

GOVERNMENT

UPDATE

Payroll changes take effect this month

The wage base for Social Security and the Minimum Wage increase this month. Minimum wage is now \$3.10 per hour and the wage base for Social Security has risen to \$25,900 from \$22,900. Check with your payroll people to assure compliance.

Benomyl gets conditional approval

Benomyl made it through Rebuttable Presumption Against Registration with two additional conditions; that a cloth face mask be worn during mixing and that large volume users mixing five or more lbs. at a time must be provided the product in water soluble bags. The valuable fungicide sold as Benlate, is manufactured by E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.

Occidental fights groundwater dispute

The Lathrop, CA, facility of Occidental Chemical Co., a subsidiary of Hooker Chemical, has been named in a suit by the California attorney general for contamination of groundwater as a result of waste disposal practices.

Hooker President Donald Baeder denies any wrongdoing and promises to resist the "unwarranted" suit. No injury has been traced to the Occidental plant where DBCP was once made.

EPA grants to help urban lakes

Ten grants of \$100,000 are being awarded to U.S. cities as pilot projects in an urban clean lakes program. EPA estimates that there are another 3,700 urban lakes which need help to avoid further deterioration. Decaying algae and aquatic plants are major targets of the program.

The target projects are:
Spy Pond, Arlington, MA
Weequahic Lake, Newark NJ
Lake Roland, Baltimore, MD
Lake Maggiore, St. Petersburg, FL
Park Lagoons, Milwaukee County, WI
Lake Pine Bluff, Pine Bluff, AR
Forest Park Lakes, St. Louis, MO
Sloans Lake, Denver, CO
Lake Merritt, Oakland, CA
Green Lake, Seattle, WA

Park air quality subject of enforcement

EPA has promised to crack down on air pollution sources which hinder use and enjoyment of parks and wilderness areas. Any source of air pollution near national parks of 5,000 acres or more should check ways to comply and avoid prosecution by EPA.

EPA calls for industry to induce own cleanup

The EPA has issued a "bubble" policy which should help industry cut costs by allowing it to figure out the best way to clean up air pollution at individual plants. Overall clean air requirements must still be met.

EPA Administrator Douglas M. Costle predicted that "This new, flexible approach to regulation will both stimulate the discovery of new control techniques and reduce the cost of regulation substantially. In the long run, both these results are critical environmentally."

PLANTS

Researcher recommends plastic for cold plants

A University of Maryland scientist believes nurserymen should roll out the plastic carpet if they want to make life easier for their plants during winter.

Dr. Francis R. Gouin, professor of horticulture, thinks the best way to pamper container-grown plants and prevent their delicate roots from being ravaged by frigid temperatures is to bed them down in a snug thermo-blanket of synthetic polyethylene or polypropylene.

The process, which results in substantial energy and money savings for commercial plant growers, is much more effective than and only a fourth the cost of conventional techniques.

Dr. Gouin has pioneered the use of foam plastics (commonly used in packaging and shipping furniture) to prevent winter injury to container-grown ornamental plants. He has spent the last 15 years studying winter hardiness of ornamental plants and a decade ago came up with the notion of insulating them in a plastic blanket.

Dr. Gouin inadvertently learned of the insulation value of microfoam, a polypropylene packaging substance manufactured by Du Pont De Nemours & Co., when he wrapped some ice cubes in it one day and forgot about it. Hours later, he found surprisingly little had melted. Gouin estimates that the use of the plastic packaging foam, which costs about 4 cents a square foot, results in wintering cost of about 6 cents a plant as opposed to about 25 cents a plant using conventional approaches.

PARKS

Volunteers can help Ohio directors told

Volunteers in the Hamilton County Park District (Cincinnati, OH) have learned about all aspects of park maintenance and functions and contributed a tremendous amount of help to the park system.

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