

1979 MARKET DATA INDICATES FEBRUARY IS BIG BUYING MONTH

February is a big buying month for landscape contractors according to "Pulse Reports" tabulated by the research arm of the Business Publications Division of Harvest Publishing Company, of which Weeds Trees & Turf is a part.

Monthly or quarterly questionnaires were sent during 1979 to obtain indications of market surges or unrest. We were very interested in indications of cutbacks caused by anticipated recession. Third quarter 1979 figures did not reflect any such withdrawal from the marketplace.

As recession is a loose term which can cause major waves in the economy, we will continue to survey Green Industry markets in 1980. The definition of recession is two consecutive months of drop in Gross National Product. Such an occurrence is likely in mid-1980. The real key to a recession is the size of the drop in GNP, not merely the fact that it dropped at all. If consumers react as they should to counter inflation, there will be recession. They are reacting now against automobile prices, energy prices, and the cost of borrowing. These factors will create conditions which can be interpreted as recession, but may not represent all factions of business. Few recognize this and therefore will respond with very conservative spending for all items. As a result, it is up to each healthy market to sell its positive growth individually, customer by customer. The Green Industry is a positive growth market which needs to get its message of growth to consumers right away.

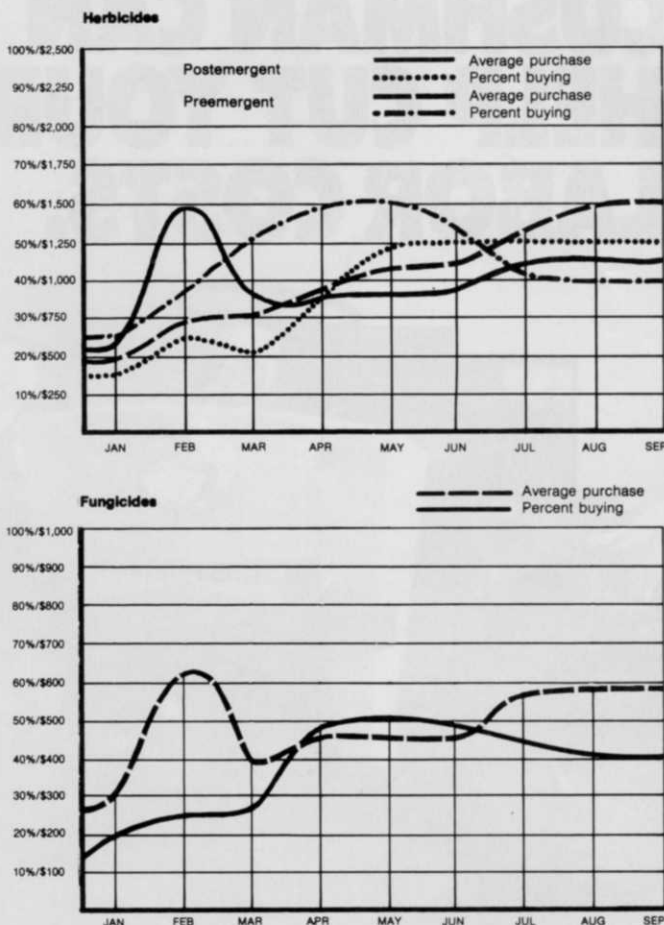
The February results to our surveys may show us a great deal about 1980. Landscape contractors must at least cover what they have on the books for the coming season. If they anticipate cancellations it will be evident in the February figures. Unfortunately, we won't be able to research, tabulate, and publish the returns until April. We will let you know as soon as possible in any case.

Basically, good accounts will stay and iffy accounts will hedge and possibly drop temporarily. It is important to categorize these different types of accounts early. At the same time you should maintain constant communication with your supplier as to his purchasing plans. Let him know what you need as early as possible.

At the same time, more people will be staying home and making carefully thought out additions or improvements to their property. You will have to have answers if you want their business. You will need examples to show them and data to support the return on investment of landscaping. Offer, if possible, things like 90 days same as cash through local finance companies, installation as soon as possible after a decision, and multi-year improvement plans to spread the cost of major improvements over two or three years.

To sell more effectively, you must have good sales aids such as color before and after photographs and sales figures of real estate following landscape improvement, and both within the practical reach of the customer to which the sales effort is directed.

In fact, since residential real estate is moving so slow, a good relationship with realtors may return



Graphs show jump in percentage buying and average purchase in February.

be a good idea to move homes needing landscape alterations.

Other observations

At the time of writing we did not have fourth quarter figures back yet. For the first three quarters of 1979, the months of February and April showed the biggest jump in purchasing for landscape contractors. The February purchase involved a lower percentage of buyers, but the average size of purchase was high.

One surprising result was that fungicide and insecticide buyers were lower in percentage but higher in average purchase in the third quarter. Perhaps they did not anticipate the amount of disease and insect control business as they received in the summer of 1979. The data could have been influenced by higher than normal disease and insect problems in a particular area in 1979.

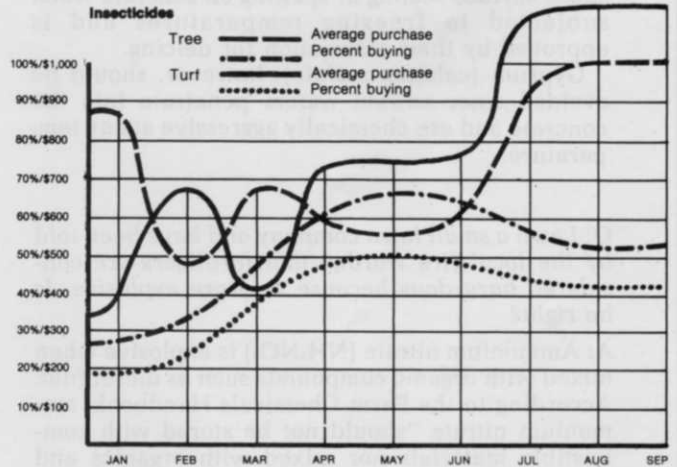
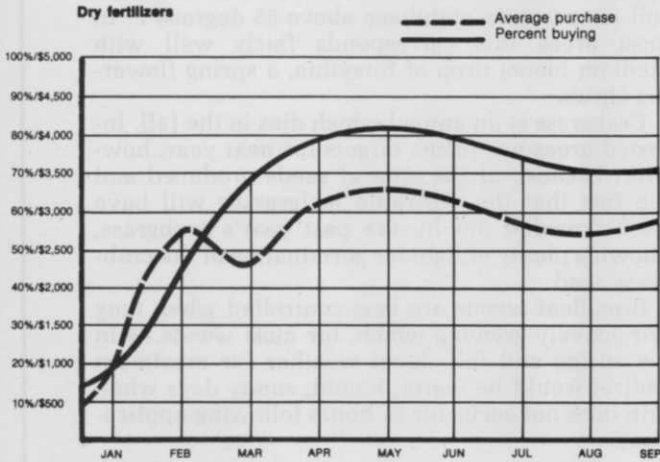
The most popular mower in 1979 was the self-propelled rotary, by nearly five to one over reel.

Continues on page 53

The 10 to 20 h.p tractor pulled ahead of the 30 to 50 h.p. tractor in 1979. Of all the types of equipment surveyed, irrigation equipment was the most evenly purchased type of equipment throughout the year. In the first three quarters of 1979, Weeds Trees & Turf readers purchased nearly \$60 million in pumps, pipe, controls, and heads.

Seed was one item that consistently showed very

high percentage of purchase every month of the year. Seed buyers outnumbered sod buyers by two to one in winter and stayed ahead throughout the busy season. Trees and ornamentals also exceeded sod. Nevertheless, sod was purchased by nearly two thirds of landscape contractors in the second and third quarters for more than \$88 million in the first nine months of 1979.



SPRAYING SYSTEMS CO.

TeeJet®

SPRAY NOZZLES AND ACCESSORIES

SPRAY BOOM CONTROL VALVES

LINE and SUCTION STRAINERS

PRESSURE RELIEF VALVES

Vari-spacing, Split-Eyelet and Hose Shank BODIES and NOZZLES

SPRAY GUNS

Over 800 INTERCHANGEABLE SPRAY TIP TYPES AND CAPACITIES... tapered edge, even and wide angle flat spray... hollow and full cone... disc type hollow and full cone... and flow regulators. The most complete line for spraying herbicides, insecticides, fungicides, liquid fertilizers and foam solutions. All materials. For complete information write for Catalog 36... and for foam spraying ask for Data Sheets 13602 and 13626.

SPRAYING SYSTEMS CO.
 North Ave. at Schmale Rd., Wheaton, Ill. 60187
 Telephone: 312 665-5000 / Telex No. 72-8409

PROMPT SHIPMENT FROM STOCK

A Great New LABOR SAVER

ROSS TreeGARD™

Ross TreeGARD is a snap-on plastic tube that expands to fit any young tree. Snaps-off & on in seconds for bark inspection.

Protects trees from:

- Sun scald
- Rabbits and other rodents
- Mower bruises
- No taping, tying or gluing
- Allows proper ventilation

If your distributor doesn't stock ROSS TreeGARD™ order direct, freight pre-paid!

Ross Daniels, Inc., 1720 Fuller Rd., West Des Moines, Iowa 50265

Gentlemen please ship me:

#1687 24" TreeGARD 400/case	\$ _____
1-5 cases: _____ @ \$169.50/case	\$ _____
6-25 cases: _____ @ \$153.25/case	\$ _____
26 plus: _____ @ \$143.25/case	\$ _____
#1695 36" TreeGARD 200/case:	
1-5 cases: _____ @ 127.00/case	\$ _____
6-25 cases: _____ @ \$115.00/case	\$ _____
26 plus: _____ @ \$107.50/case	\$ _____
Total:	\$ _____

NAME _____

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Circle 133 on free information card

Circle 144 on free information card