PRODUCTS

Product converts thatch to nourishing humus

Thatch Biodigest from Springfield, Virg.-based Envirogenesis, is described as a powerful collection of bacteria strains that aggressively break down thatch and convert it to humus.

The objective of biological thatch control is to accelerate the process of thatch decomposition.In a test conducted by the University of California at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course. 300 Kentucky bluegrass and creeping bentgrass plugs were pulled and measured. Thatch levels extended three inches below the surface.

Six weekly treatments of Thatch Biodigest resulted in a 53 percent thatch reduction six months later. According to the company, its biotechnology concentrates naturally-occurring microorganisms to a level thousands of times greater than that normally found in nature. This results in a super-accelerated breakdown of thatch into humus.

Envirogenesis says Thatch Biodigest increases turf disease resistance and restores turf to a balanced ecosystem.

Circle No. 221 on Reader Inquiry Card

Biostimulants made to enhance plant growth

Damaged or stressed turf and landscape plants, or establishing turf and ornamentals can now be treated with applications of CytoGro and CytoFe, two new biostimulants from Plant BioTech, Inc., of Corrales, NM.

CytoGro is an EPA-registered hormone biostimulant designed to enhance the natural growth of grasses. CytoFe is a mix of CytoGro and 5 percent chelated iron, to promote root growth and green up.

PBT says that an early spring application will promote tiller, rhizome or stolon growth, and help develop a deep root system to give the turf a rapid start after winter. Newly-emerged seedlings sprayed with CytoGro will speed establishment and increase canopy development.

Research by Dr. Dick Schmitt of Virginia Polytechnic Institute has shown that CytoGro applied to bluegrass and other turf will relieve stress from irrigating with saline water by stimulating new root development and root system saline tolerance.

Circle No. 222 on Reader Inquiry Card

Grace, PJ Margo open neem processing plant

W.R. Grace & Co and PJ Margo Privat Limited of Karnataka, India, recently began what is being called the world's first commercial-scale facility to produce neem-based biopesticides.

Initial capacity of the plant is 20 tons of neem seed per day, according to Grace, which has provided the process technology for the project and will purchase product from the plant.

Extracts from the Indian neem tree include the biopesticide azadirachtin, which attacks and controls more than 200 types of insect pests as well as some species of mites and nematodes.

The neem-based extracts are harmless to birds, mammals and beneficial insects such as bees.

Grace-Sierra its neem-based biopesticides to horticulturists under the trademark Margosan-O. The biopesticide is also marekted under license from Grace through the Minneapolis-based Ringer Corp. to consumers under the trademark BioNeem.

Circle No. 223 on Reader Inquiry Card

LETTERS

■ Thank you for this added service! We want to keep an open mind about all products on the market, but at this time we see no need to make any changes.

We offer a non-pesticide program for both turf and ornamentals, but of over 1000 customers, only 15 or so want it; of those 15 there is a heavy turnover since the average time they can stand weeds or insects is the time it takes their neighbor's lawn to look better than theirs! Thanks for keeping us informed.

—Jon Hart, Greenturf, Gaithersburg, Md

■ How nice to find someone who thinks biologicals are for real.

I have controlled algea in my lakes for the past three years with microbes.

We have also applied microbes to our greens for disease control. And yes, it did take a very long time to show results. I have not applied a fungicide to our greens since July 20, 1992. The sad fact is that we can not prove that the microbes are reducing disease incidence. Good luck!

—Don Parsons, Old Ranch C.C., Seal Beach, Calif.

■ I have been in the lawn care business for eight years. The handwriting is definitely on the wall. If the industry is going to survive and grow, more natural products must be used, and applications will have to be "risk free," or nearly so.

I'm very pleased you're doing your part by providing more information.

—Jim Tiller, DeYoung Landscape Services, Grand Junction, Mich.

■ Thank you for "Bioturf News." Presently, I don't offer any "environmentally friendly" pest control. I've investigated some products and found they just wouldn't fit into my service line. I am interested in bio-control products and hope I can use them in the future. Please put me on your subscribers list.

—Steve Candelori, Specialized Landscape Services, Pittsboro, NC.

BIOTURF NEWS

For the professional landscaper, lawn care operator and golf course superintendent interested in learning more about how organic turf care can supplement existing chemical control.

Published at the offices of LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

Address comments to:
Terry McIver, editor
7500 Old Oak Blvd.,
Cleveland, OH 44130.

Jon Miducki, publisher
Terry McIver, editorial, layout
Michelle Therrien, graphic designer