

SHORT CUTS

LEGISLATION

Blower controversy stirring up the air

California's landscaping industry is beginning to organize against legislative threats that would ban the use of leaf blowers because of "excessive" noise levels. Some communities in the state already have banned their use.

The efforts seem to be paying off in the form of compromises with community leaders. Two hundred contractors attended a Palo Alto City Council meeting to protest proposed anti-blower legislation. This, in addition to postcards and petitions, has forced the council to consider at 9 a.m.-to-5 p.m. use restriction and an 82-decibel noise limit instead of outright banning.

Banning the use of blowers would raise monthly landscaping bills in the city of Belvedere from \$200 to \$250-260.

Other restrictions would limit decibel levels on blowers to under 80, while limiting use of machines in the 80 to 90 db range to 15 minutes or less at a time.

The restrictions are prompting some companies, such as Echo, to produce quieter blowers. Echo claims to have the quietest on the market, producing 70 db at 50 feet.

However, extensive modifications to blower design seem unlikely since the design is already relatively simple, according to engineers at Echo.

The company has also initiated a user education program.

REFERENCE

Book published for 'green' businesses

John R. Beck, one of the nation's top business advisors to the lawn care and pest control industries, has published "Managing Service for Success."

The book includes business management advice from a team of experts like former National Pest Control Association president Hal Stein and public relations counselor Alan Caruba. Topics covered are working relationships with banks, attorneys and accountants; public relations and advertising; new technology; personnel and more.

Send your name, address and \$25 plus \$3 postage and handling to: International Pest Management Consultants, 3631 W. Pasadena, Phoenix, AZ 85019.

NOT EVEN 'HEAVY DEW'...They say it never rains in California. This summer, "they" were pretty near right. "We had our worst drought in 10 years," Janet Hartin tells LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT. Hartin, a cooperative extension agent in San Bernardino County, says that sun-scorched leaves on trees and ornamentals were a big problem. "Low-lying fog and cool valley temperatures caused people to water less than when it's intensively hot. That resulted in a lot of physiological wilt," she notes. Not unlike much of the rest of the country, the dry summer took its toll on Southern California's plants.

AND IT COULD BE WORSE...More work must be done on salt-tolerant grasses, says the president of the Southern California chapter of the GCSAA. The water shortage there could reach epic proportions. "We need snow this winter, or it's water rationing next year," notes Don Parsons of Old Ranch Country Club, Seal Beach, Calif. "In the northern part of the state, the lakes are as low as they were 10 years ago." Parsons thinks there will be a big technological push toward saline and effluent water for irrigation, as reported in the July issue of LM.

WARM BODIES NEEDED...LM technical advisor Doug Chapman of Dow Gardens, Midland, Mich., notes some statistics that cause him concern about the future of the green industry: fewer high school graduates are choosing horticultural-related fields as a major in college. Purdue, for instance, has 80 students enrolled in horticultural-related studies this year, down from 300 in the 1970s. "There have always been college programs for landscape maintenance," Chapman says. "But we still don't have any for landscape management. We don't have the status attached to our profession. We need to have programs in colleges for landscape management, and we have to call them that."

LOCATION UNKNOWN...Kathleen Colbert of the American Sod Producers Association points out that in the August issue of LM the location of Olympia Fields Country Club was not given. Appropriately enough, the course is in Olympia Fields, Ill., just south of Chicago. Colbert also tells us that ASPA has a new address: 1855-A Hicks Rd., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008; (312) 705-9898.

NEW HAZARDS ON THE COURSE...The nine-hole Laurens (Iowa) Golf and Country Club presents a new hazard to the game of golf. It seems the Laurens Airport is not merely adjacent to the course, it is the course. The grass airstrip, which serves private pilots and crop dusters, runs across the rough or fairway on seven of the holes. "The planes have the right of way," Neil Maurer, a charter member of the club, told the *Wall Street Journal*. No kidding. Who's going to stand in the way of a plane? You'd be surprised. Pilots usually circle the field and buzz the course once to clear the runway. However, uninitiated out-of-towners have a tendency to wave back and keep on playing. But they usually figure it out in time to avoid a penalty stroke, among other things.