

Becoming a 'Certified Turfgrass Professional'



**University of Georgia's
Helen Mills:
certification
candidates go at their
own pace**

■ Certified Turfgrass Professional—doesn't that have a nice ring to it?

It's finally here, thanks to a partnership between the University of Georgia and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. Lawn care technicians, once they meet specific requirements,

can be known as CTPs.

They can wear the distinctive new green-and-white patch on the sleeves of their uniforms.

John Robinson, PLCAA's immediate past president, says certification will help confirm to the public that lawn care companies have better trained technicians in the field.

Adds Steve Derrick, Orkin Pest Control, "We in lawn care knew we had to increase the quality of service and also the perception of quality that our customers had of us." That, says Derrick, is why PLCAA sought help in administering and managing the program. "We wanted an outside credible source so it wasn't us training us."

When Derrick contacted Dr. Keith Karnok, professor of agronomy at UGa, he found a ready ear. Karnok, author of "Principles of Turfgrass Management" with more than 17 years experience in both warm- and cool-season turfgrasses, directed PLCAA to Helen Mills, U.Ga. Center for Continuing Education.

The Center, Dr. Karnok and PLCAA then collaborated on building the independent study course that technicians must complete and pass to earn certification.

Mills says the home correspondence course is based on the notebook "Principles of Turfgrass Management." It is divided

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LM GRAPEVINE

Quote of the month comes from **Michael Fumento**, author of the book "Science Under Siege." While attending the Georgia Turfgrass Conference, **LM** heard Fumento utter this memorable line: "I've got very good news if you're a bullfrog. No amount of dioxin will make you croak. On the other hand, it won't make you a prince, either." Second runner-up for quote of the month also comes from Fumento's mouth: "Wouldn't it be great if every community in the country had a lower-than-average risk of cancer? It'd be great! It'd also defy all the laws of mathematics!"

Think you're busy? Then **LM** advises you compare your schedule with that of **Dick Ficco**, one busy person. Ficco, the president of Partners Quality Lawn Service, Easton, Mass., heads the Massachusetts Association of Lawn Care Professionals, serves on the boards of both PLCAA and the Massachusetts Turfgrass Advisory Commission, is the resident lawn care spokesman on WBZ Radio, and is a frequent guest on local television. Last year, he also accepted an appointment to the national EPA Pesticide Users Advisory.

A long-standing friend the green industry, **Bill Culpepper**, is starting his own business. Culpepper, formerly of DowElanco, will manufacture and market three control products—Arest, Pipron and Sonar—through the new company, SePro. He will also be the exclusive U.S. distributor of Rubigan to the specialty horticultural markets. Culpepper was formerly on the board of directors of RISE, the PLCAA and the GIE. "We'll address the more specialized markets within the green industry," Culpepper tells **LM**. "Frankly I love it. I like to put together a whole lot of little pieces and make it make sense." You can contact SePro at (317) 580-8282.

FX-10 is the new "miracle" turfgrass in Florida. According to a press release received in the **LM** offices: "during the 'storm of the century...on the shores of Tampa Bay...homes landscaped with FX-10 received little or no erosion damage while homes in the same development without FX-10 had entire lawns washed away. **Bobby Bonilla**, the New York Mets outfielder, uses FX-10 for his lawn and helicopter landing at the mouth of the Manatee River, says **Jim Anderson** of Anderson & Son Nursery, Ruskin, Fla. For more info about FX-10, phone (800) 532-7006.

Dr. Bruce Ames continues his crusade against seemingly unfair EPA requirements and the glut of professional environmentalists. An **LM** staffer, en route to a state turfgrass conference was reading a recent issue of *Forbes* magazine. He noted this quote from Dr. Ames: "I think the EPA kills people. I knew lots of good guys who went to work for the EPA because they were idealists, but it's run by lawyers, and the institutional incentives take over. The scientists on the committee...keep putting out lousy reports" because of the pressure to conform to established government risk standards.

CTP FROM PAGE 66



Orkin's Steve Derrick: industry needed a credible outside source



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into 14 chapters. Review questions at the end of each chapter prepare the technician for the four open-book mail-in tests. These are then graded and returned to the technician.

At the end of Chapter 7 the technician must take a monitored, closed-book exam; then, a second monitored exam at the completion of the notebook. The technician must score 70 percent or better to earn the CTP designation and patch. The U.Ga. will arrange exam details with a university or college in the technician's geographical location.

Mills says a technician can take as long as 12 months to complete the course. "It's up to the students to let us know when they want to take the exams," she says.

PLCAA Government Affairs Director Tom Delaney believes the certification program may help companies retain employees better. "Technicians can feel better about themselves," he says.

Delaney says he's alerting regulators in every state to the new program. "I feel a lot of them are going to jump on this."

The enrollment fee is \$275 per person. Discounts for multiple enrollments from the same company are available. Cost to PLCAA members is \$225 per person.

For information on course enrollment, call the University of Georgia at (706) 542-1756. PLCAA members should call (800) 458-3466 for information concerning special member rates.



—Ron Hall

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