

# SHORT CUTS

## LANDSCAPING

### Carpenter takes on North Carolina DOT

Joe Carpenter of Landmasters, Gastonia, N.C. has filed an appeal with the U.S. Court of Appeals in his case against the state and federal departments of transportation involving minority set-aside regulations.



Carpenter

The case involves the federal Disadvantage Business Enterprise (DBE) regulations, which mandate that at least 10 percent of funds for public works projects be awarded to minority firms. Carpenter is challenging their constitutionality on grounds that provisions of the Surface Transportation and Assistance Act create a system of racial preferences in awarding public contracts for highway construction projects.

Carpenter, former president of the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, believes that these programs result in a system of racial quotas which prime contractors must fulfill to avoid a risk of losing federally-funded state contracts.

More than 20 lawsuits have been filed challenging the constitutionality of the 10 percent quota requirement, which was originally implemented as part of the Public Works Employment Act of 1977. In 1982, the Surface Transportation Assistance Act was passed with such a quota.

## RESEARCH

### Thatch build-up is found in fescues

Researchers at the University of California/Riverside report more thatch build-up than expected in new turf-type tall fescue varieties included in the three-year-old National Variety Trial there.

Thatch was present in all 39 tall fescue varieties included in the trial, ranging in thickness from 0.64 to 1.14 inches.

"Generally, the pasture-type varieties developed the least thatch, while the newer turf types, including dwarf varieties, accumulated the most," reports Matt Leonard, Ph.D.

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**THE FATE OF N...** What happens to the nitrogen you're applying to the turf three or four times a year? According to Marty Petrovic, Ph.D., of Cornell University, about 60 percent of the nutrient is taken up by the plant, under ideal conditions. Here's where the rest goes: 14-20 percent is stored in the soil, 21-35 percent is stored in the thatch, 7-15 percent is lost to the atmosphere and anywhere from 2-85 percent is lost due to denitrification. Petrovic revealed these statistics at the 65th anniversary Lofts Seed Field Day.

**DISEASE UPDATE...** Agri-Diagnostic Associates has improved its popular turf disease detection kit. Formerly, the test took 3½ hours; the new test takes just 10 minutes. The kit, which uses the same technology, will be available April 1, 1989, according to Vonnice L. Estes, who is in charge of market development. For more information, write 2611 Branch Pike, Cinnaminson, NJ 08077 or call (609) 829-0110.

**THEY'VE BEEN ENDO-ED...** You want a perennial ryegrass with high insect-resistant endophytes present? Try these: SR 4000, SR 4100, Citation II, Commander, Dasher II, Repel or Sunrye. According to 1986 national tests conducted by C. Reed Funk, Ph.D., at Rutgers University in 1986, these varieties were highest in endophyte content.

**VIDEO ARTICULATE...** Mike Tanzini and Greg Frank have been selected by WXXI-TV, Channel 21 in Rochester, N.Y. to participate in "New York Lawn & Garden," a weekly question-and-answer show. Viewers are encouraged to submit samples of problem plants and insects for diagnosis and recommendations. Along with Tanzini and Frank, cooperative extension agent Jim Wilmot answers the questions. The panel also answers call-in questions and plans several remote broadcasts from area malls for on-camera questions and answers. Tanzini and Frank, vice presidents of Ted Collins Tree & Landscape, were selected from open auditions.

**DETOUR TO DISNEY...** For the first time in Walt Disney World history, landscape professionals can get an in-depth look at the entire Disney World horticultural operation in the new "Landscape Magic" seminar. Experts from the Disney staff will serve as instructors and guides for the three-day seminar, which begins Jan. 29, 1989. Registration fee is \$685, which includes special rates on accommodations at the Contemporary Resort. For more detailed information, write Seminar Productions, Disney World, Dept. PR, P.O. Box 10,000, Lake Buena Vista, FL 32830, or call (407) 828-1500.

**OVER THE COUNTER...** LawnAmerica Inc. has completed an initial public offering of its securities with South Richmond Securities Inc. as the underwriter. The offering consisted of 500,000 units priced at \$3 each. Each unit consists of two shares of common stock and one common stock purchase warrant. LawnAmerica is a full-service lawn/landscape company based in Tulsa, Okla.

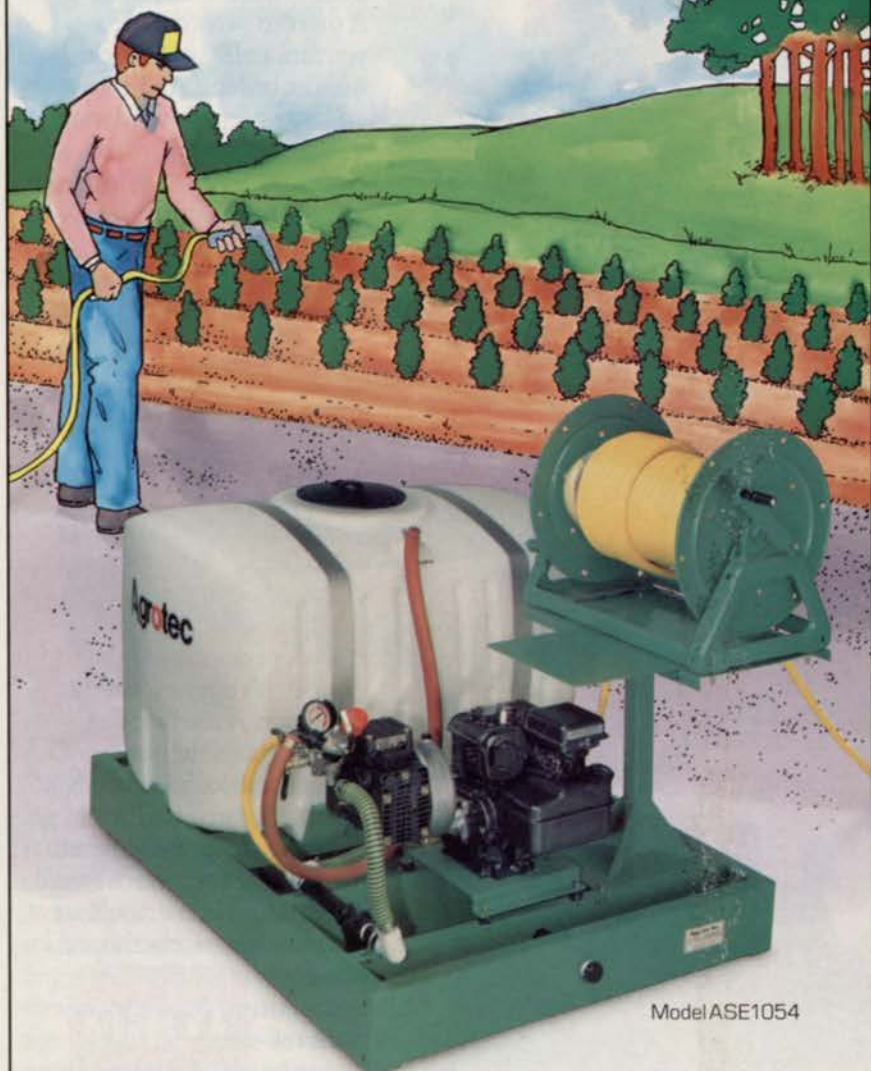
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## THATCH from page 11

Leonard, UCR botany and plant sciences staff research associate, said that the thatch build-up was noticed while soil cores were being taken to measure tall fescue rooting depth. This triggered a sampling of the 39 varieties for thatch thickness.

Cluster analysis produced two significantly different groups of fescues with respect to thatch thickness and four groups of varieties based on turf texture. Results by variety are presented in an article titled "Thatch Accumulation in Tall Fescue Varieties," in the UC publication *California Turfgrass Culture*, Vol. 37, Nos. 3, 4, 1988.

"Thatch thickness and turf texture were positively correlated," Leonard notes, "supporting the hypotheses that the new, finer textured tall fescue varieties tend to accumulate more thatch than the older forage varieties." The UCR study is not considered to be conclusive, he added, but it does point out a trend in tall fescue thatch accumulation that warrants further study.

## ACADEMIA

### Ohio State offers equipment curriculum

A college program that teaches technicians to operate outdoor power equipment will be offered at The Ohio State University.

Horticultural Power and Equipment Technology will be taught at OSU's Wooster branch, beginning in the fall of 1989.

Students completing the two-year program that includes an internship will receive an Associate of Applied Science degree.

General education courses including communications skills, math, physics and microcomputers will be balanced with hands-on and classroom studies of engines, hydraulics, power transmission, and servicing specialized horticultural equipment.

In addition, the students will receive basic training in one of three areas: turf, landscaping or nursery.

Anyone interested in more information about the program can call Fred Lendrum at (216) 264-3911 or toll-free in Ohio (800) 647-8283. The address of the OSU-Wooster campus is 1328 Dover Road, Wooster, OH 44691.

## LAWN CARE

### Tru Green buys Texas operation

Tru Green Corp. has purchased Greenkeeper Inc., a San Antonio-