



## Fast results keep lawn customers happy

When lawn care customers face an intense weed or insect problem in their residential or commercial turf, they usually have no trouble communicating what they want. They want it gone. And it's likely to your benefit to take on that same sense of urgency, lest they embark on an urgent search for a new service provider.

Empathy for customer concerns is most evident in the way you respond to a problem; in your company philosophy; and maybe even in the products you use.

Jeff Mattiola, owner of Blue Tree Landscaping in Norristown, Pa., likes to prove to his customers that he not only cares about solving their turf care problems, but that he also gives them value for their money.

"It's the attention to detail and establishing rapport that's key to keeping customers happy," says Mattiola.

Joe Loyet, owner of Loyet Landscape & Maintenance in St. Louis, sets stringent response-time

goals: he believes in "doing everything we can to resolve any problem for a customer within 48 hours. Being responsive in our service call operations is really important."

The two men share an interest in new control products. They've started to use Scythe, a relatively new non-selective contact herbicide from Mycogen Corp.

Scythe reportedly burns down weeds in a few hours, thanks to its active ingredient: a naturally-occurring fatty acid that disrupts the weed cell membranes on contact. When applied properly and carefully, the lawn care operator can cut razor sharp lines between desirable and unwanted turf.

According to Mycogen, there is no soil residual activity at normal rates, so areas treated with Scythe can be planted almost immediately.

Application can be made by boom, hand-held or high-volume equipment, but over-the-top spraying is not recommended. It's most effective when applied on warm, sunny days.

"We are always looking to separate ourselves from the competition," says Mattiola. "Our customers always want to see an instant response, something you don't get from any of the other products on the market."

Mattiola and Loyet frequently tank-mix Scythe with glyphosate, to achieve long-term systemic activity. It sounds like these guys have found the best of three worlds.

"Now," says Loyet, "we have proven pre-emergents, a systemic, and an immediate burn-down. It helps position us for creating and maintaining satisfied customers."

Loyet says Scythe has reduced callbacks. "Usually, if there is a weed problem in the beds or on curbs, the property manager wants it gone 'yesterday,'" he explains.

"Now, we can tell the customer to walk out the morning after our service call and see the results for himself." **LM**