

HOT TOPICS

Miami's zoo benefits from 'SWAT' attack

MIAMI—In one of the most intense busts of the season, a "SWAT" (Spontaneous Weed Attack Team) launched an attack on weeds in the Miami Metrozoo. More than 100 volunteers joined the team to help eliminate weeds over 500,000 sq.ft. of the zoo and its parking areas.

The effort was sponsored by Roundup grass and weed killer.

"With the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, the Roundup SWAT team couldn't have come at a better time," says Ron Magill, assistant curator of the zoo. Since the hurricane, zoo staff has focused on restoring animal habitats and creating support systems for the thousands of trees that were uprooted.

The SWAT visit to Miami's Metrozoo was the final stop on a 10-city, four-month tour that included San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, St. Louis, Salt Lake City, Chicago, New Orleans, Denver and Minneapolis. The team partnered with local community beautification groups in each of the cities to maximize local involvement.

"The purpose of the SWAT team tour was to promote community efforts for safer, cleaner and more livable neighborhoods," says Danna McKay, Roundup brand manager for Monsanto. Volunteers attacked weeds, participated in graffiti paint-outs, planted trees and flowers, painted homes and began landscaping projects.

Although the Roundup SWAT team has completed its attacks for 1993, the team will again tour parts of the country in 1994, beginning in March. For more information on future site visits, send a postcard to Deborah Schulte, SWAT Team, One City Centre, Suite 1600, St. Louis, MO 63101, or call (314) 436-5477.



A SWAT volunteer at Miami Metrozoo squirts weed-infested pathways.

Indyk responds to critic's points about LM article

To the editor:

It is encouraging that the article entitled "Athletic Field Renovation or Reconstruction" which I had authored and was published in the April issue has attracted the interest of at least one reader (Stephen McWilliams). Furthermore, it has motivated him to write a Letter to the Editor which appeared in the June issue. However, his seeming lack of understanding of the article as written prompts my response.

First of all, I am compelled to strongly challenge his statement that the decision-making process for determining whether to renovate or reconstruct is a "guessing game." I firmly disagree with him that we are "bankrupt for data" to properly address this question. The technical knowledge

and know-how is available; it's a matter of putting it into practice.

In my own situation, as turfgrass consultant for Turfcon of the Greenway Group, decisions on athletic field construction, reconstruction, renovation and/or maintenance are based on 30+ years of experience. (My) academic training coupled with long-term experience form the basis of site-specific decisions based on sound scientific and agronomic principles. This is not a "guessing game."

Mr. McWilliams concurs that drainage is the single most important factor in the failure of athletic fields. Yet he quickly questions the value of investing in a drainage system. He doesn't seem to understand that the physical characteristics of a "native soil" vary from pure sand to pure clay. Very few, if any, "native soils" possess natural physical characteristics for proper and effective drainage unless they are modified.

His statement, "We continue to put ban-

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bandages on a problem which is rapidly heading toward resolution in the courtroom" adds to the confusion. It is contradictory to his questioning of the value of soil drainage. Furthermore, it is precisely what I had emphasized in my article: renovation is a short-lived procedure unless drainage problems are corrected through reconstruction.

I wish to offer the following sugges-

tions to Mr. McWilliams: (1) thoroughly read the article again with an open mind; (2) become active in the STMA rather than expending energy and talents performing as a sideline quarterback; and (3) seek clarification from the author of an article before criticizing it.

*Dr. Henry W. Indyk
Turfgrass Consultant
Horsham, Pa.*

Landscape certification: it pays, says this California contractor

Open letter to landscapers:

You contractors are probably like me: started out as a laborer, got promoted to foreman, then to supervisor, and finally went on to get your landscape license. It probably took five to 10 years going up the ranks, doing, learning, practicing the craft.

Then what do we do? Get a license and start a business. A business—not a trade. We are still in the landscape trade, but we go from craftsman to businessperson and we have to learn our job all over again.

In the beginning, we still do most of the work ourselves, but...pretty soon, we are spending time in the office instead of the field. And by this time, we start to realize there is a lot to know about business

that doesn't have anything to do with planting trees or gluing pipe. So we sign up for business seminars, go to night school, and buy books on accounting and marketing.

(Now) we are getting an education, but do any of us learn how to teach? And we start hiring skilled and unskilled people to do the work and represent us, and build our reputation. Maybe we check the crews daily and try to show the employees fine grading and proper pruning, but are we getting our point across? We are trying to do something we know very little about: teaching.

I know this to be true because I see the percentages of people who pass the

Certification Test, and they are consistently low—not just in Oregon or Colorado or Washington, but in California, north and south.

If you are doing a good job of teaching, why are so few people passing this test? We ask all basic stuff, nothing tricky—yet just 25 percent pass.

So I want to offer a solution, and it is basic. I challenge you contractors to take the Certification Test yourselves. Set the example, like a real leader would. If you can pass this test, you can expect anyone who represents you to be able to pass it.

Certification has been around for 10 years now, and it is not going away. Companies with certified employees have an edge on the companies that don't. Sooner or later, you have to certify your employees.

This is an education process, so get on board. Education is not always in the format of yelling from the truck to do it this way or that way. Get involved in a process that has gained recognition all across the country. You'll be glad you did, and your employees will have something they can be proud of, certification.

Get certified; it pays.

*Henry Buder
Buder Landscape Restoration
San Rafael, Calif.*

HOT STUFF

A show you don't want to miss

MARIETTA, Ga.—Management for the Green Industry Expo (GIE) has revised the trade show's floor plan this year to accommodate exhibitors requesting more booth space.

"Because of the success of last year's show, many of our exhibitors are asking for more space," says Ann E. McClure, GIE show manager. "So we've re-drawn our floor plan to include wider island exhibits. Attendees should expect to see more exciting products and imaginative displays."

The show, scheduled for Nov. 15-18 at the Baltimore Convention Center, is again being held in conjunction with three educational conferences put on by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and the Professional Grounds Management Society (PGMS).

The show will open with a special keynote presentation by one of America's most dynamic speakers, Ty Boyd. His keynote address is "Change...Meeting the Challenge!" that focuses on not compromising your personal sense of ethics and values.

For information on attending, call the PLCAA at (404) 977-5222, ALCA at (703) 620-6363 or PGMS at (410) 584-9754. For information on exhibiting, phone (404) 973-2019.

MSU begins new turf program

EAST LANSING, Mich.—Michigan State University announces a two-year program in Lawn Care and Athletic Turf Management.

Coordinator David Gilstrap said the program takes 18 months to complete and includes a 22-week off-campus internship. For information, contact Gilstrap at (517) 355-0207 or Ron Collins at (517) 355-2281.

Watch out for pine shoot beetles

WASHINGTON—The Horticultural Research Institute (HRI) is coordinating an effort to fund research into the pine shoot beetle.

The insect was first discovered last July on a Scots pine in Lorain County, Ohio. It has now been found in 51 counties in six states bordering the Great Lakes. All nursery pines and their lateral terminals must be inspected before they are certified as beetle-free and shipped outside infested counties.

Dr. David Nielsen of Ohio State University is volunteering his time to research the pest. However, financial support of \$20,500 is needed to hire a technician for the first phase of Nielsen's project.

You may send donations to HRI, c/o Pine Shoot Beetle Research, 1250 I St., NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20005.