

# Tree Plant Food



**Gordon H. Knowles**  
Knowles Tree Service  
San Leandro, Calif.

Gordon H. Knowles, a veteran arborist, now spends almost full time marketing a plant food which he has been using on trees in his own business for 19 years.

Knowles, known among tree men almost as well for his testimony about Heller-Gro\* as for his acumen as a career arborist, first tried this product as a liquid plant food in 1950. He had moved to Colorado Springs, Colorado for family health reasons after operating a successful tree business in Essex County, New Jersey. Noting that some nursery stock had extremely good color, he inquired about the cultural practices used in production.

Knowles found that Heller-Gro had been used and he immediately contacted Mrs. Mary K. Heller who with her husband had formulated this product and then started using it on his own tree feeding work. He says that at that time it was being sold to the "house trade" as a liquid packed in 5-gallon jugs, while sales to the consumer were in 1/2-ounce bottles through retail outlets. Today's professional buys it in a concentrated soluble paste form in 50 pound pails and 55 gallon drums. When this con-

centrate is mixed the contents of the 50 pound pail makes 2,500 gallons and the contents of the drum makes 25,000 gallons with a cost of roughly two cents per gallon and 8/10's cents per gallon in these sizes.

Heller-Gro's analysis is 15-15-15 with trace elements added. It contains three nitrogen sources including nitrates which are immediately taken up by the plant, ammoniacal nitrogen which provides a sustained source of nitrogen and nitrogen from urea which releases gradually. Knowles says the product serves well for home owners, professional arborists, greenhouse and landscape contractors, as well as for large turf areas, fruit and field crops.

Normally, any standard hydraulic compression type of tank sprayer with compression gauge plus hose and feeding needles can be used for applying the material. Heller-Gro, according to Knowles, is compatible with most insecticides and is practical for foliar application. He suggests mixing it with "Wilt-Pruf" during transplanting in order to nourish leaves during this period of shock.

Results from a thorough root feeding will enhance tree growth

and health for two or three years according to Knowles. However, he suggests jet feeding every year to eighteen months. Foliar feeding must be made more often, and Knowles reports good success by using foliar feeding via a spray gun as a supplement to the jet feeding. Main advantages, he says of Heller-Gro, are complete solubility and the fact that it builds up no residues. It has proven equally valuable on greenhouse plants and for flowers and ornamental shrubs.

Heller-Gro is now owned by the Boyle-Midway Division of American Home Products Corporation and the professional sizes are being distributed solely by Knowles for them.

Now headquartering in San Leandro, California, Knowles proudly reports that 35 California cities are using the product exclusively in all phases of plant feeding, and that this is true with a number of leading tree care companies around the country.

Knowles distribution of Heller-Gro is national in scope and he attends many of the arborist oriented meetings throughout the country.

\* Registered Trade Mark