

Phone survey emphasizes possible lawn care clients

A wealth of potential customers among current do-it-yourselfers believe professional lawn care is overpriced.

This fact from results of a Monsanto telephone survey, revealed by David Duncan, Ph.D., director of the company's product development. He gave a presentation during the PLCAA's national convention in New Orleans.

The survey compares the do-it-yourselfer (DIY) to the professional lawn care user in three categories:

1. Frequency of use

Forty-nine percent of the respondents used professional lawn care in the 12 months prior to the survey. However, 87 percent supplemented that care with their own.

Twenty-four percent of those surveyed had what they termed "a tendency toward lawn care," but like it to be done for them. Of that 24 percent, half had indeed purchased lawn care in the past year.

By projecting the figures nationally, Monsanto believes 16 million Americans have that "tendency" to purchase services, yet only 7.8 million follow through.

"A significant amount of the population is inclined toward lawn care, and they can be brought back," says Duncan. "That is a heck of an opportunity if people get out there and talk to these customers."

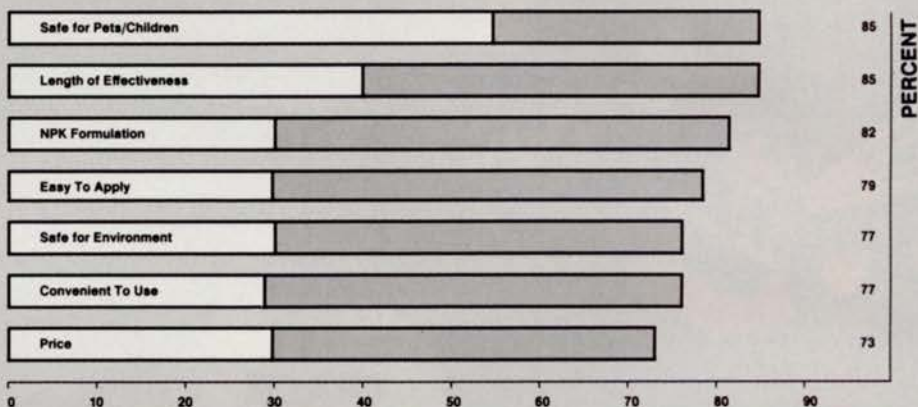
2. Demographics

Of great significance to *continued on page 14*

Importance Of Product Attitudes

LAWN CARE CUSTOMERS

Extremely Important Very Important



Like many smart shoppers, the average lawn care service customer is more concerned about product safety and effectiveness rather than price.

LEGISLATION

Green industry group battles overzealous N.Y. legislators

A group of lawn care and pest control organizations has filed suit in the U.S. District Court against the state of New York. If they win, the state would have to stop the implementation of pre-notification laws. The regulations were devised by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

At stake is whether lawn chemical and pesticide applicators must follow stricter pre-notification rules. The applicator organizations believe the regulations are unfair and redundant intrusions on the industry's business sector. They further believe the laws are preempted by

the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA).

Industry groups acting as plaintiffs in the case are the New York State Pesticide Coalition, Professional Lawn Care Association of America, Pesticide Public Policy Foundation, National Pest Control Association and National Arborists Association. Leaders are Elizabeth Seme, executive director of both the New York State Turfgrass Association and the Green Council, and Walter Schroeder, business owner and president of the New York State Professional Applicators Coalition.

"The concept of what they (state DEC) have done is outrageous," says Schroeder. "They have no consideration for the economics or lack of practicality involved. It's strictly an agenda set forth by powerful environmental lobbyists."

"The new regulations are extremely complicated and cumbersome," says Dave Sek, vice president of Monroe Tree and Lawn Tender, Rochester, N.Y. He believes the regulations would make it difficult for companies to schedule applications, especially for multiple dwelling units and business complexes.

cont. on page 14

Job estimating: don't guess; practice, practice, practice

"There are so many things to do as far as pre-notification goes," says Sek, "it will be hard to do a good job of scheduling and completing a project on a timely basis."

Title 10 requires commercial lawn care applicators to enter into written contracts with customers, provide warnings, and post the perimeter of treated areas with warning signs. The new notification regulations require most pesticide applicators to provide detailed written notification to owners and occupants of buildings or commercial property where pesticides are applied. The regulations mandate posting warning signs, specific contract language and "cover sheets" be given to the owners or occupants of homes or businesses prior to a pesticide application.

More 'labelling'

The combined forces of the green industry and pesticide groups argue that the entire notification system constitutes additional "labelling," prohibited by Section 24(b) of FIFRA.

"We're in favor of notification," says Schroeder, "but we feel that the notification regulations are confusing and are not going to properly notify the consumer. So much paperwork is involved that the consumer will not be able to pick out the important facts."

Schroeder believes the case basically stems from an abuse of power by the state DEC.

Optimism?

James F. Wilkinson, executive director of the Pesticide Public Policy Foundation, says the coalition has reason to be optimistic.

"We have been discussing the issue from a legal perspective with several different attorneys," Wilkinson says. "The Pesticide Coalition did not jump into this thing without checking it out with different people, and the consensus: we have a good chance of winning." □

Have you ever completed a job, picked up the check and deposited in the bank, and find yourself asking the question, "Did I price that job fairly?"

Sure you have. Or will. That's why it's important—in the interest of fairness and good business—to practice accurate and thorough estimating.

Phil Christian, president of PDC Consultants, is a stickler for accurate estimates, which he spoke on at the recent Landscape Exposition in Nashville, Tenn.

"Estimating is a procedure that we must go through to establish a sale price for our services," said Christian. "The cost estimate must include all labor, material, equipment and overhead, plus profit. Estimating the cost of services on a specific landscape means the estimate must be unique to the site."

And, of course, you must also know each quantity in the estimating formula. "If you don't know the distance you travel to the job,



Estimating, says Phil Christian, is a procedure that we must go through to establish a sale price for our services.

there can be no calculations due to the absence of a known quantity," Christian said.

Christian believes production factors are variables, and may be adjusted as required to protect the accuracy of the estimate.

"If we noted during the first hour of the trip that we were below our production factor of 50 mph," Christian continued, "what could we do to protect the original es-

timated time of arrival? We could increase the production factor to 50 mph, or increase production to fit the new circumstances, and keep the original estimate."

Measuring the landscape is easy, and simply involves four basic quantities: area of turf, linear feet of edging, area to be pruned, and area of shrub beds or mulch area. Combine these areas or take percentages of them to estimate the linear feet covered by all maintenance activities.

"Measure all the turf area," advises Christian, "no matter what condition the turf is in. Any large bare spots are included in the measurement, and duly noted on the analysis report."

Make a category called "push mower," for all areas that cannot be mowed with a 36-inch or larger mower. Examples? Very steep slopes or areas too narrow for a 36-inch mower to handle without disturbing the beds on both sides.

Other special attention areas should be indicated as such:

- rough-cut areas, or areas to be bush-hogged several times each year;
- large open areas or athletic fields that may require special equipment or frequency; or
- wet or swampy areas. □

LAWN CARE

Companies rally behind PR plans

In light of recent regulatory and legislative mudslinging, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA) has formed a public relations network. This action is being taken to reinforce the industry's reputation with the consumer.

Rick Steinau, president of Greenlon and Ace Exterminating Co. and a PLCAA director, said the campaign has a two-fold purpose. The first is to beat anti-pesticide groups to the punch by informing the media of the issues first. The second is to publicize the benefits of effective lawn care and landscaping services (cooling effects, erosion control, noise abatement, etc.). Monthly news releases will be sent to local garden editors, on company stationery, with appropriate quotes included. Steinau says response to the program has been fantastic.

"It's what I predicted would happen," says Steinau. "Once we had an opportunity to present the program to the membership, and they saw the ease with which it would happen, it was accepted."

Steinau said at least 77 cities are now represented by media contacts.

Contact companies will have to foot an annual mailing bill of about \$300, but that's a small price to pay, considering the plan's potential benefits.

The first releases will be mailed in February. □

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-

tional Convention) used only half of it. We got the whole damned thing!"

Mike Spicer of Perma Green in Boise, Idaho, accepted *Lawn Care Industry* magazine's "Man of the Year" award on behalf of former owner Jim Marria, who died in a plane crash on his way home from the 1987 PLCAA convention.

"Jim kind of looked at this association as his company," Spicer said of the former PLCAA president. "If Jim were here today, he'd be very honored."

PLCAA president Russell Frith of Lawn Doctor, Matawan, N.J., speaking at the annual business meeting, said the organization is establishing a \$100,000 foundation in the names of former presidents Marria and Bill Fischer, who passed away earlier in the year.

Frith noted that the PLCAA gained about 300 new members in 1988 to bring its membership to

1300, three times what it was four years ago.

Frith also presented a plaque to Dow Chemical's Larry Speer for the donation the company made to the Special Olympics in the PLCAA's name. Monsanto, Ciba-Geigy, Elanco and Dow also received plaques for contributions to the organization. □

PRODUCTS

New fertilizer is all organic

More than 35 golf course superintendents, horticulturists and landscapers were in Hilton Head, S.C., recently to preview a new organic fertilizer specially designed for sports turf and landscape use.

The product, Bio-Turf, is a safe, all-natural organic fertilizer for greens, tees and fairways, plus general landscaped areas. It is non-toxic, non-burning and non-pollut-

ing. It contains no urea.

"This was our first time out, and we were all very pleased with the reaction of these turf professionals to our new product," Bio-Turf founder Bob Onorato says. "Dr. Keith Karnok's talk on the growing importance of natural turf care products was informative and well-received by the group."

Karnok, a University of Georgia agronomist, is scientific advisor to Bio-Turf.

For more information on the product, contact the company at 23-B Shelter Cove Lane, P.O. Box 6507, Hilton Head Island, SC 29938; (803) 686-4700. □

Corrections

The October issue of *LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT* contained an error (p. 26) relative to the formulation of Riverdale Chemical Co.'s Weedestroy product. Weedestroy does not contain dicamba. The correct formulation is MCPA +

mecoprop + dichloroprop.

The October story on tree and shrub growth regulators incorrectly listed paclobutrazol (Clipper) as a turf regulator product of O.M. Scott & Sons (p. 54). Clipper is a tree growth regulator, marketed exclusively by Monsanto under license by ICI Americas. The only labeled application method presently approved for Clipper is by injection.

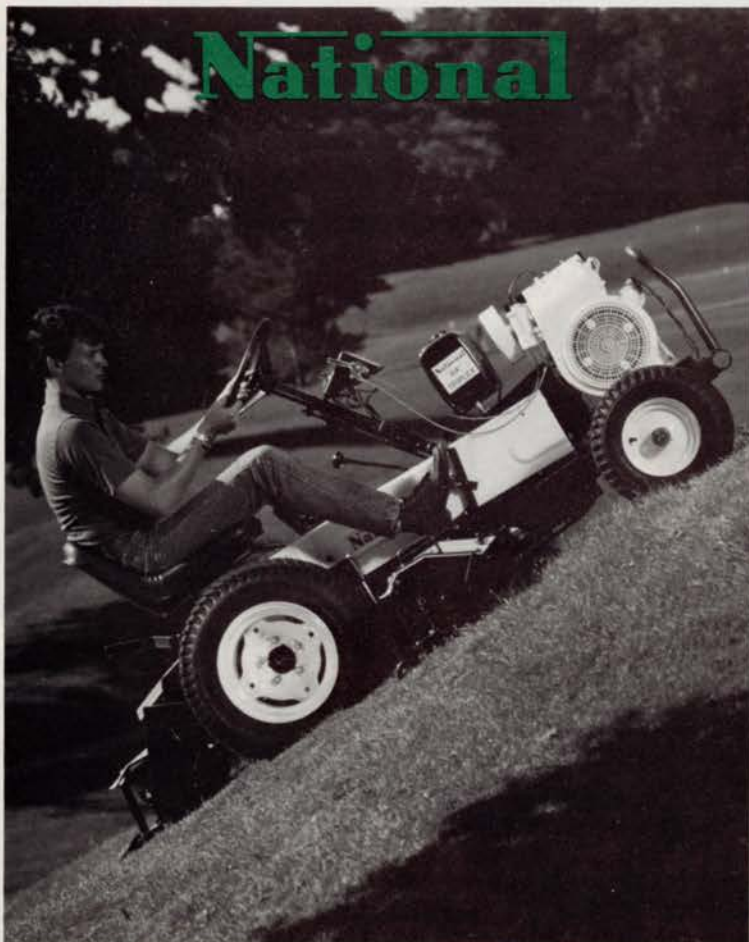
We apologize for any confusion these errors may have caused. □

EQUIPMENT

Deep aeration arrives in U.S.

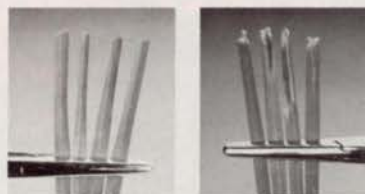
What is called "deep-tine aeration" is being learned from landscape managers on the British Isles by their counterparts in the U.S. That, according to Stan Zontek of the USGA Green Section.

"When I first saw deep-tine aeration at St. Andrews



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in Scotland, they did the whole golf course," Zontek told attendees at the Ohio Turfgrass Conference. "The machine, called a Verti-Drain, allows you to aerate to depths of 6 to 12 inches. You bring up a tremendous amount of soil."

"The kicking action is the key to the Verti-Drain," Zontek continued. "The deeper you can punch a hole in troublesome soils, the better off you are."

The Verta-Drain is in use at Pine Valley Golf Course in New Jersey, according to Zontek. Other pieces of equipment that can be used with similar results are the Floyd McKay drill aerifier and the Aer-Way aerator, Zontek said.

"They give you a way to manage greens as an alternative to reconstruction," he concluded. □

LABOR

Firm provides temporary help

Amigos Empleo Legal Inc. provides temporary help to the green industry, according to company owner Bob Wingfield Jr.

"We have placed both laborers and foremen from Florida to New York with great success," he says. "Feedback from contractors indicates increases in production from 30 to 100 percent, not to mention reliability, which is second to none."

Amigos deals strictly with workers, both male and female, documented under the Irrigation Reform and Control Act of 1986. The company charges a modest fee to companies hiring the help.

For more information, write or call Wingfield at 5415 Maple Ave., Suite 112-A, Dallas, TX 75235; (214) 634-0500. □

CHEMICALS

Confront nears new EPA label

Confront herbicide, a new non-phenoxy broadleaf

mixture under development by Dow Chemical Co., is expected to be approved by the Environmental Protection Agency next year.

"We submitted it for EPA registration in November," explains product technical manager Monique Mackasey, "and will hopefully get it by the third quarter of 1989."

The product is a post-emergence herbicide designed to control dandelion, narrow-leaf plantain, Canada thistle, oxalis, ground ivy and other weeds in cool-season grasses. Confront is an amine salt formulation containing one part clopyralid to three parts triclopyr per gallon.

Triclopyr amine is available for commercial sale in the Turflon line of herbicides, but clopyralid is a newly-developed herbicide.

Rob Peterson, Dow's turf marketing manager, sees a good fit for the product. "We think Confront offers several unique benefits to the turf care industry, including a significantly reduced active ingredient pay load per acre," he says.

Results from an Indianapolis, Ind., test show that, eight weeks after treatment, tank mixtures achieved 91.7 percent control of broadleaf plantain, 91.7 percent control of ground ivy and 90 percent control of dandelion. A similar study at the University of Illinois in Urbana reports 100, 80 and 67 percent control of white clover, broadleaf plantain and dandelion, respectively. □

ORGANIZATIONS

Colo. grounds group expands

Attention all Colorado landscape managers: The Colorado Association of Campus Grounds Professionals needs you.

Established in December 1987, the association is an informational and educational assistance organization for college and university campus land-

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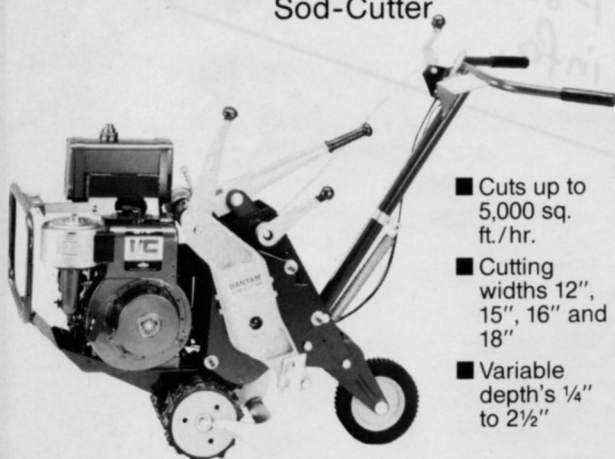
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PRODUCTS

2 new products for landscapers

O.M. Scott & Sons has announced a pair of new products, Weedgrass Control 60 WP and ProTurf Fertilizer Plus Insecticide/Pre-emergent Weed Control.

Weedgrass Control is packaged in handy 1 1/4-lb. packets which contain a pre-measured amount of pendimethalin. It controls six sprouting grassy weeds and nine sprouting broad-leaf weeds. It is for use on established Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, fine fescue, tall fescue, *Poa annua*, Bermudagrass, St. Augustine, bahiagrass, zoysiagrass, centipedegrass and blends of these grasses. It's also compatible in the tank with most fertilizers and pesticides.

The fertilizer/insecticide/pre-emergence weed control product is formulated to:

- feed the turf;
- provide pre-emergence weed control of four sprouting annual grassy weeds and two sprouting annual broadleaf weeds; and
- control of armyworm, chinch bug, cutworm, sod webworm and the bluegrass billbug adult. □

LAWN CARE

Selling video now available

"Effective Lawn Care Selling," a video sales training program, was just released by Acme Ritz Productions in Columbus, Ohio. The course, designed by Rudd McGary, Ph.D. at All-Green Management Associates and Mike Hiller of Acme Ritz, is specifically for the lawn care industry.

The program costs \$295.00. Included in the package are one video tape, one instructor's manual and one participant's manual. Additional participants' manuals are \$9.95 each.

For more information, phone (614) 863-8586. □

scape management operators.

The organization is putting together its membership phone directory, newsletter and regular member campus meeting schedule and wants to include you. And remember, there are no membership fees.

For more information, contact Daryl L. Smith, Facilities Services, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523; (303) 491-6564. □

ASSOCIATIONS

CLCA certifies maintenance

The California Landscape Contractors Association recently conducted its first certification tests for landscape maintenance personnel. It is the first certification testing for maintenance by a trade group.

The test fulfills the association's long-time goal of sponsoring separate field tests for landscape installation and maintenance. The maintenance test lasts two days. (CLCA has sponsored a certification exam for landscape installation for five years.)

The state requires all contractors to pass a written exam for installation, spokesman Larry Rohlfes says, but there is none for maintenance. CLCA exams are both hands-on and written. Applicants must prove their skills in the field under the eyes of industry experts.

John Nishizawa, chairman of the CLCA's Landscape Management Program, says the new test is designed to identify employees who have solid, all-around practical skills in landscape maintenance. "We believe those who successfully complete our test will soon get the industry recognition that Certified Landscape Technicians (those who pass the installation test) are beginning to receive." □