

# Readers take on ChemLawn, chemicals, certification

## Technical staff at ChemLawn praised

To the editor:

Having been a ChemLawn employee for 15 years, I was interested in reading your articles covering the history of ChemLawn (Oct., Nov., Dec., 1992 issues). Unfortunately, I feel that you have left out a very integral part of the ChemLawn story, the technical staff.

The technical training, combined with program development and research that was superior to any in the industry, provided the operation portion of the company the expertise that allowed ChemLawn to be years ahead of the industry.

S. Gary Custis  
Kansas City, Mo.

*Well said. That staff, which often helped us with articles for the magazine, was the best in the lawn care industry during ChemLawn's heyday. It should be a welcome addition to TruGreen's roster.—Ed.*

## Reader disputes 2,4-D arguments

To the editor:

I'm writing in reference to your editorial "Is the struggle for 2,4-D finally nearing a climax?" (Page 1, January, 1993 issue.)

Considering the fact that your magazine incorporates *Lawn Care Industry*, one would hardly expect you to take any other position than the one you have: basically "pro-pesticide" and "pro-2,4-D." You represent an industry which desperately needs the economical, and possibly irreplaceable herbicide, to help keep turf areas weed-free.

However, before you are so quick to write off the new 2,4-D study as foolhardy and a waste of money, several other factors should be considered. Especially if 2,4-D really is "the most widely used herbicide in the world."

We have read of the National Cancer Institute farm worker study, which points to a link between 2,4-D and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. In 1991, we also read of another study linking malignant lymphoma in dogs with 2,4-D contact. Both of these studies have been criticized as "unreliable" due to "methodology."

But what really makes it all rather haunting is the established link between Agent Orange and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in Vietnam veterans. Agent Orange

was a combination of 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T. While most of the health problems related to Agent Orange have been attributed to the dioxin contaminants resulting from production, it seems likely that 2,4-D could also be a culprit.

Agent White, a combination of 2,4-D and picloram, was also used in Vietnam between 1962 and 1971. Some 17 million gallons of Agents Orange and White were sprayed over the southeast Asian countryside, which would make Vietnam the ideal place to include in any comprehensive new study.

Individual pesticide applicators are constantly reminded to "triple rinse" empty pesticide containers. Perhaps this latest study is the industry's "triple rinse" on 2,4-D. Twenty-two million dollars seems like a bundle to spend on a new safety study, until the person afflicted with lymphatic cancer is a personal friend or family member. Then, it is "only money."

Our first wish should be to find the truth about 2,4-D, no matter how expensive or inconvenient the truth may be to the lawn care industry.

R.M. Donnan  
Donnan Landscape Services  
McMurray, Pa.

*We at LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT seek the truth as much as anyone. The truth is that—so far—no reliable tests have established a relationship between 2,4-D and any kind of cancer in humans. The National Cancer Institute recently announced, coincidentally, that it will soon begin a more thorough study of farm workers to try and corroborate the results of earlier, less reliable tests.—Ed.*

## Other certification programs are cited

To the editor:

When I saw my December issue, I was ecstatic...

...But it appears you people didn't do your homework very well. You failed to look at Florida and, I'm sure, other "deep

South" states ("Certifying the Industry," page 8). Here in Florida, we have the Florida Landscape Maintenance Association, which provides three certification programs.

I agree fully with your article: as an active member of the Gulf Coast FLMA, I see our biggest problem being apathy, ignorance, lack of professional self-esteem. Here in Collier County, there are approximately 1,500 licensed lawn care companies (and who knows how many fly-by-nights) who do more than just cut grass. The majority have been in business for several years or more; why they don't want to upgrade their image is beyond me. As I personally see it, they're doing just fine, don't need us, and can't see the need for professional unity, much less certification. (I wonder what if doctors and dentists had the same attitude toward the AMA and ADA?)

I am a Certified Landscape Maintenance Supervisor. It provides great personal satisfaction and keeps me in touch with what's new, what's being considered; and I have the privilege of meeting a lot of great people, who are each a wealth of knowledge.

As a woman in what is considered a man's field, I have to work harder in order to be taken seriously. Certification shows and reminds your peers that you have gone—and continue to go—that extra mile to work in an industry that demands physical labor. Success in this field requires a consciousness, a true dedication, and—above all—a love for what we do.

Shirley K. Koger  
Naples, Fla.

*We didn't mean to slight state certification programs in our article. But our coast-to-coast readership dictated major emphasis on national programs available to readers. Minor emphasis—as space allowed—was placed on state programs, though many state programs are the equal of the better national programs.—Ed.*

## NEXT MONTH:

- ☐ Our annual insect control guide, authored by Dr. Harry Niemczyk of Ohio State and Dr. Don Short of the University of Florida.
- ☐ A special "LM Reports" on hardscaping materials you can incorporate into your landscapes for maximum aesthetic appeal and profit.