. Follow up with mowing instructions, fertilizer, weed control and pesticide recommendations, and most important of all, the times of the year when these should be done. Do the same for trees and shrubs. Naturally, no company can supply specific information such as this. Recommendations vary too much from community to community. But Extension Service county agents across the nation could help landscape contractors put together the vital points for their own specific areas. And the industry would be taking a further step toward guaranteeing customer satisfaction.

We suggest help can come from Extension Service county agents for this because they are closer to the needs of the community landscape contractor than anyone. They also have instant access to the latest research recommendations of the Land Grant College Experiment Stations in their own states.

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.