

## The wave of the future

■ Trends, predictions, analyses...all are an accepted part of the bar-graph business world of the '80s. The green industry isn't immune to the fortune-telling analysts. But not all changes can be calculated on a computer printout. Sometimes, change just creeps up on you.

This issue of **LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT** is a good example. It contains a consistent theme echoing through most of the articles: biological alternatives. It isn't a trend or a prediction. It's a fact. The green industry is actively promoting biotechnology, native plant materials and environmental consciousness.

Our cover story on wildflowers tells it best. Naturalists don't want foreign seed polluting local gene pools. The seed companies, through extensive research, are regionalizing mixes as much as possible. The Association for the use of Native Plants in Landscaping (ANVIL) has organized in Illinois to promote using plant materials which are drought-tolerant and conserve energy.

The cool-season turf disease guide by Joe Vargas, Ph.D., at Michigan State looks at biological methods for controlling disease. "Jobtalk" (next month) reviews Agri-Diagnostics, the first company to develop a turf disease detection kit which works with biotechnology. We even received a letter recently from a man who pointed out the differences between weeds and native plants.

Biotechnology has infiltrated the green industry. It not only has changed disease detection and turf management, but plant breeding, as well. Dr. Bill Torello at the University of Massachusetts is developing seed containing endophytes (insect-resistant fungi) through tissue culture cloning.

Chemicals are by no means obsolete. Nor will they be in our lifetime. Nor should they be. Despite the media-incited controversy, chemicals, when used properly, benefit us all. Disease would be rampant today if chemicals hadn't been developed to kill off pests. Without chemicals, food production would be minimal, and our definition of a "beautiful" landscape would be greatly changed. Chemicals provide a high standard of aesthetics.

Despite the apparent conflict, biotechnology and chemical companies aren't arch enemies. They have a mutual respect for each other. Most chemical companies have researchers studying biotechnology. The applications are phenomenal.

Biotechnology is truly the wave of the future.

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