

## Dawning of a new age?

If you've been reading WEEDS TREES & TURF for the past few months, you know of inroads being made in the development of plant growth regulators (PGRs) for turf.

Monsanto's Limit was the first PGR introduced for "Class B" turf: grassy areas needing more than minimum maintenance but not as much care as a good-looking home lawn. Then, just recently, O.M. Scott & Sons began marketing Turf Growth Regulator Plus Fertilizer (see "Green Industry News") for golf course fairways in the south.

Landscape managers, though, have just seen the tip of the iceberg.

"We have perceived that the real opportunity in this area is not along highways, but on more intensely maintained turf," notes Dave Gerwitz, Monsanto project manager. "We look at Limit as being a very good first step."

"New generation" PGRs do not have many of the drawbacks of their predecessors. Indeed, some have benefits. Jeff Nuss of Kansas State University and Bob Shearman of the University of Nebraska, for example, are conducting tests on the possibility of Limit reducing evapotranspiration loss and thus slowing turf water usage. Limit has also been proven a color-enhancer. The Scott product has been shown to be a fertilizer enhancer and to reduce scalping potential, among other things.

Turfgrass PGRs could hit the residential market as early as 1988, according to some experts. Dr. Tom Watschke of Penn State University once predicted that homeowners would be able to buy PGRs in little spritzer bottles for hard-to-trim areas by 1990.

Will this mean less work for landscape management companies that specialize in mowing/maintenance? Not according to Gerwitz.

"These products will not put the mowing/maintenance person out of business," he contends. "In effect, they will allow him to do his job better."

Judging by the information imparted during recent trips to Monsanto in St. Louis and Scotts in Marysville, Ohio, it appears that the landscape manager will be seeing many more turf PGRs with many more different applications—including one for almost every situation—in the next decade.



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