

# Grab Bag

## Inefficiency snowballs

The *Oregon Statesman Journal* reports a lawn care company was fined more than \$5000 for destroying a client's lawn. On top of that, a company official lied to investigators and falsified reports to cover up the mistake. The employee who made the application wasn't licensed, and no one knew exactly what was sprayed on the lawn. Chemical barrels at the hq weren't labeled, either, and record-keeping was a mystery. The company is appealing.

## Beware phony timbers!

The Western Wood Preservers Institute of Vancouver, Wash. warns against buying fake pressure-treated wood products. Most buyers believe they are purchasing a treated wood product that will last many years in clients' landscapes. However, what they may be buying are squared-off, peeler cores (what's left of logs after being "peeled" for veneer in the manufacturing of plywood). The cores are then dipped in stain so as to have the appearance of a pressure-treated, wood product.

## 'BIG BUGS' FORMED FROM TREE MATERIAL...

This giant spider and web is one of the "BIG BUGS" displays seen in an exhibit of giant-sized insects made from twigs and branches, now showing at the National Wildflower Research Center, Austin, Texas. The display and sculptures are designed by David G. Rogers of Glenwood Landing, N.Y., and have been seen at the New York Botanical Gardens, Callaway Gardens, the Dallas Arboretum and Disney World's Epcot Center. Rogers has sculpted everything from dinosaurs to dragons to ornate lawn furniture. Each sculpture is created from various forest materials such as whole trees, dried branches, vines, barks and green saplings.



PHOTO BY RICHARD CARTER, COURTESY NWRRC

## Wilt-less flowers

David Clark, environmental horticulturist at the University of Florida, and others are growing "ethylene-sensitive" flowers that could last up to four times longer than common flowers. After pollination, some varieties give off ethylene gas that causes petals to fall. Clark says a gene can be implanted so the flower does not recognize the presence of ethylene. The process could work on carnations, orchids, delphinium, baby's breath, and possibly geraniums. The key is whether or not the flower is sensitive to ethylene.



## 'Perennial of the Year'

The Perennial Plant Association has named the Salvia 'May Night' the 1997 "Perennial Plant of the Year." It's described as a "wonderful late-spring blooming perennial."

Rigid spikes of dark blue-black flowers appear over aromatic blue-grey leaves in May and June. The Salvia does best in sun, in average to dry soil, and will withstand drought once established, says the Association, based in Hilliard, Ohio.

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