

by Bruce F. Shank, executive editor

Trimec becomes a commodity

Broadleaf weed control in turf may never be quite the same now that Trimec's patent has expired. What was a leading proprietary postemergence turf herbicide is now a commodity.

This will tend to push the price of 'Trimec-type' compounds down as new formulators jump into the market. It will also narrow the price difference between 2,4-D and more effective 'Trimec-type' compounds. Those sacrificing quality for price in the past may now start using the 'new Trimecs'.

Trimec is really a loose term referring to a premixed formulation of 2,4-D, propionic acid, and dicamba (Banvel), PBI Gordon, Mallinckrodt, and others with formerly patented 'Trimec-type' compounds, stressed better compatibility due to their formulating processes.

Lesco, United Agri Products, and others already have new three- and four-way products on the market for the coming weed season.

Turf growth regulators resurface

For years we've heard speeches at turf conferences on growth regulators for turf, but nothing developed. That could change in the near future.

Growth regulators for fine turf basically bombed for various reasons until recent studies showed the extra benefit of *Poa annua* seedhead suppression with 3M's Embark and Elanco's Cutless and Rubigan (a fungicide).

This newfound acceptance for fine turf has refueled the demand for utility turf growth regulators. Highway and parks department bean counters have pegged equipment mowing costs as three times greater than chemical mowing. What is more, highway people are sharing their experience now since the creation of the National Roadside Vegetation Management Association (NRVMA). Information that once spread slowly is now spreading like a brush fire.

Monsanto has announced it should have a label for its new Limit by next spring. ICI has a growth regulator in its bag of potential tricks. And 3M and Elanco products are already on the market. This time we are likely to see growth regulators stick and be accepted as a daily tool for both turf and ornamental care.

Sports turf volcano rumbles

The success of regional sports turf conferences has put a head of steam behind a national sports field movement. College and major high school athletic directors are starting to copy professional fields. They are asking a lot of questions about athletic turf management. Fortunately, years of hocus-pocus and secrecy are fading away under the pressure of intense stadium use. Expect BIG changes in the next two years.

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