

by the Editorial Staff, *Weeds Trees & Turf* magazine

Cutting down on toxic waste

Toxic waste can be reduced significantly, say Battelle Memorial Institute scientists, by modifying manufacturing and handling processes. A group of four scientists studying waste generation recently reported that with certain changes, "Waste can be reduced, recycled and reused, or eliminated in attractive and cost-effective means. The group concentrated on manufacturing processes.

Meanwhile, the Environmental Protection Agency is concentrating on the most commonly used pesticides for detoxification of rinsates. EPA is exploring mandatory recycling of pesticide containers. Reusable bulk containers are being tried by some larger distributors and users of landscape pesticides. See Government Update in this issue.

Drought spotlights wetting agents

Drought conditions impacted an unusually large portion of the U.S. this spring and summer causing a resurgence in interest in wetting agents.

Mallinckrodt's Bill Rhymes blames soil conditions and hard water for inefficient water use in U.S. landscapes and golf courses. "When a soil or other growing medium wets slowly or nonuniformly, it is due to the physical properties of the soil as well as the water. Hydrophobic organic components of soil and a preponderance of capillary pore space combine to restrict the rate of water movement into such soils. Water's high surface tension, due to strong cohesive forces, restricts movement into capillary pore space. These same characteristics delay water movement out of the soil causing localized wet spots."

The solution to both dry and wet spots, Rhymes claims, is to increase the rate of water movement by providing a link between hydrophobic soil and hydrophilic water. He claims the link is a wetting agent.

Rhymes offers these guidelines for buying wetting agents. 1) Don't buy water. Check the percent active ingredient. 2) Select one with a history of success, ranked consistently high in university tests. 3) Wetting agents must be well watered in (liquid) or uniformly mixed with the soil (granular). Wetting agent left on the plant surface can be phytotoxic.

Rhymes says wetting agents also improve drainage, reduce runoff, and eliminate dew for several days following application.

U.S. firms arrange European ties

Uncertainty over currency exchange rates is causing U.S. corporations to establish direct links with European companies. Du Pont recently agreed to acquire Amonn Fitochimica of Italy to direct market agrichemicals in key European markets. Jacobsen Manufacturing recently signed a direct marketing agreement with a British distributor to eliminate one step of distribution. The net result will be a more international market for U.S. and European products and better prices.

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