

MILES TO GO...

Rights-of-way landscape managers, who do things on a big-big scale, favor spraying non-selective herbicides and tree maintenance. An exclusive WT&T survey examines this important segment of the green industry.



85.3% of the departments responding and chain saws by 80.1%.

Rights-of-way maintenance departments come in two sizes: large and small. The average department has 317 employees, but 87.6% of the companies in the survey have fewer than the average.

With an average of 317 employees and an average 8,537 miles of maintenance per company, that means that the average employee is charged with maintaining 27 miles of right-of-way.

What is in the future of right-of-way maintenance? A wider range of plant growth regulator (PGR) use, for one. One industry expert told WT&T that he expects use of PGRs among rights-of-way managers to increase 10-fold each year for the next 10 years. And many of the survey respondents agree.

"Growth regulators may be promising," says one respondent simply.

The current scenario whereby anti-chemical groups are complaining about pesticide use also has R-O-W managers worried.

"We need to educate the public to the benefits of chemical weed control," says one respondent.

Because so many rights-of-way landscape managers are involved in spraying herbicides, it is no secret—judging by survey results—that they would like more efficient chemicals and equipment.

"We need the use of a good bermuda release herbicide like Oust," says one respondent. "Even better ones will improve efficiency and safety."

"And spray tips capable of spraying in the 40- to -50-foot range with a good pattern, using no boom, are also needed."

Another manager foresees this in the future: "more sophisticated computerized spraying equipment

Popular chemicals

CHEMICAL	USED BY
Non-selective herbicides	79.4%
Post-emergence herbicides	64.7%
Pre-emergence herbicides	45.6%
Plant growth regulators	39.7%
Mulches	39.7%
Drift retardants	38.2%

Popular equipment

PIECE	USED BY
Sprayers	85.3%
Chain saws	80.1%
Rotary mowers	75.0%
Brush cutters	63.2%
Post-hole diggers	39.7%
Tree pruners	39.7%
Aerial lifts	38.2%
Spreaders	38.2%
String trimmers	38.2%
Seeders	35.3%
Flail mowers	32.4%

Readers of WEEDS TREES & TURF care for more than 16 million miles of right-of-way annually, according to a recent survey completed by the magazine.

Sixty-eight respondents to a questionnaire say they average 8,537 miles of right-of-way maintenance. Projected to the entire readership involved in this specialized type of landscape maintenance, that's a total of 16,675,000 miles of turf.

Nearly nine out of 10 (88.2%) rights-of-way managers practice weed control, and non-selective herbicides are their favorite choice of control. The survey notes that 79.4% of the respondents use non-selective herbicides on a regular basis and 64.7% use post-emergence herbicides.

Because 69.1% of the respondents are also involved in tree maintenance, it comes as no surprise that chain saws rank second only to sprayers as the most popular piece of equipment. Sprayers are used by

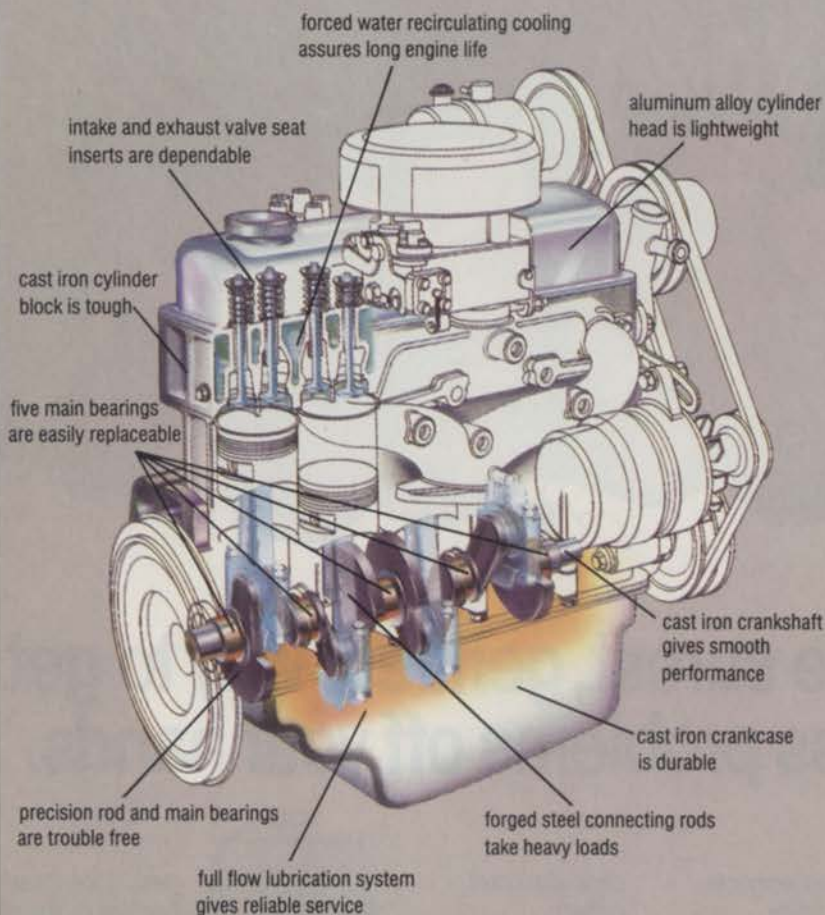
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using tank combinations at minimum rates for broad spectrum control, and new herbicides where rates are ounces or less."

New technology, then, is of utmost importance. Witness this response from California Transportation Superintendent Robert Fowler: "Long range, there has to be a better method. In spite of the equipment, volume and material advances, we are still putting out herbicides similar to the way it was done in 1948."

Fowler says the R-O-W segment of the green industry needs low quantity materials, formulations to reduce dust, and development of low volume techniques to control drift.

Finally, one respondent sums up: "We need more efficient herbicides that will have a wider spectrum of control and more advanced and efficient spray rigs having a wider range of tanks where more than two or three types of spraying can be done all at once."

This is the future of rights-of-way landscape management. **WT&T**