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The Magazine of Landscape and Golf Course Management Since 1962

24 Street Trees Need to Change As Cities Change

Trees that worked well when our commercial centers were first developed can no longer take the strain of today's cities. Horticulturist Doug Chapman offers six tips for selecting street trees.

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Normally temperate regions of the South were hit this winter with fluke cold spells. Horticulturist Michael Dirr describes why plants failed to adjust this winter.

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Operators of trim mowers can kill valuable trees by careless small injuries to the base of trees. Drs. Shigo and Tattar show how bumps kill trees.

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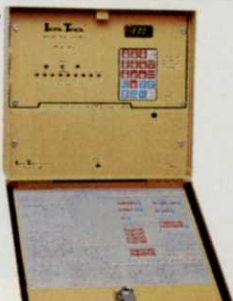
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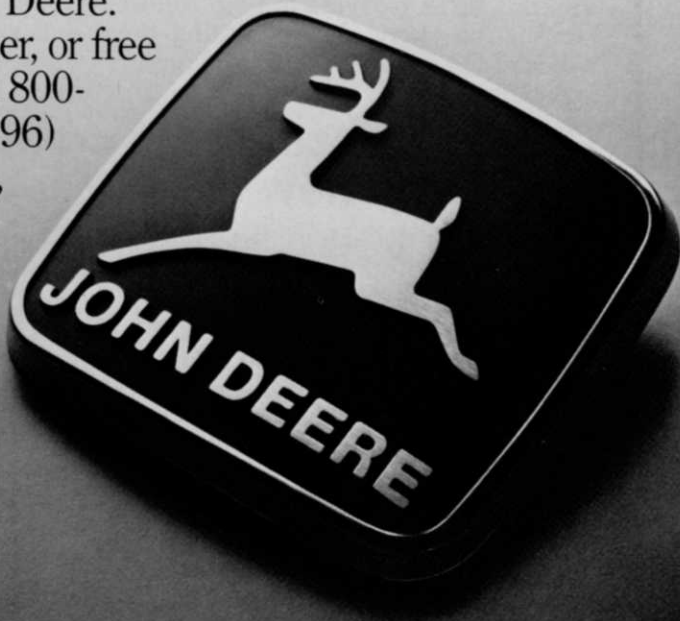
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by Bruce F. Shank, executive editor

Weather changes standards for cold hardiness in Texas

Tip of the Month—Ft. Worth, TX, Plant Pro Rich Pluenneke has reported plants currently rated to survive Texas winters are suffering severe damage this winter.

Some zone 7 and 8 plants are having trouble with the December low temperatures in the 20's. Ligustrum and oleander have been hit hard. "Losses were expected to reach 15 to 20 percent in December," Pluenneke said. "Recent checks indicate losses may go as high as 70 percent in Ft. Worth."

Turf has also been hit. Pluenneke said "Raleigh" St. Augustine appears winter-damaged in his area. "Raleigh" is a variety developed in North Carolina to withstand colder winter temperatures than other types of St. Augustine.

Although this winter may not be matched for years, Pluenneke thinks Texas landscape architects and contractors should take note of the losses and reevaluate the problem plants for their area.

Pinkus claims colleges care more about grants than students

Outgoing Associated Landscape Contractors of America President Dave Pinkus blasted colleges for caring more about grants than preparing students for the business world during a speech at ALCA's annual conference in Phoenix.

"Higher educational institutions are more interested in research grants and protection of tenured faculty than they are in producing marketable students," exclaimed Pinkus. "Our industry's number one problem is finding qualified people."

Pinkus outlined four areas where colleges fall short. Few schools require business courses for landscape contracting students, encourage students to gain industry exposure, have faculty with exposure to the landscape industry, and know individual needs of the landscape market or students.

"You could say colleges are cheating the students, fired Pinkus. ALCA is trying to help colleges to develop landscape contracting curricula by visiting them and explaining the needs of the market.

Changing technology creates shortfall in new talent

If your son or daughter is wondering what career to pursue, Dale E. Wolf thinks he or she should look into agricultural technology.

Wolf is group vice president, agricultural chemicals for Du Pont. "Technology is literally racing ahead in numerous fields today," Wolf points out. "We (agriculture) may be sidetracked simply because we cannot organize and train the necessary army of talented and highly trained scientists, technicians and managers. Too few American students recognize there are dozens of careers in agriculture which will place them on the leading edge of major scientific developments."

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LAWNCARE

Chemical insanity defense flops in trial

A former lawn care company employee who balanced a murder defense on chemical intoxication was found guilty in a Massachusetts courtroom in February in the garroting, bludgeoning death of a 34-year-old woman.

David Garabedian, 23, in a precedent-setting defense, alleged the chemicals he used as an employee at Old Fox Lawn Care, induced temporary insanity and caused him to strangle and bludgeon to death Eileen Muldoon, a Middlesex (Mass.) County woman. Muldoon caught Garabedian urinating in her yard while he was working in a neighboring yard. In the ensuing argument, Garabedian allegedly strangled and bludgeoned the woman with rocks from a nearby wall.

It took 16 jurors seven hours to reach the guilty verdict.

Industry reaction to the verdict has been mixed. Most lawn care operators, however, feel the whole incident was over much too quickly to have formed any kind of lasting public sentiment.

"It was a situation that could have taken place in any industry or in any business," said Paul Bizon of Prograss, Hubbard, OR. "It's unfortunate he (Garabedian) hung it on the chemical industry."

John Kenney, owner of Turf Doctor in Framingham, MA, and president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America said, "If you let your imagination go, you could easily imagine any former employee who ever got a hangnail suing you for damages."

The impact of the trial on the convicted man's former employer has been "minimal" according to Dr. J. Wilkinson of Old Fox.

"We have not heard from any of our customers in regard to the trial whatsoever."

However, some lawn care operators voiced concern that ramifications from the trial may come down the road, such as around the routine spraying time of insecticides.

Wilkinson voiced some of the same sentiment.

"We don't know the impact it'll have on potential future customers who may never call because of the trial."

The controversial trial, did, however, bring to the fore once again a facet of the growing anti-pesticide movement in the country; a facet that has gained enough steam to be used as a murder defense.

Said Terry Witt of Dow Chemical USA, manufacturer of Dursban, the chemical of record in the case: "We were glad that the jury looked at the scientific data rather than at the emotional appeal which is attached to that plea. Obviously, one of the real concerns the industry faces is the anti-pesticide movement afoot within the country. One of our major challenges is to figure out how to communicate with the general public and translate some of our technical information to a level that people can comprehend."

INDUSTRY

Amfac to drop hort operations

Saying their horticulture businesses are not "conducive to effective corporate management," Amfac President and Chief Executive Officer Myron Du Bain has announced plans to divest those operations from the company as part of long-range restructuring plan.

The plan, designed to focus the firm's resources on high-margin and growth businesses, will divest Amfac of \$177 million in assets that lost \$48 million last year, Du Bain said. A \$15 million after-tax reserve has been taken against Horticulture Group businesses, as well as \$10 million against their west coast retail operations, Liberty House of California.

"Horticulture has proven to be, for Amfac, a series of small businesses which we do not believe to be conducive to effective corporate management," Du Bain said. "The nurseries segment of our business has been our biggest horticulture problem over the past two years, due principally to lengthy growing cycles and depressed housing starts during the 1981-83 time period."

John Mendez, executive vice president of Amfac's Horticulture Group,

said five separate business entities are involved in the divestiture: Cal-Turf sod producers (three locations), Jenco wholesale nurseries (four locations), three container nurseries, Garden Perry's (three locations) and two mail order operations—Gurney Seed and Henry Field.

Of the horticulture and retail operations, Du Bain said, "While these activities do not fit our growth plans, we and our investment bankers believe that they are attractive and desirable to others in their respective industries."

COVER STORY

National Arbor Day finally nears reality

After 40 years of trying, the Committee for National Arbor Day may be near their goal, to have the last Friday in April proclaimed Arbor Day across the country.

Today, 24 states have legislation recognizing trees on various days from February through May. The

Committee believes the impact of a national day of recognition, the same day each year in every state, would be much greater. To this end, they have received support from more than 90 U.S. congressmen for the National Arbor Day Bill, H.J. Res. #71.

Harry J. Banker, national chairman of the Committee, believes passage of this bill is nearing reality and calls for all organizations and individuals in the landscape industries to ask their senators and representatives to support the legislation. Banker and many state Arbor Day chairmen have persistently sought a national holiday for years. The idea was created in the early '40's by Clevelander Edward Scanlon.

Banker feels a national day is needed to counteract a relentless decrease in tree population caused by increasing maintenance costs and reduced planting space for trees. "Our large elms and soft maples cost many dollars to prune, spray and fertilize," Banker states.

These trees are not being replaced with lower maintenance trees as they are lost to insects, disease and weather damage. Arbor Day legislation would help in both planting and replacement of urban trees, Banker and his group of volunteers believe.

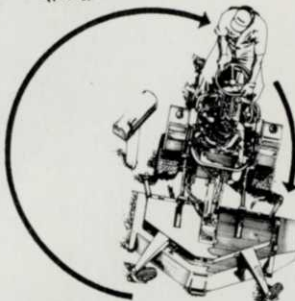


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