

SHORT CUTS

ORIGIN OF SPECIES...Ever wonder where kikuyugrass got its name? **Ann Reilly**, a noted garden writer, has a theory. During a trip to Kenya, she made these revelations: "I don't know for sure, but I suspect the grass was named for the African tribe of the same name who were instigators of the Mau Mau rebellion back in the '50s. The Kikuyu tribe believes its god lives on top of Mount Kenya. If it does, he certainly gave them a grass that seems to never be bothered by insects, disease or lack of water."

FROM THE ORIENT...Much ado has been made about the business acumen of the Japanese, and with reason. Here are some observations that **Roger Funk**, Ph.D., of the Davey Company made at the most recent PLCAA conference: "The reason Japan is more successful in service industries is that they have learned to ask the customers what they want. Clients have changed and lawns have changed and many of you haven't. The customer is getting more sophisticated, more demanding than ever. We want to target the client that wants and needs and can pay for all our services. All you have to do is track who's buying what services." Funk always makes it sound so easy.

LUCKY FELLER...Speaking of the PLCAA conference, Delta offered two tickets anywhere the airline flies, to those PLCAA attendees using the airline to get to and from New Orleans. The lucky guy was **Nick Dennis** of Pro Lawn Plus in Jacksonville, Fla. And a bon voyage and sayonara to him.

SUPER STATS...Industry figures that emerged from Elanco Company's distributor's meeting late last year: ● In 1975, 12,800 golf courses spent \$75 million on fertilizers and chemicals; by 2000, the numbers are expected to be 15,270 spending \$455 million. ● In 1975, 2.2 million residential lawns were being professionally serviced with fertilizer and chemical sales of \$72 million; in the year 2000, those numbers might be 7.7 million with sales of \$835 million. ● In 1975, 1.55 million landscaping customers spent \$59 million on fertilizers and chemicals; in 2000, they see 2.7 million customers spending \$480 million.

THINGS NEVER CHANGE...From the October, 1962 issue of *Weeds and Turf*: "We just saw a letter to the editor of a local paper, in which a lady gardener protests, on behalf of her garden club, about the so-called misuse of pesticides. This worried do-it-yourselfer says she asked her club (about 40 ladies) how many read labels on their garden chemicals and only four answered 'yes.' This, the lady proceeds, is the reason we need more laws about pesticides! Some hardworking custom applicator, who's spent years trying to convince his customers that labels must be read, would no doubt like to refute this Rachel-Carson-in-the-bud, since it is frequently the professional who gets unjustly blamed for the amateur's mistake."

SURVEY from page 11

Duncan is this survey fact: 75 percent of the time, the male of the household makes the decision to purchase lawn care.

"That's no slight to the females," assures Duncan. "That's just the way it is."

To make the best use of this fact, Duncan says LCOs must prospect more at night and in person. "You have to figure out ways to get to the male decision-maker."

Professional users are likely to be over 40 (73 percent), are college graduates earning more than \$25,000 incomes and live in the mid-Atlantic region of the northeastern United States.

DIYs are generally under 40 years of age, earning \$15,000 to 35,000 per year. Chances are 50-50 of a college education.

3. Attitudes toward lawn care

Duncan uses the term "psychographics" to describe this category.

The DIY is guided by the belief that an attractive lawn is indeed important and worth the necessary time. However, the DIY is unimpressed with lawn care and believes it to be "not worth the expense." Brand names mean nothing to the classic DIY.

Professional customers believe an attractive lawn is important and worth the expense. They attach to that belief a sense of pride in their lawn's appearance. Brand names mean a lot to professional users, and they will pay more for quality work. □

LAWN CARE

PLCAA draws 700 companies to convention

Though it didn't crack any records for overall attendance, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America convention and trade show drew more lawn care companies than it ever has.

"We had fewer people per company, but we drew almost 700 companies," said PLCAA assistant executive director Doug Moody. "There's a certain levelling off in terms of growth. We're going to have to try some new twists on the show floor next year."

The 1988 conference and trade show was held in the Louisiana Superdome with 185 manufacturers and suppliers buying space.

"Who would've thought, four years ago, that we'd be in the Superdome," noted executive vice-president Jim Brooks. "And the Republicans (at the Republican Na-