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Other equipment on Neuffer's list: outdoor safety storage sheds for chemicals, wheel chocks on all vehicles to deter accidental truck roll, and emergency spill kits aboard all vehicles and at home base.

Spills: what to do

Spills present a unique set of problems which require the right set of reactions. But as in most emergencies, common sense is the first order of business.

Consider, says Ohio EPA spokesman Jim Leach, the severity of the spill first.

In minor mishaps, the crew can perform quick mop-ups. But most spills should first be reported to the local fire department, as many local forces are trained in assessing spill severity.

In Ohio, says Leach, local emergency planning commissions may also react to larger spills. In some instances the state agriculture department has been empowered to advise and react to spills, along with the natural resources department.

These cases hold true when the mishap has occurred near a waterway. EPA agencies also have assessors



Neuffer: Industry is maturing, becoming more safety conscious.

who can assist in a range of responses.

From the perspective of Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America (PLCAA), the industry is "not doing all that well" in policing itself on safe driving habits and hazardous materials handling.

Generally, Delaney says, employee driving records should be collected for those who will be transporting potentially hazardous substances. Now, those driving histories are mandated

and overseen by the federal Department of Transportation. Delaney says the controlling agency varies from state to state.

Specialized training for driving bigger pesticide and herbicide trucks is available; particularly in turning the vehicles in urban areas.

The PLCAA, for instance, offers for \$25 an audio and workbook course entitled "Spill Buster." Details are available by calling the association at 800-458-3456.

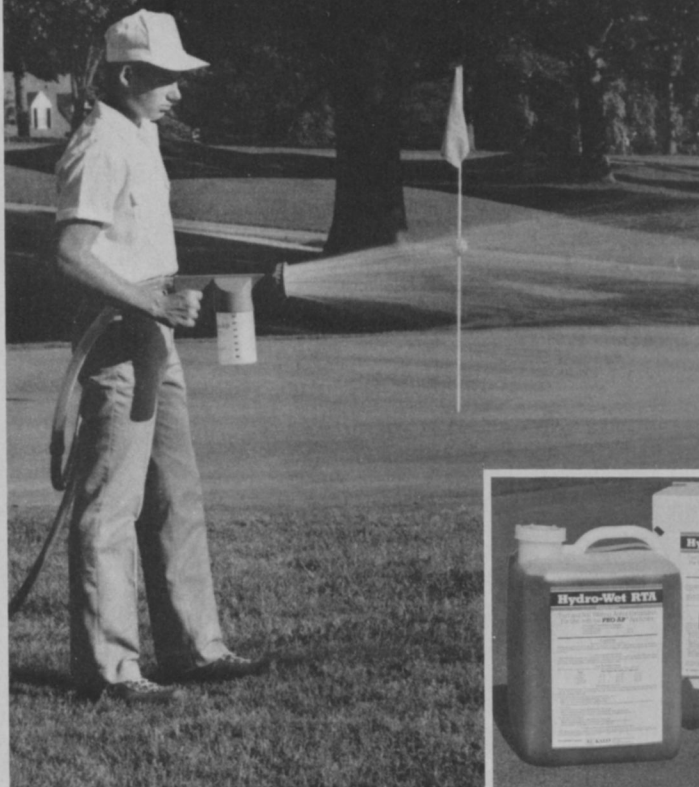
But with a PLCAA membership of 800 and with an estimated 5,000 landscapers nationwide, there seems little in the way of a central clearinghouse for safety practices.

"I don't think there is enough (advance) preparation by many companies," says Delaney.

"Companies don't often deal with things until they become a problem." He adds that some larger, national lawn care companies offer strong safety programs not only for their employees, but for others in related fields.

These questions surface as the EPA itself appears to be preparing new worker protection standards for farm and lawn care workers. **LM**

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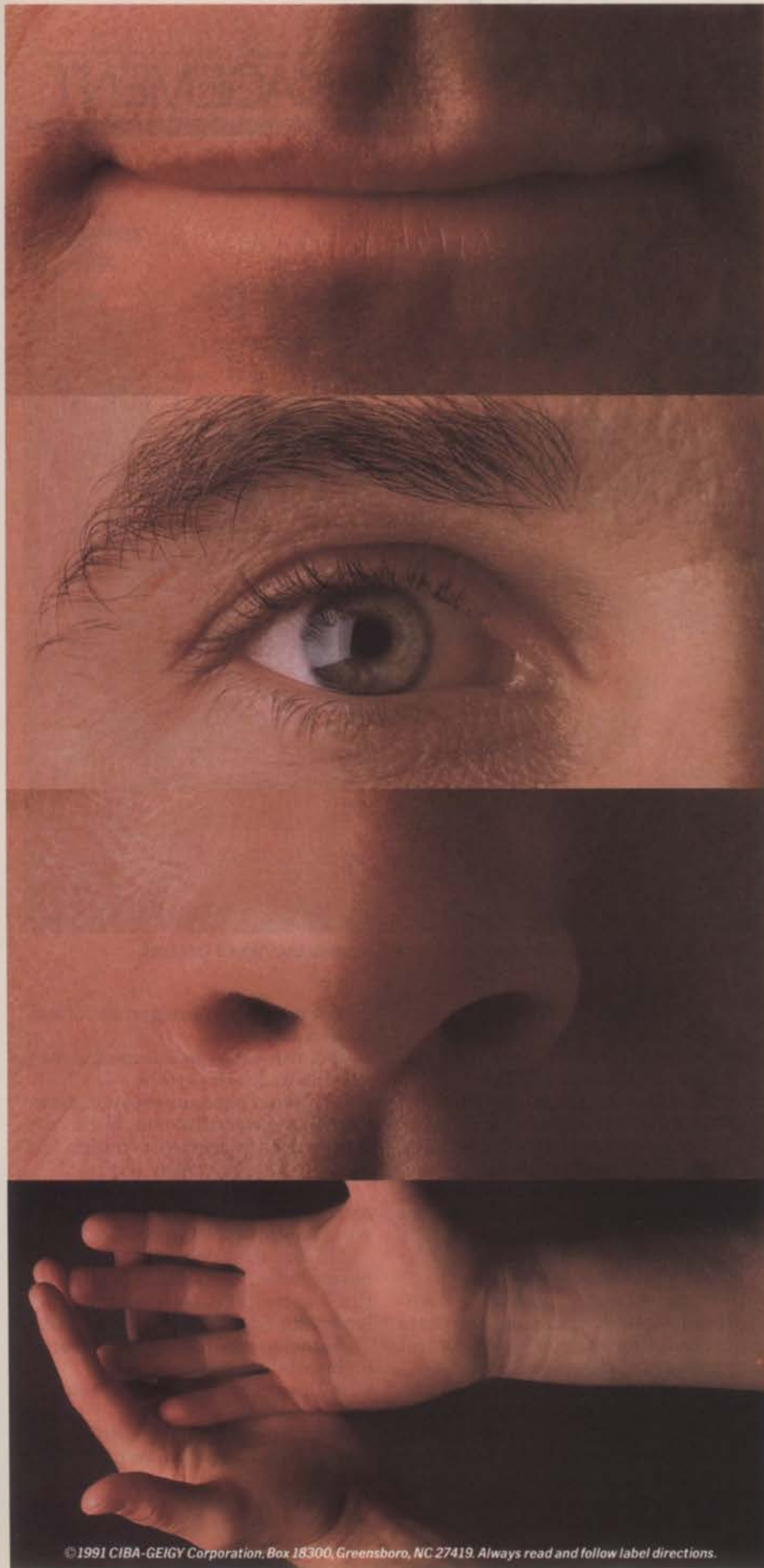
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WEED CONTROL IN ORNAMENTALS

Many methods—from hand-weeding to herbicide use—are available to control weeds in shrubs and flower beds. But a combination of methods is best, according to this extension weed scientist.

by Jerry Roche, editor-in-chief

Landscape fabric installed beneath mulch is often used as an effective method of ornamental weed control.

Sometimes, the only way you can maintain attractive ornamental beds in the landscape is by getting out there on your hands and knees and hand-weeding. But that is not the only answer, according to Dr. Jeffrey F. Derr of Virginia's Hampton Roads Agricultural Experiment Station.

"I'm a big proponent of mulching," says Derr, who spoke on the subject at the Virginia Turfgrass Conference earlier this spring.

"Hand-weeding is quite a bit of work that mulching can help alleviate."

Derr says that mulch in ornamental beds should be about two to four inches deep. "Too much could mean root rot due to excess moisture retention. Too little will allow the weeds to establish," he notes. "You should also be sure the mulch isn't infested with weed seed, and may see better weed control with mulches containing larger particle sizes."

Hand-weeding and mulching, of course, are just two of many ways to keep weeds out of ornamental beds. The others, according to Derr:

- using black plastic (polyethylene) layers over the soil base;
- using geotextiles (polypropylene and polyester) over the soil;
- applications of herbicides; and
- combinations of the above techniques.

Plastic, fabrics

Derr and his wife Bonnie Lee Appleton have numerous test plots incorporating various weed control techniques at Hampton Roads.

"Geotextiles work better than black plastic," Derr says. Geotextiles are being studied as replacements for black plastic because the latter has the following problems:

- it has a non-porous composition;
- it lacks material strength;
- it has a slick surface that does not hold mulch well;

- it can cause development of surface roots; and

- it can cause build-up of carbon dioxide under its surface.

"To avoid photodegradation, however, the geotextiles should be covered with an inch or two of mulch," he adds.

Landscape fabrics—either woven or spunbound—are being tested for weed control at Hampton Roads.

"In our experience, black fabrics have worked better than white fabrics," notes Derr. He says the problems with fabrics, however, include:

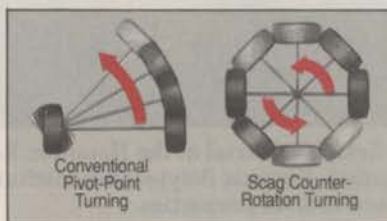
- intense site preparation prior to their installation;
- they won't control perennial weeds;
- because certain materials are lighter, installation can be more difficult;
- although it varies by material, photodegradation does occur to some extent;
- weeds can grow through or into

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Jeff Derr: More research needed on post-emergence herbicide use in wildflowers.

fabrics, especially less dense materials ("Weeds seem to be able to find seams, too," Derr notes); and

- fabrics cost more than other methods of weed control.

"Fabrics have some uses, but managing the mulch layer is important with the fabrics because they generally allow root penetration by weeds.

"Where we see a potential problem," he continues, "is in landscapes that are periodically re-worked or replanted, where sections of fabric might need to be lifted and/or removed and there has been ornamental root development into and through the fabric. This could severely damage portions of landscape plant root systems if this phenomena proves common."

Derr is pleased with the weed control offered by combining mulch with geotextiles. If you are using this method, here are helpful hints:

- Use shallow mulch layers—one inch is best.
- Keep the geotextiles totally covered.
- Remove and/or kill weeds when they are small.
- Consider using a pre-emergence herbicide atop the geotextile.
- Consider using more inorganic mulches.

Chemical control

"Anything with 2,4-D in it is damaging to most ornamentals," Derr notes.

For weed control in annual and perennial flower beds, Derr says Dacthal and Treflan are available as pre-emergents; and Acclaim, Ornamec (Fusilade) and Poast as post-emergents.

"We don't have any materials for broad-leaves, though," he says. "We have to fall back to hand-weeding."

Derr says that, in all cases, herbicide labels should be consulted to



A field fabric trial at the Hampton Roads Agricultural Experiment Station, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, tests fabric weed control properties.

determine which plant materials they can be used on.

Products like Devrinol, Surflan, Pennant, Casoron, Ronstar and Gallery are available as pre-emergents for woody ornamentals. Rout, Ornamental Herbicide 2 (OH2) and Snapshot (a Gallery/Surflan combination) are available herbicide combinations for woody ornamentals. For post-emergence control of grasses in woody ornamentals, Acclaim, Poast and Ornamec can be used. Basagran is labeled for yellow nutsedge control, and Roundup is a non-selective herbicide for woody ornamentals.

Control of the true grasses—johnsongrass, crabgrass, bermudagrass (wiregrass)—can be obtained with Acclaim, Poast and Ornamec, but they will not control wild onion, nutsedge or any broadleaf weed, Derr notes.

"Under high-temperature conditions, you might want to use a non-ionic surfactant instead of a crop oil concentrate with certain post-emergence herbicides," Derr says. "Also, under those conditions, you might want to hold off over-the-top applications."

Herbicides that can be used for special weed problems in woody ornamentals:

- yellow nutsedge:** Pennant, Basagran, Roundup
- mugwort:** Casoron, Roundup
- wild onion, wild garlic:** Roundup
- bamboo:** Roundup
- bermudagrass:** Ornamec, Poast, Roundup

"I lean toward wiping on the herbicide if there is a height differential between the weeds and ornamentals," Derr adds. "Try to get some Roundup to stick to the weed's leaves."

Weeds in wildflower plots are also sometimes problems. Derr says:

"We think some of the post-emergence grass herbicides have a place in weed control in wildflowers, but we've got a lot more work to do in that area."

For additional information on weed control in ornamentals, contact Derr and Appleton through the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service. Write them at: Hampton Roads Agricultural Experiment Station, 1444 Diamond Springs Rd., Virginia Beach, VA 23455. **LM**

HERBICIDES FOR GROUND COVERS

	English Ivy	Liriope	Periwinkle
GALLERY	✓	✓	
SURFLAN	✓	✓	✓
PENNANT	✓	✓	
POAST	✓		✓
ORNAMEC	✓	✓	✓

Source: Dr. Jeffrey F. Derr



**This picture says a thousand words.
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THE ULTIMATE CHALLENGE

What to do with company management personnel when you're in a downturn and have to revert to a 'survival mode.'

by Rudd McGary, Ph.D., AGMA Inc.

When times get tight, companies often reduce personnel to help them survive. Almost always included is some sort of reduction in management. While this makes sense from several viewpoints, there are also reasons why you should take a long look at what and whom you cut from management.

You remember the good old days, don't you? Those days when you only had three other people working with you and you knew everything that was going on? You did the work, you invoiced the customer, you collected, you marketed; you know—the good old days.

Then, because you were so good at what you did, the company started to grow. Remember when you went through the year trying to manage 11 people by yourself? You waited until the off-season, then you said, "I need to get a manager!"

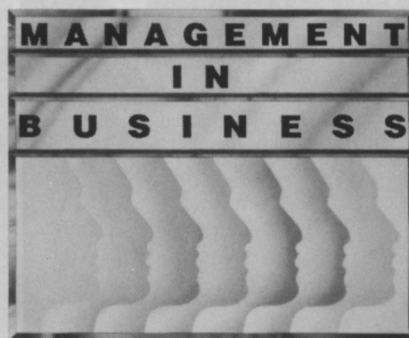
So you hired a "right-hand-man." If you were lucky, you found someone who thought along your lines, who also had other talents. If you were unlucky, you found someone who didn't fit your ideal for this management job. If you were really unlucky, you went through several people before you finally found the right person.

Now you had a company that grew to 80 employees in 10 years. You also noticed that 80 people are not 80 times as efficient as you. That—in fact—some people weren't exactly doing everything they could. But you were making money, so lots of little sins were slipping by as the company grew.

Let's get small

Then the downturn hit. In fact, it hit a year ago and people were let go at the end of the year. Then you looked at your management group and realized that you had way too many people on the administrative payroll for the size you predicted for this year. So cuts began there, too.

Here are some of the questions you ought to ask as you go through a



downsizing. The basic problem is that most management texts and courses don't worry about how to get smaller, they worry about how to get larger. Let's get small.

The basic differences between supervision and management, and one that needs to be highlighted if you are cutting back on personnel, is that the supervisor sees to the daily tasks of subordinates while the manager looks at, and plans for, a longer time period. The need for management lies in hav-

Don't get lost in just doing tasks and working long hours to save the company.

ing people who can control company functions over a long period of time and give employees the information and tools they need.

Who to manage?

The pattern in many privately-held companies (like those in the green industry) is for the owner to get away from the day-to-day operations as the company grows. After building a company to a certain size, and because of the stress of doing so, owners often try to pass off the day-to-day operations to others. This can have excellent results, but often times the personality

of the owner is needed for efficiency's sake.

If the owner/president has been around the operations, and not passive, then it is a good idea to make sure that the top manager is heavily involved when times are lean. Absentee ownership will almost always cause severe problems at such times. Too many questions come up that need to be addressed by someone who can see the entire picture, and usually that is the owner/president.

Remember that this doesn't apply if the company's owners are either public or the owner hasn't been working in the company for some time. In either of these cases, it's best to let the professional managers manage and for owners to keep out of the way.

What you should manage

In the past several articles, we have talked about areas of financial control, operations and marketing that need to be managed in times of survival. Clearly, each area is important. But on a more basic level, managers manage people, money, information and all other assets of the company.

One of the things you must determine is if the type of information you are getting is useful. More importantly, you must make sure to get all the information you need. There is no good reason to get longer and longer computer reports when times are tough. This is the time when you need your vital information on one sheet of paper, reduced to very simple terms.

If your MIS doesn't give you information you can act on, this is the time to make it more efficient. Without good, clear information, you can't manage.

In a survival mode, the company often asks people to return to old jobs as subordinates. This may mean that some people are back to physical work which they haven't done for some time, or that they are now out of the office more than they were in the past. You need to help these people