

Finally, a scientific look at chemicals by U.S. students?

BERKELEY, Calif.—Mr. Professional Applicator, you're not the only person troubled about how grade school students view the role of chemicals in today's society.

Many others, it turns out, are similarly concerned judging by the growth of the Chemical Education for Public Understanding Program (CEPUP).

CEPUP, headquartered at the University of California, Berkeley, develops and offers supplemental science programs for grade school students. One of its primary focuses is to educate students about chemicals.

Last year it reached almost 600,000 students in 40 states, says its director Herbert Thier, Ed.D.

"Citizenship requires an understanding of science," says Thier. "It is absolutely a requirement to participate in a democratic society in an effective way."

Thier explains that CEPUP, presented in hands-on packages of information, hammers away at the process of scientific inquiry. Ultimately, it presents the concepts of risks and benefits.

"An understanding about chemicals and how chemicals interact with people and the environment is essential to an informed citizenship in our society," adds Thier. "It is not productive to have people react only on an emotional basis."

So far, CEPUP has developed supplemental science programs for students from the fifth to the ninth grades. It also sponsors several community education programs dealing with chemicals

and chemical use.

Funding for CEPUP is provided by the National Science Foundation and private industry.

"You (professional applicators) are seen by some people in your communities as someone who wants to spread poison," adds Thier. "Obviously, there is an educational problem here."

For more information contact: CEPUP, Lawrence Hall of Science, Univ. of California, Berkeley, CA 94720; (510) 642-8718.



Herbert Thier says students can't become good citizens without a basic knowledge of science.

Dry California lawns contribute to fire losses, say Beard and Fender

ROLLING MEADOWS, Ill.—Reduced outdoor watering and smaller sized lawns contributed to the overall devastation caused by the fires in Oakland and Berkeley, Calif., according to Dr. James Beard of Texas A&M University.

"When the fires began, they were fueled by dry landscape plants, many of which replaced turfgrass because they were viewed as water-saving," says Beard.

"Turfgrasses are about 70 to 80 percent water by weight, and even a moderately maintained lawn can serve as a fire barrier. The loss of lives and property is tragic, but it should now be obvious that Californians and others need to take a close and careful look at the benefits turfgrass can provide," Beard observes.

Douglas Fender, executive director of the American Sod Producers Association here, adds:

"Too often, turfgrass is viewed as an aesthetic feature of the landscape, not as the practical environmental tool it really is. The benefits of grass far outweigh their water requirements, especially when people learn how to properly care for their lawns."

Beard is a turfgrass researcher with nearly 30 years experience. "(Turfgrasses) aren't the useless, wasteful water-hogs some people say they are," he concludes. "They can, in fact, save lives, with minimal amounts of supplemental water."

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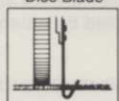
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