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AS WE SEE IT

RON HALL, SENIOR EDITOR



Industry finally making some headway in Washington, D.C.

Amtrak's Capitol Limited usually slices right through the night on its Washington D.C./Cleveland/Chicago run. This Friday afternoon the engine developed a limp just out of Rockville, Md.

Only 74 miles from Union Station and we're a half-hour behind already. The guy in the seat beside me is absorbed with his radio, which is tuned to the train's frequency. He says we're changing engines at the rail yard in Cumberland. Otherwise, it's going to be a long, slow pull up the mountain to Frostburg.

The prospect of digging my Dodge out of a mountain of snow on a frigid Cleveland pre-dawn is keeping me from feeling too chirpy anyway. (Plow jockies, I know from previous trips, bury anything they can't push out of the way.)

Anyway, I'm having these powerfully positive thoughts about the previous week in Washington D.C. The growing prospect of a hot meal served on tables with real linen in about an hour is, I'll admit, warming my recollections.

This last week in February, it seems to me, unfolded about as well as I or any of us in the lawn/landscape industry could have hoped.

Early on, about 100 of us—most of us from the Midwest and the East—jammed into Constitution Hall with the larger U.S. Chamber of Commerce group to see President Bill Clinton pitch his economic plan. He gave it to us, 35 minutes worth.

Us lawn care types then gathered with veteran Capitol Hill staffers, and one lobbyist for a how-to-win-friends-and-influence-people-on-the-Hill briefing. This was the warm-up to PLCAA's 1993 "Day on the Hill." (Co-sponsors were Lesco, Inc., Miles, Inc. and Sandoz Agro, Inc.)

By mid-week we'd fanned out in both Senate and House office buildings to meet with our respective legislators and their aides.

Gene Poole, a lawn pro from Van Wert,

Ohio, and I finished our rounds in Rep. Paul Gillmor's (R-Ohio) office.

Rep. Gillmor, a big man, greeted us genially. He gave us 15 minutes. He seemed to be genuinely interested in our industry and our message.

I'm feeling better and better about the green industry's growing presence in Washington. Law makers and their staff (never underestimate the importance of staffers) are starting to sound supportive.

They're learning more about the positive work we do. Their files contain our literature.

Some have heard from us every year now for the past four years.

What a difference these four years have made. That first year, many of us didn't even know which metro stops to use. We scrambled through office buildings, mostly lost. But, we scrambled.

Dick Ficco, a lawn care business owner from the Boston area, says it best.

On his first PLCAA visit to Capitol Hill, he says, he didn't know quite what to expect. On the second he was still feeling his way around, and on the third trip he was starting to get the industry's positive message across. On this, his fourth trip, he came to get something accomplished.

You think about people and about what they've said on a sleepy night train.

The Capitol Limited lurches to a stop beside a massive, roofless railroad roundhouse, a Civil War-era Stonehenge. It's collapsing one red brick at a time. Here's Martinsburg, W.V. with melting snow dripping from ancient buildings.

Waiting for me tomorrow morning, I'm sure, is one very cold car in a mountain of snow.



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LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

INCORPORATING LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

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Federal preemption will remain elusive this year; industry must continue to work at local and state levels.

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On the cover: verbena canadensis brightens up this landscape by Post Properties of Atlanta.

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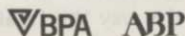
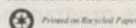
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ASK THE EXPERT

DR. BALAKRISHNA RAO

Poison ivy remedies, warnings

A number of our employees working on landscaping jobs where there is poison ivy are affected by the plants upon contact. How is poison ivy spread from one part of the body to another? Does it get into the blood stream? What can be done to prevent this problem?

Solution: Poison ivy contains toxic oil (resin) produced from leaves, stems and roots. Secretion of oil occurs generally when the plants come in contact with skin. Reports indicate that irritation can result from touching a dormant plant or recently dead plant, or even from pruning tools which come in contact with the plant.

Symptoms of poison ivy contamination include a rash. Eventually affected areas turn red, producing blisters, swelling, burning, itching and may lead to fever in some instances. Medical attention may be required if the problem is severe. Reports indicate that poison ivy is not spread by the watery liquid within the skin blisters. Also, I am not sure whether or not the ivy oil enters the blood system. My guess is it spreads only on the external skin*. The oil from the plant causes the itchy rash reaction. Washing the skin immediately after coming in contact with poison ivy may reduce the symptoms.

The resin sets up in the skin five to 15 minutes after exposure, after which washing will not help.

People who are sensitive to poison ivy should learn to recognize it and where it grows, and if possible, avoid any contact. Your landscaping job probably makes avoidance difficult, so wear gloves, coveralls, long-sleeve shirts, etc., to protect your skin. Wash hands, arms and any other body parts that may have come in contact with the plant with soaps such as Fells naptha soap. Wash contaminated clothing.

When large areas of the body or delicate areas such as eyes are involved, get prompt, professional medical care.

Consider using materials such as Technu on the body of sensitive persons prior to working in an area having poison ivy plants. Reportedly, the material helps against poisoning if applied before and/or after coming in contact with the plants.

(*Ed. note: we checked with the editors of *Dermatology Times* magazine, who verified that the poison ivy resin remains on the skin surface.) Partially excerpted from an article, "Poison Ivy Cures Founded on Myth," by Sharon McDonald, resident in dermatology, Columbus, Ohio.

Getting the most out of broadleaf control

This year we had a lot of service calls from our clients related to poor broadleaf weed control in spite of using postemergent herbicides. Why do you think we are having this problem? Now, we are thinking of applying the herbicides in the fall. How effective would this be? (PA)

Solution: In general, broadleaf weed control service calls are the major service calls in our industry. This is partly because of the way the treatments are programmed. For example, most

practitioners would not include any broadleaf herbicide in treatments until late spring. Therefore, the clients' lawns treated prior to this time may present a weed problem before the second treatment is scheduled. Clients may not be willing to wait for weed control until the second treatment, creating a need for a service call. Perhaps explaining to clients how these materials work and how they manage the weeds would help minimize service calls. This would involve educating the practitioners as well as the clients.

Other factors to consider are the cold and wet conditions which existed this year in many parts of the country. Weed control is more effective if weeds are actively growing. Rain before the herbicide has dried on the weed foliage may reduce effectiveness.

Concerning fall treatment with herbicides, turfgrass researchers at Cornell University have found that fall is the best time to apply postemergent herbicides to control broadleaf weeds in turf. Winter annual broadleaves and perennials are easier and more effectively controlled at that time, and the turf has more time to fill in the open areas before spring weeds germinate. Cornell scientists suggest herbicide applications be made from mid-September to mid-October, or even as late as mid-November during mild years. Even though you will not see the response until next spring, the herbicide will be absorbed by the plants and move down to the roots, resulting in good control in the spring.

This approach sounds good from the agronomic standpoint. However, study this option on a small practical and business aspect of the program before planning to implement on a larger scale.

Another option would be to use preemergent broadleaf herbicides such as Gallery. Make sure this product is labeled for your use. Read and follow label specifications for better results.

Ronstar and newly sprigged bermudagrass Can we use Ronstar herbicide on newly sprigged bermudagrass? (GA)

Solution: Yes, Ronstar 50W and Ronstar 2G are now labeled for use on newly sprigged bermudagrass. However, it is not labeled for use on home lawns. Both the Ronstar 50W and 2G herbicide use is restricted for golf courses, commercial sites, etc.

Read and follow label specifications for best results.

Dr. Balakrishna Rao is Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Co., Kent, Ohio.

Mail questions to "Ask the Expert," LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT, 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130. Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.



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LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

INCORPORATING LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

New faces in U.S. Capital but industry challenges remain



Capitol Hill staffer James Aidala says legislators divided on preemption.

Federal preemption will remain elusive this year; industry must continue to work at local and state levels.

■ Washington D.C.'s message to the chemical green industry: Lobby. Play the legislative game. But, don't neglect local issues either. Congress this year isn't likely to pass legislation that will preempt local political bodies from enacting their own pesticide use laws. So far, only scattered local jurisdictions have rushed toward pesticide-use laws. Where they have, it's created havoc.

"You probably have some time to work," says Claudia McMurray, minority council, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works.

The reason: the unprecedented number of new faces in Washington D.C.—President Bill Clinton and his administration, new EPA chief Carol Browner, 110 freshmen representatives, 11 new senators. (That doesn't even include new or reassigned legislative aides, individuals working directly with legislators, and

committee staff members, the people who supply legislators with information and, sometimes, opinions that drive legislation.)

"We're just barely getting started," says McMurray. Everybody in Washington is waiting to see where the Clinton administration is on the issues, she says.

So far lawn/landscape chemical pesticide use, is not high on its list. Health care and Clinton's economic package dominate the administration's attentions.

Other issues, says McMurray, that will probably take precedence over pesticide use deliberations include a Clean Water Act, the reauthorization of Superfund, amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, and a stronger Endangered Species Act.

James Aidala, a staff member with the House Government Operations Committee, says food safety will be a bigger issue than lawn/landscape pesticides.

"Lawn care is going to be a very small piece of that puzzle," he says. "So, the more that you (green industry) can have worked out among yourselves, the better off you'll be. Congress is not going to spend a lot of time on these issues...given all these other things going on."



Pennsylvania lawn care professionals (l. to r.) Bob Williamson, Kenneth Clemmer, and Larry Ellmaker practiced delivering the message they were going to present the following day on Capitol Hill to, right, Tom Diederich, Orkin Pest Control, Atlanta.



Meeting with Ohio Senator John Glenn's staff in February: (foreground to back) Mark Laube, Barefoot Grass Lawn Service; Gene Poole, Emerald Green/Bolton Lawn Care; Michael Dietrich, Lesco, Inc.; and George Gossett, DowElanco.