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# DEALING WITH PART-TIME HELP

Past experience has led us to believe that the more care you take with part-timers, the more care they will take to give you your money's worth.

by Rudd McGary and Ed Wandtke

**M**any companies need to find part-time help to get them through the peak season. These people fill in for full-time people and help perform tasks that have overloaded your regular crews. Several areas should be considered when planning your personnel needs, particularly when you are thinking about part-time personnel.

## The considerations

First, you need to determine the type of people you want to hire.

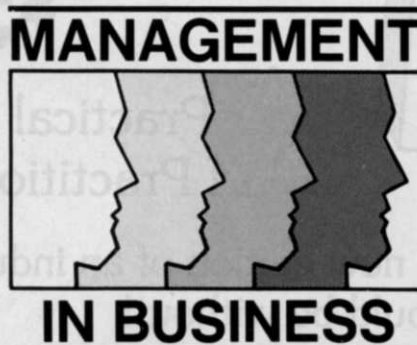
Many companies go through long processes to find their full-time personnel, but fail to take the same care when looking for part-time workers. Since these part-timers are going to be working with your regular employees, you should plan to look for these with as much care as you do your regulars.

Second, too many companies don't plan a hiring process for part-time help. They wait until part-timers are needed and then simply hire the first available people.

As you grow, consider keeping a part-time file. This file lists all the people you have interviewed in the past for part-time jobs, and comments that you may have made when you were interviewing. This will give you a start on finding part-timers who you already know.

Third, ask your regulars if they know people who might be part-time help. Get a list together. Often your best source of part-time help comes from people who work for you. If you have a good working force, you might want to try and find more people like them.

Fourth, you should have a plan indicating when peak work periods are, and then use this plan to determine if



you are going to need to hire extra people. This plan can be done with last year's needs as well as planning for the current year. This will help you to prepare for the personnel needs; it is also a valuable document from the standpoint of your operations.

## On the job

Having hired your part-time people, several management actions should be considered.

First, the part-timers (unless they are former employees) are not going to be as efficient in their jobs as your regulars. Unless the job is so simple that anyone can do it—and there aren't that many things so simple—you should not expect the part-time people to work the same way your regulars do. Keep this in mind when you plan.

Second, you should be able to tell the part-time people exactly what is expected of them, and you should do this immediately after they are hired. Too many managers forget that the part-timers don't know how to work within the new company. They make assumptions on the level of knowledge and experience the part-timers have.

Managers who find that part-timers are doing work incorrectly, or even the wrong work, are usually frustrated. These frustrations could be avoided by making sure that the

part-timers are instructed when they are brought aboard. This may take a little time, but it is time well spent for most companies.

Third, while these part-timers aren't likely to become regular members of your organization, you should make sure they are treated as if they were. The style you use with your regulars should be the one you use with part-timers. Make it is clear to everyone that, although these people aren't permanent members of the organization, they are going to be helping the regulars get their jobs done. Managers with one style for regulars and another for part-timers often ensure a low work rate from the part-time personnel. Treat them the same way. It will pay dividends.

## Summary

A growing company will generally have periods when part-time help is useful. Either part-time personnel is going to be used, the regulars are going to be overworked, or someone is going to be hired who might not be fully used. Given the three choices, often hiring part-time help is the correct one. The key then becomes the planning that goes into hiring and the management that is used after the part-time people have been hired.

Since the part-time people are an expense to the company, they should be chosen and managed with care, although it's unlikely that you will spend the same amount of time with part-timers as you would with your regulars. You also might want to consider using part-timers as part of your long-term growth pattern, finding out about new people without giving them full employment.

Whichever way you manage your part-timers, and for whatever tasks, be aware of the fact that these people can be tremendously helpful to the organization. Planning their hiring and managing them professionally will help your organization to grow and be profitable.

LM

Wandtke and McGary are senior consultants with All-Green Management Associates in Columbus, Ohio. Dr. McGary focuses on marketing and management issues. Wandtke focuses on operations and financial questions.



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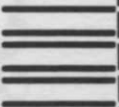
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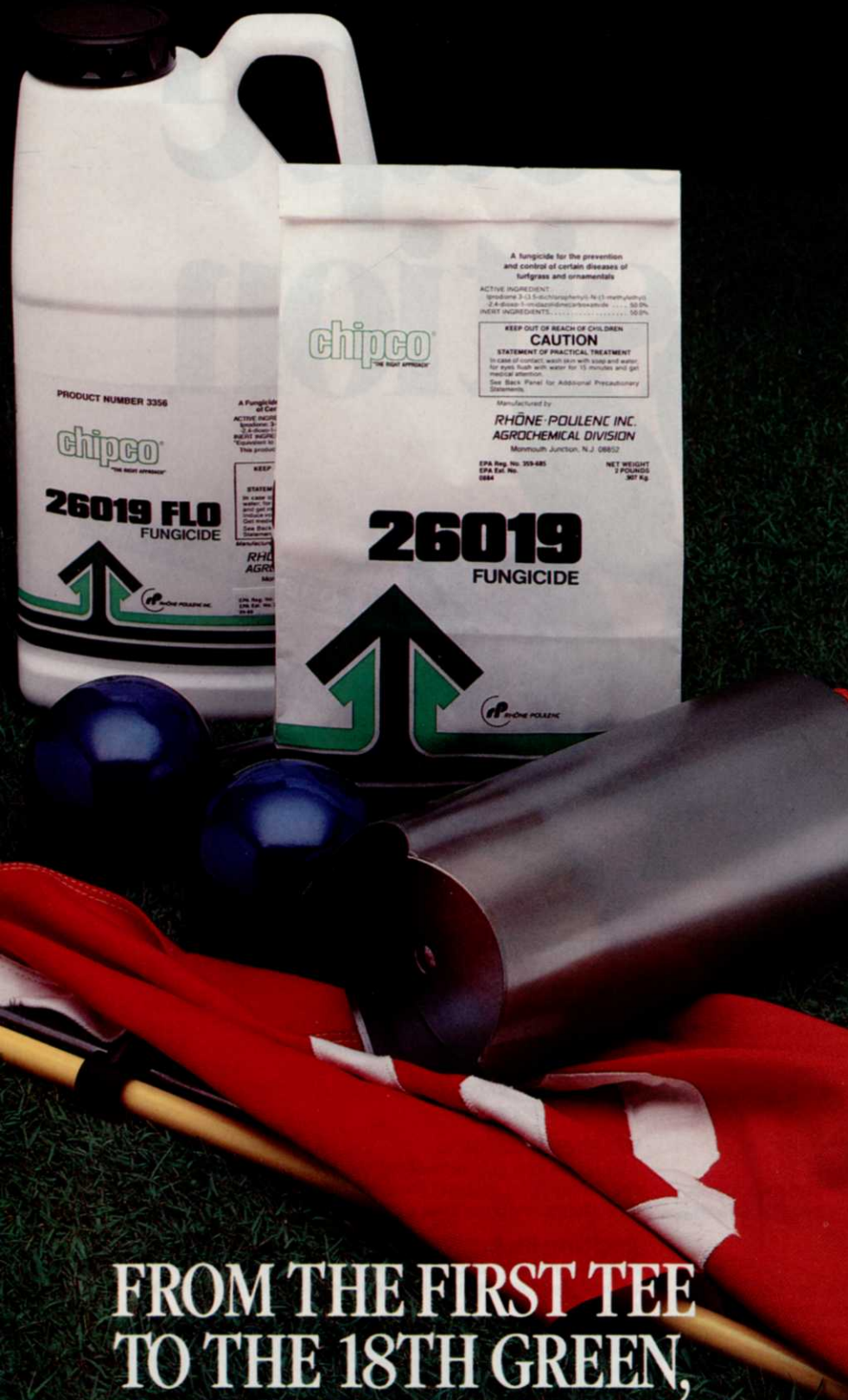
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# RESEARCH UPDATE

## Growth regulators yield different benefits

by John R. Hall III

Recent research has significantly enhanced our understanding of how turf growth regulators work.

Michigan State work was published by K.V. Hansen and B.E. Branham. It was done on Kentucky bluegrass using radioactive labeled carbon dioxide to determine how photosynthate (food) translocation is altered by applying growth regulators. The researchers compared Limit (amidochlor), Embark (mefluidide), Turf Growth Regulator (paclobutrazol), Cutless (flurprimidol) and an untreated check in both greenhouse and growth chamber studies.

Four weeks after application, mefluidide-treated plots were translocating significantly more food to the root system than all other treatments in the growth chamber study. Amount of photosynthate in the roots varied as noted: paclobutrazol 9%, flurprimidol 10%, amidochlor 15%, untreated check 27% and mefluidide 51%. This would obviously suggest the potential for increased root growth by using mefluidide.

In both studies, one week after application, the paclobutrazol caused significantly greater photosynthate translocation to axillary shoots than any of the other growth regulators. This suggests that paclobutrazol could potentially set the stage for increased turf density.

Two weeks after application, in the greenhouse study, the amidochlor was causing more food to be sent to the crown regions than the other materials. Since the crown region is a major storage area for plant food reserves, it is possible these plants would be in a good position to respond to environmental stresses.

The Ohio State work was published by R.J. Cooper, P.R. Henderlong, J.R. Street and K.J. Karnok. It was done on a perennial ecotype of annual bluegrass, evaluating the effect of mefluidide on seedhead suppression, root growth and turf quality. This work illustrated the effectiveness of mefluidide in suppressing annual bluegrass seedhead formation at very low rates ( $1/16$  lb. AI/A). An 80% reduction in seedhead formation was brought about 45 days after treatment at the above rate. Double this rate only increased seedhead suppression 18%. Mefluidide is the most economically effective seedhead suppressor available for fine turf.

The impact the  $1/16$  lb. AI/A rate had on root elongation rate (milli-

meters growth per root per week) was most striking. A March 31st treatment at the above rate led to significantly greater root growth rates when measured on April 13 (89%), May 25 (62%), July 13 (102%) and August 3 (1375%) when compared with untreated plots.

This increased growth rate was reflected in the effect on maximum rooting depth in the annual bluegrass. When maximum rooting depth of the annual bluegrass was measured on August 3, following the March 21 treatment, the treated plots had five times more root system than the untreated (2.75 inches vs. 0.51 inches).

The  $1/16$  lb. AI/A rate did produce some yellowing which reduced quality slightly, 14 to 45 days following application. However, quality was significantly better on the mefluidide-

treated plots 45 to 70 days after the application.

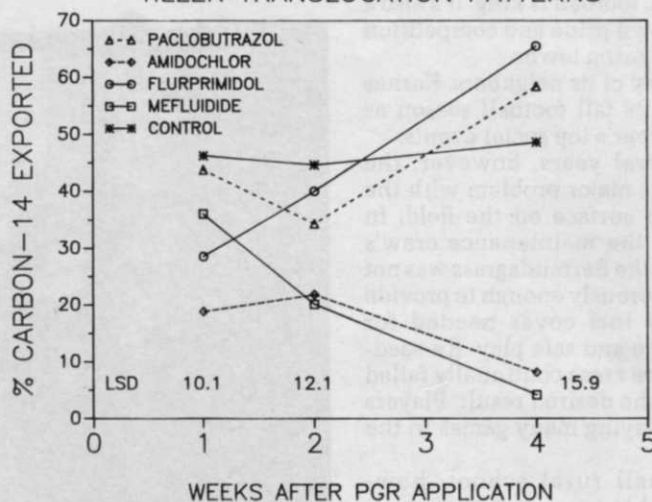
The Michigan State and Ohio State work have illustrated some very important differences in growth regulators. Each material appears to have a slightly different effect on photosynthate partitioning in the Kentucky bluegrass plant. Turf professionals can certainly benefit from being aware of these effects and using them to their advantage. By choosing the right growth regulator for your situation, you can get seedhead suppression, enhanced root growth, increased density or potential for stress survival.

LM

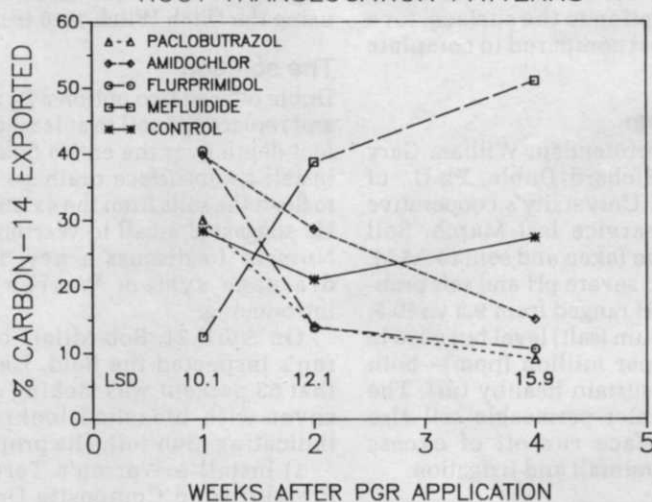
John R. Hall III is extension agronomist in turfgrass management at Virginia Tech University.

### MICHIGAN STATE RESEARCH

#### TILLER TRANSLOCATION PATTERNS



#### ROOT TRANSLOCATION PATTERNS



## New drainage technology solves field woes

In Karnes City, Texas, a typical small Texas town, football is king. It's also a source of town pride and competition with neighboring towns.

Like many of its neighbors, Karnes City holds its fall football season as one of the year's top social events.

For several years, however, the school had a major problem with the natural turf surface on the field. In spite of all the maintenance crew's best efforts, the Bermudagrass was not growing vigorously enough to provide the quality turf cover needed for beauty, pride and safe play. Re-seeding large bare areas continually failed to produce the desired result. Players were still playing many games in the mud.

This small rural school, however, was able to correct this unattractive and potentially unsafe sports field condition with a minimum disruption to the surface, for a very low cost compared to complete renovation.

### The problem

School superintendent William Gary contacted Richard Duble, Ph.D., of Texas A&M University's cooperative extension service last March. Soil samples were taken and sent to A&M. Duble found severe pH and salt problems. The pH ranged from 9.5 to 10.5, and the sodium (salt) level ran 4000 to 5000 parts per million (ppm)—both too high to sustain healthy turf. The very low water permeable soil also needed surface run-off of excess water from rainfall and irrigation.



Installing the TerraFlow system laterals. The white areas are where turf was not able to survive because of high salt.



Digging the trench for the 12-inch TerraFlow trunk line along one sideline using the Ditch Witch 1010 trencher.

### The solution

Duble offered two options: (1) remove and replace the soil to at least a three-foot depth over the entire field; or (2) install a subsurface drainage system to flush the salts from the existing soil. He suggested a call to Warren's Turf Nursery to discuss a new type of drainage system Warren's was introducing.

On April 21, Bob Milam of Warren's inspected the field. He found that 65 percent was lacking ground cover with bleached-looking soil indicating high salt. His proposal:

- 1) Install a Warren's TerraFlow Prefabricated Composite Draining System.
- 2) Aerate and fertilize with Warren's 18-5-8 30% SCU fertilizer.
- 3) Apply a 90 percent sulfur dispersal.
- 4) Flush with four to five inches of water per week for four weeks.
- 5) Re-sod the remaining bare areas with Warren's Bermudagrass sod from its Little River Sod Farm at Buckholtz, Texas.

### The implementation

Work began June 17.

The TerraFlow Drainage System was installed in a herringbone pattern down the length of the field. Because of an 18-inch crown, the TerraFlow merely followed the slope of the field from the crown to the sidelines. All trenches were backfilled to within two inches of the surface with coarse

washed sand to facilitate rapid water draw-down from the surface.

Trenching using a Ditch Witch 1010 trencher took 45 man/hours. TerraFlow installation took 100 man-hours. Sand backfilling took 60 man/hours. The trenching spoils were bladed with a tractor into the remaining two inches of the trenches, requiring six hours of tractor/operator time. The excess soil was removed from the site using a front-end loader and 20 man/hours.

Total materials used: 6,200 lineal feet of six-inch TerraFlow, 950 lineal feet of 12-inch TerraFlow, 10 rolls of duct tape, 36 feet of eight-inch PVC pipe and 35 yards of course sand. Total cost was about \$11,800.

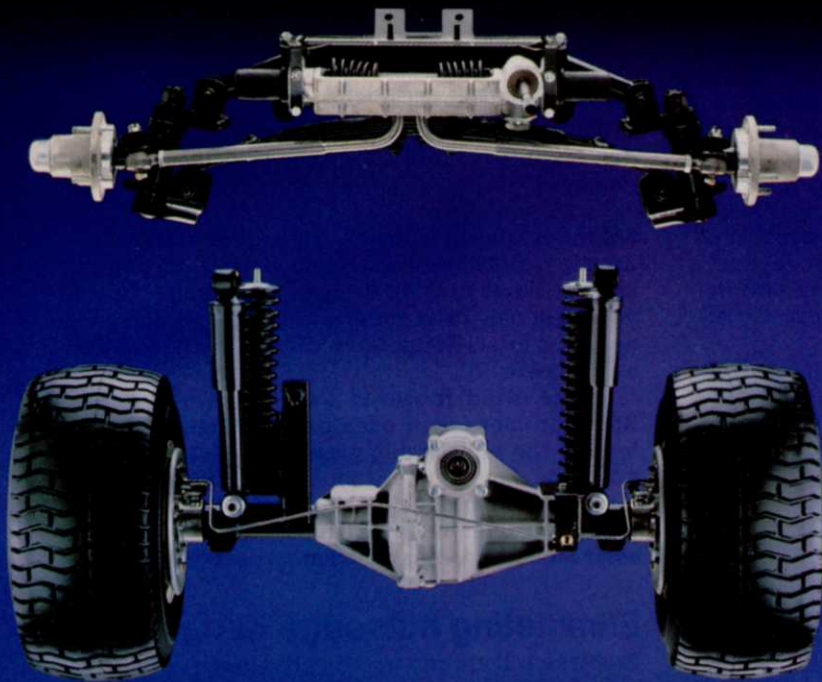
After the flushing and treatment program, the school reported a dramatic improvement in quality of the existing turf. On Aug. 6, 3900 sq. yds. of common Bermudagrass was sodded. The new field was irrigated with two inches of water once a week until mid-September, about a week after the first game.

### The result

With a simple installation of this new technology in drainage, the Karnes City school system was able to solve the untenable soil/salt problem and receive a permanent efficient drainage system. At last report, school officials proclaimed the field "the best ever." **LM**



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# PROBLEM MANAGEMENT

by Balakrishna Rao, Ph.D.

## To leave or not to leave

**Problem:** I've read opinions on leaving grass clippings on mowed lawns. Some people believe it's okay to leave clippings. But isn't that wrong because of disease development? What is your belief? (Washington)

**Solution:** Yes, I agree with your belief that if there is a potential for disease development, grass clippings should be removed. These leftover diseased portions can serve as the inoculum source for the future spread of the disease from one area to another.

It is important to recognize that having the diseased blades or fungal agent(s) alone is not enough to cause or spread the disease. For any disease to be active, three factors must be present: a susceptible plant (host), a virulent pathogen (agent) capable of causing a particular disease, and a favorable environment. Pathologists refer to this as a disease triangle. If any one of these is not present, a disease will not develop or establish.

Therefore, it is possible that even though a given disease was active in one month or in one season, as the temperature changes that particular disease may not continue to be active, even though the susceptible turfgrass and fungal agents are still present. However, the disease may become active in another time during the same or future growing season(s) if proper environmental conditions prevail.

In summary, the cultural practices and environmental conditions often contribute to pathological disorders. So, if there is a potential for disease development, it is advisable to remove clippings to help minimize the disease spread. If there is no evidence of any potential disease activity, then leaving the clippings would be beneficial if the turf is mowed regularly.

Contrary to common belief, grass clippings will not contribute to thatch development unless the clippings are too long. Clippings can supplement the soil nitrogen when they decompose and release nutrients. If the clippings are very long, decomposition may take a long time, which may contribute to thatch buildup.

## Shady cultivars

**Problem:** What cultivars of turfgrass require little or no sunlight? (Illinois)

**Solution:** There are a number of turfgrass cultivars which are adapted well to shade situations. The important thing is to determine the amount and duration of shade and light.

In the North, several Kentucky bluegrass cultivars, such as Bristol, Glade, Nugget, Touchdown and Birka, have shown good establishment under less than 70 percent shade. These cultivars would do better with more light. Areas with more than 70 to 80 percent shade, tall fescues and fine fescues have shown good establishment. If the shade is above 85 percent, it would be difficult to grow turfgrass.

Consider using some improved turf-type tall fescues such as Rebel II, Falcon, Mustang, Arid, Jaguar, Cimarron or Bonanza.

Some of the fine fescue varieties with good shade

and root competition, drought tolerance, and winter hardiness include: sheeps fescue (Bighorn), hard fescue (Biljart and Reliant), chewings fescue (Jamestown and Banner) and creeping fescue (Fortress, Ruby and Ensylva). These are some of the cultivars to choose from. Contact your local county extension office for any available list of turfgrass cultivars for shade.

## Getting the zoysia out

**Problem:** How do you go about removing zoysiagrass and keeping it out of a fescue lawn without causing damage to the fescue or soil? (Kansas)

**Solution:** I am not aware of any product which can be used to remove zoysiagrass selectively from a fescue lawn without causing damage to desirable turf. If you must get rid of zoysiagrass, the best approach would be to use Roundup to kill everything and start a new lawn.

Quite often it would be necessary to apply Roundup more than once before installing a new lawn if the undesirable grass continues to present problems. Zoysiagrass is an aggressive grass which multiplies by producing rhizomes, stolons and by tillering. Therefore, repeat applications may be necessary to manage this problem.

## Eliminating nutsedge hedging

**Problem:** Is there any weed control that will stop nutsedge? (Texas)

**Solution:** Basagran (Bentazon) is one of the effective herbicides used for yellow nutsedge control. Reports indicate that generally it may take three to five years to manage the nutsedge problem effectively. This is because of the way the plant grows. It produces underground bulbs which may not get affected with the first treatment. Therefore, repeat applications as needed when nutsedge presents a problem.

In the South, yellow nutsedge can emerge throughout the year, therefore can be treated any time.

Prograss EC herbicide will reduce competition from yellow and purple nutsedge. It is intended to be used on cool-season turfgrass like perennial rye, Kentucky bluegrass, and creeping bluegrass. To avoid injury to desirable warm-season turfgrass, spot-treat between December 1 and February 1. However, the results may vary depending upon the active weed growth and soil moisture.



**Balakrishna Rao is Manager of Technical Resources for the Davey Tree Co., Kent, Ohio.**

Questions should be mailed to Problem Management, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Boulevard, Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow 2-3 months for an answer to appear in the magazine.