

LAWN CARE from page 8

ation," Murphy continued, "that if a customer receives a service in the spring but refuses to pay on the grounds he did not order the service to be continued, the lawn service thanks them for calling and writes it off."

In short, says the PLCAMA, the report ended up as something of a public service announcement instead of a tongue lashing.

INDUSTRY

Contractor calls for established standards

Landscaping in Southern California is easily a multi-million dollar industry. In such a large market, and in the rest of the country, there stands a need for high standards, at least one landscape contractor believes. Certainly, he is not alone.

Dan Heiny of Allseasons Landscape Service in El Toro, Ca., in reference to the industry, hopes "we are



Dan Heiny

trying to achieve the highest quality landscape we can attain. It takes a lot of personal drive to have high quality projects or prodging from others."

He notes that in Southern California there are a lot of "mow, blow and go" experts. "You have probably lost jobs because of them," he told attendees of his talk at the Landscape Industry Show in Long Beach April 20.

Heiny has found that many property managers and owners have not been educated about which companies will do the best jobs. "Low bidders often cause more grief than the money savings was worth," he comments. They "generally lead to a bad reputation for all contractors through lack of professionalism," he says.

Heiny adds there is a movement by the California Landscape Contractors Association to set standards for the industry. Standards, he says, will lead to better quality jobs. "(Better jobs) give the maintenance group better credibility, among other things."

Also, in the instance of a lawsuit, he explains, "the law looks to state-of-the-art for a particular area as the industry standard in the absence of an

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HAZARD COMMUNICATION...The Associated Landscape Contractors of America has obtained a copy of "Hazard Communication: A Program Guide for Federal Agencies" for members of the association. The guide is designed to provide technical assistance to agencies participating in the newly-implemented Hazard Communication Program. This document may be used by field managers to help determine those elements of the hazard communication program that are necessary to prepare their facilities for extension of the new standard. For more information, call ALCA at (703) 241-4004.

A LITTLE LOCAL SELF-HELP...Ilona Gray, executive director of the Alliance for Environmental Concerns in New Jersey, had some advice for the those starting a similar group in Pennsylvania. "You are probably the best spokespersons on your business," she told attendees of the Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference, but that voice should be unified. She noted there is a fear of pesticides, some real, some imagined. "You have to fight this with education." She also stressed the importance of local involvement to help against damaging state legislation and regulation.

NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH...The first official meeting of the Sports Turf Association-Canada was a huge success, with a turnout of close to 100. Athletic field management is as much a concern in Canada as it is in the U.S. For more information, contact: **Annette Anderson**, Dept. of Horticultural Science, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada N1G 2W1; (519) 824-4120. For information on athletic turf in the U.S., contact: Sports Turf Managers' Association, 400 Mountain Ave., Up-land, CA 91786; (714) 981-9199.

GERMAN ASTROTURF...The New York Times reports that Monsanto has sold its Astroturf Division to the German company Balsam. No word yet on how it will affect U.S. sales.

AQUATIC WEED PROBLEMS?...The "1987 Aquatic Weed Control Guide", authored by **Vernon Vandiver**, Ph.D., gives aquatic site managers and applicators access to the following: aquatic weeds and herbicides registered for their use, labelled aquatic sites for specific herbicides, and herbicides, manufacturers, percent active ingredient by product. It is available through IFAS, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

REMEMBER...Ovid the philosopher said: "When elephants fight, the grass suffers."

The most effective

...The Associated Landscape... has obtained a copy of "Hazard Com-... for men-... The guide is designed to provide... in the newly-... This docu-... to help determine those... are nec-... for expan-... call ALCA at (703) 261-4004

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INDUSTRY... Contractor calls for...

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Circle No. 101 on Reader Inquiry Card

Managing baseball, football fields

It's important for a school or park athletic field manager to know the age of people using a baseball field. The height of the pitcher's mound and the age of the athlete can make a difference in injuries, according to sports physical therapist Allan Brown, of Brunswick, Maine.

If you're working with young kids, "keep it flat," Brown says. "Encourage no kicking out the hole in front of the mound."

The higher the mound, or the deeper the hole, the more speed on the ball. But higher mounds or deeper holes also create a higher torque for the arm. Such a powerful thrusting motion can cause shoulder injuries, especially in younger athletes.

Brown encourages turf managers to work closely with coaches and trainers. "If a kid complains of a painful arm, go look at the mound," he says. "Suggest to the coach that the kid throws on a flat surface for a while."

Brown also encourages turf managers to work closely with coaches in repairing divots and holes on a football field which can cause ankle injuries. "Eighty-six percent of ankle sprains rotate outwards, often because of uneven terrain," Brown explains. The nerve endings in previously sprained ankles "forget" to stay balanced. When the foot comes down in a divot, the ankle will twist again.

"You can help as a turf professional by keeping the terrain even," Brown says. He also suggests that coaches advise athletes to wear 15-spike molded shoes whether they play on artificial or natural surfaces. That type of shoe distributes the friction between the leg and the surface.

The turf manager gets off easy on the problem of shin splints, however. Brown says most cases are not caused by the surface but by a "biomechanical problem in the athlete's lower extremities."

Brown spoke at the Maine Turf Conference in Portland, Maine.

Regional seminar in Illinois

The Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) will hold a regional seminar at the College of DuPage in Glen Ellyn June 22. To receive further information or to register, contact Susan Glasgow at (312) 858-2800, ext. 2770.

Memberships available

Memberships are available in the STMA, which was formed in 1981. Cost for professional sports turf facility managers are \$50 per year. Educators/parks/schools pay just \$30 and students \$10. Commercial affiliates may obtain a membership for \$100. Checks should be sent to the STMA at 400 North Mountain Ave. Suite 301, Upland, CA 91786. For questions, call the STMA at (714) 981-9199.

CALIFORNIA from page 11

established standard."

Established standards will have benefits to owners and managers as well as contractors. They will lead to better looking projects, less complaints from tenants and less vandalism, Heiny notes. This in turn leads to lower replacement costs in the future.

Heiny brings up another point. "What is the first thing an owner does when he gets ready to sell a property?" he asks. "He jazzes up the landscape."

Heiny suggested a number of maintenance standards:

- Plants, irrigation, etc., should be maintained in a high standard at all times.

- A short monthly summary of work done on a property should be filed. This, Heiny says, results in quicker payment and reduced liability.

- Overall appearance should be good: uniformed employees, clean trucks and equipment.

LEGISLATION

Chemical producers blast EPA program

In testimony before representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in Washington, D.C., Warren Stickle called for changes in the agency's Endangered Species program.

The EPA is holding a series of hearings to gather suggestions for improving its plan to protect endangered species from agricultural chemicals. Stickle is executive director of the Chemical Producers and Distributors Association.

"Despite the merits of the Endangered Species Act, we seem to be pursuing a program of implementation that is out of proportion to the real needs of endangered species," Stickle told the EPA. "In many cases, it is like attempting to swat a fly sitting on a glass table with a 16-pound sledgehammer."

The Endangered Species Act would outlaw pesticide applications in certain areas of the country where endangered species live or visit.

Specific recommendations made by Stickle included updating habitat information, correcting county maps and establishing a training and certification for pesticide applicators. "Alternatives to the prohibition-of-use approach should be considered," said Stickle. "The unnecessary removal of pesticides creates an economic hardship without enhancing the goal of protecting species."

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Circle No. 135 on Reader Inquiry Card

RIP-8-201D

AERATION

Equipment improvements and greater awareness have aeration service penetrating deeper into the residential market.

by Jeff Sobul, associate editor

For a long time, aeration was something golf course superintendents did, and few others. There were, of course, some reasons for this.

Most of the aeration equipment was geared toward operating on larger areas such as fairways, or smooth areas such as greens. Up until a few years ago, no aerators were designed specifically for lawns.

Early experiments with machines

such as the Ryan Ride-Aire found they really couldn't hold up to the constant pounding on grass areas that often had never been aerated before.

In addition, early machines for home lawns were expensive and weren't always reliable. Therefore, smaller contractors and lawn care companies which seem to have a lot of residential contracts couldn't afford the machines, which in turn made it difficult to offer the service.

Also, awareness of core aeration's benefits has only recently begun to spread as more research is conducted on the cultural practice, and as more golfers see the results on the course.

Shattering the core problem

Equipment manufacturers are finally addressing the problem of viable equipment shortages. Ryan led the way with its Lawnaire series and now, according to Milwaukee-area equipment distributor Ed Devinger of Rein-

ders Brothers, smaller service companies have 12 to 15 machines to choose from.

While that isn't exactly a flood of machinery, improvements and competition have brought the price of a home lawn core aerifier down to about \$1,000. "You paid \$2,000 five years ago for a similar machine," Devinger notes.

Low prices and good results are making aeration a cost-effective service. "It's an increasing part of our business," says Bob DeRosa, DeRosa Landscaping in Montvale, N.J. "I think this is the way to go."

One obvious reason for DeRosa's thinking is that the amount of aerifying his company has done in the last two years has grown by 50 percent. He sees no reason to slow it down. "In the Bergen County area, we're coming to realize aeration is the thing. It's a worthwhile service to sell." He believes his aeration contracts could increase by another 50 percent this year. He has about 40 clients now totalling three to four acres, but 80 clients is a reasonable goal.

DeRosa explains that Bergen County is about the second-most affluent county in the country, home to the headquarters of a number of large corporations. In his neck of the woods, houses start at \$250,000. Of course, with a house like that, a good lawn is a necessity. ("When we have a downturn in the economy, we don't feel it too much," he relates.) In addition, the potential for commercial contracts is excellent.

Propagating nationally

DeRosa's is not an isolated case. "Since people are becoming more attuned to its benefits, it has increased," says Bill Davids of Clarence Davids & Sons, Blue Island, Ill. The 38-year-old company has offered the service for at least the last 25 years, he says. The service has grown by 10 percent since 1986.

Prograss Liquidcare Lawn Service of Hubbard, Ore., began offering the service three years ago, according to manager Paul Bizon. "Some accounts were asking for it," he explains. They had heard about it through gardening



Smaller equipment built specifically for home lawns has fueled the growth of core aeration service as a money-maker in the residential market.

articles or had seen its effects on the golf course.

"It was a natural thing for our program," Bizon continues. About 10 percent of the company's customers have the service. Bizon expects that total to grow by another 12-15 percent this year.

Marketing efforts have gone a long way toward building the service. Companies only recently began to market the service. Clarence Davids & Sons offers the service as an extra to its regular management package. They sell the service with a brief description and some help from pamphlets by Ryan.

Bill Davids says the price for the service is based on the size of the job (more or less than an acre) and the estimated time per hour for the job.

DeRosa now sells the service as part of the whole package as opposed to an extra. He explains that commercial aeration holds the biggest growth potential for his company because of the direction it is taking. "But there is potential for residential aeration contracts," he adds.

Bob Berry of Lancaster Landscapes, Arlington, Va., has a similar forecast. Eighty percent of his company's contracts are large commercial/residential ones—housing or condominium developments. He has seen about 50 percent growth of the service in the last two to three years. Because of the size of his company, the residential market is not cost-effective for him, but "it has tremendous potential," he adds quickly. "In the metro Washington D.C.-area there's a need for people in this field.

"No question. I think someone coming into this area offering aeration as a service would do very well," he says.

A few more obstacles

Though home lawn aeration equipment has improved greatly during the second half of this decade, it still isn't perfect. "None of them take enough cores out," says Progress's Bizon. Having to go over a lawn in two or three directions is not cost-effective, either. "You can't afford to take a lot of time on it," he adds.

"I can understand the manufacturers' problems," Bizon empathizes. "They have to make a machine small enough to fit through a gate and fast enough to get the job done to make it worthwhile."

This challenge lays before the equipment manufacturers for this year and into the '90s. Given the rapid strides they have made in the last few years, it is not unreal to believe they can make the improvements. **LM**



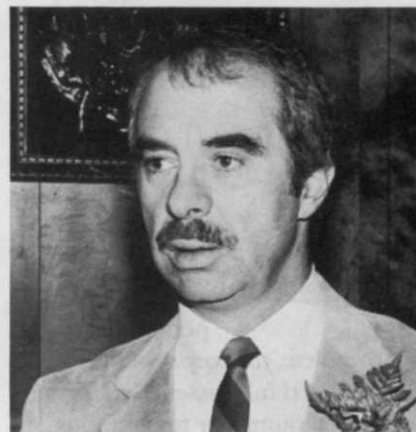
'In the metro Washington D.C.-area, there's a need for people in this field.'

—Bob Berry



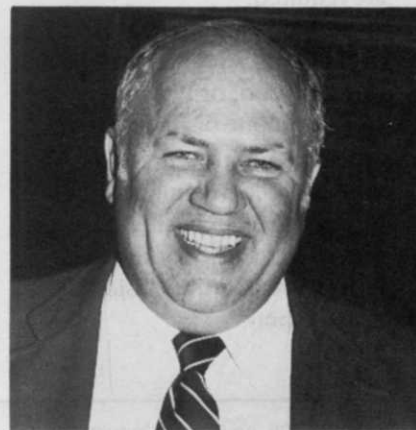
'Since people are becoming more attuned to its benefits, it has increased.'

—Bill Davids



'In Bergen County, we're coming to realize aeration is the thing.'

—Bob DeRosa



'Aeration has become more cost-effective for smaller companies.'

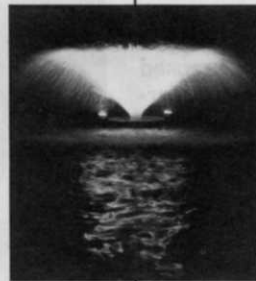
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