

# LETTERS

To the editor:

There has been a considerable debate on the topic of the "black death" (August, 1988 LM) and interest in the form of letters (November, 1988 LM) and articles being published in various turfgrass magazines.

As a microbiologist trained in agricultural science and presently practicing in the area of biofouling, this topic has considerable interest.

Events in 1987 at a relatively new golf course in Regina in which the black layer phenomenon occurred very rapidly led to my engagement as a consultant to determine the causes of this problem. It was clear that the rate of infiltration of water through the black layer zone was severely depressed and that both grass die-back and surface erosion was occurring in these high-sand putting greens. The nature of the black plug layer in the Regina golf course was found to be bacterial in nature. It was overlaid with molds and algae. In many ways, the type of plug that formed in the black layer resembled the plugs that occur around a water well.

In the laboratory over the winter of 1988, it became possible to synthesize

the black plug layer, indicating that a black layering could be generated using simply the bacteriological components. Papers are being prepared on the precise nature of the structure of the black plug layer. The basic concern is that the bacteriological component has been either downplayed or totally ignored.

Clearly, far more research needs to be undertaken, but perhaps the phenomenon could better be referred to as "black plug layering." Black because iron and manganese sulfides are present to make the layering obvious, plug because the water infiltration through the soil is severely impeded by the biofouling and plugging of the sand, and layering because the problem becomes severe when the bacteria generates lateral layers just under the surface of the soil.

**Dr. D.R. Cullimore**

Regina Water Research Institute  
Saskatchewan, Canada

To the editor:

Each month I look forward to receiving *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* and thoroughly enjoy reading about the many subjects that are covered.

This month, however, I became disturbed with statements made in the article "Thorny flora makes a good fence." My assumption is that the plant referred to is *Poncirus trifoliata* (Trifoliolate Orange). If my assumption is correct, I don't think the statement, "The plant was introduced to the American market 2½ years ago" and etc. is right.

*Poncirus trifoliata* was grown and used as a barrier hedge 60 years ago in the neighborhood near Atlanta where I grew up. In fact, the plant was so easily grown from seed, it became quite prolific. Also, in Florida, this plant has been used through the years as a root stock for grafting citrus, making the plants more tolerant of colder temperatures.

The statement "its exact identity remains a secret," is rather asinine as it is so dispersed through the Southeast.

I also disagree with the flowering cycle. As I remember, the plants which I grew bore flowers and fruit every year after it became mature. The three I retained grew to 12 to 14 feet.

**M.B. Garrity**

Landscape Designer  
University of Florida

**ED NOTE:** Stephanie Slahor, who wrote the article, reports that Barrier Concepts, which markets the plant, would not reveal its identity to her, thus her statement "it's exact identity remains a secret." Barrier Concepts did, indeed, begin marketing it 2½ years ago. But Garrity is exactly correct in his assumption and other statements.

To the editor:

I am just reading the December issue and have read the article under "Jobtalk" regarding a so-called "great idea for a living fence."

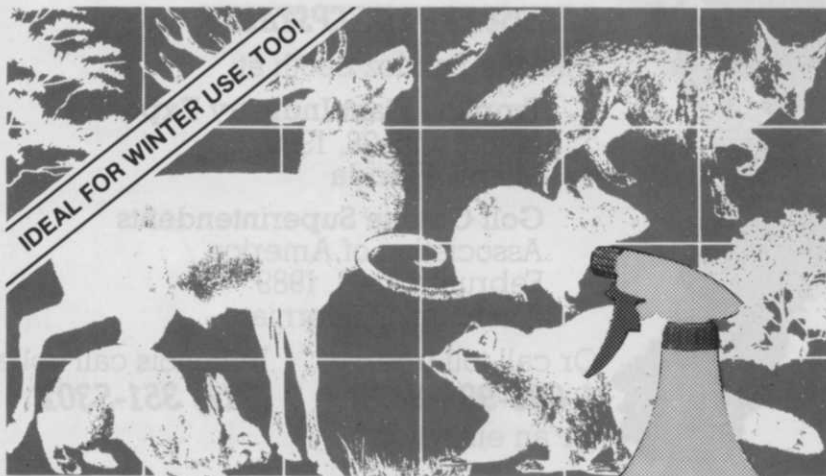
A number of years ago, our game commission in Pennsylvania encouraged people to plant a similar plant, Multi-Flora Rose, for nature's sake. This dastardly plant has now spread and taken over farms and every other area.

This new idea sounds to me to be another like problem and should be outlawed immediately by the federal government. Leave this stupid plant in China and let them keep the problem.

**John Shimmel**

Rolling Green Cemetery Co.  
Camp Hill, Pa.

**ED. NOTE:** The people at Barrier Concepts report more than 200 responses to the "Jobtalk" article, all but a handful positive.



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