

Na-Churs goes after ChemLawn

"Our corporate objective is to be number two (in the lawn service industry) within the next five years," Peter Moore, manager of lawn and garden care for Na-Churs boldly stated recently.

Na-Churs, a fertilizer manufacturer, will launch four branches in Ohio this summer. The company is based in Marion, OH. ChemLawn, number one, is based in Columbus, OH.

That seems like a pretty tough goal, to approach ChemLawn's \$180 million plus in lawn care within five years, especially when existing companies are closer in sales and going full speed, including Lawn Doctor, Ever-Green, and Tru-Green.

It's not the first time a manufacturer attempted the market. Barefoot was owned at different times by O.M. Scott and The Toro Co. Sears tried lawn care for two years and backed out.

The question is, can a manufacturer or supplier manage a service company? Were Scotts and Toro premature with Barefoot? Did Sears give up too quickly?

Na-Churs thinks it has the twist to make it happen.

1984 will be lawn care year

The excitement in the Green Industry this year will be centered on the lawn care industry.

At this moment, we are aware of at least six large companies ready to invest or expand in lawn care. One is British and the rest are U.S.-based.

We can't tell you the British company yet, but it makes you think of the opera.

The U.S. companies include Na-Churs and True Value hardware. Two other diversified companies are ready to jump in and two mid-size lawn care companies are preparing to go public.

We expect a great deal to happen in the next few weeks. We'll tell you as soon as we can.

Industry suppliers hire celebrities

Arnold Palmer did such a good job for Loft's Seed Co. that The Toro Company has hired him to help promote its products. Maybe we'll soon see an 'Arnie' mower since Loft's introduced Palmer perennial ryegrass last year.

Estech already has Jack Nicklaus under contract for its Vigoro line and may use him for its Par-Ex professional fertilizer.

Sports celebrities help distinguish the professional turf market from agriculture. Roy Clark or Jerry Clower can't sell grass seed or mowers like they can ag products. It's a sign that turf is growing up and able to stand on its own, apart from agriculture.

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