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OXALIS



CRABGRASS



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SPURGE



CLOVER

Dependable, economical post-emerge control

Crabgrass, Nutsedge

Plus the truly hard-to-control broadleaves

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environmental stewardship and reduce their chemical costs.



Everett Mealman
Chairman and
Chief Executive Officer
PBI/Gordon Corporation

The environmental age weed control program being used by Roger Albrecht is typical of progressive turf professionals.

Albrecht is president of Nitro-Green Corporation, which has 38 lawn care franchisees scattered over 15 different states, and he manages two locations in California for his own hands-on experience.

"Our goal is to eliminate all broadcast spraying of herbicides on the ornamental turf we manage, and replace it with spot treatment as necessary," says Albrecht. "We want to be pro active on environmental issues and be able to assure our customers that we are using the absolute minimum requirement of chemicals."

Albrecht goes on to explain that such a

program takes time to implement because the turf needs to be so healthy and thick that weeds cannot easily germinate.

"The elimination of the pre-emerge broadcast is the critical step," says Albrecht, "because, no matter what, some crabgrass is going to appear, and since crabgrass is a major cause of complaints, we must be able to eliminate it fast with no discoloration."

Trimec Plus provides the safety net that enables Albrecht to eventually eliminate pre-emerge. "We have absolute confidence in Trimec Plus to handle any crabgrass or nutsedge that shows up," says Albrecht.

And, of course, the same spot sprayer filled with Trimec Plus that Albrecht uses to control crabgrass and nutsedge also controls the other grassy and broadleaf weeds that can germinate throughout the year. "Having one herbicide for all of our spot treatment is a major factor in our program," says Albrecht.

But if Trimec Plus is ideal for spot treatment, it is also unsurpassed for broadcasting when the need exists. Listen to George Toma, the executive turf consultant for the Royals, Chiefs, and NFL:

"My son, Chip, the groundskeeper for the Truman Sports Complex, used a broadcast of Trimec Plus on the out-of-sight, unirrigated perimeters of the complex, which was loaded with every conceivable weed, and

Trimec Plus absolutely took out everything except the bluegrass."

According to Toma, it would have taken four different selective herbicides to do the job that Trimec Plus was able to do . . . but even more important, Toma says that Trimec Plus did a better job on all of the individual species than a narrow spectrum selective could have done.

What is Trimec® Plus?

Trimec Plus is a unique formulation of Trimec Broadleaf Herbicide and MSMA in a stable, uniform suspension that is as easy to work with as any other Trimec Complex.

By all means give Trimec Plus a trial this season . . . especially on crabgrass, nutsedge, and clover. We assure you that your experience with Trimec Plus will give you the confidence you need to start working toward the elimination of broadcasting.



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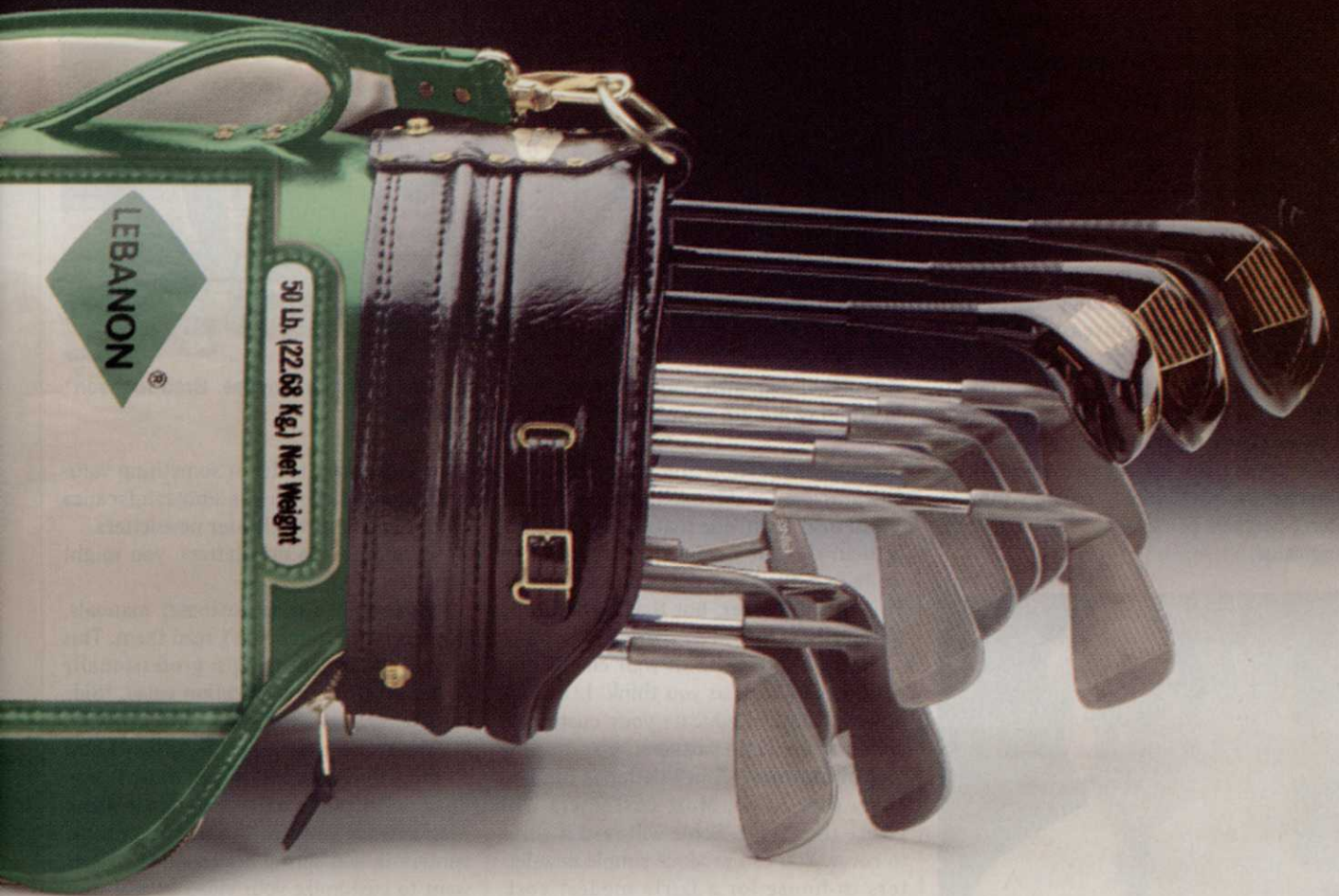
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Circle No. 117 on Reader Inquiry Card

Focus of lawn care in 1990s: customer, employee education

Well-trained, responsible employees are a company's best resource but consider newsletters, videos, and radio too.

by Brad Johnson

■ Leaving customer expectations to chance is risky business.

That's because the uneducated customer often builds unreasonably high expectations. No wonder. Some lawn care companies advertise that all customers have to do for a beautiful lawn is to mail them a check every two months. When the lawn doesn't live up to these expectations, customers, particularly new customers, don't perceive professional service as having value.



Brad Johnson: education must go hand in hand with service.

Lawn care business people now realize they *must* educate customers as well as treat their lawns.

They must educate them concerning the value they're receiving.

It benefits both parties. Customers must often work *with* the lawn professional to secure an attractive, healthy lawn. For instance, lawn professionals need continuing customer cooperation with mowing and watering. That's when a customer begins to receive real value from the lawn professional's service.

The professional provider builds on



A professional lawn care company is only as good as its employees. Brad Johnson is proud of his green up! team in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

customer education and communication *in addition* to attempting to deliver a "weed free" lawn, one that is always greener than the one across the street—often while using less pesticides and fertilizers. This is a tall order, but that's what we're working toward.

Building bridges with your clients may not be as difficult as you think. Let's look at ways you can educate your customers and turn them into partners.

Newsletters—A newsletter is fun and fairly easy to do. Most customers will glance through it. Some will read it cover to cover. You can produce simple newsletters in-house for a fairly modest cost. However, to really attract customer attention, use a professional marketing firm.

Leave newsletters with customers with every application. You can also mail them to customers, but this is more costly.

Use newsletters to increase sales of add-on services. Be fair. Don't produce newsletters that have substantially more advertising than helpful information. You want

your customers to learn something valuable about their lawns and landscapes while looking through your newsletters.

In addition to newsletters, you might consider:

Videos—We tried customer manuals, but customers often don't read them. This season we began using a professionally produced customer education video, "Side by Side."

The 15-minute video shows clients how to properly water and mow lawns. It also deals with two particularly frustrating problems for lawns in the transition zone, winterkill and spring dead spot. (You may want to customize your video to deal with other issues.)

When a new customer signs up with us, we send them a welcome card, do their first application, and leave a copy of the video in their invoice bag.

We also include a short survey for them to fill out after they watch the video. To answer the survey, they have to watch "Side by Side," since answers to the ques-

Little things mean a lot

- Little things your people can do every day add up to better-educated, loyal customers.
 - ✓ Take the time to talk to customers, either in person or on the phone.
 - ✓ Call customers to ask if there are any questions about their lawn or your service.
 - ✓ Write personal notes on invoices each time an application is done.
 - ✓ If the customer is not watering and mowing properly, tell him or her, and leave information on proper watering and mowing.
 - ✓ Leave fact sheets on special problems a lawn may have, such as soil compaction, disease, thin turf, etc. Follow these up with phone calls.

—B.J.

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Circle No. 105 on Reader Inquiry Card

tions are in the text of the video. When they return the video in a postage-paid mailer, we give them a coupon good for \$5 off of an optional service.

Radio—This past year I began co-hosting the KRMG-AM (Tulsa, Okla.) Lawn and Landscape Show, a one-hour, Saturday talk show.

Many of our customers tell us that they regularly listen to our show. Several fellow lawn care owners even remarked that the information is helpful for their customers, too. Of course, the do-it-yourselfers really appreciate the tips.

We usually have guests on the show such as arborists, irrigation experts, university professors, and nurserymen. We feel the show is a great opportunity to teach the public and lawn service customers about lawns and landscapes.



Many LCOs now use professionally produced newsletters to keep their clients informed.

Our employees—All the video, newsletters and radio shows, will have limited effectiveness without quality, well-educated, motivated employees. There is no substitute for just good, old-fashioned face-to-face communication.

That's where we need to spend the most time and money, in encouraging and educating our employees first. Employees can then begin to educate our customers.

Market saturation, increased regulation and pressures from anti-pesticide group is, a more demanding customer base—these are the reasons why we must educate and become partners with both our employees and our customers.

—Brad Johnson is president of *green up! Lawn Care Services, Tulsa, Okla.* For more information about customer education videos, contact him at (918) 250-3898.

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Circle No. 112 on Reader Inquiry Card

HOT TOPICS

Landscaper unearths ancient bones

Illinois State Museum identifies dinosaur remains.

WADSWORTH, Ill.—Van Zelst Landscaping turned preservation of a wetland area into a national news event when mastodon bones and tusks were discovered in the excavation to expand a small marsh into a larger lake.

The 10,000-year-old bones were discovered along with the remains of an ancient spruce forest which existed on the site during the Ice Age, according to David Van Zelst.

The bones, tusks, shells and spruce tree trunks were found on Van Zelst's property as it was expanding a tree nursery site and excavating a three-acre lake to provide for a continuous source of water.

The first piece of bone excavators came upon was almost four feet long with a cross section of about 4-by-7 inches. What appeared to be a tree stump was the femur (right thigh bone) of a prehistoric American mastodon.

Van Zelst contacted the Illinois State Museum in Springfield. A team of scientists led by Dr. Russell Graham, curator of geology, arrived the next day. Graham identified the bone as part of the beast which stood 10 feet tall at the shoulders and weighed up to six tons.

A section of tusk ivory about 24 inches long was also found, along with the remains of a grove of spruce trees believed to be about 11,000 years old. Tree trunks and white spruce seed cones are neither decomposed nor petrified. After carbon-14 dating and tree ring studies, these specimens are expected to tell the history, climatic and season conditions at the time of growth. Pollen studies are also being made.



Van Zelst with a hunk of a mastodon's thigh bone originally thought to be a tree trunk. He found it in a 15-foot-deep excavation in Wadsworth, Ill.

Ban pesticides in refuges? It's not an issue, say feds

WASHINGTON—Pesticide use could be banned in all of the U.S. National Wildlife Refuge System.

That's one suggestion of several environmental impact "alternatives" being considered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

Some of these alternatives will likely be incorporated into a new management plan for the refuge system later this year—but only after the FWS weighs input from a series of public hearings.

Most comment from the public so far has been from hunting, trapping and fishing interests seeking continued access to federal lands.

Pesticide use on federal refuges is, to date, not a burning issue, apparently because of the FWS's use and oft-repeated endorsement of integrated pest management (IPM) practices.

Several FWS "alternatives" would continue to allow pesticide use on national properties, but only in IPM programs.

Actually, pesticide use on national refuge property has dropped dramatically since 1974 anyway—about 40 percent in 20 years, claims the FWS.

In 1989 the FWS says it used pesticides in 61 refuges, on 202,000 of a possible 90 million acres in the national refuge system.

INSIDE

Industry debate continues over DIYers,
p. 50

Specify sulfur on analysis labels?,
p. 51

The Irrigation Association's 1992 International Irrigation Exposition & Technical Conference

November 1-4, 1992
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Ongoing debate continues: posting for D-I-Yers or not?

MARYSVILLE, Ohio—The debate continues over whether do-it-yourselfers (in most cases, homeowners) should have to post lawn pesticide applications in the same manner that their professional counterparts must, in many areas of the U.S.

The most recent opinion was received at LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT in a letter from Dr. Michael P. Kelty, vice president of research and development for The Scotts Co. Here is what Dr. Kelty wrote:

"As the nation's largest supplier of do-it-yourself lawn and garden products, The Scott Company agrees that homeowners have every right to be fully informed of the products and services they purchase. We are opposed to mandatory D-I-Y posting and pre-notification, however, and present the following as support:

- "Products registered for residential application by LCOs or D-I-Yers are, to my knowledge, all 'General Unrestricted Use' products. This is EPA's most benign risk

category. Our experience in nearly 100 years of supplying the turfgrass market shows that EPA's classification scheme is appropriate.

- "D-I-Y consumers receive an EPA-approved and/or a state-approved label for the fertilizer and pesticide products they purchase. These labels fully disclose the product contents, etc. In the case of The Scotts Company (and other D-I-Y suppliers), a toll-free number is provided on all product packages so that assistance from trained technicians is readily available. To my knowledge, LCOs are not required to provide similar product/service disclosures under FIFRA, but several states do have disclosure standards.

- "With a good history of safe use and with a federally-mandated disclosure system already in place, we feel that posting and pre-notification for D-I-Y products is superfluous. Further, a consumer posting and pre-notification system is impractical

to implement and virtually impossible to enforce.

- "D-I-Y consumers continue to reside in the neighborhood after they've applied their products. It seems to me that a neighbor who wants to be notified of product application will receive that information more effectively by knocking on his/her neighbor's door than by instituting a costly and unnecessary consumer posting and pre-notification system.

"Scotts strongly endorses freedom of choice. If LCOs, notably the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, feel that posting and pre-notification laws are appropriate, they should be free to pursue them. It does not logically follow, however, that LCOs' endorsement of these laws makes them appropriate for consumers.

"Consumers should continue to have the choice of D-I-Y or LCO. Neither method is toxicologically or environmentally better, but a simple matter of choosing what is the best value for each individual. Both application methods and their related products have a role to play in serving customers."



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