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Costlier homes, landscapes on upswing

■ Demand for new luxury homes in the United States has soared, according to recent real estate reports. One report said that eight out of 10 builders will be catering to upscale buyers by 1990, compared to last year's 66 percent.

Part of the reason for this new demand is that baby-boomers are no longer first-time buyers. They are now becoming what are termed "move-up buyers."

Because more emphasis is being placed on luxury homes, the trend is expected to carry over into the landscaping market. It would be natural for homeowners to also place more emphasis on luxury landscapes, too.

And that could be a big boon to the landscape contracting industry.

More bluegrass billbugs?

■ Dr. Paul Heller of Penn State University thinks that the bluegrass billbug is pushing white grubs and chinchbugs as the No.1 insect problem in turf.

"And it's not just on bluegrass," he claims. There is another problem, he adds: "It is mis-diagnosed 50 to 75 percent of the time as disease or drought resistance."

According to Dr. Heller, the St. Louis area and parts of the east coast had severe outbreaks of bluegrass billbugs last year that peaked in late May and early June.

"We are trying to get you folks out there to do a little sampling," Dr. Heller told Maryland Turfgrass Conference attendees. "You have to get out there and monitor them. Insects won't wait for you, and they are out there doing the damage."

Seed report was misleading

■ An article in the March issue of WT&T was misleading. It reported a pessimistic outlook for 1986 turfseed availability. In truth, availability for the 1986 crop is undetermined.

"References were to the 1985 crop, which supplies seed for spring and summer usage in 1986," points out Art Wick of Lesco, Inc. "The 1986 crop will be harvested in July and August of this year. All species look very promising at this time. Seed from the 1986 crop should be available beginning in late August."

Mike Robinson, president of Seed Research of Oregon, Inc., agrees. "The supply for fall 1986 won't be harvested until July," he says. "If we have a good spring, weather-wise, we will have a better crop than last year."

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