

RIGHTS-OF-WAY

Landscaping lures developers and tenants

In California's Silicon Valley, where competition for new industry is intense, the City of San Jose is building roads with attractively landscaped median strips to enhance land value and help lure developers and tenants.

In one such median strip project, on a 1.5-mile extension to Hellyer Avenue in South San Jose, the Oakland-based landscape architecture firm of Singer & Hodges has created an instant landscape, using 36-inch boxed trees and other large specimens.

But the landscape would not have flourished for long in the native serpentine soil, a real problem on the northern portion of the project, says landscape architect Ron Hodges. With too little calcium and too much magnesium, the soil stunts plant growth and distorts foliage.

B&B Landscaping of Mountain View, which installed the landscape, removed 12 inches of subsoil, says Hodges. "They ripped the bottom and added gypsum. The calcium in the gypsum displaces the excess magnesium."

An irrigation system was laid and a new soil mix imported. Hodges specified a sandy loam topsoil and CompGro, a sewage sludge-based soil amendment produced by the East Bay Municipal Utility District at its wastewater treatment plant in Oakland. A composted mixture of organic solids and fir and cedar bark chips, CompGro contains high amounts of humus needed for building good soil structure. It also adds nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and essential minerals to the soil.

The medians were mounded in the middle, sloping gently to the edges. Explains Hodges: "We wanted to maximize the amount of soil so that the plants—particularly the coast live oaks—would be well-established before hitting the serpentine subsoil." To protect the oaks from excess moisture, the landscape architects designed a sub-drainage system, with a perforated drain to each tree.

"Since the oaks are slow-growing, we used 36-inch boxed specimens to make an immediate impact. Everything else we planted was in scale with that," Hodges says.

Where it is difficult to maintain ground cover, Hodges opted for seeding a drought-resistant tall fescue.

Plantings throughout the project are drought-tolerant.



Shown above is a strip of right-of-way along Hellyer Avenue in San Jose that was designed to attract industry and residents to the area. This tract was designed by Ron Hodges of Singer & Hodges.

PESTICIDES

EPA kills special review of 2,4-D

The Environmental Protection Agency will not conduct a special review of 2,4-D because further research could not confirm suspicions that it causes cancer.

EPA spokesman Al Heier said additional studies suggest 2,4-D is not a carcinogen. "Some of the best toxicologists in the country looked at the data" and could not verify the link between 2,4-D and human cancer.

The possibility of a special review arose in 1986 after release of a National Cancer Institute (NCI) study of Kansas farmers using 2,4-D more than 20 times a year and mixing their own formulations. The study said farmers were eight times more likely to con-

tract non-Hodgkins lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph systems.

However, a followup study by NCI in western Washington found no increased incidence of cancer.

The EPA decision averted the possibility of new label restrictions or a banning of the herbicide.

"This is probably the best news I've heard in a long time," says Doug Fender, executive director of the American Sod Producers Association. "The significance of an effective herbicide on a sod farm cannot be overstated."

EPA will seek out long term studies of the effects of 2,4-D done by universities or manufacturers. "We will be

asking registrants (2,4-D manufacturers) to conduct some additional long-term studies," adds Steve Johnson, deputy director of EPA's pesticide hazard evaluation division.

The *New York Times* quoted staff scientist Diane Baxter of the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) as calling the decision "outrageous," saying that results of the human studies conducted by the NCI should outweigh animal studies which the EPA has referenced.

In the meantime, EPA has classified 2,4-D as a Category D pesticide, one which displays no evidence of human carcinogenicity.

Davey to reduce pesticide applications in tree and lawn care by up to 80 percent

The Davey Company of Kent, Ohio, will reduce the use of traditional pesticides by 75 to 80 percent in tree, shrub and lawn care services by 1990.

"We will realize over 30,000 gallons of pesticides that will not be applied in 1988," says Roger Funk, Ph.D., vice-president of technical and human resources. "We will realize that without reduced control and with no additional cost to the customer."

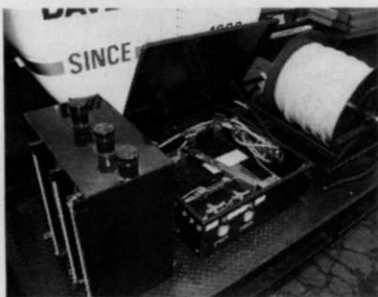
The company began what it calls its Plant Health Care concept in 1987. In five test territories, use of traditional pesticides on trees and shrubs were reduced by 50 percent. And use of herbicides and insecticides on turf were reduced by 40 and 50 percent, respectively.

"There are alternatives which are acceptable to the American public in terms of pesticide use," says Funk.

Davey surveyed 10,000 customers and found that they want less pesticide use, no more pests and no increase in prices. Funk and other Davey executives believe that the Plant Health Care concept is the answer to customer wishes.

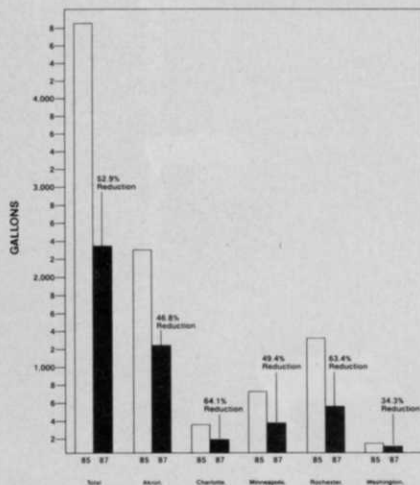
One key development in pesticide reduction resulted when Davey researchers mixed soaps with reduced amounts of pesticides. They found that soaps not only control pests, but also appear to act as an adhesive, adhering the reduced levels of pesticides to leaves longer, providing a residual effect. To achieve further pesticide reductions, Funk and his staff are continuing to test alternative products like mineral, neem and citrus oils; and natural pesticides derived from plants such as rotenone and pyrethrum.

"We're going to increase the use of horticultural oil in summertime," notes Funk. "And I'm extremely im-



The patented "Customizer."

LAWN CARE
HERBICIDE REDUCTION
IN FIVE-AREA REPRESENTATIVE SAMPLE
OF DAVEY OPERATIONS



pressed with the results we've seen with neem oil."

Funk is likewise high on soaps for insect control. Says he: "With some insecticides, we've found that we can reduce applications to 1/16th of the original, mix with soaps and get the same level of control. In a petrie dish, the soaps will control all known species of lawn insects."

Funk adds that nematodes "look extremely promising."

Other techniques being used by Davey to reduce pesticide use are special pesticide timing charts keyed to the host, its "Customizer" spray injection system and low-drift spray equipment.

At presstime, Davey was considering marketing its "Customizer" to the lawn care market. The patented spray unit is specially designed for spot application of pesticides. Pesticides are not tank-mixed, but are secured in a separate reinforced tank and are injected in the fertilizer line only as needed. Another feature of the unit is a no-drift nozzle.

"It's not only the 'Customizer,' but it and the nozzle together that make it unique," Funk told a special press conference last month in Cleveland.

Brian Jeffers of Davey has invented a tree spray gun whose pressure can be adjusted by the technician at the gun without having to return to the truck. Use of this gun makes it easier to go from large trees to small shrubs

or vice versa without worry of excessive drift.

The bottom line? Less pesticide use. Look at these figures:

Before implementation of the Plant Health Care program, Davey had projected the use of 27,900 gallons of tree pesticides in 1988. Since the move to PHC, that estimate has been downgraded to 6,900 gallons. Davey had planned, pre-PHC, to use 16,000 gallons of turf herbicides; now, they're figuring on 7,600 gallons. And the company had plans for 3,300 gallons of turf insecticides before PHC; that estimate is now 1,930 gallons.

One of the most important factors in making total Plant Health Care work is educating the customer, Funk believes. "Education is the greatest service we provide to the customer. Beginning in 1988, we will take a more pro-active approach to education." He notes that Davey lawn technicians may even offer to adjust customers' lawn mower cutting heights this summer.

Davey president Dave Cowan concluded the press briefing with this:

"We're not doing this to save money or to make money. We're doing it because we believe in it."



Funk

INDUSTRY

'Get off our duffs,' says Eliot Roberts

Turf is a multi-billion dollar industry. In fact, it is valued nationally at about \$25 billion. That's the good news.

Eliot Roberts, Ph.D., executive director of the Lawn Institute, says the value of the turf industry can be assessed in four ways:

1. Facilities—golf courses, parks, cemeteries or home lawns.
2. Manufacturing—mowers, fertilizers and chemicals.

3. Services—consulting, USGA specialists or commercial

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ENDANGERED LABELING...Chemical producers should realize by now that quick action on an EPA judgment is sometimes folly. Such is the case with endangered species labeling. Since it has become unlikely the endangered species program will be in place by this September, the EPA is issuing three options, according to a report in *Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News*. First, products already with new labels can be used until the product is gone. Second, stickers can be placed over language required by PR notices 87-4 and 87-5. Third, use labeling approved prior to issuance of those to PR notices. Stay tuned.

IT COULD HAPPEN...Fire can devastate a maintenance operation, as Scott Wallace, superintendent at Waveland Golf Course, in Des Moines, Iowa knows. After it happened to him, he learned some valuable lessons. His advice: store equipment and chemicals in separate areas...keep a good inventory, especially all equipment receipts for anything you still use...keep records in two different areas.

CONGRATULATIONS...to Dr. Eliot Roberts, executive director of the Lawn Institute. Roberts received the Iowa Turfgrass Institute's Meritorious Service Award. Roberts started some of the first research plots at Iowa State University.

PRUDENT PRUNING...Be careful when you prune wild cherry or black locust trees near a pasture. The branches are poisonous to animals which eat them, says John Mead, extension agent at Rutgers University's Cook College. According to Mead, the branches become more dangerous as they dry out.

REINCO CONSOLIDATES...Reinco, Inc. a New Jersey-based manufacturer of hydrograsses and power mulchers, has announced the dissolution of its 20-year-old sister company, Grass Growers, Inc. Grass Growers produced Terra Tack tackifier used to minimize erosion. Information on the availability of Terra Tack trademark can be obtained by calling 800-526-7687.

SHRINKING POOL...The labor pool for young adults is shrinking—not a good sign for service-oriented industries like lawn and tree care and landscaping. According to National Arborist Association executive director Bob Felix, there will be 24 million 18- to 24-year-olds entering the job market in 1990. This compares with 30 million who entered in 1980. Competition for these people will be intense; Felix believes that the green industry should be prepared to pay for its share of the market.

representatives.

4. Institutional—university research and extension.

The bad news, however, is that the general public doesn't realize the worth of the turf industry, Roberts says. "We need to get off our duffs and educate people," he says. "The production of seed and sod is a marketable commodity, but there's value to us in using it, not just how it's produced."

Roberts spoke at the Iowa Turf conference.

REGULATIONS

OSHA revises its trimming regulations

The Occupational Safety and Hazard Agency (OSHA) revised its regulations concerning trimming trees in the proximity to telephone, cable vision and other communication lines, including house drops.

Through the efforts of the National Arborist Association, previous requirements for extensive safety training record-keeping were dropped. The new regulation, effective Oct. 28, 1987, allow simple training certification.

Employers retain the right to provide this training exclusively on the job. The new requirements state in part: "Employers shall provide training in the various precautions and safe practices required to trim trees in proximity to telecommunications lines. Such training shall consist of on-the-job training or classroom type or both.

"The employer shall certify that employees have been trained by preparing a certification record which includes the identity of the person trained, the signature of the employer or the person who conducted the training and the date the training was completed. Such record shall be maintained on file for the duration of the employee's employment."

If verifiable training occurred before the new regulation, then further training is not necessary. Training includes the following:

"1) Recognition and avoidance of dangers relating to encounter with harmful substances and animal, insect or plant life;

"2) Procedures to be followed in emergency situations; and

"3) First aid training, including instruction in artificial respiration where appropriate."

For complete details on the new regulations, contact OSHA or the NAA at P.O. Box 1094, Amherst, NH 03031; (603) 673-3311. **LM**