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WEEDS TREES and TURF®

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Pesticide Legislation — Just Where Are We Headed 16

Hard news on pesticide legislation at the Federal level is now in a lull period. Public hearings are completed on H.R. 4152, and congressional debate has as yet not begun.

"Why I Believe In Flail Mowers" 18

Elmer Mott, one of a half-dozen or so manufacturers of the efficient flail for the commercial turf industry, gives his views on the flail and its place in the industry.

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The Cover

Flail mower on the cover this month demonstrates versatility of this type unit for the industrial market. Flail blades are lightweight, free swinging, self cleaning, and cut with an edgewise slicing action — as a good knife should. They are safe and efficient and most, such as this Mott unit, have a variety of flail blades available. Mott, for example, in addition to the general purpose blade offers a scalping, thatch thinning, and a special blade for mowing in areas littered with rocks and trash. Flail mowers also come in many sizes, both self-propelled and tractor pulled. More on flail mowers can be found beginning on page 18.

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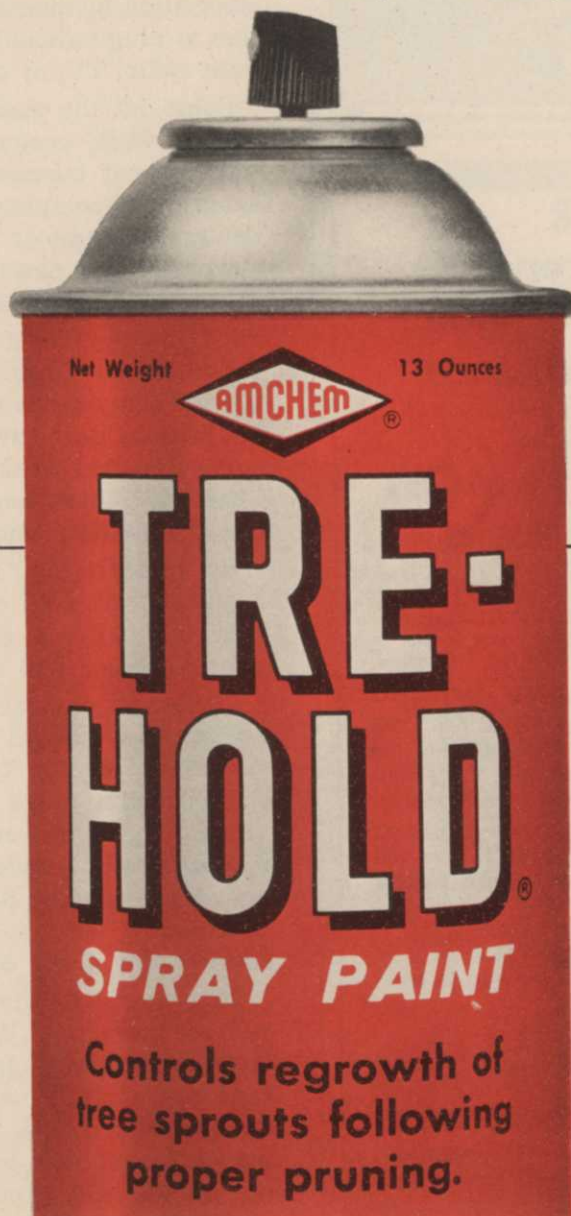


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by MOTT CORPORATION

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EDITORIAL

Artists Come In Many Colors

The fast buck artists are back. Like the swallows they show up each year with every conceivable type of fly-by-night business. With every job, you lose more than just the loss of business. You lose some of the lustre you have previously earned as a legitimate business man.

Right now—at the height of the fly-by-nighter's busy season—is a good time to alert your customers. Point up the trials a homeowner buys when he pays for a shoddy operation. You can do this in a number of ways. Your local advertising outlets or your own direct mail piece offer possibilities.

But we think this is a good time to band together with your competitors and do some joint local advertising. Those of you who hold common association memberships are in an excellent position to plug national association standards. Run a joint radio, TV, or newspaper promotion.

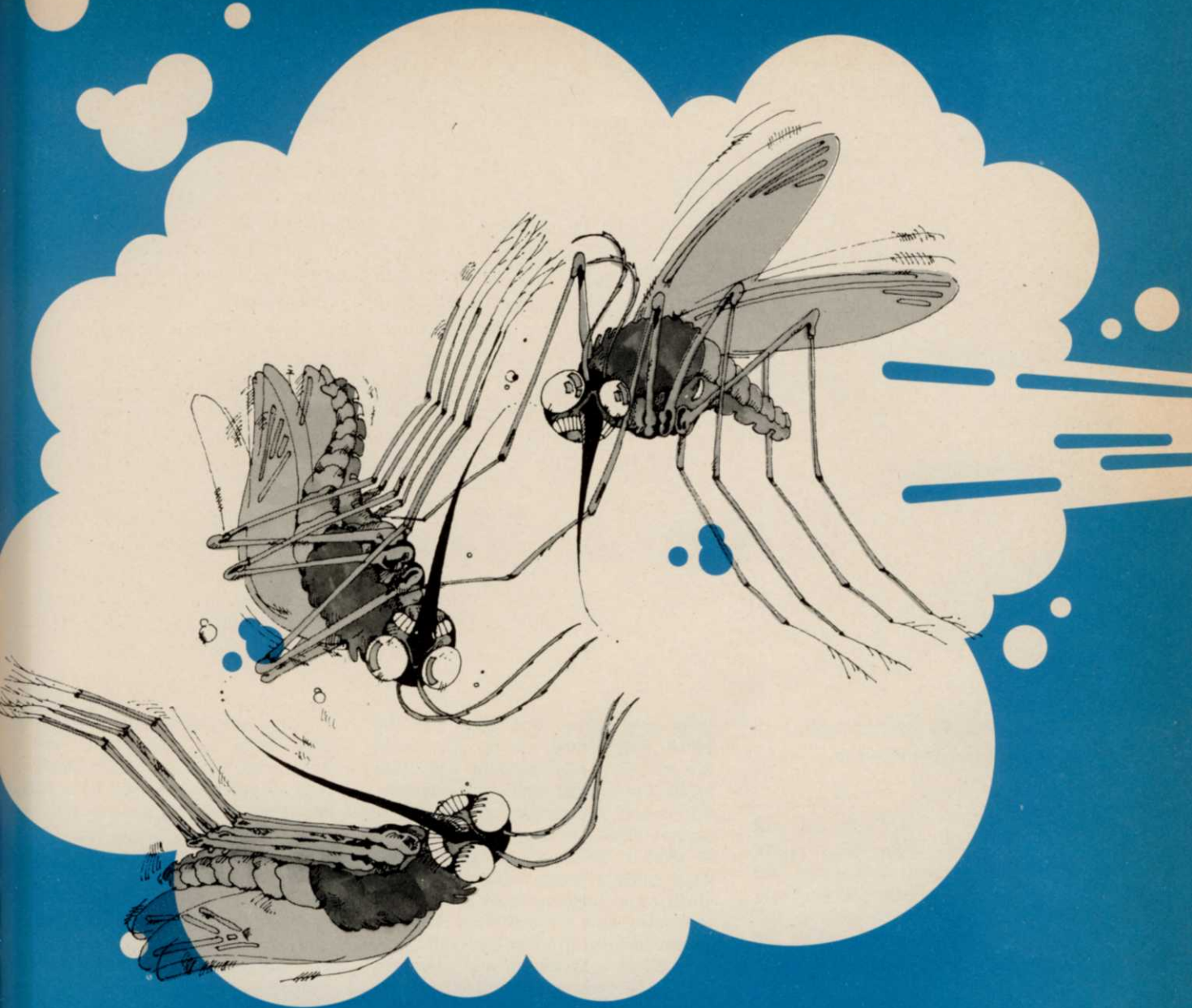
Point out the guarantee of prompt service and quality work customers can expect from year-round, local businesses such as your own. Use examples of complaints which have made the local newspaper, radio or TV outlets. And, by all means, alert the local news media when you have solid evidence of fraudulent operations. Usually, local reporters will follow up a good tip with an exposé.

You are in a business where reputation of the service company is extremely valuable. Whether you are treating lawn, trees, or ornamentals, or doing tree care work, there is no second guessing. Once the job is completed, the fast buck artist has collected and moved on.

By contrast you are still around and still in business. Not only can you be found if the job fails, but you will expect to make it right. And your customer will expect you to.

Customers are at the mercy of the fly-by-nighter and should quickly recognize this. No customer for this type service can examine a chemical and judge its value. Nor can the customer judge a tree care job until it is done. Thus, it is difficult to understand why a customer will not check with the Better Business Bureau before contracting with a transient for an expensive service. But many don't.

So, it's your territory and your franchise which you are protecting. Warn your customers that the best practices vary from area to area. Local, full-time operators know their area. They know the specific insects and diseases, and they know the most effective, and legal controls. Transients cannot provide this experienced judgment.



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Dursban insecticide—the unsurvivable one.

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Words of Wisdom From A Winner

By **HOWARD F. HARVEY, JR.**

Product Development International
Rutledge, Pa.

RECENTLY I ran into an old acquaintance who has really made it big in the tree business. He has one of the largest private concerns going and has come up the hard way. After having worked for somebody else for over thirty years, he went out on his own. In just more than ten years he has built an enterprise grossing \$1 million plus per year.

The first time I met . . . let's call him Floyd . . . some years ago, I was just starting in the business and I asked him for some good pointers. The advice he gave me was, without question, some of the best I ever had. Here, then, are those timely tips which Floyd gave to me which could prove to be invaluable information to anyone in the tree and landscaping business.

I. "I've seen lots of good tree men who failed in the tree business, but never a good businessman."

Knowledge of the technical skills of tree working is not enough in itself on which to build a business. If it were, every good climber around would be self-employed. To be sure, these technical skills are

very important. But they can be hired. Other men can do that work for you. But management and sales skills are a different story. Especially when you're first starting, you cannot afford to employ a manager or even a good salesman until you have quite a good volume of trade. Until your business gets pretty big, the sales and management is your responsibility. To survive, you must succeed as a salesman and manager and this requires knowledge and skill in business.

Where do you get this business knowledge and skill? One of the best sources is the Small Business Administration (listed under U.S. Government in most phone directories). They have a list of free or low cost publications on all aspects of business and management. Just give them a call at the office nearest you. You can benefit from the information available from S.B.A. no matter how long you have been in business. The S.B.A. even has a free personal advisory service known as S.C.O.R.E. Trade magazines, such as WEEDS, TREES & TURF, are a good source of information as well.

Another good source of information and expertise is an experienced associate in the field. More often than not, they will be glad to tell you anything they know if you'll but take the time to listen. Old timers can tell you how to screen your pro-

spective employees, how to get the best deals on equipment, how to keep good books, etc. TIP: Don't expect to get good advice from someone you'll be competing with directly.

If you live in a small town, your banker and the Chamber of Commerce may be excellent sources of business assistance and information.

II. "Build Slow and Build Solid!"

Building a service business depends on selling repeat accounts. One-shot customers will only last for so long. Therefore, you have to sell repeat accounts if you want to stay in business. How do you do this? First of all, you must establish a reputation for doing a first-class work at a reasonable price. You must be there to do the job when you say you will be there. That's dependability. A lot of tree surgeons don't know what the word means. And that hurts them. If you can't be at the job when you're expected, it's always worth the effort to be courteous enough to call the customer and keep them posted. That's called communication.

When you bid on a job, be sure to explain clearly just exactly what you will do for the price you quote. When you do that job you must deliver everything you promised for the same price you originally quoted. Even if this means you lose

money on the job. One thing that will lose a customer forever is tacking on extra charges as you go along. If you see that you have bid a job too low, once you have started, do the same top quality job you would do for top profit. You may recover your loss on repeat work. Even if you don't recover it from that particular customer, at least they will be satisfied and will sell their friends for you. But, if you try to recover your loss on a low bid by chisling the customer for more money, they not only will lose confidence in you, but will also warn their friends against dealing with you. A reputation for being a fair, trustworthy, dependable person to deal with is worth all the small losses you must sustain to establish that reputation. You will build your business solidly and your customers will stick with you, year after year, and tell their friends about you too.

III. "Don't meet competition by cutting prices."

Compete on the basis of quality. Sell a quality job — do a quality job. Your competitors cannot do a first class job for a cut-rate price. They will have to do a "cheapie" job or else lose money. Sure, you will lose some jobs. Because there are some people who can see no farther than price alone . . . not value. But your jobs will be a better value for your customers and they will advertise for you long after the rate-cutters have gone out of business or at least out of town. Don't ever be lured into bidding a job too low because a prospect says, "Well Joe so-and-so will do the job for \$50.00 less than your bid!" Your answer must be, "Well sir, you'd better get so-and-so before he changes his mind!" Always remember this — You must justify your price. The customer doesn't know your business so you must explain *why* your price is higher, in terms of his own interest. He doesn't care if you have payments to make on your new trucks or that labor costs you dearly. He *does* appreciate it if you say, "Sir, there is only one way to do this job 100% safely. It will take more time than it would if we took chances. And time is money. If so-and-so wants to take chances on damaging your property or injuring your loved ones or his workers, that is his business, but I have more concern for your welfare than that. I would rather lose the job." Or if you say, "Sir, we carry \$100,000 worth of in-

surance for your protection. That is not free to us, but most people feel that is worth paying a little more for, don't you?" Most people do appreciate quality work but you must *explain* that the reason that your work may cost more is because it is a quality job. You can break even sitting at home. If you can't make a profit on a job, learn to walk away from it. Let your competition lose money on it, but not you.

IV. "Keep your prices consistent."

Every contractor's pricing is different and you should know your own system. However, it is always a temptation to get the best price you can, especially when a particular customer can well afford top dollar. But pricing can be tricky. More often than not, the person who can best afford to pay the most, is the one who'll want to pay the least. That's how they got their money to start with, right? But don't fall prey to the temptation of the easy buck. Taking advantage of anybody is not only unethical, but will hurt you in the long run. If you charge Mrs. Jones \$100 to remove a tree and then charge Mrs. Smith, \$50 to do a job of a similar size "Because you are already right there", you will lose *two* customers after the girls get together. You will lose them because they'll both think Mrs. Jones was robbed and Mrs. Smith is her close friend, remember?

The same holds true with spraying jobs. If you spray two fruit trees in Mrs. Jones' yard for \$20 and you do Mrs. Smith's two for \$5 each, because your tank is almost empty and you're going to dump it anyway, once again, you'll only hurt yourself. Ask for \$10.00 per tree, same as Mrs. Jones. Or dump the spray. Otherwise you will almost certainly lose both customers.

This may not seem logical at first, but it is a valid theory. If both customers think they'll get theirs for half-price if they wait till you come to spray next door, you will never get either job again.

V. "Be Careful of Giving Discounts to Special People."

Sure, you want to give your friends and relatives a break. Right? Right! Everybody wants to be charitable. But, you are in business to make money, not lose it. Now before you think that is a hard line, consider one thing — for the most part, the tree business is a luxury

(continued on page 41)

Look Mom... One Hand



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So light, so well balanced, so easy to maneuver . . . every trimming job goes faster with the Ackley Pistol Grip Hydraulic Chain Saw. Powered by the HYREVZ hydraulic motor it zips through limbs and trees big and small hour after hour with never a miss or sputter. Quiet too . . . much, much quieter.

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Government News / Business

New Insecticide Registration Registration has just been announced for Dow Chemical's Zectran, an insecticide aimed at the spruce budworm and the jack pine budworm. The Federal Forest Service will use the insecticide this summer to replace DDT. Zectran is said to be 20 to 25 times more toxic than DDT to budworm. It has undergone six years of research and field testing in the west by the USDA plus extensive testing during development by Dow.

More \$'s For Pollution Clean-Up A \$350 million package has been made available via the Environmental Protection Agency to step up the attack on water pollution problems. EPA's release emphasizes that most of the money will go to municipalities for both new and past expenses on waste treatment plants. However, the regulations do give priority to critical pollution problems identified by the Administrator. He apparently may, at his discretion, apply some funds for aquatic weed control programs.

IRS Rules On Payment of 'User Taxes' Aerial applicators are subject to the new Airport/Airways Law, Public Law 91-258. In affect, according to an Internal Revenue Service ruling, this makes aerial applicators subject to both the \$25 registration fee and the 2-cent per pound tax on all pounds of maximum certificated take-off weight if the ship weighs more than 2500 pounds. The ruling makes applicators liable during the '70-71 fiscal year. Precise data is available from Farrell Higbee of the National Agricultural Aviation Assn., 1101 - 17th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

DDT Hearings To Resume In Mid-Summer EPA reports that public hearings on federal cancellation of all remaining uses of DDT will begin in mid-summer. A pre-hearing conference was held for 12 formulators in mid-April, and others during May at Little Rock, Ark., and Washington, D.C. Some 42 formulators of DDT products appealed the original cancellation order. EPA expects to have the entire administrative review process for DDT completed by the end of March, 1972.

EPA Announces Organizational Changes Two organizational changes just announced by EPA Administrator William D. Ruckelshaus are worthy of mention. Of primary interest to the industry is creation of the position of Assistant Administrator for Categorical Programs. This assistant administrator, who will be nominated by the President, will assume charge of the Offices of Pesticides, Radiation, and Solid Wastes Programs. The other major change was appointment of Donald M. Mosiman as assistant administrator for Media Programs. Mosiman will head up activities of the Offices of Air and Water Programs. Acting commissioners for these offices in both instances have been eliminated.