



Joe, why is it important to have a fungicide that will work against a lot of different fungus diseases? "At any given time, conditions may be right for three or more different fungus diseases. And others may be dormant in your turf, waiting for conditions to change. You never really know what you'll be up against next."

What makes Fertilizer Plus Fungicide VIII so special? "It's a broad-spectrum fungicide—among the broadest on the market, in fact. It handles dollar spot, brown patch, leaf spot, red leaf spot, and pink snow mold. And it's a double-barreled weapon against disease: it works first on contact for quick action, then systemically for additional protection."

Sounds like that would be helpful to any turf manager. "Sure would. It makes things a little handier—you don't have to pick and choose from among several products for the best treatment."

What about follow-up outbreaks of those diseases? "You don't have to be as concerned about future disease problems, because Fertilizer Plus Fungicide VIII does more than just cure. It's also effective as a preventative."

How often should you apply it? "Every 10 days to 3 weeks, depending on the severity of the disease pressure."

Won't that be too much nitrogen? "No. At the recommended application rates, you'd be using a modest amount of nitrogen consistent with the development of quality greens."

How does the price compare with other alternatives? "The pricing is very competitive. Considering that the alternative is normally a combination of products—which may even call for different methods of application—I think a lot of turf managers will end up saving money with this fungicide combination."

For more information about Fertilizer Plus Fungicide VIII, call your ProTurf® Tech Rep. Or call Scotts® direct at 800-543-0006.

“Economy and broad-spectrum action will make this one of your most powerful weapons against turf disease.”

Joe Bell, Scotts Research project leader (Turfgrass Fungicide R&D), talks about new Fertilizer Plus Fungicide VIII.

Circle No. 145 on Reader Inquiry Card



"Our range of equipment includes everything from a \$15 string trimmer to an airport runway snow blower at \$300,000 or a Snorkle, a piece of fire fighting equipment, at \$400,000," says vice-president Richard Duke.

Richard is the son of company co-founder G.C. Duke, who at 80 is still a vigorous force in the business and well known in the Canadian turf industry. The elder Duke started as a commissioned salesman (the garage behind his home was his office), worked that into a dealership and eventually a distributorship.

Gravely was the first manufacturer he represented. He later sold that business to Studebaker.

Company expanding

Today Duke Equipment represents dozens of different manufacturers.

The airport runway equipment is new for the Ontario-based company. It could be profitable. To reflect the addition of heavier equipment several years ago, the company name was changed from Duke Lawn Equipment. "The name was getting us into trouble with some of our bids," Richard Duke recalls.

Turf, however, remains the backbone of the company and accounts for about 80 percent of sales. Says Duke, a big man with a ruddy complexion and 25 years in the business, "Our strength really comes from the golf course and parks industries."

The growth of the business had employees pumping inventory and sales figures into a new IBM 36 computer at the Burlington headquarters from last December to mid-summer. An attractive, young keyboard operator complains with a smile, "If they wouldn't keep adding data, we would be done by now." Duke Equipment has outgrown the capabilities of two previous computer systems.

The company headquartered in Lake Ontario-hugging Burlington (a city of about 100,000 an easy drive up from Niagara Falls) maintains an office in Montreal, direct lines to nearby Toronto, and sells to all of eastern Canada with dealers extending to the Maritimes.

It's a mobile and an aggressive sales force that drives Duke Equipment.

Parked outside of Richard Duke's office window is muscular green ¾-ton pickup with sparkling chrome wheels, one of a fleet of 12 that cruises the long but narrow band of the Canadian turf industry. Geography defines



Dick Raycroft, seated, conducts on-site demonstration for an interested on-looker.

Duke's territory. The 12 salesmen are divided between municipal and dealer/landscape accounts in Ontario and Quebec, concentrating on that 80-mile wide strip containing most of Canada's population.

Selling turf equipment in Canada poses special problems.

"All our salesmen are commissioned and pay their own expenses," Richard Duke says. "We supply the salesmen with the basic trucks and they fix them up with all the options." All 12 trucks are powered by propane, offering a substantial savings in transportation cost.

Two tractor-trailer "traveling billboards" complement the company's road show at field days and demonstrations.

Selling turf equipment in Canada poses special problems.

The American dollar (as of press time) is worth \$1.38 Canadian, and most imported turf equipment is subject to duties of 11 percent plus a 10 percent federal sales tax.

Says Duke: "For mowers and equipment up here, the American list price is the dealer's cost. It's a problem, and it isn't. Everybody up here is faced with the same situation."

Marketers often say that selling to

Canada is selling just 1/10th of what you'd move in the States. Not true, says Duke. Professional mowing takes on more significance than the so-called 10-to-1 ratio would suggest.

Reel mowing popular

Says Duke, "I think there's a lot more reel cutting done here in parks and by landscapers. Reel mowing takes a lot less horsepower per inch of cut, and the maintenance of reel mowers has come down dramatically in the last couple of years."

He adds, "One of the biggest changes we've seen is when reel mowers went hydraulic. We were one of the first to jump on hydraulic mowing." Duke Equipment is the largest distributor of Ransomes reel mowing equipment in North America.

The sophistication of the Canadian turf market is also reflected in the growing importance of such practices as clipping removal and fairway mowing as short as 3/8th an inch. "The golfer is becoming far more demanding, and industrial customers are displaying more pride. They're becoming better corporate citizens," Duke says. "There is something new coming all the time."

When it does, Duke equipment will be there.

"We expect our salesmen to have demonstration equipment with them at all times," says sales director Tanner. "If a manufacturer comes out with a new product, they'll take that too."

WT&T

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Circle No. 148 on Reader Inquiry Card

University City Village Tried to Beat the System.

When 74-acre University City Village in San Diego installed an automatic sprinkler system 18 years ago, the choice was Weather-matic remote control valves. Today Anson Mendoza, grounds maintenance manager, says the original 1,000 bronze valves (1" to 2" in size) have performed ever since. Watering the grounds of the 542 unit apartment complex and 9-hole golf course with only routine maintenance. And not a single valve replacement required.

With performance like that, it's easy to see why so many professionals choose Weather-matic valves for their turf irrigation systems.

You can count on Weather-matic quality be-

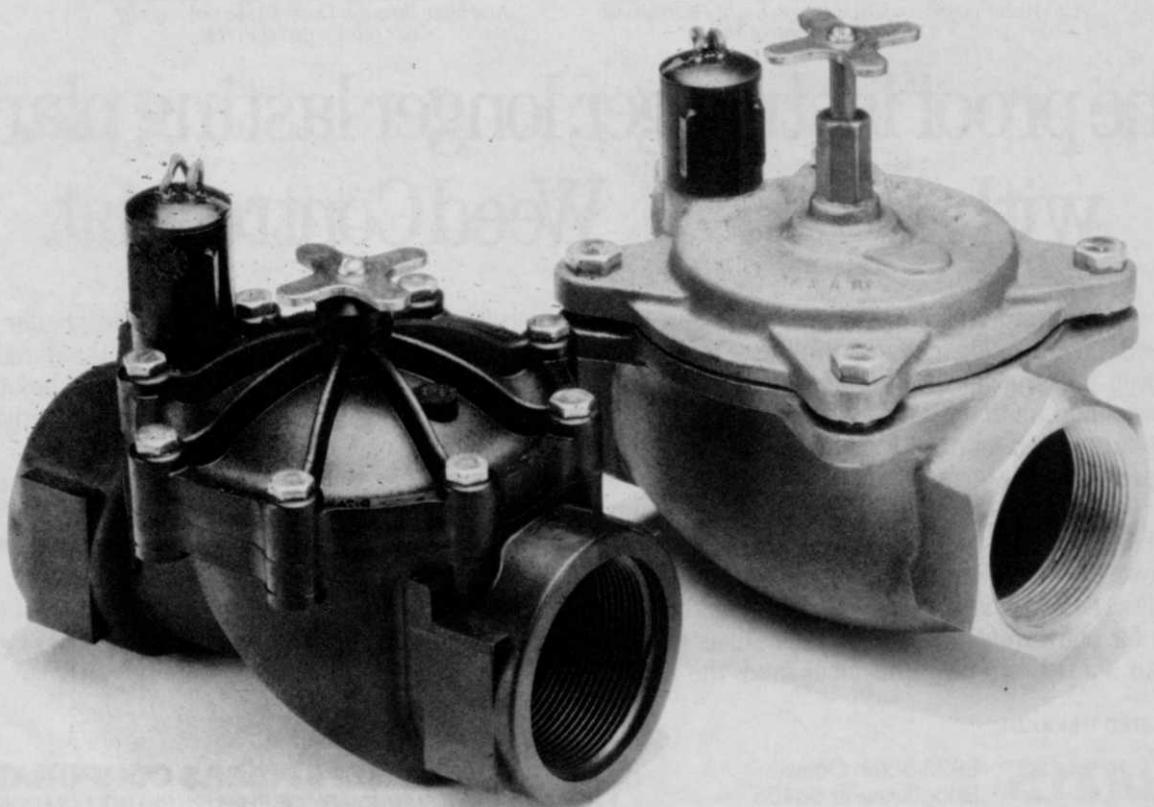


cause every valve is pressure-tested before leaving the factory. Valves are available in sizes to suit every application. Heavy cast bronze 3/4" to 3" or high-strength, glass-filled nylon 1" to 2".

A special design reduces the chance of contamination with a teflon coated solenoid actuator, and a ported flexing diaphragm that eliminates traditional bleed tubes or channels. Teamed up with Weather-matic controllers and sprinkler heads, they're an unbeatable combination.

So take it from Anson Mendoza — Weather-matic valves deliver years of trouble-free service. Call or write for all the details.

You can't beat the system.



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LAWN AND TURF IRRIGATION

Growing in Florida

A second generation of leaders guide DeBra Turf & Industrial Equipment in the Sunshine State's expanding turf equipment market.

by Ron Hall, associate editor

Jud DeBra, tan and trim at 43, his dark hair graying, cranks up the big Chevy, snaps on cruise control and settles in for the 3½-hour drive south from Orlando. Destination: Hollywood, FL. Mission: to stay one step ahead of Florida's turfgrass industry.

DeBra the company official and DeBra Equipment the company are on the move. Hollywood is the busiest of three DeBra Turf & Industrial Equipment Company offices.

"We see things changing here in Florida," Jud DeBra says.

The V-8 bends coastward and miles of scrub pine and acres of grazing cattle give way to gleaming patches of white Florida sand—bulldozed sites of future residential developments and the businesses they spawn. South Florida creeps north. DeBra Equipment, the largest Jacobsen distributor in North America

and guided by a second-generation of family members, will be pushing hard here soon with the addition of an office in Stuart, FL, just north of West Palm Beach.

New generation

Last May, Bill DeBra retired as president. He is one of the five brothers who founded the company. In 1946 he and brothers Don, George, Jack, and Jud, Sr., began selling Cushman scooters and three-wheel vehicles from Tampa and Atlanta, GA, dealerships.

"I guess there is no secret to the success of this business," Bill's son Tom says. "It was just good old hard work. They put their noses to the grindstone and got down to work."

Dave DeBra (Jack's son) is DeBra Equipment's executive vice president. He and Tom direct the East

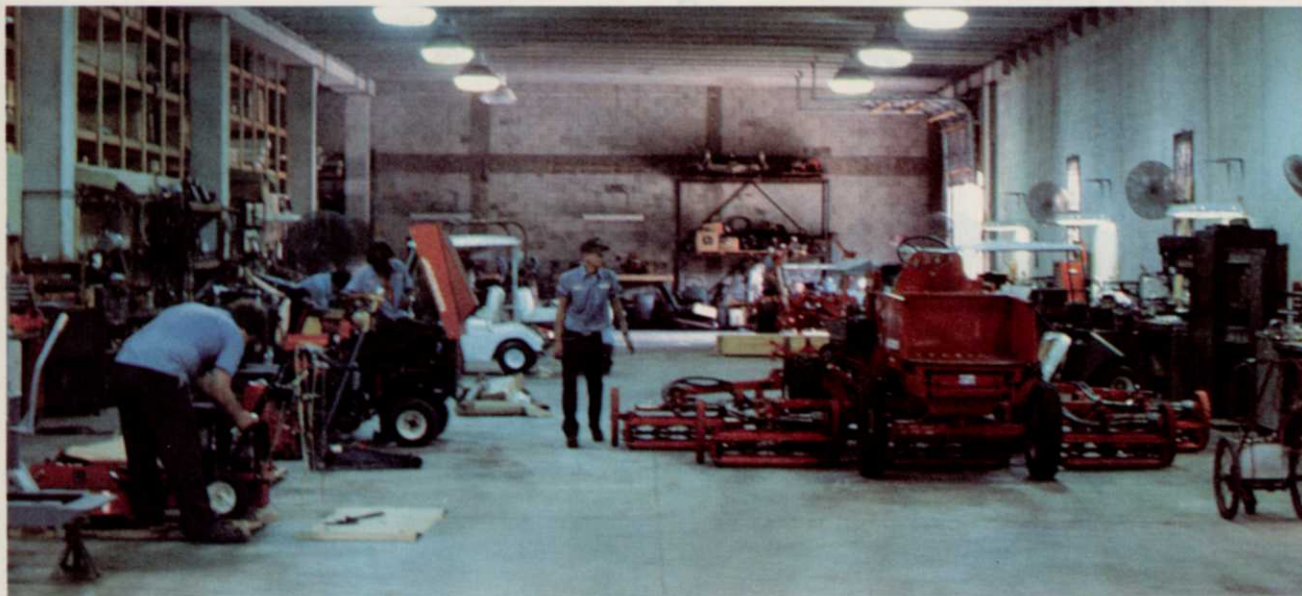
Coast operation out of the Hollywood office. Jud (son of the late Jud, Sr.) is the corporate vice president and directs the West Coast offices of Fort Myers and Tampa. Dave has been with the business 20 years, Jud 17, and Tom, the youngest of the three cousins, four years.

This is the heart of a hard-working and visible management team that takes an active role in community and professional functions. Dave is past president of the Florida Turf-Grass Association.

Golf is king

Hard work is one reason for DeBra Turf's success. Florida golf is another.

Says Jud, "Of the 100 new golf courses built in the country last year, 24 were built in Florida. People come to Florida to be near the water or to be near green. Waterfront property is



Employees service equipment in DeBra's vast warehouse



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Jud DeBra (sportcoat), Tom DeBra with Jacobsen HF-15 reel mower.

getting expensive and scarce, so a lot of Florida development centers around golf courses. Developers can pay for a new course with the sale of lots."

In 1956 the company entered the golf business by leasing golf carts (a service it still provides with the lease of 150 carts to Dade County). Not until 1960—when Jack DeBra moved to Hollywood, FL, just north of Miami—did it plunge into the commercial turf market as a distributor for Jacobsen. The introduction of a riding greens-mower by Jacobsen in 1968 made things happen for DeBra—and for Florida golf course maintenance.

Or as Jud says: "The growth explosion hit."

Latest figures show 770 golf courses in the state. Play is measured at about 34 million rounds annually. A two-year-old study described Florida golf course maintenance as a \$177 million industry with more than 6,000

employees.

Other directions

DeBra Equipment, however, found opportunities in other areas, including government accounts. Although company officials describe this as a "maturing" market, it remains profitable. More exciting is the contract maintenance market flamed by the spread of turfed and landscaped properties up the coasts and inland.

"The biggest growth will be in the landscape business," Jud DeBra adds. "And as the caliber of maintenance is pushed up in the big developments and nice resorts, it will influence the rest of the state about what is the norm and what is acceptable." That translates into the need for professional equipment.

DeBra Equipment, with 15 pickup-truck-equipped salesmen on the road, tries to anticipate these client needs. "Our involvement with residential



Service Manager Gary Foote, right, helps mechanic Jack Moffat with a mower reel adjustment.

developments and condominiums opens new markets for us. It's a natural extension of the services we can offer," says Jud. That attention led DeBra to offer industrial equipment also, including the Clark & American warehouse and factory sweeper and the Netherlands-manufactured Ravo street sweeper. Industrial equipment has shown a 150% sales increase over the past two years, a company spokesman says. Even so, the company picks its markets carefully.

"DeBra takes a conservative approach to growth," says Gary Foote, a Michigan State grad who began his turf career with DeBra, worked the Southeast for Jacobson, then returned to DeBra as parts and service manager. "DeBra doesn't take on lines just to be adding more equipment."

The Florida company, with sales expected to exceed \$13 million this year, now represents more than 70 manufacturers (including Jacobsen, Excel, Smithco, Cushman, and Kubota in two locations). It backs its salesmen with 13 mechanics and a million-dollar parts inventory.

And its service schools are a model in the turf industry. Factory representatives from Jacobsen (which pioneered the idea of a service school) and other manufacturers visit DeBra Equipment offices on a regular basis to provide free hands-on training for client mechanics. Turnouts of 250 to 300 mechanics are common.

"We're working with the same customers over and over so what we do is build relationships with our customers rather than just making sales," Jud DeBra adds. "We know if we can build good customers, they'll be buying good products from us over a period of time."

WT&T

Ivy League player

Manager Phil Mowery put the Bunton Company back in the game in one of the nation's fastest-growing corporate centers—Princeton, NJ.

by Ron Hall, associate editor

The ivy-covered walls, the tree-lined streets hadn't changed much in college town. But when Phil Mowery drove 10 minutes north from his boyhood home in Princeton, NJ, five years ago he saw a whole new world of gleaming corporate headquarters and acres of manicured turf. He saw opportunity.

Mowery, 25 years in the lawn and garden industry, says he was "hungry." So he acted.

"It all started over a phone call"—Mowery

He contacted Stan Byers, president of The Bunton Company, a Louisville-based manufacturer of commercial mowers. Presto. Bunton's putting up the money and Mowery's managing a business, a turf equipment distributorship in the middle of corporate boomtown that is alternately being touted as "the New Jersey Sunbelt" and the "next Silicon Valley."

Neither term is entirely accurate. But how do you describe a gold rush for corporate office space in central Jersey, in what had been potato fields and sod farms? We'll talk about that later, but more about the distributor, Bunton Turf Products.

A phone call away

Says Mowery, "It all started over a phone call with Stan (Byers). He set us up. We started with four people and grew from that. We worked out of our homes."

The founders were Mowery, his daughter Penny (who later left the



Phil Mowery stands in front of growing Bunton Turf Products.

business to move to Washington, DC), Stan Stevenson, a hefty gregarious man with bearpaws for hands, and slender, dark-haired Dave Walter. Stevenson is Mowery's top sales rep now, Walter the company's parts and service manager.

The distributorship now has 19 employees. It is located in a small rectangular masonry and glass building off narrow Quaker Bridge Road. Not in Princeton, but close enough for lunch.

Mowery's office is not a refuge. His door is open. Everybody—customers, mechanics, salesmen—poke their grins over his desk for greetings or

guidance. The bespectacled Mowery, with the patient, polite demeanor of an accountant (he started his career as a clerk), is a good listener, and when he speaks he chooses his words carefully.

The first thing he wants to make clear is that Bunton Turf Products is owned by the Bunton Company.

New directions

For Bunton, it's a profitable departure and it's planning a second factory branch in South Florida. But, a manufacturer owning its own store isn't unknown in the turf industry.

continued on page 50

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IVY LEAGUE from page 48

Yazoo Manufacturing, the Jackson, MS, manufacturer of "Big Wheel" and front-cut riding mowers, controls its own distribution in Memphis, TN, Houston, TX, and Birmingham, AL. It has for more than 30 years. Howard Day, Yazoo's marketing vice president, says Yazoo factory branches sell as well as its independent distribu-



Stan Stevenson helped start company.

tors. Other manufacturers, however, have gone in the opposite direction.

The Toro Company sold its three final company-owned distributorships in 1978, the same year that Cushman/OMC Lincoln dealt its store, Cushman Motor Sales.

The Bunton Company's decision to bankroll the New Jersey operation, although bucking recent trends, is working. Says Mowery, "we've grown anywhere from 20 to 30 percent each year and it's still growing." Later this year the size of the company-owned store will be doubled. In addition to Bunton products, the distributorship handles Sarlo and Ryan mowers, Honda engines, and Lo-Blo leaf blowers. Additional lines will be added, Mowery says.

The distributorship, Bunton Turf, sells from the showroom and through dealers. "Believe it or not, that hasn't been a problem," Mowery says. "When we set up a dealer we tell them we also sell direct. Selling direct has been profitable, but we want to be known as a distributor."

Bunton Turf's four salesmen cover almost all of New Jersey, including parts of Pennsylvania and Long Island. One salesman sells the golf course and municipal markets exclusively. These markets are new to Mowery's business and he's optimistic. "They will fall into place. We

know enough about it. We've stayed on top of it," he says.

Boom times

Mowery credits much of the New Jersey distributorship's success to Bunton Company president Byers. "The man has great forecasting ability and he's willing to take a gamble," Mowery says. "He could see the growth that was going to happen here."

Growth? How about explosion?

The epicenter is the Princeton Corridor, an 18-mile-long stretch of U.S. Route 1 from Princeton north to New Brunswick.

Within the past 10 years more than eight million square feet of office space (enough to almost fill the World Trade Center) grew up along this highway. The total should jump to 10.6 million (more than downtown Milwaukee) by 1992.

This corporate office explosion, touched off when Princeton University set aside 1,600 acres for its Forrestal Center "corporate campus" in 1975, erupted with the addition of other neighboring private developments: Carnegie Center, 744 acres; Princetonpark Corporate Center, 650 acres; and Princeton Corporate Center, 98 acres.

Corporate bosses appreciate Central Jersey's sylvan settings, its proximity to New York and Philadelphia, and the Princeton mailing address which they see as prestigious. *Image*. It's important down to the turfed and landscaped grounds of the corporate buildings.

The Forrestal Center contains 500 acres (nearly one-third of the Center) of permanent open space. Other developers, eager to attract tenants and to head-off cries that they're gobbling up prime real estate without consideration for the the pastoral countryside, are following suit. That's a lot of manicured grass.

"I've seen peaks and valleys," says Mowery, "but this is probably the longest good period I've seen—and it hasn't peaked yet. Not in this area anyway."

Bunton boss Byers, although not downplaying the area's growth, puts the success of the distributorship in more personal terms. "We knew we weren't getting the market penetration we should in this area, and the right guy (Mowery) came along. He runs it like he owns it."

Mowery responds, "I think Stan found some people who were hungry enough to make it work." WT&T

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