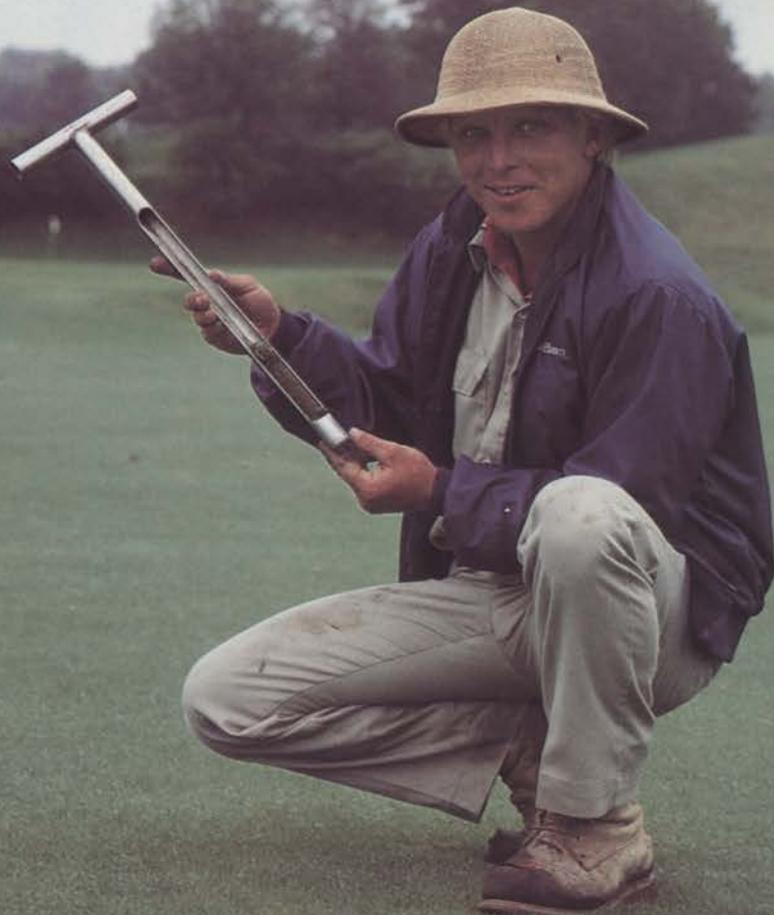


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It's our turn

Tom Oyler, the man who made Oyler's Landscaping and U.S. Lawns a leader in the Florida landscape/maintenance industry, couldn't be happier.

He's happy that the 1990s is the "decade of the environment."

People, says Oyler, gravitate to the biggest issues with which they all share a common interest. "The environment is an issue," says Oyler. "And guess what landscapers do? They work with the environment. You are perfectly positioned for the 1990s." And wouldn't it be nice for a change, Oyler asks, to be seen as the leaders in the environmental movement?

Speaking at a recent meeting of the Ohio Landscapers Association, Oyler presented a dozen other ideas to a packed house.

How can landscapers capitalize on the environment, and help preserve it? Well, there's composting and water audits for starters. Yes, it rains often in the Midwest, but is rain an iron-clad guarantee? Yard waste will be landfill non grata in 1993. Customers will need suggestions on what to do with it. How about selling rotating composters?

Lobbying and other offensive strategies are also necessary.

Oyler knows of a conversation with a city councilman that helped save Florida landscapers from having to pull permits for all kinds of irrigation installation or repair whatsoever. The councilman was simply unaware what problems such legislation would create for the industry.

Internally, all companies need a business plan. According to Oyler, many landscapers say business is great, but can't elaborate. "You need a short- (one-year) and long-term (five-year) plan, says Oyler. Develop measuring systems and use them. If you need help, ask your state association or find a consultant.

Network among community groups, like the Chamber of Commerce, and get your best people active in the community as well. Soon, they'll be coming to work with all kinds of ideas.

Are lower-priced companies dominating your market? Develop a measuring and estimating system. "Every piece of your equipment has a capacity," notes Oyler. "Every piece has a production rate the average guy can generate while using it." If you've calculated those rates, and measured the site, and know your break-even point per hour, you're in. The property manager will look at your 27-hour estimate, compare it with the competitor's 8-hour estimate, and wonder what the other guy is leaving out, and just what he's getting for his money.

And above all, *always* be ethical, and insist on quality.

It all worked for Tom Oyler.

Terry McIver, managing editor

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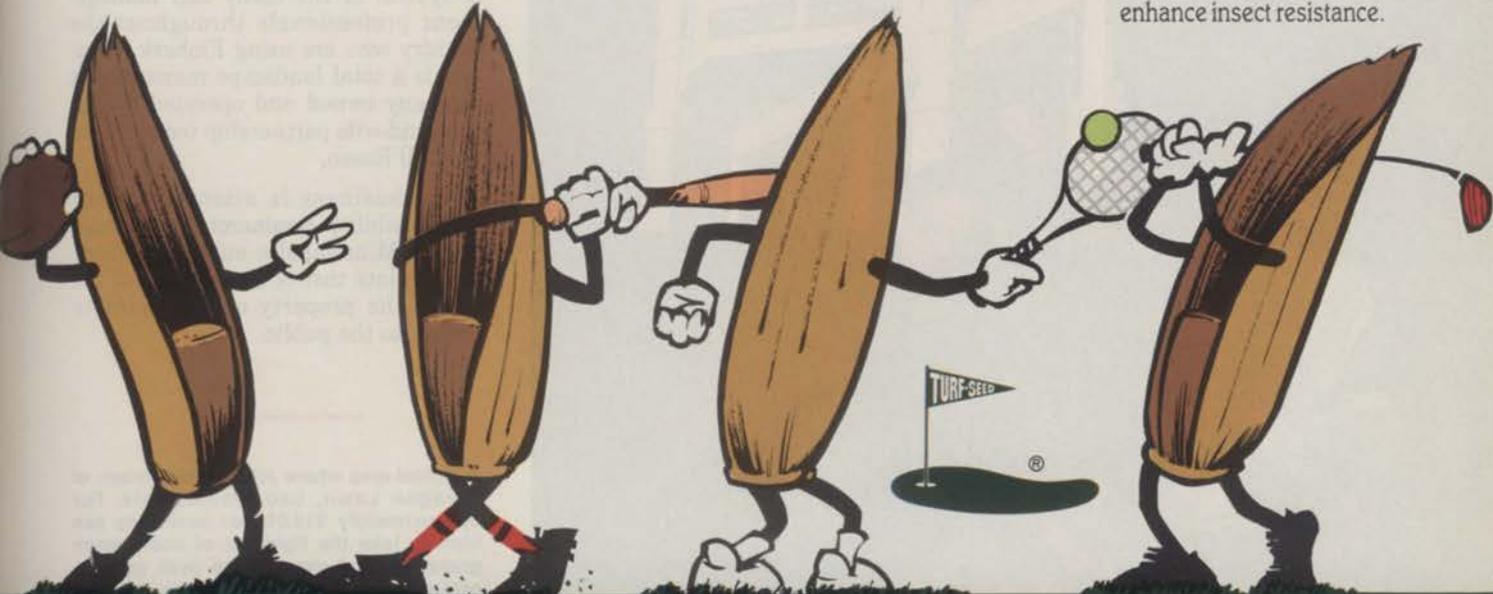
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Using Embark[®] to reduce top growth and clippings

PLANT GROWTH REGULATOR

Now, with new formulations of Embark and tank mixes with Limit[®], you can tame the growth of turfgrasses and reduce the mowing by up to 50% — or you can slow it down just enough to make regularly scheduled mowings easier and faster. In either instance, there are no concerns with objectionable discoloration, and the reduction in cost is very significant.

Everett Mealman, President
PBI/Gordon Corporation

The Embark PGR programs for growth regulation of fine turf are surely the most important developments to date in landscape management. They can dramatically increase the productivity of turf managers . . . and productivity, of course, is the ultimate generator of profits.

The recommendation for maximum growth suppression of cool-season

fine-turf species is a tank mix of Embark Lite and Limit.

Embark Lite (Mefluidide) is specially formulated and labeled for use on fine turf. And Limit is amidochlor, the root-absorbed turf growth regulator developed by Monsanto and recently acquired by PBI/Gordon.

This easy-to-handle tank mix, when applied to cool-season grasses prior to

the major growth period, will reduce the number of mowings up to 50% for five to six weeks at a cost of approximately \$45.00 per acre — the average cost of one mowing.

But that's only part of the good news: Turf discoloration is avoided with this combination, when used as directed. At the end of the six-week cycle when untreated turf tends to fade, the release of pent-up energies in the Embark Lite/Limit-treated turf results in a rich, vibrant green color.

And, notice, we haven't even mentioned the environmental bonus of reduced clippings.

On the other end of the Embark programs, an application of just Embark Lite will by itself slow down the growth for three to four weeks to such a degree that the mowers will virtually float over the turf . . . clippings will be significantly reduced . . . you'll be able to stay on schedule even during the peak growing season . . . and the cost will be only \$18.00 per acre.

What users say

Paragon Lawn of Edina, Minnesota is typical of the many turf management professionals throughout the country who are using Embark. Paragon is a total landscape management company owned and operated by the husband-wife partnership team of Dan and Jill Rosen.

The business is oriented toward high-visibility commercial properties in the Minneapolis suburbs, where immaculate turf is a vital part of the image the property owners want to project to the public.

A typical area where Jill and Dan Rosen, of Paragon Lawn, use Embark Lite. For approximately \$18.00 per acre they can literally take the fight out of cool-season grass, so that even in the peak growing period they not only can stay on schedule but the mowed premises will maintain their freshly cut appearance longer.



On several properties, Paragon has total responsibility for designing and executing the complete program on an annual bid basis. "Such property owners don't really care what we do or when we do it," says Rosen. "The issue is that a constant image of quality and neatness be maintained."

In such instances the Rosens factor into their bid an Embark Lite/Limit tank mix treatment twice a year. Once in the spring, ahead of seedhead emergence, and a repeat prior to the fall growth season.

"It reduces our mowing costs by more than 50%, at a cost of less than \$45 per acre, while actually improving the appearance of the grass ..." states Rosen.

On the other hand, Paragon has many customers who are on a regular mowing schedule. "We get paid a flat fee per mow," says Rosen, "and at the peak of the growing season it can be a real back breaker to stay on schedule and maintain a manicured appearance."

"This is where Embark Lite is ideal. During the peak growing season, we can definitely put money in the bank by spending \$18 per acre out of our own pocket for a treatment of Embark Lite that lasts three to four weeks. It eliminates double mowing ... it makes clipping clean-up a breeze ... it takes pressure off men handling the mowers ... and, best of all, it keeps us on schedule."

Interestingly, the Rosens were hesitant about getting started with Embark, and actually had a gallon in their machine shop for a year before they opened it. Like so many turfgrass professionals, the concept of suppressing growth made them uncomfortable in light of the fact that they had always measured turf quality and health on the basis of how vigorously it was growing.

Consequently, the Rosens started out very cautiously and tested both the Embark Lite/Limit tank mix and the Embark Lite mowing aid program in low-profile areas and expanded the total commitment as the evidence became overwhelming.



The Beauty of Embark Lite/Limit Tank Mix

Above: John Van Haften, director of research and development for PBI/Gordon, demonstrates the dramatic effectiveness of an Embark Lite/Limit tank mix. This test plot of bluegrass and ryegrass in suburban Kansas City was treated on April 25, 1990. It was mowed once, on May 1 after the PGR kicked in, and never touched again until this photo was taken on May 25. This dramatic reduction in growth occurred in spite of abundant rainfall and excellent growing temperatures.

Embark is the original, undisputed leader of all PGRs for use on turfgrass. It is foliarly absorbed and translocated to the growing points of a plant, and redirects the energy to the roots, thus preventing seedhead development and stem elongation.

For almost ten years, Embark has been virtually unchallenged for use on low-maintenance turf such as roadsides and hard-to-reach areas.

But use of Embark on highly visible fine turf was not recommended until 1986, when PBI/Gordon researchers, as well as several universities, had proven that tank mixes of Embark and Ferromec® AC Liquid Iron could eliminate the problems of turf discoloration.

Limit, on the other hand, is root absorbed and has been recognized from its inception as the PGR for maximum growth suppression on fine turf without problems of discoloration. The major drawback was its cost.

Happily, a tank mix consisting of reduced rates of both Embark Lite and Limit has proven to be the perfect marriage. It results in growth control for five to six weeks; control of seedheads and stem elongation; reduction of clipping volumes; strengthening of the roots ... and all of this for only \$45 per acre.

New Tank-Mix Combo!



Special Get-acquainted Offer on Embark Lite and Limit

Offer consists of a Combo Pack containing two 1-quart bottles of Embark Lite and one quart of Limit. When tank mixed, this combination will treat one acre of cool-season turfgrass and will give you a clear and rapid understanding of what Embark Lite/Limit can do for you. And the evidence will reach you in time to expand the program yet this year, beyond your original test area. See your PBI/Gordon distributor or ...

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FINE TURF REGULATOR

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Circle No. 141 on Reader Inquiry Card

SEED

U.S. economy and weather influence turfseed buyers

NATIONAL REPORT — A number of turfseed varieties appear to be readily available at fair prices, say golf course superintendents and landscapers.

Indeed, recent reports out of the Pacific Northwest, where most of the world's turfseed is produced, indicate that there may be an oversupply of many varieties. Whether the current economic recession has an impact on seed use this spring and summer remains to be seen.

One superintendent that it won't affect is Jerry Coldiron of Boone Links Golf Course in Florence, Ky.

"The recession is not affecting our course at all," Coldiron admits. "We're recession-proof; Boone Links is in the greater Cincinnati airport area, where things are booming.

"Chemicals are getting so expensive, though, that I don't mind losing a little grass. It's just a personal philosophy, but I've actually been doing more renovation lately and using more seed, especially perennial ryegrass."

Seed buyers in parts of California may be challenged by drought.

Conditions are "very serious," says Peter Prentice, superintendent at San Luis Bay Golf Course in Atascadero, midway between San Francisco and



Jerry Coldiron: more seeding rather than less.

Los Angeles.

Prentice now has kikuyugrass on fairways and roughs. He has ordered modest amounts of a ryegrass blend and bentgrass.

For drought conditions, Prentice will also likely look to both turf-type tall fescue and buffalograss. In any case, he intends to make only modest seed purchases.

A different picture emerges for northern California golf course superintendent Donald Roller at Eureka Golf Course.

Roller, who buys seed locally and not often in bulk, has successfully maintained plush tee and fairway areas with only spot plantings of ryegrass.

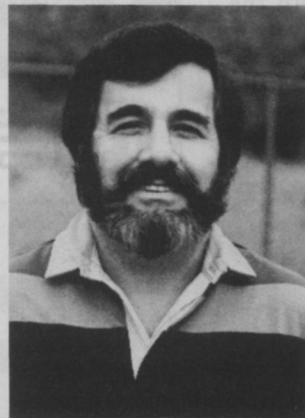
A continent away, Tom Humphreys of Ireland-

Gannon Associates, a residential landscaping firm in Norwich, (central) N.Y., usually makes a modest one-ton seed purchase each season.

Availability and price fluctuation have not been problems in his area. The only small change the firm may make is to experiment in some varieties to combat a fungus problem.

Landscaper Dennis Dautel of Clean Cut in Austin, Tex., has found a dwarf fescue to be particularly drought-resistant in his working area, but the solution to another common problem eludes him.

"We are trying to develop a seeding which will be a year-long program—one we won't have to overseed, which can be expensive," says Dautel.



Norman Gray, Jr.: seed prices generally lower.

Dautel notes availability of most common seeds is good in east central Texas. The company is not shopping price this spring.

Norman Gray, Jr. of Transit Seeding, Norfolk, Mass., likes what he sees.

"A year-and-a-half, two years ago," remembers Gray, "the issue was water conservation. The better bluegrass blends would have 40 to 50 percent bluegrass in them. The balance would be fescue or perennial rye."

In response to dry weather, Transit offered mixtures with 25 percent bluegrass, the rest rye and fescue.

Although drought is not a big challenge in the East, Gray says he still recommends drought-tolerant blends, unless the customer is set on more bluegrass.

For low-maintenance needs, such as hard-to-reach slopes, Gray uses a blend dominant in K-31 tall fescue, clover and red top.

"Then, of course, we get the customer who wants low maintenance and aesthetic appeal," in which case Gray recommends a wildflower seeding in combination with hard fescue.

"Seed is definitely available at lower prices since last fall," says Gray. "We've been able to modify our prices downward where able." □