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golf green.”

—Howard Kaerwer, Director of Turf Research
at Northrup King’s Research Center

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When Howard isn’t in the lab he’s on the links talking to superintendents, conducting field experiments and collecting new grass samples to bring back for testing.

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Circle No. 120 on Reader Inquiry Card



Hungry, Young and Friendly

In four years, Seacrest Services has become a leader in South Florida landscape maintenance

By Maureen Hrehocik
Associate Editor



In the summer, mowing at Century Village and Leisureville is done every seven to 10 days.

commitment to his work and has been responsible for streamlining and making cost and labor-efficient many aspects of the landscaping operation.

Lopez practices the Integrated Pest Management method of pest control, irrigates on an as-needed basis, uses only zero-turning radius mowers, and, as a rule, cuts his grass higher than most. He expects the best from his workers and usually gets it.

Seacrest holds the maintenance contract to Century Village and Leisureville, both in West Palm Beach, and each covering about 150 acres. Management sources declined giving the worth of those contracts for competitive reasons.

Century Village, according to Lopez, was the largest condominium complex in the United States when it was built in the 1970s, with 7,500 units and 15,000 residents.

The sweet smell of success. Seacrest Management of West Palm Beach, FL, knows it well. The company, specializing in condominium/apartment landscaping, building services, janitorial and pest control, increased its business 50 percent this year to \$4.5 million. The landscaping portion alone increased 316 percent; impressive statistics for a company that's only been in business four years.

Ralph Lopez, vice president of landscape operations, has been largely responsible for the impressive jump in income. The success of the landscape division is as much a personal triumph for the 31-year-old as it is a business triumph. Lopez, the son of Spanish immigrant farm workers, has always set high personal goals for himself. He has transferred that



Tree-trimming is done with lightweight trucks to reduce stress on the turf.

There is no time sharing. Seacrest also maintains 25 other condominium developments from Ft. Pierce to Ft. Lauderdale, and has recently opened a Tampa division. Total acreage under its care is between 12,000 and 18,000 acres, 600 in turf acreage. The landscape division employs 60 people.

Bill Kerns and Neil Valentine bought the company in 1978 after working for it since 1968. Lopez was promoted to vice president last year after working as landscape division manager.

Lopez says the hardest thing he has to deal with are the condominium association boards; those people living in the complex elected to protect the interest of the residents.

"The changeover of personnel on boards is high, and usually what the boards are interested in is the bottom line which isn't always in the best interest of the maintenance program," Lopez says. "They are always considering how the maintenance fee looks to the potential buyer. Everyone is a resident expert (about maintenance). Trimming a tree can be traumatic."

The largest part of the maintenance fee at Century Village and Leisureville goes towards mowing.

What compounds the problem is that Lopez believes that in South Florida, the landscaping contributes greatly to the salability of the property.

"Most of the time, the board doesn't know what it takes to maintain property properly," he said.

Proper maintenance is no stranger to Lopez.

"With the Integrated Pest Management method, we treat on an as-needed basis and that way we have less chemicals in the atmosphere. It's also safer for the residents."

At the new Tampa division, mole crickets are a problem.

Two years ago, South Florida experienced a severe drought. Lopez began cutting his lawns higher and less frequently. He also used a slow release fertilizer. He changes his mower blades twice a day to get a good cut. His zero-turning radius Hustler, Heckendorn, Grasshop-

per and Dixon mowers give him the kind of maneuverability apartment and condominium care requires. He also has a prototype Heckendorn zero-radius mower with 91-inch "bat wings" that can mow in a zero radius of 54 inches. The machine is worth \$11,000.



Ralph Lopez, vice president of landscape operations for Seacrest Services, sits on the firm's prototype Heckendorn zero-radius mower with 91 inch "bat wings."

"We have the best of everything—mowers, people, management, and blend it to make a hybrid landscape maintenance firm." —Lopez

Cherry hedge and ficus are the predominant plants used at Century Village and Leisureville because of their disease-resistance and low maintenance. While some bahiagrass is used, St. Augustine is the predominant grass. Lopez contends with diseases and brown patch by using Daconil and Captan. Cutting height is 3 to 3½ inches.

"We go for structure here, not esthetics," Lopez says. "We try to put as little stress on the turf as possible."

His cutting schedule is dictated by the condominium contracts, but during the summer, mowing is usually done every seven to 10 days, in

the fall and spring, every 14 days, and in the winter, once a month.

Lopez uses a 100 percent slow release sulphur-coated urea fertilizer.

"The leaching effect provides a good, even green all-year round," he says. "Some people think it's cost prohibitive to use, but you use less in the long run because it's concentrated. Having to spread less fertilizer also means a savings in time and labor costs."

He fertilizes in the spring and fall and uses a 24-4-15 mixture in the summer.

"We change the analysis with the climatic conditions."

No selective herbicides are used at Leisureville or Century Village to take care of the torpedo, nut and bullgrass problems.

Irrigation on both properties is done from man-made lakes fed from the flood control districts. Century Village is irrigated manually. Leisureville is manual but is being converted to automatic because of problems with line breaks.

Palm Beach County takes care of flying insect control. Seacrest does do ground spraying around walks and households.

Bad drainage and trees planted by developers without their full growth potential in mind are continuing problems for Lopez.

Most of the trucks in the 50-vehicle Seacrest fleet are Mazdas. Lopez has Chevrolet and Ford cherry pickers with hydraulic buckets. Seacrest also buys used Bell Telephone trucks because they're light enough to be driven on lawns. Because of using the IPM method of pest control, Lopez's Swift 300-gallon sprayer truck is sufficient for his needs. He also has the usual assortment of string trimmers, leaf blowers and edgers. The company employs a full-time entomologist, Terry Lyons, and arborist, Ron Cower.

Seacrest prides itself on the type of working environment it provides for its employees. Incentive and hard work pay off in a variety of ways.

"We take a professional approach to everything," Lopez says.

"Follow-up is very important."

Seacrest material are people who are "hungry, young and friendly." Operational meetings are held twice a month for supervisors and foremen to clear up problems and "rap."

"I treat my people the way I'd like to be treated," Lopez says.

When a customer calls in to commend a worker for a job, the call gets posted on a "motivator board," that way everyone notices a job well done. Even the Seacrest shirts are incentive-oriented—non-supervisory personnel wear tee-shirts, supervisors have collared shirts. Picnics, softball games, Christmas parties and get-togethers help cement the family atmosphere Seacrest is proud of.

"We have the best of everything—mowers, people, management, and blend it to make a hybrid landscape maintenance firm," Lopez says.

Lopez himself is somewhat of a

hybrid. With no formal landscape or management training, he credits all of his landscape knowledge to the University of Florida Extension Service.

Lopez says the hardest thing he has to deal with are the condominium association boards.

"They have always been there when I needed them," he says. "I love this business and it will always be a part of my life."

His responsibilities at Seacrest include assisting the five-member sales department, doing proposals, public relations, buying equipment, setting up projects, doing time studies and keeping the lines of communication open in the company. He is a member of the

Florida Turfgrass Association, Florida Pest Control Association, Florida Grounds Maintenance Association and is on the Horticultural Advisory Board for the Palm Beach County Extension Service.

Lopez has worked as an estate groundskeeper and had a gardening and landscape business with his brother. But it's at Seacrest that he is realizing his real potential.

He readily admits he is not a "fat cat executive" and prefers to be outdoors driving tractors and "smelling freshly cut grass and grease on lawnmowers."

"I like to be at the pulse center of what's happening, not in an office somewhere," he says.

He's also a man who doesn't like to dwell on past accomplishments. Lopez has already set a new goal he'd like to help the company reach by 1984—that of doing \$5 million in business. With his past track record, he is well on the way to helping Seacrest realize it. **WTT**

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The August sunshine presents some real "health" problems for the air-cooled engine. Some special attention to maintenance during hot weather can help avoid engine "sunstroke."

Heat and dirt are the major causes of air-cooled engine failure. Warm air is less effective in engine cooling than cooler air. Therefore, when ambient temperatures are high, it is important that as much air as possible get to the fins on the cylinder and head.

The shrouds that direct the cooling air must be in place and the grass screen over the flywheel must be kept open. Also, the fins on the cylinder and cylinder head must be kept clean. This will be more difficult in the hot and dry summer months because grass clippings will be dryer, lighter, and drawn in with the cooling air more easily.

Engine oil also keeps engines cool in two ways. Its lubricating property reduces heat from friction and the oil also serves as a heat sink. High quality engine oil with an API rating of SC, SD, SE, or SF and the viscosity rating of SAE 30 is recommended for hot weather operation. Check the engine oil level before each engine operation and every five hours thereafter. Keep the level at the full mark, but don't overfill.

Dirt destroys engines and in hot and dry weather there is much more dust and dirt in the air. It is critical that the air cleaner be given more frequent attention. Wash oiled foam air cleaners in detergent and water, rinse, and dry. Re-oil with a generous amount of the same oil as is used in the engine crankcase. Paper elements should be cleaned by tapping on a clean surface. Don't use compressed air to clean paper element air cleaners since a hole could be blown in the filter. If tapping won't clean it, replace it with a genuine replacement filter supplied by the engine manufacturer.

Air cleaners that combine a paper element and an oil soaked sponge are particularly effective and are available for most air-cooled engines.

Attention to air cleaners, oil, and cooling systems is inexpensive and takes little time but will pay big dividends in avoiding engine "sunstroke."

Joseph M. Whalen
Manager of Technical Services
Wisconsin Magneto
Milwaukee, Wisconsin



Due to dust, seeds, grass clippings, etc. attention to air cleaners is particularly important in summer months.

Scientific Guide To Pest Control Operations

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WTT 83

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PROBLEM SOLVERS

By Balakrishna Rao, Ph.D.

Q: *I would appreciate it if you would furnish names of flowering plants which have a fragrance. We are interested in using these in landscape design. Please also mention some books or references on this subject. (Ohio)*

A: Your idea of including fragrant flowers with plants is very creative. Because of the space limitations, I will furnish the following reference sources which you might find interesting and helpful in your line of work.

1. *Plants for Fragrance*, Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Service, Publication No. L-243.
2. *Flowering Shrubs for Fragrance*, Morton Arboretum, Bulletin for Popular Information, Volume 13, No. 7, July 1938.
3. *Shrubs and Vines for American Gardens*, Donald Wyman, MacMillan Publishing Company, Inc., New York 10022.

Q: *Whom should we contact in case of a pesticide spill? (West Virginia)*

A: Pesticide spills or leaks should be handled effectively and promptly. In case of a pesticide spill, you can call several numbers for guidelines on clean up and decontamination.

You should notify the state department of agriculture for your particular state of any pesticide spills or leaks. In your case, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (304-348-2213) should be notified.

In addition, you should also notify the following agencies, depending upon the problem.

1. National Response Center (NRC) (800) 424-8802 - The NRC should be notified if a pesticide spill or accident occurs on a highway. They will in turn notify the proper authorities.
2. CHEMTREC (Chemical Transportation Emergency Center) and National Agricultural Chemicals Association (NACA) (800) 424-9300 - The CHEMTREC consultation team can assist you in providing identification of chemicals, safety guidelines, and manufacturer's emergency phone numbers. The NACA can give you technical advice on pesticides and telephone numbers of manufacturers. If clean up is needed, NACA can assist in getting in touch with the people who are equipped to clean up pesticides spills.

Keep these important numbers in easily accessible places and also in the pesticide spray truck for any emergency situation.

Q: *This spring we treated a number of lawns with Roundup for renovation. About mid-May when we visited the lawns for seeding we found a lot of broadleaf weeds. I am surprised by the results and so are the upset clients. Please help me—what might I have done wrong? (Michigan)*

A: From your statement I assume that your Roundup treatment took care of all the turfgrass in the lawn. Even though this is frustrating, the broadleaf weed

problem you are experiencing in Roundup-treated lawns has also been experienced by others. The following explanation might help you to better understand the situation.

I feel that your Roundup treatment worked well enough and it killed everything that was "green" in the lawn at the time of application. However, the weeds germinated later on and now present a problem. Recognize the fact that Roundup should kill all of the green vegetation in the lawn when contacted by direct spraying. It will break down in the soil and thus it does not have preemergent activity on ungerminated seeds or unaffected underground plant parts. Another explanation is that you might have accidentally missed a few areas. In that case, you should also see unaffected turfgrass along with weeds.

Q: *I have read that large tree limbs fall off or are spontaneously shed when the temperature is extremely hot. Is this true? (California)*

A: In checking literature, I have found that this can happen. Dr. R. Harris, of the University of California, has been collecting information on this phenomenon for years.

"High temperature limb breakage" or "summer branch drop" are terms used to describe the situation where apparently sound branches fail when it is hot and humid. Overmature and senescent trees are more susceptible to this condition than young, vigorously-growing trees of the same species. Oak, elm, pine, London plane, poplar and willow are some of the species involved. Limbs that fall are usually large in diameter, long and horizontal to the ground. The break occurs out on the limb rather than at the crotch.

Why limbs break or shed under the conditions you describe is not known. Shortening large scaffold limbs which hang over buildings or pedestrian areas is suggested.

Q: *Some of our clients have shaded lawns with poor turfgrass growth. Annual bluegrass is presenting a serious problem in these situations and we are interested in seeding the areas with shade-tolerant mixes. Our clients want a GUARANTEE on annual bluegrass control. Is there any preemergent material which can be used to control annual bluegrass? (Pennsylvania)*

A: The problem you are dealing with (established annual bluegrass under a shaded environment) is a difficult one. Make sure you prepare good seed beds and seed the area with shade-tolerant, aggressive cultivars. Follow good establishment procedures and cultural practices to discourage annual bluegrass from establishing from seed. Reducing the amount of shade should favor the growth of desirable grasses.

I think your clients are asking too much in wanting a guarantee on control of annual bluegrass. Because of the shade environment and the history of

annual bluegrass in the lawn, it would present a problem in the future and, thus, it would be difficult to give any guarantee on the job.

There is no herbicide on the market that will provide satisfactory control of annual bluegrass in lawns. Preemergent herbicides will help to prevent new seedlings from growing but will not kill established plants. Annual bluegrass is a short-lived plant which usually begins growth in late summer or early fall from seed. Application for annual bluegrass control should be made in late summer and spring. Follow the directions on the label for application rates.

Advise the client not to expect complete elimination of annual bluegrass with herbicides alone. Emphasize the importance of maintaining good cultural practices to help manage the problem.



Balakrishna Rao is plant pathologist for Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, OH.

Questions should be mailed to Problem Solver, Weeds Trees & Turf, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44130. Please allow 2-3 months for an answer to appear in the magazine.



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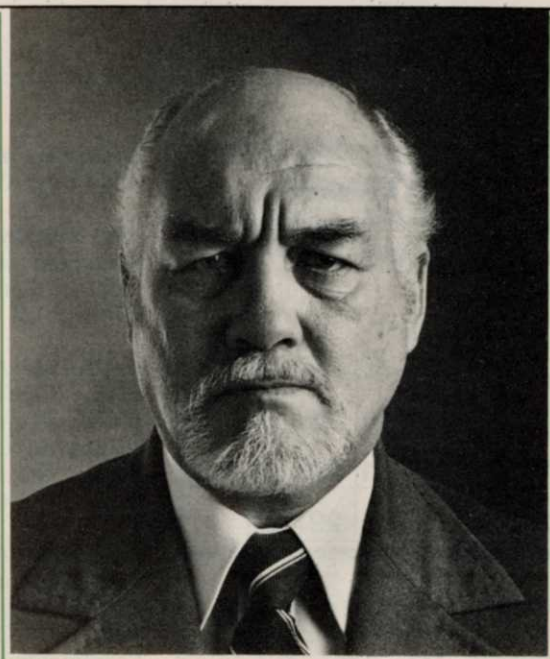
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EVENTS

SEPTEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

Maine Nurserymen's Association Summer Picnic, Wassamki Springs, Westbrook, ME. **Aug. 14.** Contact Richard Churchill, Executive Secretary PST/SMVTI, South Portland, ME 04106. (207) 799-7303.

International Society of Arboriculture Annual Conference, Indianapolis, IN **July 14-18.**

1983 Ornamentals Northwest Seminars, Portland, ME **Aug. 26-28.**

University of Rhode Island Turfgrass Field Day, Kingston, RI. **Aug. 31.**

East Lansing Turfgrass Field Day, Michigan State University. **Sept. 1.** Contact Paul E. Rieke, MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824

California Association of Nurserymen, Pacific Horticultural Trade Show, Anaheim Convention Center, Anaheim, CA **Sept. 8-10.** Contact CAN, 1419 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814. (916) 448-2881.

California Association of Nurserymen Convention, Lake Arrowhead Hilton Lodge, Lake Arrowhead, CA. **Sept. 11-13.** Contact CAN, 1419 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 448-2881.

Interior Plantscape Association Fifth Annual Conference and Trade Show, Diplomat Hotel, Hollywood, FL. **Sept. 11-14.** Contact Ann Sher, National Headquarters Office, 11800 Sunrise Valley Dr., Reston, VA 22091 (703) 476-8550.

California Association of Nursery-

men Horticultural Study Tour, South Africa, **Sept. 21-Oct. 12.** Contact CAN 1419 21st St., Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 448-2881.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Service Turfgrass Field Days, Blacksburg, VA. **Sept. 27-29.** Contact J.R. Hall, VPI&SU Agronomy Dept., Blacksburg, VA 24061. (703) 961-5797.

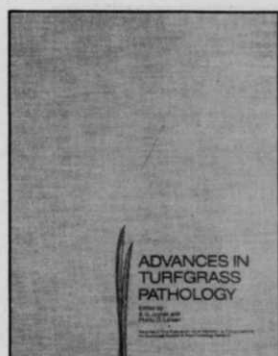
International Pesticide Applicators Association 1983 Annual Convention, Tigard, OR. **Sept. 28-30.** Contact IPAA, c/o Grass Spray Service, Inc., PO Box 2523, Eugene, OR 97402.

The New York Botanical Garden, "The New Perennials," **Oct. 1.** Contact NYBG, Cindee Howard, Assistant to the director of Education, Bronx, NY 10458, (212) 220-8700.

To insure that your event is included, please forward it, 90 days in advance, to: WEEDS TREES & TURF Events, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130.

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Circle No. 145 on Reader Inquiry Card

Lakeshore announces new line of products

Lakeshore Equipment and Supply Co. of Elyria, OH, is marketing 40 pound capacity rotary spreaders. The two spreaders are offered in addition to the 80 pound capacity Lesco Spreader introduced last year. One 40-pound spreader is made with a stainless steel hopper, pneumatic tires and ball bearing wheels. The other 40-pound spreader is manufactured with a green baked-on epoxy enamel on steel hopper and heavy-duty plastic wheels. The spreading spinner in both new Lesco Spreader models produces uniform spread. Rate control adjusts for precise spreading rates.

Circle No. 146 on Reader Inquiry Card

* * * *

The new Lesco Tee-Handle Soil Probes are constructed in stainless steel and come in 21 inch lengths with three quarter inch core size and 17-inch length with seven-sixteenths core size.

Circle No. 147 on Reader Inquiry Card

* * * *

The Lesco Products Division is also marketing small and large litter baskets and directional signs for use in recreational and golf course facilities. The weather-resistant cypress litter baskets have vat-dipped frames. Baskets are available with pedestals, spikes, brackets or on posts to be set in concrete. The large size basket is 20 inches by 18 by 21 inches deep and fits a standard 22-gallon trash can (not included). The small basket is 12½

inches by 11 inches by 16 inches deep and comes with one liner.

The heavy-duty polyethylene directional and informational signs are available in white or yellow and are equipped with steel spikes for convenient display. Decal messages are available separately.

Circle No. 148 on Reader Inquiry Card

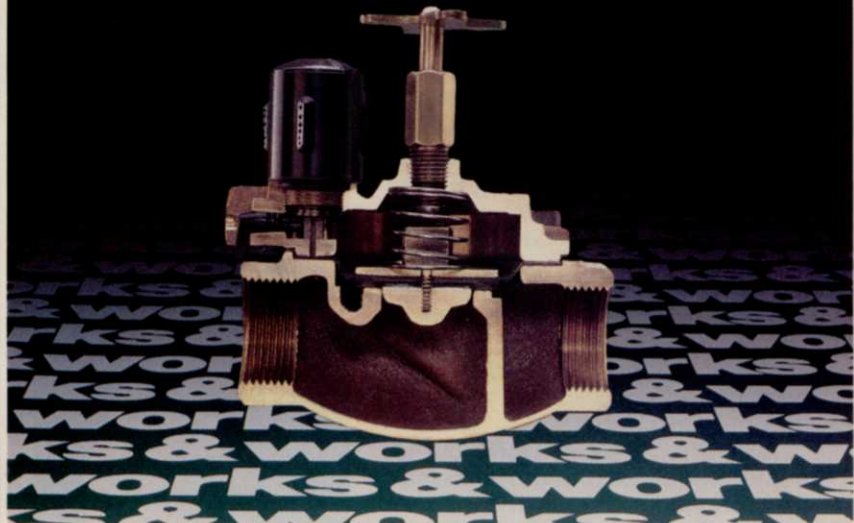
Foot starting, air sweep added to Excel's BAC-VAC

A new air sweep and easy-start for the

auxiliary engine have been added to the Hustler 261's 16-bushel capacity BAC-VAC Grass Vacuum attachment from Excel Industries, Inc., of Hesston,



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KS. The BAC-VAC Grass Vacuum attachment is exclusively for use on the Excel Hustler 261 lawn tractor with a 60-inch three-way mowing deck.

The new air sweep feature is located at ground level on the right side of the mower deck. It can be used to blow clippings or other debris from walks and drives. A hand lever controls the air sweep from the driver's seat. When open, it directs a strong stream of air out the side discharge port. Closed, it directs the air through the collector chute for added vacuum action.

A 5 hp auxiliary engine powers the vacuum flow to pull clippings and debris from the side of the mowing deck through a collector chute and into a 16-bushel collector bin. A two-gallon fuel tank is provided for the auxiliary engine.

The Bac-Vac is easy to use. As leaves and grass clippings are cut and vacuumed, they're deposited in the rear-mounted collector bin. The air flow continues on and through the bottom rear of the bin so dust is discharged to the rear for a clean operator

environment. When the collector bin is full, a visual spinner alerts the operator. To empty it, a locking lever is released, and the bin's over-center balance dumps clippings out the rear door as the operator drives forward to continue mowing. The rear-mounted design of the BAC-VAC system doesn't hinder maneuverability of the 261. With dual hydrostatic drive and twin-lever steering, an operator can easily mow in and around obstacles.

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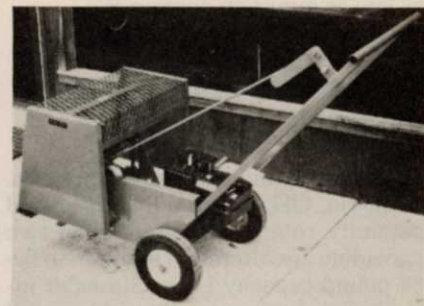


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Turfco's "Turf Plugger" for lawn aeration

Turfco, Inc., has introduced a self-propelled lawn aeration machine designed for all types of soil. The Turfco "Turf Plugger" is powered by a 3 hp B&S, 4-cycle engine and is equipped with eight solid steel tines to remove a plug 9/16 inches in diameter and 1¾



inches deep. It is equipped with an adjustable clutch for easy starting and stopping. The chain-driven machine can aerate the soil at a rate of 400 square feet per minute. Another feature is the alignment of the outer tines allowing the "Turf Plugger" to operate within 2 to 3 inches of obstructions such as sidewalks, curbs and buildings.

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Demise is low-odor, 2,4-D herbicide

Kalo has patented a new 2,4-D herbicide. Demise® is a non-volatile and virtually odorless herbicide which leaves no vapors.

Kalo recommends Demise® for knockdown and control of susceptible broadleaf weeds in grass turf and lawns. It is specific for common chickweed, dandelions, knotweed and plaintains.

Demise® is packaged in dry crystal form. It will not freeze in storage. Since it is concentrated, storage space is minimized. The crystals in one bag quickly and easily form enough spray solution for weed control on up to two acres.

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