

A million snow throwers, a million reasons for safety

Shipments of snow throwers have topped the one million mark for model year 1995, meaning more chances for professional landscape maintenance contractors who "throw snow" to have an accident.

Here are some important safety recommendations made by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute for all operators of snow throwers:

- Read your owner's manual thoroughly and understand all of the recommended safety procedures before using it the first time.
- Keep the area of operation clear of all persons, particularly small children and pets.
- Clear the area of doormats, sleds, boards, wires and other debris. Snow can sometimes hide objects that might clog the chute or cause other damage.
- Never throw snow toward people or cars, and never allow anyone in front of your snow thrower.
- Always turn the machine off and wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop, if you have to repair the machine, remove an object or unclog built-up snow from the auger blades or chute. Then disconnect the spark plug wire.
- Use a stick to unclog the snow thrower.
- Keep hands and feet

away from all moving parts.

- Dress properly for the job, including footwear that will improve footing on slippery surfaces. Avoid loose-fitting clothing that can get caught in moving parts. Be

careful of extra-long hair.

- Use non-spill gas containers with spouts. If possible, fill the tank while the engine is cold.
- Do not clear snow across the face of slopes. Use ex-

treme caution when changing direction on slopes. Do not attempt to clear very steep slopes.

- Never operate a snow thrower without good visibility or light.
- Keep a firm hold on the handles.
- Walk, don't run.

Well-maintained yards increase in importance

More Americans enjoyed the multiple benefits of a well-maintained lawn and landscape in 1994 than in 1993, according to a survey by the Gallup Organization for the Associated Landscape Contractors of America (ALCA) and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA).

Homeowners that participated in the sur-

vey were more inclined to view a yard as a safe play area for children in 1994 than in 1993. They are also more interested in a yard that beautifies the neighborhood and having a comfortable place to entertain, work or visit, the survey noted.

Complete results of the survey:

BENEFITS OF A PROPERTY WITH A WELL-MAINTAINED LAWN AND LANDSCAPE

	1993	1994	% change
1. A property that helps beautify the neighborhood	45.0%	60.7%	+15.7%
2. A place of beauty and relaxation for the family, employees or visitors	38.6%	53.8%	+6.7%
3. A property that reflects positively on its owner	38.4%	50.3%	+11.9%
4. A property that has increased real estate value	35.3%	48.1%	+11.9%
5. A comfortable place to entertain, work or visit	32.5%	48.1%	+15.6%
6. A property that provides a safe, high-quality play area for children	26.7%	45.4%	+18.7%
7. A place that provides an exercise area for pets	12.7%	22.5%	+9.8%
8. A property that helps purify the air	12.4%	24.8%	+12.4%
9. A property that helps cool the air	12.2%	20.7%	+8.5%
10. An environmentally-friendly property that filters water that drains into the ground	12.1%	22.8%	+10.7%
11. Other	1.2%	3.5%	+2.3%

Field managers need bigger budgets, says STMA's Trusty

The athletic turf industry is operating at a time of intense public demand for quality sports facilities.

Now if only public demand would be matched by adequate funding.

As new executive director of the Sports Turf Managers Association, Steve Trusty wants to change the perception that an athletic field manager can come up with pro-quality results on bush league budgets.

"Some of the people that see the professional fields on TV expect their own high school or parks and recreation fields to look the same way," observes Trusty, "but, in many cases, they don't want to provide any funds to do that with."

"One of the things we want to do is help educate not only the sports turf managers around the country but the people they have to depend on for the funds to do the job they could do if they had some budgets to work with."

Trusty's concern for STMA includes plans to establish a fraternity of sorts with professional baseball, as a way to gain further support and exposure for the profession.

He plans to attend the National Association of Baseball Leagues' winter meetings, "to meet with league presidents to form some type of alliance of



Steve Trusty of STMA: Membership potential barely scratched.

sports turf managers responsible for A, AA and AAA fields."

The association also plans to exhibit at the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America conference and trade show in February.

Trusty says he expects to see "tremendous" growth from the association over the next couple of years.

"We feel STMA has barely scratched the surface in membership potential."

"We're very interested in providing the proper message to the sports turf industry, and the sports turf managers, but also working on helping make the public more aware of the Sports Turf Managers Association."

New STMA chapters are being established in Minnesota, Kansas City, Oregon, Northern California, Pennsylvania, Arizona and Central Florida. Existing chapters are located in Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Colorado, Southern California and Southern Florida.

The STMA annual conference will be held in Anaheim, Calif. Jan. 24-28. The new STMA headquarters is located at 1375 Rolling Hills Loop, Council Bluffs, IA 51503; phone (712) 366-2669.

Commercial users take Expo spotlight

Commercial outdoor power equipment users can keep your edge and sharpen your skills at the seminar program planned for Expo '96 at the Kentucky Exposition Center in Louisville, Ky., July 28-30.

Cost of the PLUS (Professional Landscaper Seminars) is \$25 for three days of sessions. Here are some of the scheduled topics:

- "Ask the Pros" panel discussion. Attendees will benefit from a diverse panel of landscapers at different stages of business development. For results of the 1995 "Ask the Pros" panel, see the article on page 10L.

- "Growing People Who Grow Your Business" with Tom Winner of Winner Resource Group. How to use common sense in your management techniques. This is an intensive seminar on the art of building a more productive, self-sufficient team.

- "Tech Tools: Technology You Can Use to Grow Your Business" consists of a team of professionals that will give advice on making the most of today's technology—voice mail, fax-on-demand and more. They'll also make recommendations on sophisticated software developments for bidding and planning.

Expo '96, the largest outdoor power equipment exhibition in the nation, is free if you pre-register, \$20 at the door. To receive a brochure, contact Expo '96, 550 S. 4th Ave., Suite 200, Louisville, KY 40202; (800) 558-8767. In Kentucky: (502) 562-1962. Fax number: (502) 562-1970.

Study reveals decrease in urban tree programs

The average municipal tree management budget in the U.S. has decreased significantly when adjusted for inflation over the last eight years, according to a study by the International Society of Arboriculture's Research Trust.

The average budget fell from \$4.14 per capita to \$2.49 per capita since 1986.

The study makes clear that urban forest managers must search for alternatives to municipal funding sources if they are to maintain healthy, attractive trees.

"Decreased funding is thought to be one of the greatest challenges facing urban forest managers today," says Trust director William Kruidenier, "and our study seems to validate that belief. To offset the effects of decreased municipal budgets, urban forest managers should look for other resources, such as alternative funding sources, partnerships and citizen involvement."

The study notes:

- actual dollars allocated to tree care as percentage of total municipal budgets, 1986: **0.49%**
- same statistic, 1994: **0.31%**
- city tree management programs receiving funding from municipal general funds, 1986: **94%**
- same statistic, 1994: **67%**
- average tree-related expenditures per municipality for parks, streets, public grounds, cemeteries and nurseries, 1994: **\$399,387**
- average municipal tree management budget, 1994: **\$279,307**
- average cost of most expensive tree maintenance cost (tree removal), 1994: **\$481.79 per tree**
- average cost of least expensive tree maintenance cost (chemical application), 1994: **\$42.41 per tree**

Engine technicians can be certified

If your job is to repair golf and commercial turf equipment engines, you can now become certified through the new Outdoor Power Equipment Technicians Certification program.

Virgil Russell is Director of Certification for the program, based in Austin, Texas. As an independent agency, the program is expanding to include all engine, outdoor power equipment, golf and commercial turf, and power generation technicians.

Tom Kane, assistant director of national training for Kubota Tractor, is chairing a training council made up of service and training professionals from education and industry. An educational foundation to provide support to schools and instruction within the industry will also be developed.

For more information, contact Russell at OPE Technicians Certification, 1946 South IH-35, Suite 100-A, Austin, TX 78704-3693. Phone number is (512) 442-1788 and fax is (512) 442-1789.

Spring is just around corner, so beware of lightning injury to clients' trees

With spring just a couple months away (we all hope), the usual rash of thunderstorms can bring lightning that can be damaging to trees. Last year's outbreak of lightning damage was especially heavy. Sharon Lilly of Expert Tree Service, Columbus, Ohio, offers these precautions arborists should take:

1) Except for reducing hazardous conditions (like pruning out cracked limbs) and removing "hanging" bark, little should be done for the first year after a lightning strike. Trees can die after being struck, regardless of the extent of obvious damage, but death may occur in a few weeks or not until the beginning of the next season. Therefore, owners should be advised to take a "wait and see" approach.

2) Arborists should be very cautious when called upon to make a diagnosis involving lightning. Lilly says a high percentage of "lightning damage" calls to her company actually involve wind damage. She notes that many insurance companies will cover damage caused by lightning, but not by wind. Even being an unwitting accomplice in an insurance fraud case can damage hard-earned reputations.

3) Installing copper lightning rods and cables connected to a 10-foot copper rod driven into the ground will conduct the charge away from a tree, but it will not keep a tree from being struck. It will provide some protection to the tree, but will not protect nearby structures. However, this kind of system can be expensive (\$500 to \$1500) and is usually reserved for high-value trees such as those crucial to the play of a hole on a golf course or state/national champion trees.