

On Some Lawns, Grubs Just Aren't a Problem.



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California landscape maintenance contractor, John Heston, president of Heston Landscaping in Menlo Park, California, says that he has been successful in controlling grubs on his clients' lawns for many years. "I've tried a lot of different products, but OFTANOL is the only one that really works," he says. "It's the only one that gives you continuous protection that lasts. Nothing works better. It's your best bet for grub control."

It's not a hassle, Heston says, because OFTANOL is a preventative product that keeps grubs from getting started in the first place. "You just apply it once a year, and it keeps them away from your lawn for the rest of the year," he says. "It's a real time-saver."

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The old standby drum roller, which aerates quickly and never needs fueling. Drums can be detached, depending on the size of the area in question.

plains, "you're not letting it evaporate or get lost in the thatch layer."

Brophy also reminds landscapers that by opening the ground with aeration, fertilizers and other control products will reach their targets more effectively.



Cushman's Bob Brophy: aeration can show a 25 percent water savings.

"That's why a lot of lawn care companies try to sell aeration with the first fertilizer application," says Brophy. Customers are then told to water after the aeration service to wash the fertilizer down into the rootzone.

It's not a hassle

Landscapers whose customers view aeration as a hassle because of the remaining core material have to explain the benefits better.

"The aeration cores stimulate microbial activity to break down the thatch," says Brophy, "and make a better growing medium."

Experts also say it's important to coordinate aeration with overseeding: aerate first, then overseed. That way the cores can be broken up with the overseeder. This will also eliminate the problem of grass growing in clumps inside aeration holes.

Sell the benefits

John Haubrich, general manager of Thornton Landscape in Maineville, Ohio, stresses to customers aeration's positive effect on thatch, especially during dry spells. "During the drought two years ago," says Haubrich, "we strongly recommended it, there was so much compaction."

Haubrich says the company aerates about 100 acres each year, for

about 60 percent of its clients. The service is presented as part of a maintenance package.

"If it's a new account," says Haubrich, "we go in proposing everything. Hopefully, they'll buy everything, but not every client will. If there are budget constraints, aeration is one of the first things that'll go. The client may need to thrift out, and maybe will agree to it next year."

Steve Ashton, manager of the Tree Division for Molar, Inc., says company crewmen recommend aeration to customers if they see a need for it during the course of a visit. The service is sold at a minimum of \$35, and Ashton says it has been well received. "It's an old neighborhood, and lawns are so compacted," explains Ashton. "It's

Aeration can be sold as an end-of-the-year "extra" when customers have a few dollars left in their yard budgets.

never a hassle for us. It's a rainy-day job in spring and fall."

Finding the money

Charging \$10 to \$12 per 1000 square feet is reasonable, according to Ed Gallagher, landscape maintenance manager for Yardmaster of Painesville, Ohio. For harder-to-reach areas, such as throughout condominium areas, Gallagher suggests charging \$12 to \$15 per thousand.

"We try to put the service in as a way to complement the fertilizer application," says Gallagher. "If the customer is going to put dollars into fertilizer, aeration is certainly the most complementary service."

"You can fertilize and fertilize and fertilize," Gallagher explains, "but if you don't do some of the mechanical treatments, like aeration, you'll develop extreme thatch problems on top of compacted soil. Then you run into disease and stress problems."

The money for aeration is there; it's the landscaper's challenge to find it.

"Companies are going to sell a lot of 'extras' throughout the year," says Gallagher, such as annuals or other plant material. "Aeration, if sold properly, can be another one of those extras, when it comes down to September and October, and they still have a few bucks in the budget." LM



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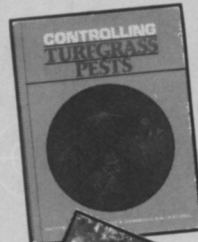
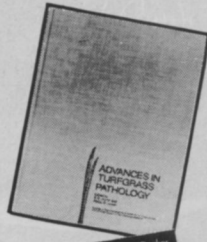
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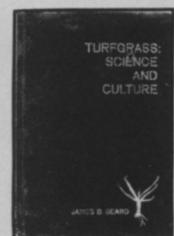
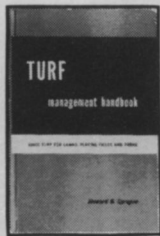
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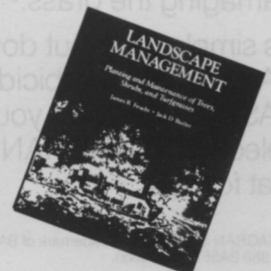
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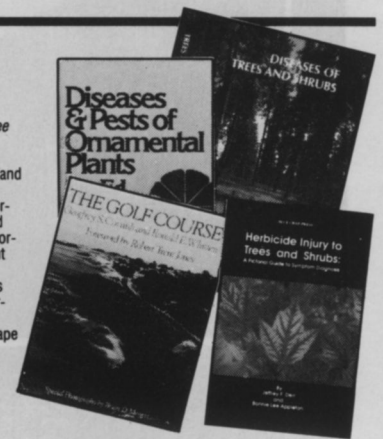
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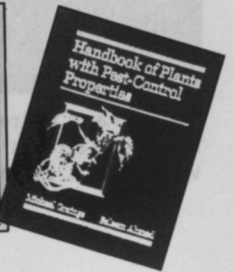
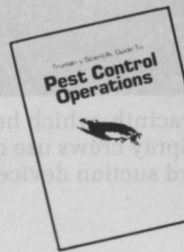
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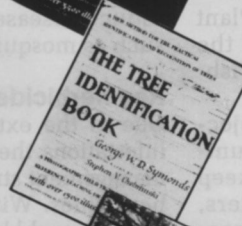
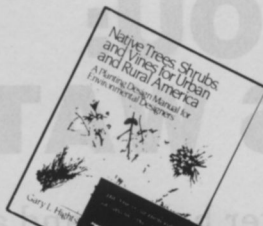


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Treated and untreated water hyacinth, which has completely covered this Louisiana stream. **Inset photo:** Spray crews use custom-made aluminum skiff boats outfitted with pumps, metering, overboard suction devices and outboard motors.

THE BAYOU: CLEARING ITS WATER

With more than 6.4 million acres of freshwater habitat and a sub-tropical environment that favors rapid aquatic weed growth, Louisiana is hard-pressed to keep water hyacinth from completely choking many waterways.

Water hyacinth is a major problem in the deep South, but in no state is this pesky aquatic nuisance more prevalent than Louisiana.

To meet this challenge, the state has an extensive and finely-tuned program. More than 50 workers are responsible for water hyacinth control, as well as other duties related to aquatic vegetation management, for an area of 48,523 square miles.

"We're spread pretty thin, but we've been able to fight water hyacinth down to a maintenance situation," says Richard Brassette, regional

aquatic biologist for the Aquatic Plant Research & Control Section of the state Department of Wildlife & Fisheries in Baton Rouge.

The section's continuing objectives are: to maintain access to hunting, fishing and trapping areas; to keep state waterways open for boaters, skiers, sightseers and other recreational activities; to prevent deterioration or loss of wildlife and fish habitat; and to assist in maintaining healthy, balanced fish populations. The program also strives to keep waterways navigable for commercial concerns, and helps maintain flood drainage and

reduce disease-transmitting vectors such as mosquitos.

Key herbicides

Due to the extent of water hyacinth infestations, the Aquatic Plant Section's management strategy relies heavily on herbicides. Without these materials, control would be impossible.

"Trying to manage water hyacinth by mechanical means in Louisiana is like trying to sweep back the ocean with a whisk broom—you just can't do it," says Brassette. "For instance, if using mechanical harvesters, our crews could only cover five or six

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The water hyacinth challenge

Native to South America, water hyacinth was introduced into the U.S. in 1884 by Japanese representatives attending the International Cotton Exposition in New Orleans. By the turn of the century, the plant had become a major pest in Louisiana.

Water hyacinths can double their number every 10 days, and 10 plants can cover one acre in 10 months. A single plant has the capability of producing 65,000 to 70,000 daughter plants during the eight-month growing season in northern Louisiana. Because growing conditions are more optimum, this figure may double in the southern part of the state.

One acre of hyacinths can yield up to 45 million seeds every year, and these seeds can remain viable for 20 to 40 years. As many as 900,000 plants can raft together on one acre of water.

This pest completely blocks many Louisiana bayous and streams, making navigation impossible. Large-scale hyacinth infestations are also highly detrimental to fish and wildlife.

Spawning grounds of largemouth bass and other gamefish can be completely smothered and destroyed. Floating mats of hyacinth block out light and destroy other aquatic plants used as food by ducks, geese and other wildlife. Hyacinth is useless as a food source for waterfowl, and many good hunting lakes and ponds have been ruined by it. □

acres a day."

Brassette also stresses that mechanical control methods often can't be used at all. Stumps, trees and other underwater obstacles prevent mechanical removal equipment from operating and cause severe damage to machinery.

Herbicides, on the other hand, allow treatment of up to 25 acres of infested waterway per day by each of the 21 two-person spray crews. The two main herbicides used are 2,4-D and Rodeo.

"Due to large acreages of agricultural crops, particularly cotton, in northern Louisiana we cannot apply 2,4-D without special permission from March 15 to September 15," Brassette explains. "Rodeo is perfect for use in sensitive areas where there are agricultural crops."

There are no restrictions on use of water treated with Rodeo for irrigation, recreational or domestic purposes. However, Rodeo cannot be applied within one-half mile of a drinking water source point.

The biologist adds that Rodeo is also often used near residential areas where there is concern about off-site damage to lawns, shrubs or gardens. The active ingredient in Rodeo, glyphosate, is the same material used in Roundup herbicide, a product commonly used by homeowners to control weeds and grasses in lawns and flower beds.

Because of these special properties, Rodeo is also frequently used to control unwanted vegetation in Federal game reserves. In many cases, it is the herbicide of choice here.

"Part of our job is to provide the public with information on aquatic weed control," says Brassette. "We often recommend Rodeo for use in farm ponds and in subdivisions where lakes and ponds are part of the landscaping scheme."

Trained support

Each spray crew is made up of two to five workers operating from a boat that is specially-equipped for herbicide application over water. Most of the spray crews—and all of the supervisors working with them—have been thoroughly trained and are certified to apply herbicides correctly and safely.

This training and certification process is conducted by the Louisiana Department of Agriculture. State workers involved in commercial herbicide application attend a special school to obtain their certifications. They are re-certified every three years.

"We take this certification process very seriously," says Brassette. "Over 90 percent of our people are certified, and we're working on getting the others to complete the course."

The spray crews work primarily from custom-made aluminum skiff boats outfitted with pumps, metering and overboard suction devices and powered by outboard motors. Some crews use special 22-foot mud boats that are powered by V-8 inboard engines.

"We use these mud boats near spillways and other conditions where an outboard would have trouble operating," Brassette explains. "It's amazing where these boats can go in just a few inches of water."

During the mid-1970s, water hyacinth infestations approached an estimated 1.7 million acres in Louisiana. Since then, Brassette says that populations have fluctuated. Each year, the Aquatic Plant Section provides control of roughly 25,000 to 60,000 acres of water hyacinth. At this treatment rate, Louisiana is literally staying just one step ahead of the problem.

According to Brassette, growing conditions during the past few years have favored the spread of water hyacinth and complicated control efforts. More seeds germinate when conditions are dry, and Louisiana experienced several droughts in the late 1980s.

Another complicating factor has been heavy summer rains that raise water levels in rivers, bayous, lakes and other waterways. When water rises, hyacinth plants are carried further inland from shores and banks and quickly become established in new areas.

"If current control operations are reduced or interrupted, water hyacinth infestations would rapidly reach the levels experienced in the 1970s," Brassette warns. "The expenditures required to again reclaim public waterways would be economically staggering to the state." **LM**

Herbicides allow treatment of up to 25 acres of infested waterway per day by each of the 21 two-person spray crews.



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Intensive maintenance of college campuses will become increasingly important as schools vie for their share of the shrinking student population.

At last year's Green Team Conference in St. Louis, three noted landscape managers—Jeff Bourne of Montgomery County, Md., John Michalko of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland and Thomas Smith of Spring Grove Cemetery in Cincinnati—agreed that things will not get any easier for fellow practitioners in this decade.

Here are some problems cited by the experts:

- Fewer students seeking a college education
- Loss of government's "sovereign immunity"
- What Bourne calls "life-cycle responsibility"
- Loss of certain pesticides in the landscape

College woes

"According to one study, the number of 18-year-olds nationwide will fall by 360,000 to about 2.4 million in the next five years," says Michalko. "About 19,000 seniors will be lost in Ohio alone in that period. Which means that budgets will be very, very tight" among collegiate building and grounds supervisors.

"Two things are at play in terms of colleges," adds Bourne. "The other is that fewer educated people will be coming out of colleges—certainly in our business—to provide that educated entry-level employee."

Michalko says that total enrollment will continue to drop, and that competition for the prospective student will increase.

In another poll, fully one-half of the students queried ranked a visit to the campus as the most important factor in their choice of colleges, Michalko points out. Sixty-two percent name appearance as "an influence."

"We have to keep our appearance of the campuses up, no matter what," Michalko contends. "If you have the facility, that'll help your enrollment stay up, which in turn will keep your budget up."

Sovereignty gone

"Risk management" and "cost containment" are the two biggest buzz phrases in the public sector, Bourne says.

In the past, governmental agencies could rest behind the protection of



FUTUREVISION

The 1990s will bring more judicious use of chemicals, a more aesthetic landscape and closer involvement between management and labor, according to a panel of respected green industry executives.

by Jerry Roche, executive editor

Society will play an increasing role in the ability—or inability—of landscape managers to perform their job functions in the 1990s, according to a panel of industry experts.