

Industry News

Perlite usage up 25 percent

According to U.S. Bureau of Mines Reports for 1975, the most recent year for which data is available, horticultural perlite usage climbed 25 per cent over 1974. In 1971, 11,500 tons (approximately 808,500 cubic feet) were consumed by this market. In 1975 this rose to 31,520 tons (approximately 2,206,400 cubic feet) — an increase in four years of 173 per cent.

Robert Milanese, managing director for the Perlite Institute, said "the impressive growth in use of horticultural perlite may be attributed to several factors including: increased awareness on the part of the home gardener and commercial grower of the benefits of proper soil aeration and drainage, the need to reclaim marginal soils for crop growth, more intensive gardening on existing land to increase productivity, the 'green boom' in the U.S., and a desire for more use of 'natural' materials."

AAN asks Congress for research \$\$\$

In testimony before the House and Senate subcommittees for agricultural appropriations, the American Association of Nurserymen strongly urged Congress to appropriate adequate funds for horticultural research at Agricultural Research Service Laboratories, the National Arboretum, and state experiment stations.

"Horticulture is the second largest commodity classified as agriculture," AAN Executive Vice President Robert F. Lederer pointed out, "and our industry's product will play an increasingly important role in conserving and adding to our nation's resources. The drought in the West and increasing reports of dust storms in the Great Plains create an urgent need for an erosion control program.

"These programs will depend on plant material to conserve energy; aid in air and pollution improvement, noise abatement; serve as sight barriers; beautify our surroundings and bring us peace of mind."

Hopkins to sell elm fungicide

Correx, a fungicidal aid for the control of Dutch Elm disease, formerly sold by DuPont under the trade name of Lignasan BLP, will be available from Hopkins Agricultural Chemical Co., Madison, Wisc. in 1977.

Correx is not the ultimate in control of Dutch Elm disease, but researchers and Hasel, executive director of the Elm Research Institute, Harrisville, N.H., believe that Correx is an aid for the control of Dutch Elm disease.

Lawn and garden tractor sales up

Lawn and garden tractor sales will climb about eight percent this year, according to R. E. Drennan, Massey-Ferguson's vice president sales. He attributed the expected jump to resurgence in home construction and to the continuing spread of home gardening. He also said the increase level of the consumer's confidence in the economy was a factor.

300 turf experts attend Va. meeting

More than 300 turf professionals from Virginia and four neighboring states recently attended the 17th annual Virginia Turfgrass Conference at the Sheraton Motor Inn.

Theme of the two-day conference, sponsored by Virginia Tech's Extension Division and Virginia Turfgrass Council, was "From Seed to Success."

J. F. Shoulders, Tech Extension turf specialist, said the meeting was "most successful. It brought research, extension, management, and industry together."

Dr. W. R. Van Dresser, dean of Extension at Tech, chaired the conference's opening session on successful seedings. The session featured W. W. Huffine, professor of agronomy at Oklahoma State University at Stillwater, and Robert J. Peterson, sales representative for E. F. Burlington & Sons of Forest Grove, Ore.

New canker strain found in New York

A new virulent strain of Scleroderris canker has been identified for the first time in the United States. The outbreak has been identified in nine counties in New York's Adirondack Mountain area, covering 34,000 acres. Tree mortality has exceeded 90 percent on 2300 acres. Seriological work has shown that the new strain is identical to one present in Norway and Finland that has extensively damaged conifers in those countries.

A mild strain of the canker — caused by the fungus Scleroderris lagerberii — has been present in northeastern and lake states conifer nurseries, Christmas tree plantings and conifer forest plantations for the past 20 years. Chemical and cultural controls are available for these strains but not for the newly discovered one.

The American Association of Nurserymen has asked the Senate Appropriates Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies for a \$200,000 for research aimed at the control, and if possible, eradication of the new strain.

New York State is anticipating promulgating an interior quarantine and expanded inspection to protect the non-infested areas of New York and the states to which N.Y. Christmas trees and conifer nursery stock is normally shipped.