

industry almanac

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Medallion labeled for landscape use

BASEL, SWITZERLAND — Medallion (fludioxonil) fungicide, manufactured by Syngenta Professional Products, received a new label from the EPA for control of certain foliar, root and stem diseases in azaleas, begonias, gerbera daisies, roses and more than 40 other popular container grown and landscape plants.

Roundup sales boost Monsanto

ST. LOUIS, MO — A record 4% increase in sales of Monsanto Co.'s Roundup herbicide lifted the company's second quarter net income to \$389 million compared to last year's Q2 net income of \$248 million. The company said sales during the first six months of 2001 would have improved by almost 2% compared with first-half 2000 sales, if the effect of foreign currency exchange was excluded. Worldwide sales for Monsanto's agricultural productivity business rose 8% to \$1.57 billion.

BASF implements restructuring

LUDWIGSHAFEN, GERMANY — BASF has completed a reorganization into 38 regional and 10 global business units under its "Fit for the Future" motto. The new structure will allow the company to respond quickly and flexibly to worldwide customer needs, it says.

Chipco's Finale granted state label

MONTVALE, NJ — Finale herbicide, produced by the Chipco Professionals

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Acquisition expands and strengthens Brickman's reach in midwestern markets

BY SUE GIBSON/
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

LANGHORNE, PA — Consolidation among landscape maintenance companies continues with the August 1 purchase of Duke Weeks Landscape Division by The Brickman Group Ltd.

Duke-Weeks, which started as an in-house landscape department for the Duke Realty Corporation, generated nearly \$35 million in revenues from a variety of commercial services offered in several midwest and southern markets.

Brickman's move to buy Duke-Weeks gives it a new presence in several markets,

such as Cincinnati, Minneapolis, Columbus, Greenville and Nashville. It also gives Brickman a stronger presence in several very competitive markets where it is already established, including Cleveland, Dallas, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Raleigh, Atlanta, and Chicago.

Most of the former 300+ Duke-Weeks employees will continue with

Brickman. Mark Flowers, former division president, will now manage Brickman's Atlanta office.

Brickman will now employ approximately 5,100 employees and have proforma revenues for 2001 of more than \$300 million from 88 branches in 25 states.



CLIPPINGS

Yazoo/Kees expands plant

BEATRICE, NE — Yazoo/Kees recently expanded its production plant by 57,000 sq. ft. to bring the total building size to 167,000 sq. ft. As part of the expansion, the company has also added a \$1 million Milbank painting system and robotic welders.

"We continue to plan for the future and believe the future looks bright for Yazoo/Kees and the Husqvarna Turf Care Company," says Anders Berggren, president of Husqvarna Turf Care Company. "We feel very optimistic about this expansion as



Anders Berggren, president of Husqvarna Turf Care (left), is congratulated by Bill Cook III, president of the Gage Co. Economic Development Board, on the plant expansion.

well as the new Yazoo/Kees products that will be unveiled in the near future."

Grass is greener on the other side

BY JASON STAHL/
MANAGING EDITOR

Lured by water bill credits, homeowners out west are ripping out their grass. But irrigation and landscape contractors are hardly complaining.

When the Southern Nevada Water Authority (SNWA) began offering homeowners money to rip up their lawns in an effort to conserve water, you could easily imagine irrigation and landscape contractors gasping and grabbing their chests. No turf means no need for landscape maintenance, and certainly no need for irrigation, right?

Wrong, says Joe Fortier, and Fortier should know. He's the founder of Mojave Water Management, an irrigation consulting firm, and a former employee of the SNWA who helped develop and implement many of its conservation programs.

"It's actually providing more work for irrigation and landscape contractors," Fortier says of the "cash for grass" program. "When people want to retrofit, they have to retrofit the landscape and irrigation to drip irrigation for plant materials that are there. And there's usually not a big reduction in lawn maintenance because landscape professionals still come back, clean up the yard and maintain the irrigation system. Sometimes pruning and clean up takes the place of mowing."

For or against?

The program actually creates additional work for Green Industry professionals and credits homeowners up to a maximum of \$1,000 on their water bills. It also makes everyone feel good about doing their part to conserve a valuable resource. But there could be a day when people like Fortier will not support the program.

"If it stays a volunteer program, I'm all for it," Fortier says. "If it becomes mandatory, I'm against it."

Don Crawford, Western Director of Landscape Services for Camden Property Trust and board member of the Water Conservation Coalition, agrees with Fortier: "This program is only smart if it's done at the right place at the right time."

Even though commercial properties can earn a water bill credit of up to \$50,000 (and Crawford has taken advantage of that), he won't just rip up turf everywhere.

"I won't take out grass where it doesn't make sense," Crawford says. "If I'm watering a skinny strip of turf and getting more water on the hardscape than the turf, it makes sense to replace the turf. We're doing these things anyway because it's the right thing to do."

The right solution?

Irrigation contractors are benefitting from additional work the program has created, but is it really helping to conserve water? A study done by Arizona State University Professor of Urban Horticulture Chris Martin suggests that it may not be.

"Two things happen: the drip irrigation system is either mismanaged or not managed at all," Martin says. "The homeowner will just set the clock and walk away. Water used in the landscape tends to follow the seasonal course of evapotranspiration — it increases in summer and decreases in winter. With drip, the pattern is unchanged from summer to winter."

"The best way to conserve water is to plant fewer plants," he says. "If you're looking at an absolute savings of water, replacing turf is a good thing. You're reducing canopy cover and water application. But it's not going to magically save water."

'Cash for grass'

It appears as though "cash for grass" programs are catching on around the country. New Mexico, California and Arizona have instituted similar financial incentive plans to save water.

■ The City of Corona, CA, for instance,

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offers free water conservation classes to the public. One class in irrigation design is sponsored by a local irrigation supplier. After homeowners complete all four classes, they can apply for a mini-grant of \$500 to make their yard more water efficient.

■ In Glendale, AZ, homeowners can receive a \$500 rebate for converting 50% or more of their grass to water efficient plantings.

■ In Florida, there's a bill in the state legislature that would allow people in deed-restricted communities to grow something other than water-intensive St. Augustinegrass.

■ The National Wildlife Federation offers an official backyard wildlife habitat seal to those who curtail their lawns in favor of native plants that feed and shelter indigenous wildlife and require less pesticides and water.

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Products group of Aventis Environmental Science, was granted a state label for turf use by the California Department of Pesticide Regulations.

ServiceMaster Q2 income drops 23%

DOWNERS GROVE, IL — ServiceMaster announced a 23% drop in its second quarter (Q2) net income and reduced its earnings outlook for 2001. Q2 2001 earnings per share (EPS) were \$.17 on net income of \$51 million compared to Q2 2000 EPS of \$.21 on net income of \$66 million. "In TruGreen, slower growth in the residential lawn care business and unprofitable contracts in the landscaping construction business continue to put pressure on results," said Jon Ward, president and CEO.

Eco Soil to reorganize

SAN DIEGO, CA — Eco Soil Systems Inc. will reorganize its core business, including actively seeking to sell non-core assets in an effort to pay down debt and improve the company's working capital position. The company has also substantially reduced headcount and implemented salary cuts for senior level management, among other efforts to reduce expenses.

Century Rain Aid opens new offices

MADISON HEIGHTS, MI — Century Rain Aid opened five new branch locations: Springdale, AR; Phoenix and Surprise, AZ; Riverhead, NY; and Warrendale, PA.

[CLIPPINGS]

5 ways to use H2B to your advantage

1. Count to 120 backwards. No, it isn't a sobriety test. Count back 120 days from when you want your work permits to begin and be sure your petition is filed on that date to ensure the earliest chance of getting your approval on time. Unfortunately, the law doesn't allow a petitioner to file more than 120 days out regardless of what the various governmental delays may be in processing.

2. Hurry up and slow down. Be prepared for the process to be slow. You may not have approval as early as you would like. Respond quickly to any requests your agent, attorney or, if doing it yourself, governmental agency may have to complete your petition.

3. Proof of existence. Be ready to provide documentation to substantiate your

seasonal need with financials and payroll records. The national office for the U.S. Department of Labor is taking strides to ensure all regional offices are interpreting petitions the same. Be ready to provide substantial documentation to substantiate your seasonality/seasonal need.

4. Next in line please. Screen your recruits carefully for deportation history. Many times you can only go by their word. Have a list of backup recruits in case your first choices do not pan out.

5. Be kind and unwind. Be patient with your agent/attorney processing on your behalf. The program still works, but delays will still occur.

— Terry Foley, Foley Enterprises,
Austin, TX. He can be reached
at 800/623-7285.

Info Center

VIDEOS AND LITERATURE FOR THE GREEN INDUSTRY

Got turf problems?...Then get the new pocket guide, "Turfgrass Problems: Picture Clues and Management Options," from the Natural Resource, Agriculture and Engineering Service (NRAES). The guide is 214 pages and costs \$24.95 plus shipping and handling/sales tax. Order the book from the NRAES, Cooperative Extension, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853-5701.

Spindle assemblies...for walk-behind and riding mowers abound in Stens' new 2001 catalog. The selection includes replacement spindles for AYP,

Murray and others. Stens also carries MTD 6 point star center hole blades. For more information on spindles and other Stens parts call 800/457-7444.

Training tractor loader backhoe operators...is now easy with VISTA Training's complete instructor kit for training tractor loader backhoe operators. The new "tool kit" contains two videos, an easy-to-follow instructor's packet, and a CD-ROM. For more information call 800/942-2886 or visit www.vista-start-smart.com.

Lock up seed purchases: higher prices on the horizon

BY RON HALL/
SENIOR EDITOR

SALEM, OR—If you're anticipating a lot of seeding work this fall and next season, consider buying your seed soon.

Unfavorable growing conditions in prime turf growing regions of the United States will cause seed prices to rise but there will be enough seed of almost all species and varieties to meet your needs. As of this writing you could still find perennial ryegrass seed at bargain prices due to a large carryover from the previous year's harvest, but that will change.

"We overdid a good thing," says Mike Baker, general manager at Pennington Seeds' Lebanon, OR, facility. "You have a good thing going and it's awfully hard to know when to slow down, but the market tells you — and it did."

"We're looking at a 15% reduction in

yield in perennial ryegrass," adds Don Herb, president and general manager of Ore Gro Seeds, Inc., Shedd, OR. "When we get into May and June of next spring there could be little carryover of any quality seed at all."

Herb says that a combination of a mild, dry winter and several days of 90°-plus weather this past May as grass plants were pollinating caused the short crop in some production fields in the Willamette Valley.

"It certainly seems like a good bit of the carryover is getting used up for early shipment," adds Pennington's Baker.

Prices of Oregon-grown turf-type tall fescue seed will be stable but will rise because of a shortfall in the K-31 tall fescue crop, most of which is grown in Missouri.

Drought affected the dryland production of common Kentucky bluegrass, too. Instead of the anticipated 130 million-lb.

crop, marketers are looking at a yield of about 105 to 110 million lbs. For this reason, prices on these commons, most of which are used in mixtures, will rise.

"But, the proprietary varieties, which are grown on irrigated ground, are in good supply," says Glenn Jacklin, Idaho/Washington Manager Jacklin Golf. "Inventories should be stable and the quality looks very good this year."

"Adequate" is the prediction for most varieties of bermudagrass seed as well, says Pennington Seed's Russ Nicholson.

The take-home message from this year's turf seed harvest is a simple one: "Take care of all of your needs for spring 2002, and get it locked up because we might see some strengthening in price," says Tom Stanley, Southwest Sales Manager, Turf-Seed, Inc., Hubbard, OR.

People & companies

Environmental Industries



Law

named **Richard Sperber** President and Chief Operating Officer. The company also named **John T. Law, Jr., Ph.D.**, Director of Technical Services for the West Coast, and **Andrew J. Mandell** senior vice president and chief financial officer.

Bozzuto Landscaping Co., Greenbelt, MD, promoted

Bruce Leonard to area manager and **Randy Abshier** to vice president. The company also hired **Tom Hopkins** as area manager.

Dow AgroSciences LLC appointed **Martin Posset** turf and ornamental product communications manager, **Beau Miller** turf and ornamental market research manager, **Dan Loughner** field biologist, **Kerry Avirett** Texas sales representative, **John**

Price Ohio sales rep, and **Ray Miller** Florida sales rep.

Aventis Environmental Science's Chipco Professional Products group named **Joseph Grippi** sales representative for western Michigan and northern Indiana and **Scott Parker** sales representative for southern Indiana, northern Kentucky and central Illinois.

Oregro Seeds hired **Hagen Ledebor** as outside sales representative for the southwest.

The J. R. Simplot Company's Turf & Horticulture group

named **Steve Franzen** western region director of sales for its fertilizer division. **U.S. Lawns** added its 82nd franchise, U.S. Lawns of Simi Valley, CA.

Miramar Wholesale Nurseries



Smagacz

promoted **Kelley Smagacz** to purchasing manager and appointed **Debbie**

Binczewski controller.