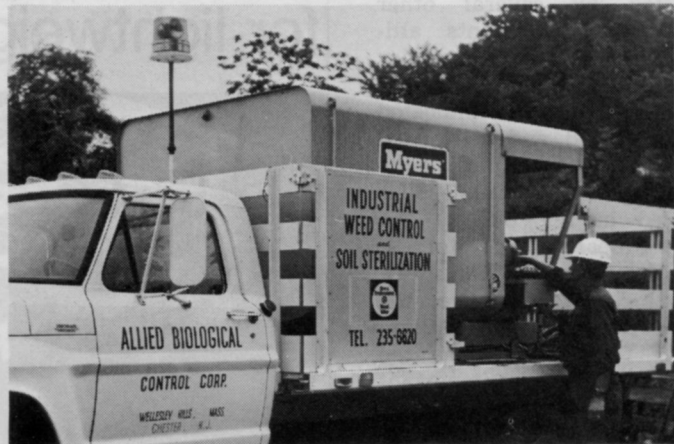


Urban, Industrial Weed Control

How Allied Biological Control Approaches Problems



Late in the summer, a community's appearance goes to pot. Weather's hot and dry. Everything moves slower — except weeds. It doesn't need to be that way. A season-long weed control program prevents weeds from taking over, trash from collecting, fires from starting, and so on. That's the story Allied Biological Control Corp., Wellesley, Mass., keeps telling — with success. Albert Trusas, field specialist, checks out a truck before it leaves on a clean-up mission. Karmex diuron did the neat roadside job.

CLEANER, more attractive industrial and commercial plant grounds are in prospect for New England firms. Improvements can be achieved economically through planned programs of chemical weed control. These programs offer great potential for helping to relieve fire hazards, eliminate unsightly trash and establish an exterior plant appearance that will help stimulate positive employee attitudes and performance. These improvements can help also to spark public interest in community clean-up programs.

That's the view of industrial specialists who have been following nationwide weed and clean-up programs. And it is the conviction, too, of Jason M. Cortell, graduate biologist

from Boston University, vegetation consultant and president of Allied Biological Control Corporation, of Wellesley. Cortell's 10-year-old firm specializes in prescription weed control for plant sites, for roadsides, and for aquatic areas.

Solved Airport Bird Problem

When the subject of weeds comes up, Jay Cortell has an amphibious expertise that has proved useful to major airport and turnpike authorities as well as to maintenance superintendents, engineers and executives of utilities, construction companies and various individual plants throughout New England. Nearly a decade ago, for example, when Logan International Airport

was plagued by huge flocks of birds that were responsible for a tragic takeoff crash of an Electra, the Massachusetts Port Authority called in Cortell as a consultant. Wildlife and bird specialists had been trying numerous approaches to the problem of too-many birds on airport property, but it was Cortell who came up with a practical solution that moved the birds away from marshes and grassy areas adjoining the runways. And the solution was a planned program of vegetation control, involving chemical weed and brush killers. These simply eliminated the overly-attractive airport feeding grounds for the birds and the birds moved out.

Cortell has since been called in to

help Kennedy and LaGuardia Airports with similar bird and vegetation problems. He has developed special equipment and techniques for controlling unwanted aquatic and marshland weeds. Today he has expanded his operations and interests to include terrestrial or "dry-land" weed control programs. And he is bringing new knowledge and dedication to the problem of weed and brush control that bedevils many firms in the Northeast.

Industrial Sites and Roads

Weed problems on industrial sites and roads in New England are both numerous and complex. Cortell's firm uses a variety of contact and residual-type chemical weed killers to tackle the problems. The contact chemicals are fast acting; they work through plant foliage and in effect "burn out" the weeds. The residual-type, such as "Hyvar" X bromacil weed killer or "Karmex" diuron weed killer, work through a weed's root system. The chemical weed killer is applied when weeds are small or have not yet appeared above ground. Natural rain carries the herbicide into the soil, where it goes to work on weed roots. And so weeds are destroyed, and germination of new weeds is prevented, usually for a full growing season. This provides long-lasting, economical weed control — and it can often be achieved through single application of a residual-type herbicide.

The Allied Biological seasonal program for effective weed control in industrial sites starts with a survey of the existing weed problem. A written program is developed and reviewed with a firm's management. Proper timing of herbicide application is an integral part of the program and this phase, of course, is Allied's responsibility. The initial application of residual herbicides normally occurs in the spring and it is followed later by a "spot" or "follow-up" herbicide treatment. And finally, comes a recommendation for continuing attention to weeds in succeeding years.

When a firm like Allied steps into the picture, most area business and government executives have found they can stop worrying about weeds. Chronic late summer and early fall infestations of weeds can be halted before they start, primarily because chemical weed know-how has been brought to bear where and when it counts.

Experience in Greater Boston suggests what chemical weeding can do. During the past several years, for

example, Allied Biological has been using or recommending "Hyvar" X-WS (a water soluble form of bromacil) for bareground weed and grass control around the Logan Airport landing lights and in areas adjacent to airstrips. Another chemical — dalapon or "Dowpon C" — has been used for phragmites in bogs near the runways. And 2,4-D is applied for control of certain broadleaved weeds in grassy areas.

Jay Cortell has helped other state and local agencies deal with weeds. He has consulted with the Metropolitan District Commission

on problems in parks and recreation areas. He has used "Karmex" diuron weed killer to control guard rail weed and grass growth for the Massachusetts Department of Public Works. This treatment, started in the spring of 1969, after several years of experience with alternate materials, has proved to be outstanding. A two-foot band of "Karmex" was applied under more than 1900 roadside miles of guard rail in April and May. Adjacent gutters and abutments were also treated with the herbicide. So effective was the application that treated

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In contrast to the plant at left, ripe for a fire, is the distribution center of Algonquin Gas Company. One application of Hyvar X-WS in the spring keeps an area like this clean all season.

areas did not require mowing all season long. Costly hand cutting was once the only method of keeping grass and weeds down around the guard rails, but now state landscape specialists are considering other places where chemical weed control may offer advantages.

Gas and Electric Utilities

Similar success in bare-ground weed control has been established in nearly two dozen gas distribution sites of the Algonquin Gas Transmission Company. These sites are located from Portsmouth to Fall River. They are relatively small and about two or three tennis courts in size; but Algonquin wants a weed-free and grass-free surface inside its protective fence. And Allied has been able to keep weeds completely out by applying "Hyvar" X bromacil weed killer in the spring—with follow-up treatments in early fall. But the need for these follow-up treatments has been dropping sharply. So now Allied is initiating a three-year herbicide cycle in which each Algonquin distribution site will receive a treatment with "Hyvar" X bromacil weed killer for two years—then no treatment at all in the third year. Cortell expects this pro-



gram to provide an application saving, yet he expects no loss in weed control quality.

A related program has been used at Boston Edison plant sites. Weed control on tank farms, on power slabs and in terminal areas has been extremely effective and, as a result, Allied Biological has received recommendations for other work on rail sidings and on construction sites. Around Boston Edison's power slabs, for example, Allied has been using a two-year program that calls for a seven-pound-per-acre application rate of "Hyvar" X the first year. This is followed by a four-pound-per-acre rate the second and following years. Where ornamental plants are close by, Cortell usually treats with other chemicals, i.e. Casoran, Paraquat.

Radar Installations

Allied Biological handles weed problems for the radar "dishes" at MIT's Lincoln Laboratory and also for plant sites and for new parking and drive areas for new plant units. The aim, in the latter situation, is to prevent tough weeds from popping through pavement. "Hyvar" X is applied at a relatively high rate—20 to 30 pounds per acre—before the

pavement goes down to avoid cracking of paving by weed growth.

Multi-Benefits in Weed Control

It is sometimes difficult to compare costs of controlling weeds with an outside firm vs. control with in-plant labor. Maintenance supervisors are agreed, however, that when you try to control weeds in the Northeast on a do-it-yourself plan, the plan has such low priority that the job rarely gets proper attention. Untrained people back away at overgrown vegetation **after** it has become an eyesore. The result is an untidy look outside the plant—and there is little chance that this appearance can help develop a positive on-the-job attitude in a plant's work force.

Environmental concern is currently developing in many New England communities. Plant managers and maintenance supervisors have been faced with rising costs in labor; and many are now turning to chemical weed control as a practical, economical approach to vegetation problems. This has become interesting even for small to medium-sized plant sites through organizations like Allied Biological Control.

"We take a positive approach to the weed control problem," says Jason M. Cortell. "We take over the problem, we plan the treatment at the right time, then we get back after the treatment to be sure things work out right."

Cortell's ideas do indeed work out for industrialists who want clean, attractive plant sites, rail spurs, parking areas and related facilities. They not only build a better work environment for employees, but they also eliminate fire hazards in the dormant season.

"In one sense," notes Cortell, "weed control with residual herbicides like "Hyvar" X bromacil weed killer seems almost too easy—or too simple. If you have the know-how and the equipment and it is used at the right time, you can treat a full acre of ground in half an hour or less. The job is done quickly and cleanly. And it lasts a full season. But this is not the place for an amateur, or the inexperienced man. Herbicides must be carefully applied. A professional applicator has what it takes to get the most out of the residual weed killers. They should go on in the spring, before weed growth really starts. The professional is really equipped to help a plant executive save time and money—and so he takes the annual weed nuisance off a man's worry list."