

# GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS

## LANDSCAPING

### Company installs sky-high plants in Houston

The Spencer Company, Houston, took its landscaping skills "to new heights" when it installed rooftop terraced gardens on the 48th through 51st floors of the Gulf Tower building in downtown Houston.

The extreme height of the project—police helicopters whiz by several feet from the gardens—presented some unique problems. Like winds regularly reaching gusts of 50 miles per hour.

Spencer installed plants able to withstand such conditions. Where possible, they have been positioned near walls and other natural wind-breaks. The plants are watered by an automatic irrigation system under the supervision of a Spencer Company horticulturist.

The four terrace levels range in length from 25 to 150 feet. Each gets successively longer toward the top floor. Symmetrical plantings include borders of mondograss and plantings of nandina and dwarf yaupon.



Plants are positioned near natural wind-breaks at the Gulf Tower Building.

Perched nearly 500 feet above street level, these terrace gardens are probably the loftiest landscape pro-

jects in the city.

The Gulf Tower Building is operated by Chevron Companies.

## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

### To lease or not to lease? That is the question. . .

Leasing used to be the right to use something for a specific period of time, after which you'd return it. But today, leasing can imply ownership.

With such little difference between leasing and buying, how do you make the decision? You look at the cashflow level of your business, says Fernando Bensusaski of Bensusaski, Delana & Luce in Boise, Idaho.

"The idea of leasing only makes sense to small businesses, if the cash outlay improves," Bensusaski says. With both leasing and buying, the purchaser usually has to pay maintenance costs, interest and depreciation of the equipment. When the differences between leasing or buying are broken down, the only real difference is the down payment which is needed in buying. Although some leases will cover maintenance, the purchaser still ends up paying in the way of depreciation."

Bensusaski says that before making a decision, a person should ask these questions:

● *Should we have the equipment at all?* Small businesses often embark on a decision without clearly thinking through this point.

● *Can we afford it?* New equipment should pay for itself. Seek out the advice of a good accountant and banker.

● *Can we budget to pay for the equipment?* Landscaping is seasonal, which makes it difficult to make payments some months.



**Bensusaski** ● *Are we creating too much leverage?* Fast growth of a company can create a large debt. If things suddenly slow down, the company could go broke.

Good cash management is the key to a successful business. "A lot of people confuse cash with profit," he says. "It's not the same thing. You can have a very profitable company, but be broke because it's all tied up in equipment or worse, you tie it up in receivables."

"The odds are worse than at a slot machine in Las Vegas," Bensusaski says. "In Las Vegas, you don't have to contend with rain and early snow."

● *Are we creating too much leverage?*

## CONFERENCES

### OPEI Expo will 'go international' later this month

Attendees and exhibitors at the International Lawn Garden & Power Equipment Expo '87 can expect a larger international contingent than last year when delegates from 37 countries attended the show.

According to Basilio Liacuris, director of international programs, pre-registration indicates a strong showing from Canada, with a number of European countries close behind. Government representatives from England, Italy and Venezuela will also attend the show, being held in Louisville, Ky., July 27-29.

Liacuris attributes the expected international attendance increase to more support from exhibitors through promotional mailings, Expo advertisements appearing in 171 countries and a greater awareness of the event, now in its fourth year.

The show floor for the Expo, sponsored by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, will be expanded to 260,000 sq. ft. this year.



## PESTICIDES

# No evidence linking 2,4-D with human cancer, EPA says

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has yet to see evidence linking the herbicide 2,4-D to human cancer. It has tentatively given the compound a Category C classification.

The classification means the compound is a "possible human carcinogen with limited evidence of carcinogenicity in animals," says Doug McKinney, who was the EPA's special review manager for 2,4-D at the time the classification was announced.

The classification was made after the EPA's 2,4-D peer review panel completed a literature survey for 2,4-D.

A category A classification would mean the compound is a human carcinogen. Category B would mean there is cause for concern of carcinogenicity.

Category C means there is some possibility of animal carcinogenicity, McKinney said, but the data is inconclusive.

The review panel's work will be examined by the EPA's Scientific Advisory Panel, according to McKinney. That panel will either agree with the review panel or ask for more information. The advisory panel was scheduled to meet June 25.

A Canadian panel, meanwhile, concluded there is no conclusive data

linking 2,4-D to cancer in humans or animals. The Expert Panel Report on Carcinogenicity of 2,4-D, dated March 23, prompted the Ontario Ministry of the Environment to remove a moratorium on the introduction and use of new 2,4-D products.

"Overall, the panel concludes that the existing animal and human data are insufficient to support the finding that 2,4-D is a carcinogen and, consequently, finds insufficient evidence to conclude that existing uses of 2,4-D in Ontario pose a human health risk," states the report.

"I think they've done a pretty good job trying to review all the studies," notes Greg Richards, chemical products manager for Lesco, Inc., Rocky River, Ohio. "It doesn't seem to be all politically motivated."

Even if the EPA does change the product's user status at some time in the future, Richards said, "At least this (scientific approach) gives us some more time to develop other products that can do the job of 2,4-D."

"As time has gone, their (the EPA's) actions in this manner have gone along in a careful pace," said Dr. Wendell Mullison, consultant to the Dow Chemical Co. "The fact that they're doing this is very optimistic."

—Elliot Maras

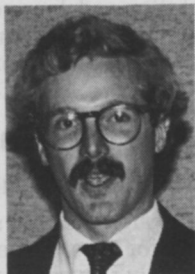
## BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

# Drugs and other problems

It's a subject that's received widespread publicity. It's an emotional and controversial topic. But testing employees for drugs is necessary, says attorney Richard Lehr.

Operating mowers and other equipment is as dangerous as driving under the influence. "Do you want to wait for an accident?" Lehr asks. "You are strictly liable for the acts of your employees."

Besides drug testing, Lehr advocates thoroughly checking out an employee before making a hiring decision. Check the



applicant's safety record, driving record and absenteeism. In the interview, ask applicants what they liked and disliked about their past supervisor. "A problem with an employee in the first year is a hiring mistake," Lehr says. "In the second year, it's a management mistake."

Lehr warns that another management mistake is using disclaimers. A disclaimer is a statement in a contract which says that the company is not responsible for certain mishaps.

"Disclaimers are not favored by the courts and are viewed against the writer of it—you," Lehr says.

Making promises or guarantees in advertising or contracts is also viewed against the company. "If you're using the term 'guarantee,' you may create a warranty," Lehr says.

## 1-2-3

**W**hile we may take precautions to prevent accidental poisoning from pesticides, we are often unprepared when such an occasion arises. It is critical to be prepared, especially since a life could be at stake. Remember these procedures. It could save a life.

1. If a victim has stopped breathing, commence artificial respiration.

2. Immediately call a poison control center or doctor.

3. Remove contaminated clothing, wash skin, hair and fingernails with soapy warm water, dry and keep the victim warm.

4. If the pesticide has gotten into an eye, gently rinse with clear running water quickly, continuing for at least 15 minutes.

5. If pesticides have been inhaled, carry the victim to fresh air and keep calm, in the event of convulsions, watch victim's breathing and protect the head from injury. Keep the chin up to keep air passages free.

6. If the pesticide is swallowed, induce vomiting in *conscious* victims. If unconscious, showing signs of convulsions or has swallowed petroleum or other corrosives, do *not* induce vomiting. The blunt end of a spoon, two tablespoons of salt in water or syrup of ipecac will induce vomiting. To keep vomitus out of the lungs, have the victim face-down with head lowered. If the victim can swallow after ingesting a corrosive poison, give as much milk or water as can be tolerated.

7. Take the victim to a hospital as quickly as possible.

8. Give the container and remaining to the doctor. If this can't be done, give him a sample of the vomitus.



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## INDUSTRY

### Imperial agrees to buy Stauffer

Imperial Chemical Industries says it has agreed to purchase Stauffer Chemical Co. from Unilever for \$1.69 billion in cash. Unilever acquired Stauffer just last year when it purchased Chesebrough-Ponds.

ICI's primary interest is in Stauffer's agrochemical operations, which accounted for half of the company's \$1.3 billion in sales and \$113 million in pre-tax profit in 1986.

According to Ray King, who handles investor relations for ICI, the company "has been approached by several entities" interested in purchasing Stauffer's specialty and basic chemical operations, which ICI plans to sell, but "we don't feel constrained to sell."

According to Stauffer's Greg Bushman, the Stauffer-ICI deal was due to close on July 9.

King says the company will evaluate Stauffer's operations and management in the coming months, but as yet it is too early to tell if any changes will be made at Stauffer.

Unilever will use money from the Stauffer sale to pay back some of the debt from the Chesebrough purchase.

## CHEMICALS

### Sandoz names new pre-emergence herbicide

Sandoz Plant Protection Corp. has named its new pre-emergence herbicide Blockade. The herbicide was developed for use on turf and ornamentals.

University trials and Experimental Use Permit (EUP) demonstrations for the herbicide, technically known as prodiamide, showed it to provide long residual control of common turf weeds.

Scheduled for release in 1988, Blockade has a limited water solubility and low volatility. This year the herbicide will undergo further trials and EUP demonstrations.

## SEED

### High demand hits seed crop hard

Although the 1986 seed crop was average for most varieties, high demand quickly reduced the nationwide supply of turfseed. Jerry Pepin, Ph.D., of Pickseed West predicts the '87 crop will only be slightly better for most varieties.

"The demand for turfgrass has sky-  
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## SEED CROP from page 8

rocketed," Pepin says. The high demand and low supply forces seed prices up. "When the '87 crop comes in, hopefully it will be a better situation and mean lower prices."

Pepin's predictions include:

- limited availability of Kentucky bluegrass;
- fair availability of fine fescue;
- fair availability of perennial ryegrass;
- fair to good availability of turf-type tall fescue; and
- fair to poor availability of creeping bentgrass.

Although more creeping bent is being grown than in the past, the demand is much higher. "More golf courses are using creeping bent in their fairways and more Southern states are using it than ever before," Pepin says.

Pepin spoke at the Reinders Turf Conference in Milwaukee, Wisc.

## TURF

### Proper soil testing procedures are an art

Soil tests should be done at the same

time each year, according to Dale Kinney of Harris Labs. That way, testing history can be charted for trends in the turf area.

Kinney says the size of the sample depends on the type of area that you are testing. Kinney says to avoid non-representative areas when picking a sample.

Soil tests are necessary to determine nutrient levels, soil characteristics and problems. Collect samples with a stainless steel probe in a plastic pail. Always remove the thatch layer.

● To sample greens, Kinney recommends taking 10 to 12 cores up to three inches deep.

● For fairways, send 10 to 15 cores up to three inches deep.

● For rights-of ways or park areas, send 15 to 30 cores up to six inches deep.

● For lawns, send 10 to 15 cores up to three inches deep.

● For shrub and hedge areas, send 10 to 15 cores up to six inches deep.

Kinney says to always know the laboratory procedures and methods being used.

Kinney spoke at the Reinders Turf Conference in Milwaukee, Wisc.

## TREES

### Nicks and salt are bane of urban trees

The way to keep trees healthy is to avoid extremes, but that's impossible in a city atmosphere. The Morton Arboretum in Chicago is researching ways to make trees more adaptable to urban settings.

George Ware, Ph.D., dendrologist at the arboretum, says trees need to be selected to tolerate urban stress. Beyond that, certain cultural practices can help.

Ware recommends relieving "people pressure" by placing barriers around the trees. Mulching helps by keeping lawn mowers away from the tree's trunk.

"One nick on a two-inch tree will be with the tree for life and will shorten its life," Ware says. "For a young tree a nick is a large part of the circumference."

Another major problem with urban trees is the salt spread on expressways which gets splashed on trees and soil. Salt-tolerant trees, such as the hackberry, must be chosen.

Trees should be inspected to make sure the trunk isn't being wasted under the soil. Roots need room to grow freely. "We suggest digging trenches to allow space for roots to grow," Ware says.

*continued on page 14*

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## INDUSTRY NEWS from page 12

Imitating forest conditions helps urban trees. "Whoever heard of grass in a forest?" Ware asks. Most trees aren't used to living in turf.

Looking at the overall landscape situation should be a priority. Trees should be native to the region or to a part of the world with a similar climate.

Ware spoke at the Landscape Expo in Chicago, Ill.

### ASSOCIATIONS

## Breeders group formed to help seed growers

The Turfgrass Breeders Association has been formed to collect and distribute breeding data to educate growers and distributors on plant variety protection (PVP) laws. The group also intends to police PVP infractions.

"Our membership is the 'Who's Who' of the turfgrass breeding industry," says John Rutkai, association president. "With names like Dr. Jerry Pepin, Dr. Reed Funk and Dr. Bill Meyer, we have established credibility and clout.

"PVP laws were intended to protect and reward developers of improved turfgrass varieties," Rutkai adds. "Some



For a better seed industry: left to right, Dr. Jerry Pepin, John Rutkai and Dr. Bill Meyer.

sellers could be bypassing the certification and/or royalty programs."

One of the first projects the association will be to investigate is variety-not-stated (VNS) perennial ryegrass trading. The association will act as a fact-finder, investigating suspect seed and presenting conclusions. It will be up to the individual breeder to prosecute infringements.

One goal of the association is to develop and implement a system to "fingerprint" turfgrass seeds so that a sample drawn from a suspect source will reveal the actual variety.

"The protection of improved varieties through the Plant Variety Protection Act was a giant step in turf breeding," Rutkai notes. "Now we want to put teeth into the law."

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