

# GREEN INDUSTRY NEWS

MARCH 1991, VOLUME 30, NUMBER 3

## LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

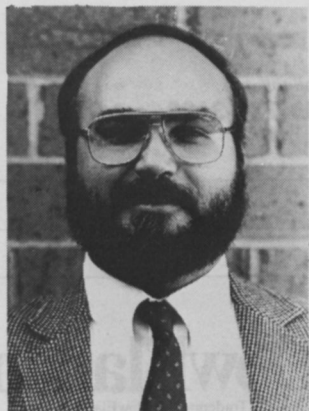
### EQUIPMENT

# Cornell U. research proves mulch mowers' superiority

ITHACA, N.Y. — Mulching mowers yield healthier lawns and their use should be a standard practice throughout the turfgrass industry, Cornell University's Dr. Martin Petrovic says.

"The whole industry should be using mulching mowers," he says. "A mulched lawn always looks better than a non-mulched lawn because you have healthier turf when returning clippings as added nutrients."

Petrovic, associate professor of turfgrass science,



**Petrovic: Mulching can reduce N requirements.**

cites an earlier Michigan State University study which showed that mulching produces generally healthier and greener lawns both because of added nutrients and allowance for evaporation at the soil level without thatch buildup.

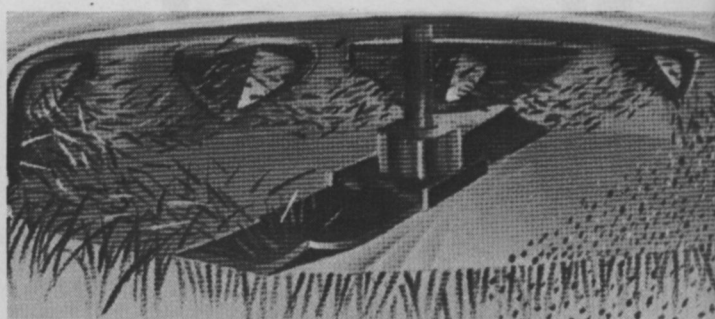
The study also found mulch particles decompose and are absorbed by the grass root system within 14 days.

Mulching also can reduce nitrogen fertilizer needs by 30 percent.

Petrovic's remarks came at a recent seminar in Troy, N.Y. at the headquarters of Garden Way, Inc., which manufactures Troy-Bilt and Bolens tillers, mulching mowers, chipper-shredders and outdoor power equipment.

The company says mulching mowers are gaining support from agronomists and turfgrass experts.

For more information on current overall trends in mowing equipment, refer to the article beginning on page 38 of this issue. □



Mulching mowers like Toro's patented Recycler (shown above) chop grass leaf blades into fine pieces that don't ordinarily 'clump,' leaving clean, well-groomed lawns.

### **RISE names 1st director**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Allen James has been named executive director of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE), an organization recently formed to address the issues affecting the \$1.3 billion specialty pesticides industry.

"James brings considerable management experience and broad knowledge of the industry to this important environmental position," say David Duncan and Jay Vroom. Dr. Duncan of Monsanto was search committee chair; Vroom is president of the National Agricultural Chemicals Association.

One of the main functions of RISE is to explain the benefits associated with proper use of pesticides, including benefits to the public health. Membership is composed of manufacturers, formulators and distributors of specialty pesticides; associations, media, academia and equipment manufacturers. □

## INDUSTRY

# Customer service easy as counting, says ALCA speaker

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Creating good customer service is as easy as 1-2-3-4-5-6-7, says Richard Akerman, president of Northwest Landscape Industries.

Akerman, speaking before the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA), listed the seven "basics of customer service" that all industry professionals can benefit from.

1. The secret to winning customers is to reward them. Be prompt, kind, agreeable, complimentary, polite, make recommenda-

tions and deliver more than you promised.

2. Forget about selling. Concentrate on helping customers decide what's best for them.

3. Remember that the greatest customer you'll ever win is you, because the best sales person is the true believer.

4. The only two things people really buy are good feelings and solutions to problems.

5. Remember that when in contact with a customer, you are the company.

6. Providing excellent

## LANDSCAPING

### Construction downswing helps free up labor force

ORLANDO, Fla. — Mike Stewart of Ground Control Environmental Services says that competition for college graduates is strong in the landscape market. "We all recruit," says Stewart. "In the past, there were 10 jobs for every graduate. But the downswing in construction has helped."

"Over the last several years, many companies have sprung up to take advantage of the good times," he notes. But, he adds, in his area the landscape construction boom is over, and more design/build companies are doing more full-service maintenance, especially among corporate clientele.

Promotion from within is "without a doubt," a tenet of Stewart's business management. "I would say half the staff has been promoted from within the organization. Quite a few of the supervisors who started out as laborers showed some aptitude.

"One was a carpenter from Trinidad. We didn't identify him as anyone spe-

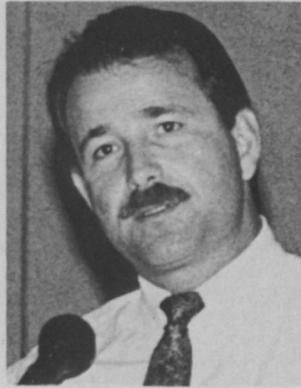
cial. He was dependable, and now he runs one of the crews."

Do low wages keep people away from landscaping? "I think it's a combination of that and the business," Stewart admits. "It's weekend work, it's a lot of late work. It's not a nine-to-five job."

What frustrates Stewart are the times at which he establishes his prices based on proper horticultural treatments—such as applications of pre- and post-emergence control products—and finds companies bidding at prices that are lower than Stewart's chemical costs.

"I try to explain to the contract administrator that my chemical costs are more than what (the competitor) is charging," says Stewart. "He's going to cut the lawn; that's all he's going to do."

"And the sad thing about it is that you probably won't see a difference for the first year. But long term, you're going to have problems with evergreens, crabgrass, broadleaves." □



**Akerman: to sell, you must truly believe in company.**

service isn't enough. You need to subtly remind the customer that you're doing so.

7. To win new customers, ask the golden question: what is their unmet want? To keep current customers, ask them, "how are we doing?" □

### Next month:

- Top 50 landscapers
- Warm-season insect control
- Making your job safer
- Right-of-way landscaping

## EVENTS

### MARCH

**13-14: Reinders Brothers Turf Conference, Equipment Show and Service Clinic**, Waukesha (Wisc.) Expo Center. Contact: Ed Devinger, Reinders Brothers, (414) 786-3301.

**14-15: California Interior Plantscape Association Council conference and trade fair**, Sequoia Athletic Club, Buena Park, Calif. Contact: Hartley Bennett, CIPAC Seminar Coordinator, P.O. Box 414, Wickensburg, AZ 85358; (602) 684-7308.

**17-20: Public Golf Manage-**

## ACADEMIA

### WTA will open research center

OCONOMOWOC, Wisc. — The O.J. Noer Research Center will soon become a reality at the University of Wisconsin.

Don Roskopf, president of the Wisconsin Turfgrass Association, said at the association's annual conference that ground-breaking took place in October.

"Dreams do come true," said Monroe Miller, superintendent of Black Hawk Country Club. According to Miller, \$100,000 of the \$300,000 cost has been raised.

The 27-room facility includes two conference rooms and pesticide and soil research facilities.

The deed for the completed center will be given to the university.

The Bruce Co. of Wisconsin is playing a large part in constructing and landscaping the center. Industry contributors include the Reinders Bros. and Spring Valley Turf Products. Grass seed was supplied by Kellogg Seed, Old Seed and Northrup King.

Fund-raising continues. □

**ment Association**, National Forum on Public Golf Management, Hyatt Regency-DFW Hotel, Dallas. Contact: PGMA, 8030 Cedar Ave., Suite 228, Minneapolis, MN 55425; (612) 854-7272.

**27-28: University of California Cooperative Extension Entomology Conference**, UC-Riverside. Contact: (714) 787-3718.

**27-28: Yard Waste Management Conference**, Albany (N.Y.) Hilton Hotel. Contact: Cary Oshins, 466 Hollister Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853; (607) 255-9587.