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AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Servicing the reader: the ticket to quality in magazine publishing

My definition of quality: **dedicated, informed employees consistently giving customers exactly what they want.**

To that end, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT magazine takes its quest for quality to a new level with this month's issue.

In the past, we've conducted reader surveys—in which many of you have participated, thank you—to determine how well our magazine is being received, and if we are on target with our articles. Because of their unequalled value, these surveys will continue.

But this month, we're proud to become the first magazine in the green industry to boast a "Reader Advisory Panel" that features six of the most respected names in the industry.

These people are not suppliers. They are not researchers. They are not extension agents or other consultants. They are golf course superintendents, landscape contractors, athletic field supervisors and lawn care operators—just like you.

The panelists: Ken Gerlack, Twyla Hansen, Tim Hiers, Bill Prest, Mark Schlossberg and Brian Storm. (For more information, see "Hot Topics.")

All six have not only been around the industry for a long time, but they've been extremely active, and have probably come in contact with many of you.

With this panel, balance is the key. We've included two golf course superintendents, two landscape contractors, a lawn care operator and an athletic field manager—roughly the same proportions as our total readership. We've got a great geographical diversity, from Ken in California, to Tim in Florida, to Mark in Baltimore.

The formation of this select panel gives us a means of more efficiently delivering even more valuable information, each and

every month.

For instance, in the next few days, we'll be finding out exactly how those six panelists viewed this month's cover stories on mowing, and what they think of our "LM Reports" on coated fertilizer. We'll know if our "Tech Center" section about disease control was on the mark. And we'll get reactions—especially from our two golf course superintendents—on the interesting points concerning algal scum in the "Strictly Golf" section.

In the past two years, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT has made some fundamental and wide-ranging changes: in the information we deliver, the way in which we deliver it, and to whom we're delivering it. We are thankful that you, readers, have embraced our renewed commitment.

The green industry is changing. Unlike other magazines serving the industry, LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT is changing along with it.

With our new "Reader Advisory Panel," you're assured of seeing more positive changes over the ensuing months.

It's not often in this column that you read anything self-serving. But we're proud of our new "Reader Advisory Panel," and proud of our effort to provide a quality editorial product to you. So please forgive us if we take a moment to puff out our chests.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

INCORPORATING LAWN CARE INDUSTRY

MAY 1993 VOL. 32, NO. 5

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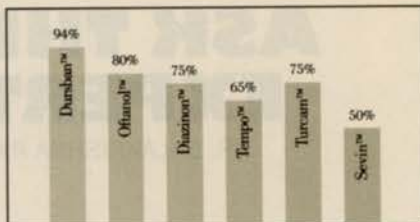
the right tactics, you can use a lot less and still get excellent results.

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ASK THE EXPERT

DR. BALAKRISHNA RAO

Home-study courses in horticulture?

Problem: Are there any schools offering home-study courses in horticulture and landscape design for which a degree can be earned? (Pennsylvania)

Solution: I am not familiar with any schools offering home-study courses in horticulture and landscape design for a degree and/or no degree program. I will update you if I hear from our readers or other sources.

Earthworms and golf greens

Problem: How can I eliminate earthworms from penetrating my greens? The worms bore holes up through the turf, causing little mounds of dirt. When the greens are mowed, the mounds are left flat. This causes an uneven putting surface and an unattractive green. (New York)

Solution: Generally, most people—particularly those who deal with turfgrass management and farming—consider earthworms to be beneficial as their feeding activity enriches the soil. In addition, their burrowing improves soil aeration. The soil they ingest with their food becomes a good source of natural fertilizer when excreted.

The problems they create—as you indicated—are mounds of soil in the turfgrass area which can be unsightly. In your situation, this presents an uneven soil surface for playing. Also, a large number of earthworms may be found crawling or dead on sidewalks, driveways, etc. during heavy rains or saturated soil conditions.

Although these activities can be a nuisance, or objectionable to a number of people, there is no pesticide registered to manage earthworms. Reports indicate that certain soil-applied insecticides on lawns may have some adverse effects on earthworm population and activity. If any of the readers have suggestions or comments, I will pass them on in this column.

Read and follow label specifications for better results.

Ever see an 'umbrella' tree?

Problem: Are you familiar with the "umbrella" tree? If so, do you have any idea where I can locate one? What is its botanical name? (Pennsylvania)

Solution: In reviewing the literature from our library, the specific name of the umbrella tree to which you are probably referring is the *Magnolia tripetala*. In addition to this, the following names of trees were also included under that umbrella tree name:

- Australian: *Brassaia actinophylla*
- Ear-leaved: *Magnolia frasseri*
- Queens: *Brassaia actinophylla*
- Queensland: *Brassaia actinophylla*
- Texas: *Melia azadarach*

Among the above names and tree species, the umbrella tree most commonly refers to umbrella magnolia (*Magnolia tripetala*). It gets its name from the characteristic arrangement of large leaves. Unlike many other plants on which the leaves are normally arranged along the branches, the umbrella tree's leaves are

crowded at the ends of the branches, giving an umbrella effect.

The umbrella magnolia tree can be a large shrub or small tree seldom more than 40 feet tall. It is found near streams or in moist soils along the coastal plain and Piedmont plateau from Virginia to Georgia. It may also be found in mountains.

The tree has large (10- to 20-inch) broad elongated leaves, cream-colored, 10- to 12-inch wide flowers with three sepals and six or nine petals with unpleasant odor and fruits which are rose/red-colored and two- to four-inches long. Its bark is light gray and smooth.

With the above unique characteristics, it may not be very difficult to locate the tree in its growing regions, which are Pennsylvania to Alabama and Mississippi.

Nutsedge control tips

Problem: We are having problems controlling nutsedge in our clients' properties. We have used Basagran with mixed results. Is there a better product or method of managing nutsedge on warm-season grasses? (Texas)

Solution: In Texas, you are probably dealing with two types of nutsedge—the yellow and purple varieties. Of the two, purple nutsedge is reportedly common in your area. The Basagran herbicide that you used is primarily for yellow nutsedge control. You would obtain mixed results if purple nutsedge is the predominant problem, since Basagran doesn't work well in managing this.

If purple nutsedge is predominant, try using Image herbicide. This herbicide is by far the best product for purple nutsedge management. The manufacturer claims 80- to 100 percent control.

It will also help control yellow nutsedge.

Image can be used on warm-season established turfgrasses like bermudagrass, centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass and zoysia-grass. Labels say not to use on tall fescue or mixed stand of tall fescue and bermudagrass. For better results, apply Image on actively growing weeds. It can be tank mixed with other herbicides, but check the label specifications for mixing guidelines and compatibilities.

According to the label information, Image will also help manage quite a few other monocot and dicot weeds. Refer to the label for more information.

Image is a systemic herbicide which can move throughout the foliage and roots and starve weeds by affecting plant protein production. Reportedly, weed growth stops within two weeks of application. With continued mowing and good plant health care practices for desirable turfgrass, the weed problem disappears.

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

Do you know the mowing basics?

The turf type, the mower, the operator: all play vital roles in maintaining healthy grass.

■ "Mowing is the primary cultural practice in turfgrass management," observes Dr. Beth Baikan of Cornell University. And as such, it should be the number one consideration of turfgrass managers who want a healthy, attractive stand of turf.

She defines mowing as: "removal of photosynthetically active tissue that temporarily reduces the food-making process and weakens the plant."

In one sentence: if you're not mowing correctly, chances are that you're creating more problems for yourself.

Mowing height, Baikan says, is determined by:

- turfgrass species;
- intensity of maintenance; and
- how the turf is being used.

"All species have a mowing tolerance range," she says. Bermudagrass should be mowed at 0.2-0.5 inches; St. Augustine, carpetgrass, centipedegrass at 1.5-2 inches; turf-type tall fescue and bahiagrass at 2-3 inches.

"The shorter the grass is mowed, the more frequently it needs to be mowed," Baikan further observes. "You can compromise mowing height and frequency on less highly-maintained turf, but not on intensely-maintained turf like golf greens."

Also, grasses which grow in shade typically lack vigor; its leaves are weaker than grasses growing in sunlight. So mowing heights should be raised 30-50 percent of the normal recommended height.

Other factors—"Selection of equipment is critical," she says.

"And adjustment of blades is also important."

She suggests adjusting the mower blades before every mowing.

Rotary blades cut in a horizontal mode, reel blades in a circular mode. Rotary blades use a suction-effect to stand the grass up straight and then rip the tip of the plant off in a scythe-like manner. Reel blades, on the other hand, use a cleaner, more efficient scissors-type action with the blade slicing off the turfgrass tips against the bedknife.

"Season, time and temperature also play an important role in mowing practices," Baikan notes.

In cool, wet periods, you should use a higher cut to promote deep rooting. When it's hot and dry, a shorter cut means less water evapotranspiration loss. "You have to see where the line is," she says.

Problems—Common problems which arise from improper mowing practices include:

- 1) At lower heights, the plant is stressed more, meaning more opportunity for weed encroachment.
- 2) Dull blades will rip the plant, causing injury.
- 3) When the mower is travelling at an excessive forward speed, the turf tends to show a wavy appearance.