

INFO-CENTER

SPRAYER CALIBRATION...A 16-minute, single-projector slide presentation entitled "Calibration of Turfgrass Sprayers" is now available. Included is a narrative tape which helps the observer walk through the entire calibration process. For more information, write to Spraying Systems Co., Agricultural Division, P.O. Box 7900, Wheaton, IL 60189.

IPM NEWSLETTER..."Landscape IPM Updates," a bi-monthly newsletter, contains the latest IPM information and product reviews, along with providing ideas for more efficient and safer pest management. Subscriptions are \$36 per year. For more information, write Larry Hollar, "Landscape IPM Updates," P.O. Box 309, Mt. Home, NC 28758.

SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT...An excerpt from Laurence Sombke's latest book is the basis for "30 Ways to Save the Environment," a free pamphlet from Garden Way, manufacturer of Bolens and Troy-Bilt outdoor power equipment. For a copy, write Garden Way at 102nd St., 9th Ave., Troy, NY 12180.

ALCA MEMBERS...The Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) has released its 1991 membership directory. Copies are \$25 plus \$1.50 for shipping. To order, call ALCA at (703) 241-4004 or write 405 N. Washington St., Suite 104, Falls Church, VA 22046.

FOR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS...A Hazardous Material Program Kit is designed to help employers comply with all five of OSHA's Right-to-Know requirements. Request a free 1991 Master Catalog from Direct Safety Co., 7815 S. 46th St., Phoenix, AZ 85044; (602) 968-7009.

WATER CONSERVATION TIPS..."A Water Conservation Handbook, Your Guide to Efficient Irrigation" is available through Pepco. Illustrated sections include drip irrigation, micro-irrigation, laser technology, the handbook is available by calling (800) 247-8138. Services, Penn State University, 119 Ag Admin. Bldg., University Park, PA 16802.

LYME DISEASE PREVENTION..."Outsmarting the Deer Tick" is a video recently released by Penn State University that covers prevention, personal protection and tick control of Lyme disease. Send \$35 to Ag Information Services, Penn State University, 119 Ag Administration Building, University Park, PA 16802.

PRODUCTS

Here's a win-win situation: organic, synthetic fertilizer sales keep everyone happy

CLEVELAND—Here's an idea that can't miss: sell both natural organic and synthetic fertilizer, and you win either way.

Steve Fesperman, vice president at Koos, Inc., says that the professional market is starting to sell both, especially when more customers show interest in "natural" products.

Selling organics and synthetics can pay off when faced with skeptical customers. When comparing the two, Fesperman says customers often think they get a biased opinion from a straight chemical company or a straight natural organic producer.

"Our point," he says, "is to try and sort through the prejudice and get down to the fact of what is most beneficial."



Steve Fesperman

Although all natural organics are ideal for customers who shun chemicals, Fesperman warns that it will take a few weeks for results to show, due to the low nutritional value of the raw materials used.

Another benefit of the all natural organics is the microbial activity, which helps decompose thatch.

The all-natural organics are 80 percent water insoluble and have no salt. The downside is cost. The all-natural organics are very low in nutritional value and are twice to three

times as expensive as chemical fertilizers, no matter who makes them. "We can buy granular urea for \$180 a ton that's 46 percent nitrogen," explains Fesperman. "Leather tankage is \$200 a ton, with only 11.8 percent nitrogen."

Fesperman says that the high price of current organic sources might force the market to seek out cheaper sources, such as seaweed or poultry waste products.

Prescription fertilizer blends, although not a new idea, are becoming more popular in both the do-it-yourself and commercial markets, according to Fesperman.

"Different prescriptions depend on different soil and weather conditions," says Fesperman. "Out of 80 different fertilizer materials, we'll encourage customers to use as much of the premium slow release material as we can."

In addition to weather and soil considerations, there are a series of questions to ask a customer interested in a prescribed mixture: Do you fertilize four to five times a year? Are you advertising that you're using totally natural organic fertilizer? What about weed control?

"The all-natural organic weed control method is to continue to feed the turf; the theory is that healthy turf crowds out the weeds," says Fesperman. "We eliminate the thatch layer and hopefully reduce the amount of insecticides and fungicides that would be necessary."

"There's nothing wrong with chemical fertilizers," says Fesperman, "for people who know how to use chemical fertilizers. If a homeowner is not going to follow the label directions, no matter which product he uses, he needs to call (a professional)." □