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AS WE SEE IT

JERRY ROCHE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



A little bit of Santa Claus, a little bit of Robin Hood... not much of Ben Franklin

"When you assemble a number of men, to have the advantage of their joint wisdom, you inevitably assemble with those men all their prejudices, their passions, their errors of opinion, their local interests and their selfish views. From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected?"—Benjamin Franklin

WE THE PEOPLE of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union... demand an end to oppressive government influence over our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Forgive me for plagiarizing the first few words of the U.S. Constitution. But that message came through, loud and clear, to our legislators during the general election last month. By throwing a number of incumbents out of Washington on their ears, the people spoke.

I hope that the small-business community—the green industry in particular—was part of this collective voice. Some of what Congress legislated during the '80s and '90s has had a dramatic impact on our industry, if not through the EPA, then through FIFRA, OSHA or any number of other alphabet-soup agencies and laws that continue to sprout like weeds in Washington.

When I contemplate these problems, the memorable words of ABC-TV consumer reporter John Stossel often echo in my mind: "The market works in mysterious ways. Leave it alone, and it will regulate itself."

Certainly, if you tried to run your small businesses the same way the government tries to run itself, you'd be sleeping in cardboard boxes and dining on someone else's table scraps by now.

How is it, I wonder, that the government of the world's richest nation went

belly-up more than 20 years ago? How can our per capita earnings be among the highest in the world, our income tax rate hover around 20 percent, and our government still not have a penny to its name?

One of the reasons—appropriate to the coming holiday season—is that our federal government is the biggest Santa Claus in the world. We send millions of dollars to Somalia, Bosnia and other less fortunate countries. We break the bank sending U.S. troops to Haiti or the Middle East. We even play Robin Hood (rob from the rich, give to the poor, infirm and aged) here within our own borders.

We put up with porkbarrel spending, fraudulent welfare claims, and a massive bureaucracy that is buckling under its own weight.

No, these are not the words of a latter-day Ebenezer Scrooge. They're your own words—words I've heard while visiting you and chatting with you on the phone. Words that echoed in the halls of Congress as you were casting your votes.

Certainly, we all realize that occasions arise when the United States must help less fortunate people, both here and abroad. But you and I (as patriots first and small business men and women second) realize the folly of trying to be all things to all people.

With the 1994 elections, we have drawn the proverbial line in the sand. But our job isn't done yet. We must continue to closely monitor our newly-elected officials to make sure they don't often step over that line.

And you know they're dying to.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

WE KNOW YOUR TURF®

DECEMBER 1994 VOL. 33, NO. 12

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Jerry Roche

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Ron Hall

COLLEGE & ATHLETIC TURF

1G Never-ending education

Former teacher Kevin Clunis takes delight in showing others how to be more efficient and useful. He believes in education--everyone's including his own.

Jerry Roche

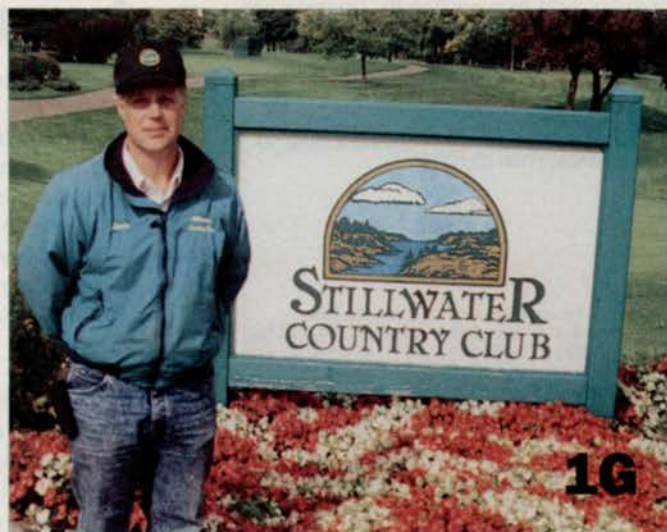


HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Coming next year:

January: State of the Landscaping Industry in the U.S.—third of four exclusive surveys

February: State of the Golf Maintenance Industry —last of our exclusive surveys



4G Unique goals

Here's how one community used tropical gardens, floral mounds and fountains in its parks to draw people back to a long-slumbering downtown.

Ron Hall

5G Bringing golfers back

Maintaining good conditions and integrity of design will keep those greens fees rolling in.

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Small businesses across the U.S. enjoyed a healthy surge in sales and profits during the second quarter of this year, according to a quarterly survey conducted by Padgett Business Services. Service businesses in the Midwest, however, were down.

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ON THE COVER: Wrigley Field in Chicago, home of the Cubs, is one of the oldest and most respected athletic fields in the nation. Photo by Dr. Kent W. Kurtz.

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The logo for ESN is rendered in large, bold, green 3D block letters. The letters are set against a blue background that features a series of purple spheres of varying sizes arranged in a circular pattern around the text. A small 'TM' trademark symbol is located at the bottom right of the 'N' in ESN.

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ASK THE EXPERT

DR. BALAKRISHNA RAO



How to control purple nutsedge

Problem: Is there anything to control purple nutsedge? (Texas)

Solution: Your best approach would be to use Image. According to Lesco Co. representatives, Image plus MSMA along with a spreader/sticker provides better control of purple nutsedge than Image alone in your area. In this combination treatment, MSMA has been shown to reduce the phytotoxicity effect on desirable turfgrass from Image.

Image is slightly slow to respond to treatment. I suggest using a tank mix of one quart/acre of Image plus 2 lb. ai/acre of MSMA plus a spreader sticker. Do not use MSMA on St. Augustine turfgrass.

Make sure the turfgrass is not under moisture stress to reduce the possibility of phytotoxicity. Apply during the cooler part of the day, such as early morning or late evening, two to three days after mowing. Also, do not mow for another 48 hours after the treatment application. This would improve translocation and systemic movement of Image. Avoid watering for 24 hours after the application of treatment.

Generally, two applications of Image at 14-day intervals should be sufficient to help manage the purple nutsedge plants during the season. Often, these treatments may not be sufficient to manage the nutsedge problem the following year. Reports indicate that new nutsedge plants can emerge from the underground bulbs which are not killed the previous year. Depending upon the situation, you may find 50-to-70 percent of new nutsedge plants during the second year. Therefore, monitor the area and consider using Image treatment the following year as needed. If the problem reappears the third year, it may require further treatments. With this approach, the objective is to eliminate the new plants emerging from underground bulbs every year. Within two to three years of treatment, the problem should be eliminated satisfactorily. A new nutsedge material from Monsanto, Manage, is currently pending EPA registration at this time for most warm- and cool-season turfgrasses. Read and follow label specifications for better results.

Sod webworm/grub trouble

Problem: We are finding lots of sod webworms and grubs in lawns. We are thinking of using Sevin insecticide for managing both. Would this work? (Ohio)

Solution: Yes, you can use Sevin insecticide to manage both sod webworms and grubs. Sod webworm larvae hide in the silken cocoons during the daytime and come out at night and feed at the base of tillers. Generally, they do not cause serious problems since sod webworms do not kill crowns. With the onset of cool and moist weather, turfgrass normally recovers well. Recovery can be further supported with proper fertilization. Insecticide treatments can be provided as needed if the problem is severe.

With grub control, the situation is slightly different. If the grub population is not very big with onset of good weather and

lots of rain, the turf may recover and the damage symptoms may not be very apparent. However, if the grub population is high, their extensive feeding on roots can cause severe injury. Turfgrass may not recover in spite of good growing conditions. For this reason, grub activity should be detected early, preferably around late July to early August, and registered insecticides applied as needed.

There are a number of good products in the market, but since you are interested in using Sevin, I will limit my answer to that product. After applying the insecticide, post-application watering is very important. This practice would provide about 80 to 85 percent control of grubs when treating with Sevin. The key is to apply early and water it in.

Read and follow the label specifications for better results.

Persistent poison ivy

Problem: A 30,000 sq. ft. field I manage is inundated with poison ivy. Until I took over, the field was cut twice each year at about six inches. From May 15 through August 15, I cut the field at 3 inches with a rotary mower. The leaves are smaller, but the ivy persists. The field is in full sun.

(Massachusetts)

Solution: The problem with poison ivy is that it may be coming from a nearby wooded area. Poison ivy can spread primarily by vegetative viny stem growth, as well as from seeds. Once established, they can gradually keep spreading into larger and larger areas.

A perennial, poison ivy survives the winter and returns the next year. Its seeds remain viable in soil for several years. When conditions are favorable in spring, seeds can produce new plants.

Selective management in a turfgrass field is difficult, if not impossible. Growth regulator products such as trichlophyr or dicamba would be needed for selective control. Consider using herbicides such as Confront (at a high label rate), Turflon II amine (which contains trichlophyr and 2,4-D) or dicamba plus Weedone DPC combination.

Fall application may be advantageous. At that time, the sugar from the leaves moves down to the root system for storage. If the treatments are done before the leaves change colors and before defoliation, fall application may be good. Try in a small area to see how it would manage the problem. Another option is to treat the field in early spring when plants unfold. It may require at least two applications. Consider a third application as needed to help manage the problem.

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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Benefits among the best in the green industry for athletic field managers

■ Ah, the joys of being an athletic field manager! Forget the weeds. Forget the complaints from irate parents. Besides the feeling of accomplishment that often accompanies watching a bunch of kids knock around on a safe, beautiful field, another of the business's true attractions is the list of financial benefits provided by employers.

From 401k plans to paid sick leave to partial or full retirement, these benefits are unequalled in the green industry.

Almost 100 percent of athletic field managers who responded to an LM survey last month get paid holidays and paid vacations. In addition, more than 90 percent of the sample receive paid sick leave, and health insurance that is at least partially paid by the employer.

(By contrast, less than half of all lawn care companies offer paid vacations and holidays, and less than one-third offer

They're an experienced, stable bunch who have been able to provide the best playing surfaces for the least money.

paid sick leave.)

It is no wonder, then, that 65.4 percent of our sample has been involved in maintaining athletic fields for 10 years or more. Just 18.2 percent has been involved for fewer than six years.

"It's pretty easy to get up and go to work in the morning," notes Steve Wightman, field supervisor for Jack Murphy Stadium in San Diego.

Part of the reason for lack of turnover is because of the job's very nature, he says. "It takes at least three to four years before

you feel comfortable preparing a field, regardless of how much you know. It takes a while to grow accustomed to your job because of all the variables."

John Michalko of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland thinks students on college campuses are a factor. "Here, the customer changes every four years," he says. "I think the reason people stay around is security and dedication."

In August, LM's survey questionnaire was mailed to 750 athletic turf managers who subscribe to the magazine. By mid-September, we had received 174 valid answers, a response rate of 23.3 percent.

The average respondent maintains 10.8 baseball or softball fields, 6.9 football or soccer fields. Other fields maintained include intramural, practice, lawn bowling, all-purpose, rugby, parade and band, disc golf, radio aircraft, field hockey and volleyball. Average acreage is 104.7.

THE NATIONAL SCOPE...

■ Projecting the average (mean) responses obtained in our survey to the national scope, we are able to come up with some useful figures for the size of the total domestic athletic field maintenance industry.

There are approximately 12,000 park systems and 20,000 high schools, colleges and universities in the U.S. with football, soccer and/or baseball programs. Therefore, the total dollars spent on athletic field maintenance in the U.S. each year—including employee wages, salaries and benefits—appears to be very close to **\$2.0 billion**. (This figure adjusted for abnormal survey responses.)

Dollars spent on purchased supplies breaks down something like this:

High-end equipment (aerators, trucks, tractors)	\$499 million
Fertilizers and pesticides	\$434 million
Mowing equipment	\$322 million
Irrigation	\$178 million
Turfseed/sod	\$112 million

Diane Gildemaster, district supervisor for the Sioux Falls (S.D.) Parks and Recreation

Department, is on the high side of being a typical respondent. Her department maintains 33 baseball or softball fields and 41 football or soccer fields.

"We're finding that our existing leagues would like to expand," she reports, "but we just don't have the facilities. People are demanding more quality and more use.

Thankfully, the associations are starting to pick up some of the maintenance costs."

As might be expected, nearly all the survey respondents reported mowing and fertilizing fields. However, a surprisingly high 94.0 percent re-reported aerating

at least one of their fields on at least an annual basis.

"Our school is not big enough to have a football team, so our soccer fields are being used constantly," notes Denton Smith of Lenox (Mass.) Memorial High School. "We have huge leagues, spring summer and fall, and our fields are being pounded. But aeration does a hell of a job" of keeping them safe and usable.

Another respondent, Jim Robinson of the Garner (N.C.) Parks and Recreation Department, has even tried deep-tine aeration, a procedure that is becoming more popular on golf courses but is not yet being used on a widespread basis by athletic turf managers.

"We had problems with overuse and abuse on our football and soccer fields," Robinson says. "We contract the Verti-Drain aeration from a local golf course. It's an expensive operation.

"The jury's still out on it because we had to get right back on the fields this year, so it was not a fair test. However, damage sustained this year was kept to a minimum."

Weed control, reseeding/overseeding

1994 State of Athletic Turf Maintenance

TYPES OF FIELDS MAINTAINED

	% of sample	Mean	Projected to readership ¹
BASEBALL/SOFTBALL	95.0	10.8	50,643
FOOTBALL/SOCCER	87.1	6.9	29,665
OTHER²	42.1	3.6	7,481
TOTAL FIELDS MAINTAINED	100.0	21.2	87,789
TOTAL ACRES MAINTAINED	100.0	104.7	516,800

¹Total athletic field readership of Landscape Management magazine, June 1994 = 4,936

²"Other" types of fields mentioned in survey: intramural, practice, lawn bowling, all-purpose, field hockey, volleyball, recreational, open turf, passive play, parade, band, rugby, playground, disc golf, radio aircraft

Type of Maintenance Performed (by percent of sample)

MOWING 98.2%

FERTILIZATION 96.4%

AERATION 94.0%

WEED CONTROL 87.4%

RESEEDING, OVERSEEDING 83.8%

IRRIGATION 81.4%

INSECT CONTROL 52.1%

DISEASE CONTROL 47.3%

(Other maintenance performed: topdressing, dethatching, painting, dragging infields, sod installation, levelling, litter control, safety control, fence maintenance, light maintenance, bleacher maintenance)



and irrigation are other tasks performed by more than 80 percent of our sample readers. Athletic field maintenance, however, doesn't end with the turf. Most respondents report being responsible for infield maintenance, and many report painting, levelling, safety monitoring and fence, light and bleacher maintenance as allied duties.

"We've got state-of-the-art infield maintenance equipment," boasts Tim Stubbs of the Bowling Green (Ohio) Parks and Recreation Department. "We use our Bannerman Diamond Master to level our infields on a daily basis, and we've been told we have the best infields around. Bowling Green State University's athletic department has even borrowed our equipment to use on their varsity baseball field."

Gildemaster says Sioux Falls rolled its fields for the first time this year after a recent regrading program. "It took out some of the little ruts we wouldn't have normally been able to rake out," she says, "and the community is really proud of the fields now."

According to the survey results, athletic field managers are major purchasers of mowers of all sizes, aerators, irrigation equipment and compact tractors. In addition, three out of four managers purchase dry-applied fertilizer and turfseed on an annual basis.

Average annual budget for athletic field maintenance was more than \$162,000, but that was skewed upward by four respondents who reported budgets of \$2 million or more. More typically, the annual budget for materials is around \$30,000, the median response.

Budgets, the survey notes, are growing incrementally. More than half of our respondents reported no growth or negative growth in their budgets from 1993 to 1994, though the overall average was plus 0.5 percent. Next year, there will be about a 1.6 percent increase in budgets overall, our survey reports.

By far, the greatest portion of the respondents were affiliated with public parks—58.7 percent. An additional 32.3 percent work for schools or universities.

—Jerry Roche

NEXT MONTH:

State of the Landscape Industry

PRODUCT CATEGORY	% OF SAMPLE	MEDIAN DOLLARS	MEAN DOLLARS	PROJECTED TO CIRC.
Soil aerators	24.5%	\$2,000	\$4,394	\$5,313,752
Fert./herb. combos	63.3%	\$3,000	\$7,479	\$23,368,046
Domestic pick-ups	38.8%	\$15,000	\$22,200	\$42,516,730
Dry-app. fertilizer	76.9%	\$2,750	\$4,727	\$17,942,671
Ornamental fert.	30.6%	\$1,000	\$1,860	\$2,809,374
Liquid-app. fertilizer	16.3%	\$1,000	\$2,025	\$1,629,250
Post-emerg. herbicides	63.9%	\$1,000	\$2,269	\$7,156,662
Pre-emerg. herbicides	47.6%	\$1,000	\$2,773	\$6,515,263
Small mowers	32.7%	\$1,000	\$2,892	\$4,667,896
Mid-size mowers	21.1%	\$8,000	\$10,694	\$11,137,758
Large mowers	40.1%	\$14,000	\$17,129	\$33,904,046
Turfgrass sod	40.1%	\$1,500	\$3,937	\$7,792,646
Irrigation/sprinklers	66.0%	\$2,000	\$8,456	\$27,547,619
Compact tractors	28.6%	\$14,000	\$20,655	\$29,158,581
Turf fungicides	17.7%	\$1,000	\$4,950	\$4,324,676
Turf insecticides	29.3%	\$1,000	\$2,249	\$3,252,612
Turf-seed	74.8%	\$2,000	\$2,589	\$9,588,919
TOTAL				\$238.6 million