Editorial

An Industry Challenge

The Green Industry is sitting on the threshold of one of the greatest recycling ventures ever conceived by man. New developments in solid waste disposal now make it possible to spray human sewage effluent on turfgrass with no odor, no muss and no fuss.

The technique, already in operation is some parts of the country, is essentially giving back to Mother Nature that which was rightfully hers. But in a larger sense, spray irrigation, as it is called, reunites man and his environment as never before. We would predict that in the next few years major metropolitan cities will undergo massive changes in municipal sewage disposal.

Currently, a bill is in Congress that calls for zero effluent discharge into any stream, river, lake or ocean in the U.S. by 1985. If passed, the dependence of mankind on the Green Industry will be brought into focus acutely.

Recycling human wastes is not new. We've been doing that for some time. The problem is that as cities grow larger, disposal systems become overburdened and fresh water supplies are endangered.

Spray irrigation provides and alternative solution to the problem. It makes use of land area as a living filter. We in the Green Industry already know the environmental benefits of turfgrass. The new system makes use of these benefits. Effluent is flushed to a storage lagoon where it is aerated allowing natural biochemical breakdown to take place. It is then pumped to an irrigation system like that on a golf course. Sprinklers distribute the material uniformly throughout the area. From here on, Mother Nature does the work. Organic matter is decomposed by soil bacteria. Nutrients are taken up by plants. And that foursome can play a round later in the day with no lingering odor.

Currently, Disney World's new waste treatment plant is processing about a million gallons of waste water a day. Effluent is pumped to the northwest edge of the property and sprayed on turfgrass and cropland. The city of Muskegon, Michigan utilizes 6,000 acres of land as a living filter. Several golf courses on the west coast are irrigating with waste water. In this issue of WEEDS TREES AND TURF, you will read about the spray irrigation system of St. Charles, Maryland.

We believe that the Green Industry is a natural to accept the concept of spray irrigation. The demonstrated expertise in system irrigation, the fact that commercial turfgrass is an environmental filter, the convenient location of golf courses, parks and grounds to metropolitan areas — all make for compatability that is hard to beat.

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