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THE VOICE OF THE GREEN INDUSTRY

LANDSCAPE *management*



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In case you've missed out on some of the green industry's best shows and conferences, here's a rundown on what the industry's talking about. (Not that you should ever use this column as a substitute for being there, of course.)

The Sports Turf Managers Association met in January in Colorado Springs. Dr. Eric Nelson of Medalist America was one of the many presenters. He spoke on over-seeding as an important—but often neglected—part of athletic field turf management.

"Over-seeding is not just something you do for a week in the fall, explained Nelson. "Procedures can be done during the summer so you can prepare a seed bed that's receptive to perennial ryegrass/annual ryegrass over-seeding in the fall."

The benefits of over-seeding, said Nelson, go beyond aesthetics, to include shear tolerance; it forces you to manage bermudagrass to reduce thatch layers and decrease compaction; it keeps you

in a mind-set of wanting your fields to look their best year-round.

"There's also some people who feel there are insulation benefits to ryegrass over-seeding on bermudagrass," added Nelson, "to protect it from cold shock or winter hardiness problems."

At the same show, Dr. Whitney Cranshaw, entomologist at Colorado State University, reminded field managers to, "know your insecticides," in terms of:

- ▶ toxicity/hazard to humans;
- ▶ environmental persistence;
- ▶ hazards to non-target organisms;
- ▶ water solubility;
- ▶ affinity for organic matter.

STMA reported it will soon have a certification program, one that will help them develop an

alliance with stadium managers, athletic trainers, "any group that is allied to sports fields."

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America held its annual "Day on the Hill" in Washington, D.C. in early February, as part of its ongoing quest for responsible legislation. (See our report on page 12.)

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America hosted its annual, educational gem of a show, this time in Las Vegas. Jim Snow of the United States Golf Association received the LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT "Person of the Year" award in the golf category, for his career-long dedication to better golf turf.

USGA consulting agronomists made 1,788 visits to golf courses in 1996 to help superintendents solve turf problems, said Joe England, new chairman of the USGA Green Section Committee. The testing of new bentgrass and bermudagrass varieties on 15 practice greens will begin later this year, co-sponsored by GCSAA and the National Turfgrass Evaluation Program.

It's also reported that the USGA and the National Geographic Society present an environmental symposium in Washington, D.C. on May 16, to be attended by many golf and environmental agencies.

The Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program will expand, said England, who added that the USGA is committed "to making golf courses more accessible, easier to maintain, ecologically sensitive and environmentally safe."

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America held its "Executive Forum" Feb. 15-18. An annual retreat for business people with an affinity for improvement, the forum featured guest speakers and break-out sessions on a variety of topics, from incentive programs to communicating your company "vision" to employees.

As usual, the green industry show calendar is full of events that can help you and your people improve the way you work, at a time when standing still just doesn't cut it. **LM**

Comments? Write Terry at 7500 Old Oak Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44130; phone him at (216) 891-2709; fax him at (216) 891-2675; or e-mail to lscap@en.com.

Main events cover turf like a blanket



Terry McIver

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Editor-in-Chief



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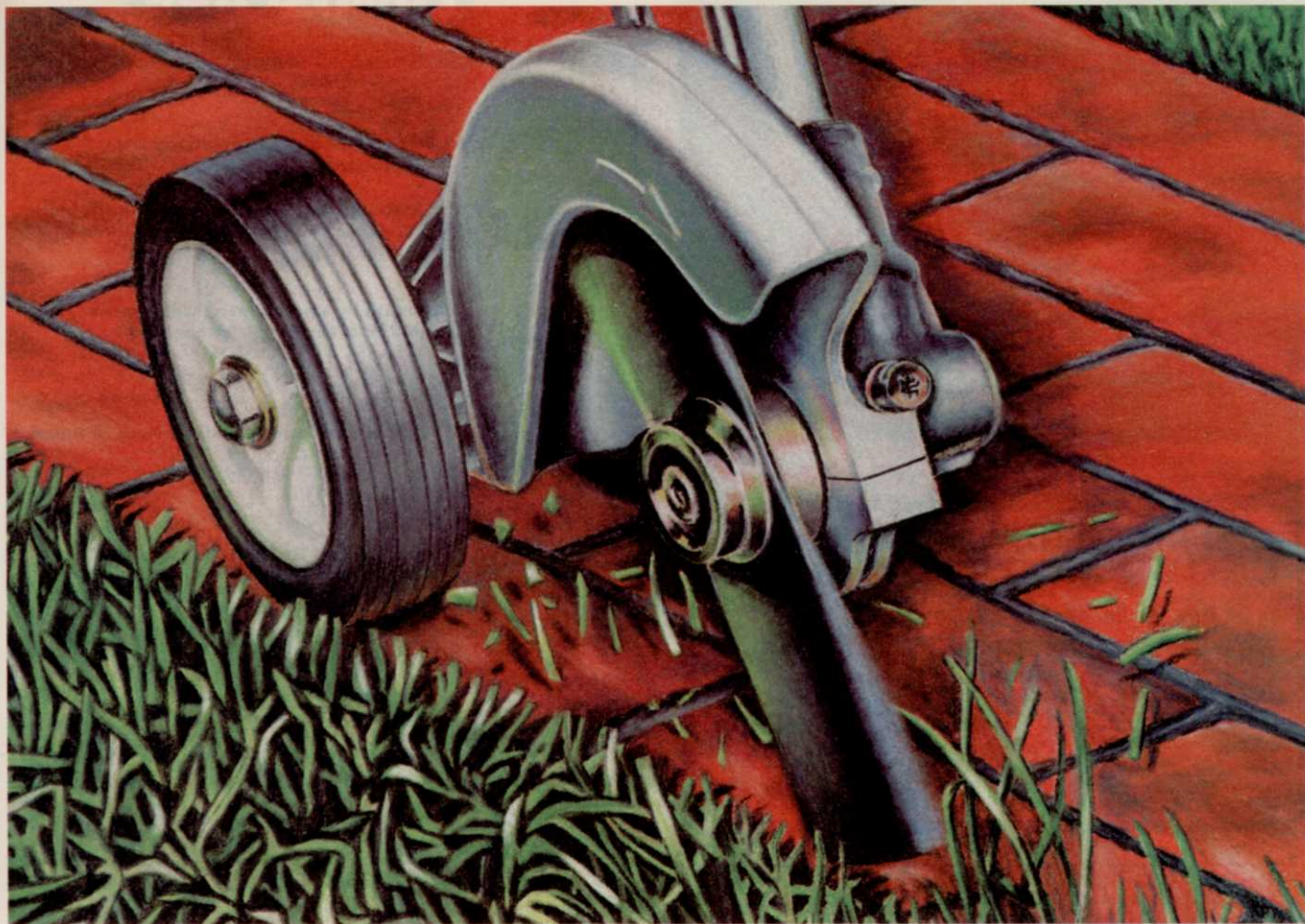
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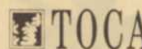
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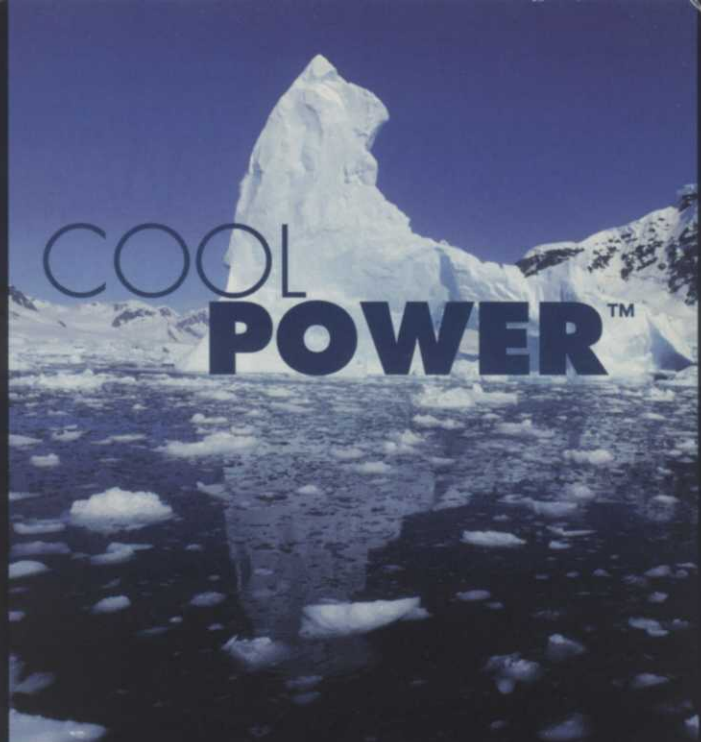
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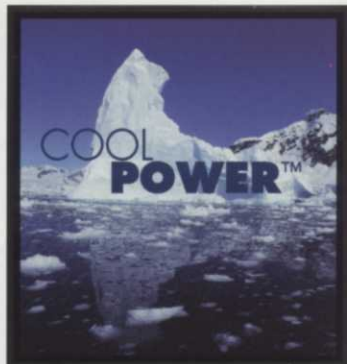
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Container plant weeds

We have a small nursery for container grown plants. Among many weed species, crabgrass and spurge are the most common and troublesome. We are thinking of treating the area with Princep before placing the containers in that area. What do you think about using this method to manage the weeds? Will container plant roots pick up the herbicide and injure the nursery plants?

—OHIO

Princep has been the standard soil sterilant used in container grown ornamentals. Reports indicate that Princep can control crabgrass for more than 120 days, and control spurge for 90 days. To prevent direct contact with the treated surface, consider placing the containers on gravel or wooden structures. This should prevent possible contamination of container media and/or root absorption of herbicide.

If you have not used Princep or have not used it in the method discussed, try it on a small scale using different containerized plants. Monitor for possible herbicidal injury. If the applications and arrangements are done properly, there should not be any adverse effects. For any escapes or future problems, consider postemergent, non-selective herbicides (Roundup, Finale or Scythe). Make sure they are labeled for the plant species culture and that your license allows you to use these herbicides. Read and follow label specifications for better control.

Roots and water pipes

We are dealing with several new construction building sites with a number of large willow trees. Because of the close proximity of these trees to buildings, we are afraid that the tree roots may cause damage to water pipes. For this reason, we were considering using Biobarrier. Can Biobarrier be used around water pipes and sewer lines without harming the water?

—INDIANA

A representative from Reemay, Inc.—the maker of Biobarrier—replies:

"Tree roots seek and follow the wall of the pipe because of condensation and oxygen along the wall. When they find a small hole or leaking joint, they grow through, and the problems start. A strip of Biobarrier wrapped around the joint will provide added protection from movement due to changing soil conditions or roots exerting pressure as they grow radially next to the pipe wall. You can also wrap drain lines without obstructing the flow out while still preventing root encroachment.

"Trifluralin, the active ingredient in Biobarrier, releases in vapor form and is adsorbed into the soil. Root tip elongation is blocked, and growth towards the pipe is prevented. Trifluralin is not taken up into the tree or ornamental, and has no adverse effects on other roots outside the zone."

(Reply edited due to space limitations—ed.)

Hydrogel in planters?

What is your opinion on the use of water-adsorbing polymer products, such as hydrogel, in the container production of nursery ornamental plants?

Would it be better to incorporate it into the planting media or dribble it beneath the liner or pots?

—OHIO

Some reports suggest that hydrogels can reduce watering requirements of container grown plants, reduce transplant shock, increase nutrient retention of media and enhance plant growth. There are conflicting reports about their practical use, and benefits are questionable. Reports from Auburn University, as well as our own experience, suggest that hydrogel products may not be advantageous for container production. Watering frequency was not decreased by use of these products. In some instances they may reduce or not affect the shoot and root growth.

Comparatively, incorporation is better than the dribbling method. A product beneath the liner may cause the liners to force out of place, requiring repotting. If young plants did well and can produce roots into and out of growing media, forcing the plant out may not be a concern. Water-adsorbing polymers such as hydrogels may aide water use for some species of plants and not for others.

This practice may also be advantageous in drought or during water bans.



BALAKRISHNA RAO

Manager of Research and Technical Development for the Davey Tree Co. Kent, Ohio

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Please allow two to three months for an answer to appear in the magazine.

Novartis plans 'aggressive' training, market focus

LAS VEGAS—Novartis—the new company formed by the merger of Ciba and Sandoz—plans to hit the ground running with "aggressive" sales training and product research, and special attention to ornamentals markets.

The merger of Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz AG to form Novartis Specialty Products was officially announced during the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America Conference and Show, held here Feb. 6-12.

Thomas McGowan, head of Novartis Specialty Products, says the company is committed to providing innovative products and technology to help customers achieve their business goals.

"We do not plan to lose ground in the marketplace during the transition year, we expect to meet our 1997 business goals, and we expect to make real changes in the near future that will soon make it possible for everybody to know who Novartis is," says McGowan, who adds that the merger will give Novartis "significantly stronger" research and development capabilities than either

company had before.

"Novartis is founded with a mindset of continuous improvement," says Gene Hintze, director of Novartis Turf & Ornamental Products.

"Our goal is more products, better service and exceeding customer expectations. We will have the most experienced turf field sales team in the business," says Hintze, "with over 20 dedicated sales representatives out in the field."

Hintze says "aggressive" sales training programs will continue through 1999.

"We also intend to provide some focus to the ornamentals business," says Hintze. "We will start off with a small, dedicated field sales force that will focus on the greenhouse and nursery business in key geographies in the U.S."

Hintze says Novartis will focus on "marketing management" rather than "product management," with market managers for the golf business, ornamentals business and professional lawn care business.


Novartis is headquartered in Greensboro, N.C., in what were previously Ciba headquarters. The company's product line includes turf and ornamental products—herbicides, fungicides, insecticides and turf management products for golf courses, greenhouses, nurseries, commercial lawn and landscape companies and sod farms; vegetation management products; and seed treatment products.

Products already in use by green industry professionals include Banner MAXX fungicide; Barricade preemergence herbicide; Primo plant growth regulator; Sentinel fungicide; Subdue MAXX fungicide and nine other products.

Headquarters address for Novartis is: 410 Swing Rd., Greensboro, NC 27409. □

► The Novartis logo

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