

RESEARCH

Lawn care overall gets good marks

The typical lawn care customer is more than 30 years old, makes more than \$25,000 a year, and is most interested in the convenience and extra time he or she gains by using a professional lawn care firm.

That's how the market is viewed by the Mobay Chemical Co., which recently commissioned an independent research firm to conduct a telephone and personal interview survey of several hundred lawn care customers throughout the country.

In her report at the fourth annual Professional Lawn Care Association of America convention, Carol Scott of the Barickman Co. said her firm's research indicates that, "overall, you've done a good job." More than 80 percent of the customers surveyed said they were satisfied with the work done by their lawn care firm, while only 10 percent were dissatisfied.

Scott commented on the following points, which the survey indicates were the major reasons why customers use professional lawn services.

■ **Convenience.** "The most important factor." She noted that lawn care businessmen report that younger, professional, two-income family customers are on the rise.

■ **Standing in the community.** "Many customers concede that neighborhood peer pressure is a factor in their decision."

■ **Pride.** Residents want "that lawn to enhance the image of their home and their community."

■ **Safety.** "They want professionals to apply lawn chemicals because they're concerned about possible harmful side effects."

Scott also had several suggestions based on discussions with the few dis-

satisfied customers contacted in the survey. "Prompt service and reliability are of paramount importance to your customer," she said, adding that "careful scheduling, timely, and consequently, effective treatments," are the best ways to keep customers happy.

Other points to remember include:

■ **Courtesy.** "Indifferent attitudes on the part of your personnel will only alienate customers."

■ **Communication.** Providing information about the chemicals applied and "explicit concern for the health of your customer's lawn is going to help you."

■ **Good taste.** Women make as many decisions regarding lawn care as men, so females "should not be overlooked or offended by your marketing efforts."

SUPPLIERS

Demand triggers remodeling at Andersons

Responding to changing marketplace conditions and increased demand for its products, the Andersons have renovated their production facilities in Maumee, OH.

Two new fertilizer mixers and two

production lines are now operational after extensive remodeling and construction at the fertilizer company's headquarters.

The Andersons manufacture nearly 400 lawn care products, and

Mike Cole, lawn division marketing manager, said that changing purchasing habits demanded the firm increase its flexibility in processing orders.

In the past, customers generally purchased all their fertilizer lawn care products in early winter for use throughout the year, Cole explained. But now, more and more people are buying their supplies only as soon as they are ready to use them.

"This continual compressing of the lawn fertilizer season means we often must be ready to furnish our customers with a large amount of product during a very short period of time," Coles commented.

The firm hopes the new production facilities will give it added efficiency and flexibility.

PEOPLE

Walden promoted to E-Z-Go v.p.

L.T. Walden, Jr., has been promoted to vice president of customer service at the E-Z-Go golf cart company, Augusta, GA.

Formerly director of service and distribution, Walden has been with the firm since 1962 and has held a variety of positions with the subsidiary of Textron, Inc. In his new position Walden will be responsible for E-Z-Go's

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Newly renovated Andersons fertilizer facility will provide increased efficiency and room to grow.



UPDATE

A super's best friend

"I'm sold on them. A person can do anything a computer can do, but it's not as easy or as efficient."

Those are the sentiments of James F. Moore, golf course superintendent at Ridgewood Country Club in Waco, TX, and president of the Texas Turfgrass Association.

As computers and "computerese" creep their way into more and more industries, Moore told an audience at the recent Texas Turfgrass Association Convention in Houston, that superintendents can do their jobs more efficiently and in less time with a little help from a personal computer.

Moore applied his \$4200 system to six areas of his job: equipment maintenance, employee records, daily records, available products, budget and communications.

"It can do as much or as little as you want it to," he said.

One of the largest areas where his computer has come in handy is in the equipment maintenance area.

"With a computer, you can easily keep a record of every repair on a piece of equipment and when it was made and why," he said. "This helps tremendously when you have to convince a greens committee it's time to buy a new piece of equipment. You have a complete record of everything done.

"I could live without a computer on the job, but I'd hate to try now that we have one."

Watson on maintenance levels

Developing a long range plan for maintenance levels on your course -- one that is approved by the club's membership and is greens committee-proof -- is one of the best ways to insure first-rate course maintenance, according to James Watson, vice president of customer relations and agronomist with the Toro Co.

Watson, speaking at the Texas Turfgrass Conference in Houston, said it is up to the superintendent to keep the lines of communication open between the membership and greens committee to insure proper maintenance levels.

"No matter what your budget, strive for consistent application of fertilization, watering, mowing, cultivating and disease, insect and weed control," said Watson. "Of course the intensity with which you go about any of these boils down to the budget."

Watson also said a thorough soil analysis for texture, structure, porosity, air-water relationships, compaction and organic matter is important before application of cultural practices.

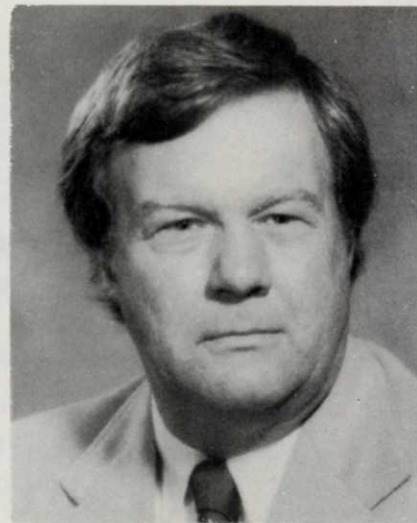
Course development almost in a boom

Golf's growing popularity and lower interest rates are being credited with an increase in new golf course development.

The National Golf Foundation's Golf Facility Development division reports it supplied more than 100 golf course planning groups in 31 states with basic golf course planning and operational information, including estimated course development costs, to assist them in developing new golf facilities.

Requests for help came from all over the country and pertained to all types of courses.

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L.T. Walden, Jr.

traffic, order entry, service parts, warranty, field service and quality assurance departments. He also oversees the firm's service training schools and currently is acting director of project engineering.

CHEMICALS

Monsanto expands research facilities

The Monsanto Co. has announced plans to build a multi-million dollar addition to its research and development facilities currently under construction in west St. Louis County, MO.

The addition includes a two-story building that will house process-development laboratories for the firm's plant-growth regulator, animal-nutrition and human health-care products. Scheduled for occupation by late next year, the new facility is to be fully operational by 1985.

According to a Monsanto spokesman, an estimated \$150-\$170 million pricetag for the entire facility is "within the ballpark" of the project's cost, including the new addition.

CONFERENCES

Houston conference tops ever, draws 760

The Texas Turfgrass Association's 38th Annual Convention and Trade Show attracted more than 760 registrants, the group's largest turnout ever.

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UPDATE

Loss of large ficus high, Florida marl planting suspected

An unusually high mortality rate for large ficus trees has been reported by many interior landscape contractors during 1983, according to Dick Ott, chairman of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America's Interior Landscape Division.

Most contractors have reported that the loss shows up among large ficus that had originally been grown in the field in Florida and subsequently transplanted into large containers. The trees were then held by other Florida nurseries in acclimatizing houses and eventually sent to the contractors for installations.

Where losses have occurred, an unusually large percentage of the trees installed have been lost.

Growers in Florida are generally aware of the problem, as are the research people at the University of Florida, although there is no consensus among them as to just what is specifically the cause of this developing problem, or, for that matter, whether there is a single cause.

There is agreement on one thing, however; most of the dying trees have been grown in fields of Florida marl before they have been transplanted.

Estimating seminar planned for March in Houston, Dallas

A one-day bidding and estimating seminar for contractors will be on March 9 in Dallas and on March 10 in Houston.

The seminar is designed for general contractors as well as specialty contractors involved in commercial or public works projects.

Session topics will include bidding techniques to improve project cash flow, ways of reducing errors in the estimating process, the disadvantages of percentage billing, how to develop a good cost accounting system and effective ways to ensure accurate communication between office and in-field employees.

Preregistration is required and enrollment is limited to 60 people. Enrollment fee is \$135. For more information on registration, contact The Idea Bank in Tempe, AZ, (602) 829-1233.

ALCA plans student field days

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America will sponsor its 8th Annual Student Field Days March 23-25 at Ohio State University's Agricultural Technical Institute in Wooster, OH.

The three day competitive event allows students from horticultural programs from colleges across the country to compete in events which directly relate to the skills necessary for a career in the horticulture industry.

Eighteen colleges are expected to participate in this year's event. For more information, contact Kent D. Hammond, ATI Dover Road, Rt. 250, Wooster, OH, 44691, (216) 264-3911.

CONVENTION *from page 12*

"Registration was much better than expected and it sure feels good," said Dr. Richard Duble, conference chairman and turfgrass specialist, Texas A&M.

Noted turf and industry specialists from Texas and across the country conducted seminars during the four-day show.

New officers elected to the association are: James Moore, superintendent, Ridgewood Country Club, Waco, TX, president; Gary McElvaney, Chemical and Turf Specialty, Dallas, TX, president-elect; Jerry Roberts, vice president, director of development, Laurel Land, Ft. Worth, TX, vice president.

Directors include: Region III - Louis Quick, Denton Country Club, Director of NTTA; Region IV - George Manuel, O.M. Scotts; Region V - Joe McMahan, Dallas Country Club; Region VII - R.W. Deems, Herlingen Country Club.

Next year's conference will be in San Antonio, TX.

INTERNATIONAL

Trade venture links U.S. and Europe

An international horticulture distribution company based in Holland has been formed by Shemin Nurseries



Emanuel Shemin

Inc. in a joint venture with the Weyerhaeuser Co.

Shemco International (CQ) B.V. has been formed to initiate horticultural trade between the United States and Europe and within Euro-

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UPDATE

Reagan makes environment priority for election year

President Reagan, the consummate politician, is preparing to take a daring stance during his campaign this year in favor of environmental issues, according to administration officials.

His position is intended to counteract bad impressions made by James Watt at the Department of Interior and Anne Gorsuch Burford at the Environmental Protection Agency. But, it also pushes Reagan toward a confrontation with Big Business.

Meanwhile, both houses of Congress are actively considering environmental legislation, including amendments to FIFRA and the Toxic Substances Control Act. Since Congress was unable to produce this legislation in 1983, continued delay will be fought strongly by lobbyists.

Companies fear label nullification if Monsanto data decision stands

Drexel Chemical Company and Griffin Corporation fear they will lose registrations for current products if the U.S. Supreme Court rules in favor of Monsanto in its registration data suit against EPA and Stauffer Chemical Company.

Du Pont, the initial registrant of linuron, has notified Drexel and Griffin that it will seek to nullify their registrations of linuron products obtained with du Pont's data. At the same time, Zoecon has asked EPA to cancel registration of Sathon's dienochlar miticide, saying Sathon failed to properly arbitrate for use of Zoecon's dienochlar data.

Drexel and Griffin have filed briefs with the Supreme Court in the Monsanto case, along with the Pesticide Producers Association and PPG Industries.

EPA says Monsanto traded data for right to hold registration

EPA has filed its brief in the Monsanto case with the Supreme Court stating Monsanto gave up its exclusive rights to glyphosate health and safety data in exchange for the privilege of a registration.

EPA also defended its arbitration and compensation process in which an EPA arbitrator determines appropriate compensation for use of the data by others, subject to review by an EPA law judge.

EPA toxic waste inspectors want guns, fear for safety

Enforcing hazardous waste laws is dangerous business and EPA inspectors want the same rights as other law enforcement officials.

EPA inspectors have testified to a House committee they face threats daily from criminal elements in the toxic waste business. The committee is investigating why the Department of Justice has not deputized EPA inspectors as EPA had requested months before.

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pean countries. With headquarters based in Aalsmeer, Holland, Shemco's trade products will include interior foliage, flowering plants and cut flowers, exterior nursery plants and related horticultural supplies and accessories.

Emanuel Shemin, president of Shemin Nurseries, said, "We feel that major market expansion can occur by our becoming part of the European community and having international associates working together for mutual trade benefits."



Carl Johnson, left, President of Sensation, a division of Gilson Brothers Company, presents Sensation's first annual marketing leadership award to Howard Phelps, the firm's founder, recognizing his contributions to Sensation and the power equipment industry.

TURFGRASS

Portz to advise Illinois Turfgrass

Agronomist Herbert L. Portz has been reappointed adviser to the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation.

Portz has been professor of plant and soil science at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale for the past four years. He specializes in turf research and has developed methods for seeding difficult-to-grow zoysia grasses.

Since 1959, the Illinois Turfgrass Foundation has awarded more than \$260,000 in turf research grants to various projects.