

Merger Mania: Landscape Suppliers Involved

The big news this winter has been the number of mergers, many of which could impact the turf and landscape market.

The most recent negotiations were between Diamond Shamrock and Occidental Petroleum. The merger, which was cancelled, would have combined the oil and gas reserves of the two large companies. Diamond Shamrock is partner with Showa Denko, a Japanese chemical company, in SDS Biotech, manufacturer of Dacthal and Daconil.

In other recent negotiations, NOR-AM Chemical Company, Wilmington, DE, has made an offer to purchase the Plant Health Business of Upjohn, according to Leo Ekins, president of NOR-AM and David Phillipson, vice president and general manager, Agricultural Division, of the Upjohn Company, Kalamazoo, MI.

Included in the transaction are the Actidione line of fungicides for turfgrass, lawns, and ornamentals; Botran, fungicide for edible and ornamental crops; Enide, preemergence herbicide for tobacco, edible and ornamental crops; and BAAM, Upjohn's brand of amitraz, a miticide/insec-

ticide for pears and other crops.

NOR-AM manufactures and sells a wide variety of agrochemicals and specialty chemical products, including lines in the turf and ornamental areas. The Upjohn products will reportedly be marketed and distributed in accordance with NOR-AM's sales and marketing policies.

A third merger discussed has been an unsolicited offer by Chicago Pacific Corporation to pay \$43 a share in cash for Textron Inc. But, the offer was not received enthusiastically in the Textron board room. Textron is the multi-faceted industrial concern based in Rhode Island. Jacobsen is one of its divisions.

Textron Chairman Robert P. Straetz said his company would be "better served" if it remained independent. Textron responded to Chicago Pacific's offer by retaining a New York law firm which has been successful in designing aggressive defense tactics to potential take-overs.

Chicago Pacific is a new company, the successor to the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company which filed for bankruptcy protection in 1975 and was operated by a court-appointed

trustee the following four years.

Mergers previously reported in *Weeds Trees & Turf* are the pending combination of International Harvester's Agricultural Equipment Group and Tennaco, parent of J.I. Case, and Chevron's purchase of Gulf Oil. Both instances have possible repercussions. Many IH and Case dealerships are being combined, leaving existing dealerships for other companies to exploit. Chevron is selling assets to pay for its leveraged buyout of Gulf. Inside word is that Chevron, parent of Ortho, has plans for the exterior and interior landscape industries. Also, since Ortho has shelf position at garden centers equal or greater than Scott or Burpee, it may invest in expanding its garden center and discount store position.

Changes at Velsicol and Estech are also possible, with negotiations and financing arrangements changing weekly. Velsicol has new products for turf it is preparing to launch, as does Estech, which has a plastic-coated urea called Meister ready for market.

Keep reading *WT&T* (or the *Wall Street Journal*) for up-to-date information.



New ASLA president

Robert H. Mortensen is sworn in as president of the American Society of Landscape Architects by past president Darwina L. Neal at the organization's annual meeting recently in Phoenix. Mortensen will serve a one-year term.

INDUSTRY

Landfill woes threaten Long Island industries

Finding places to dump landscape debris has long since passed the headache stage in Long Island, NY, prominent Green Industry spokesmen there tell *Weeds Trees & Turf*.

It's a problem that's not likely to be resolved quickly or inexpensively these same spokesmen fear.

With local associations eyeing their war chests and threatening to initiate political action committees, the problem could easily spill into the political arena.

The heart of the problem is the state-mandated closing of all landfills in densely populated Nassau and Suffolk Counties, and the inability of Green Industry leaders and government officials to hammer out suitable alternatives for the disposal of tons of landscape debris generated by customers of landscape and lawn businesses.

Although the sheer volume of garbage in general (the New York City skyline miles away is visible from the tops of some landfills) is part of the

problem, government agencies are concerned about the quality of ground water supplies since Long Island depends almost exclusively upon well water.

The state has given the 13 communities in the two counties until 1990 to close their landfills. Some have already been closed.

"We have been aware of this problem for several years but the landfill situation is in the critical state right now," Jon Hickey, a member and past president of the Long Island Arborists Association, says. Efforts to convince individual communities to set aside areas for the disposal of lawn and garden debris, in effect community compost areas, have so far made little headway, he reports.

"We know that with every landfill there could be an area set aside that can be used by our industry and we could help police it," he says. "We can cooperate with the various government agencies if we can find some middle ground."

continued on page 18

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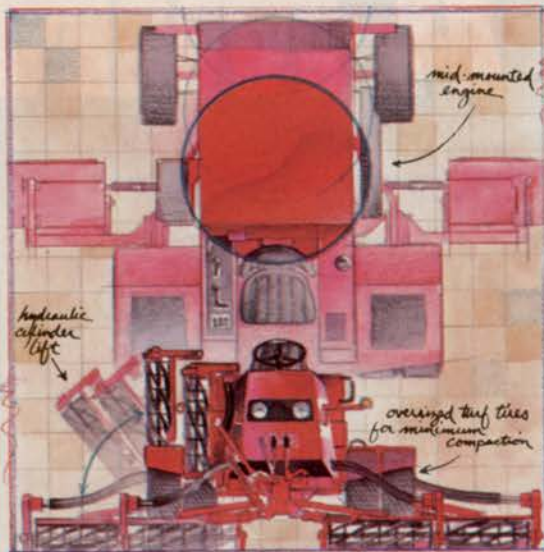
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Alternatives could be costly to landscape and lawn care concerns—and their customers. Household garbage in some areas of Long Island is already reportedly being trucked 100 miles to Goshen, NY, at a cost of \$50 a ton. Long Island Green Industry businessmen are wondering how much of an additional charge, a so-called disposal fee, their customers are willing to pay to get rid of the clippings, leaves, and branches arising from the care of their properties.

"It's really a complex problem about how to charge for this," says Andrew Hanlon, president of the Nassau Chapter of the Nassau/Suffolk Landscape Gardeners Association. "We've suggested that our materials shouldn't be mixed in with garbage but be composted. Our landfill was 181 acres and now it's down to 50. When it's filled up where are we going to put it. That's the problem."

Solutions, including the reduction of the amount of fertilizers on lawns to reduce clippings, aren't likely to come easily or cheaply.

PESTICIDES

Ohio pesticide groups unite

The Ohio Pesticide Task Force and the Society to Educate Pesticide Safety (STEPS) will merge and become the Ohio Pesticide Applicators for Responsible Regulation, OPARR.

This new group grows out of concerns in various areas of Ohio over pesticide legislation, like that in Lyndhurst, OH, where the Cleveland suburb is trying to pass legislation on prenotification of pesticide spraying by lawn care companies.

At press time, plans were calling for Jim Betts, lobbyist for the Ohio Nurserymen's Association, to act as executive director. Coordinators are Betts, Lonnie Alonzo, Dr. Phil Larsen and Lauren Lanphear.

"The first priority for the OPARR is to get preemptive legislation introduced on a statewide level," notes Lanphear of Forest City Tree Protection, Cleveland. "In that respect, the situation in Lyndhurst helped, because now there's an ordinance on the books. We plan on asking the Ohio Attorney General for an opinion on the issue."

The Ohio Pesticide Task Force was created one year ago as a protective organization hoping to cut off anti-

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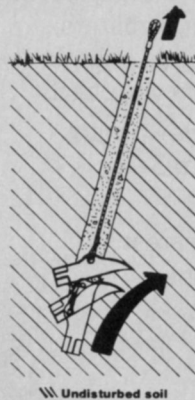
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pesticide legislation before it got a footing.

RESEARCH

Tru-Green readying turf research site

Tru-Green, Lansing, MI, is expanding property it had used for several years for truck buildup into a new turf research and development facility. The site in Fremont, IN, just below the Michigan state line, is to include about 3½ acres of turfgrass plots.

"We will use it to evaluate materials which we use for our residential and commercial applications," says Al Turgeon of Tru-Green. Eventually the Tru-Green Turf Research and Development Facility could be used to study ornamentals, equipment, and be used for training programs as well, Turgeon says.

The facility should be ready for turfgrass research sometime this spring.

ASSOCIATION

PLCAA regional seminar date set

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America's 2nd annual Florida Regional Seminar is slated for Feb. 14 at the Orlando Hilton Inn/Florida Center.

The all-day program is applicator-oriented covering such topics as turfgrass entomology, pesticide handling and safety, a review of state laws, calibration of spreaders and sprayers, and turfgrass identification.

For further information contact Jim Brooks, executive director of PLCAA, 1225 Johnson Ferry Road N.E., Suite B 220, Marietta, GA 30067. (404) 977-5222.

EDUCATION

Davey training program offered

Davey Environmental Services is offering a two-week Tree Care/Urban Forestry Foreman Training Program to help urban foresters manage their street and park trees. The instruction is designed for municipal, state, federal and institutional foremen, top trimmers, and supervisory employees.

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