

Novartis plans 'aggressive' training, market focus

LAS VEGAS—Novartis—the new company formed by the merger of Ciba and Sandoz—plans to hit the ground running with "aggressive" sales training and product research, and special attention to ornamentals markets.

The merger of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz AG to form Novartis Specialty Products was officially announced during the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show, held here Feb. 6-12.

Thomas McGowan, head of Novartis Specialty Products, says the company is committed to providing innovative products and technology to help customers achieve their business goals.

"We do not plan to lose ground in the marketplace during the transition year, we expect to meet our 1997 business goals, and we expect to make real changes in the near future that will soon make it possible for everybody to know who Novartis is," says McGowan, who adds that the merger will give Novartis "significantly stronger" research and development capabilities than either

company had before.

"Novartis is founded with a mindset of continuous improvement," says Gene Hintze, director of Novartis Turf & Ornamental Products.

"Our goal is more products, better service and exceeding customer expectations. We will have the most experienced turf field sales team in the business," says Hintze, "with over 20 dedicated sales representatives out in the field."

Hintze says "aggressive" sales training programs will continue through 1999.

"We also intend to provide some focus to the ornamentals business," says Hintze. "We will start off with a small, dedicated field sales force that will focus on the greenhouse and nursery business in key geographies in the U.S."

Hintze says Novartis will focus on "marketing management" rather than "product management," with market managers for the golf business, ornamentals business and professional lawn care business.

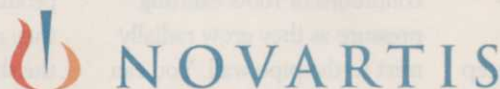
Novartis is headquartered in Greensboro, N.C., in what were previously Ciba headquarters. The company's product line includes turf and ornamental products—herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and turf management products for golf courses, greenhouses, nurseries, commercial lawn and landscape companies and sod farms; vegetation management products; and seed treatment products.

Products already in use by green industry professionals include Banner MAXX fungicide; Barricade preemergence herbicide; Primo plant growth regulator; Sentinel fungicide; Subdue MAXX fungicide and nine other products.

Headquarters address for Novartis is: 410 Swing Rd., Greensboro, NC 27409. □

► The Novartis logo

▼ Novartis headquarters is in Greensboro, NC.




PLCAA hits 'the Hill'

by TERRY MCIVER / Editor-in-chief



Terry Kurth, president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, addresses the crowd of volunteers during the opening ceremony for 'Renewal and Remembrance.' At left is Phil Fogarty, event organizer.



Doug Hague of Classic Lawns signs in at the office of Ohio Sen. Mike Dewine.

WASH., D.C.— Members of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America did their industry duty for the 8th straight year Feb. 2-3, with visits to Washington, D.C. lawmakers to lobby for common sense legislation as it relates to pesticide use and small business operations.

The "Day on the Hill" activities began when more than 100 volunteers from a variety of companies from across the U.S. fertilized and seeded 160 acres of selected areas of Arlington National Cemetery.

"We were really well-received by the grounds people at Arlington," said Gene Pool, president of Emerald Green, Van Wert, Ohio, and president of the Ohio Lawn Care Association.

"We were very blessed to have Phil Fogarty on the committee. I want to give a warm thank you to the sponsors."

Fogarty, of Crowley Lawn and Tree and Shrub Service, Cleveland, came up with the idea for the event as a gesture of goodwill to veterans, and a symbol of the lawn care industry's concern for the environment.

"We're very proud of the work done today, and hope that our efforts will make a lasting impression on the beauty and environment of our national cemetery grounds," said Fogarty.

Play offense, not defense

Prior to the Hill visits, lobbying expert Ed Grefe presented a seminar on the benefits of getting to know your legislators, and of getting involved in the lawmaking process.

"You have two choices," said Grefe.



Gene Pool, Emerald Green, center, and Carl Petelle, Leisure Lawns, meet with Joe Jensen, aide to Sen. Mike Dewine (R-OH).



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., left, addressed the PLCAA crowd on issues related to environmental stewardship. 'Lawn care operators are also environmentalists,' explains Tom Diederich, Orkin Lawn Care.

"You can do something, or you can do nothing. If you do something, you may win, or you may lose. If you do nothing, you *will* lose."

Grefe stressed the need to be on the offensive.

"If you're always playing defense, you will always play by someone else's rules," explained Grefe, who has tutored groups on both sides of a variety of contentious public interest issues. □

Zeneca debuts Heritage fungicide

LAS VEGAS—Zeneca, Inc. released its long-awaited, broad-spectrum fungicide—called Heritage—during the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show, held here in February.

The fungicide, azoxystrobin, is the first turf fungicide ever registered under the EPA "reduced risk" program, and the first pesticide registered under the new Food Quality Protection Act.

The EPA has approved the product for use on turfgrass to control 18 turfgrass diseases, including: brown patch; Pythium; take-all patch; summer patch; anthracnose; and snow mold.

The fungicide was inspired by highly effective natural compounds found in certain species of wood-decaying mushrooms.

"We are really excited," says Keelan Pulliam, business director for Zeneca Professional Products. "We think this has a great opportunity to change the turfgrass industry. Bottom line, it's a big event!"

Pulliam says Heritage provides golf course superintendents more flexibility, thanks to "the most extensive research and development program ever," which included many trials by university researchers and golf course superintendents.

The product enters the turfgrass plant through the leaf blade, stem or root system. It works against all four classes of fungal diseases in two ways, as a preventive and curative.

"Heritage is probably the top brown patch material we've looked at in the past three years," says Dr. Bruce Clarke, turfgrass pathologist at Rutgers University.

"For summer patch control, I'd say Heritage was definitely the best material we've looked at. We've also looked at this material for several other diseases, and I think in every case, Heritage has been one of the better materials we've looked at," says Clarke.

Distributors for Heritage are United Horticultural Supply; Terra; Lesco; and O.M. Scott. □

Lesco, MTD to make mowers

Lesco, Inc. and MTD Products, Inc. have formed a joint venture to manufacture turf equipment. The joint venture is called Commercial Turf Products, Ltd.

Seed/fertilizer/equipment marketer Lesco, of Rocky River, Ohio, and Valley City, Ohio-based MTD—maker of Cub Cadet and MTD Yard Machine products—are predicting sales of \$80 million after three years of operation.

Lesco announced it will close its Sebring, Fla. plant. A production facility for the joint venture is being built in Streetsboro, Ohio, near Akron. □

TurfGrass TRENDS joins with LM

TurfGrass TRENDS, a practical research digest valuable to turfgrass managers, joins LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT magazine in serving the green industry.

Advanstar Holdings, Inc., purchased TurfGrass TRENDS from TurfGrass TRENDS of Washington, D.C. in February. The monthly subscription publication provides the most recent technical and research information about turfgrass disease and pest management, nutrients, irrigation, genetic improvement, turfgrass physiology, and ecology.

Published since 1992, the digest is written by leading turfgrass scientists. Its field advisory staff includes leading golf course superintendents and sports

facility greenskeepers, turf producers, professional landscape managers, and the coordinator of the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program.

"We are excited about adding our publishing resources to further build TurfGrass TRENDS and, at the same time, this resource of cutting-edge technical turf information will benefit readers of LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT," said John Payne, publisher of LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, who will oversee the operation of TurfGrass TRENDS.

For subscription information, call (218) 723-9477; or fax to (218) 723-9437; E-mail at fulfill@superfil.com. □

McClure to leave PLCAA

Ann McClure, executive director of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, will step down from her post to become the managing director of the International Gas Turbine Institute located in Atlanta.

"We're bidding farewell to a great manager, and while we wish Ann the best of luck, we will miss her leadership," said PLCAA President, Terry Kurth. "The association has grown under her direction, and she will be leaving on a positive note."

"It's tough to move on, but I'm looking forward to yet another challenge," said McClure.

PLCAA President-Elect, Larry Messina, leads the Executive Search Committee to find a successor to McClure. **LM**