

# CHEMICAL LOG

## Mole Crickets a Threat This Season

By Jim Shuford

The storm of the century, record high and low temperatures — you name it, southern turf managers have faced it this spring. To make matters worse, mole crickets are beginning their spring hatch. Sports turf managers and superintendents from Florida are reporting nymphs in various stages of development.

Beginning in mid-March, mole crickets begin their annual mating flights. The tawny mole cricket is usually the first as well as the most damaging variety. Little is known about individual behavior patterns of mole crickets, but university research indicates tawnys lay their clutches in the same place each year. If correct, this would explain the yearly mole-cricket hot spots that appear in turf in the South.

Bahiagrass and bermudagrass are the dominant turf hosts for mole crickets. St. Augustinegrass has also fallen prey in recent years, causing turf managers to make unscheduled and unbudgeted pesticide treatments.

The combination of cricket size and changing spring weather patterns make control and timing treatments difficult. In recent years, turfgrass managers have begun to rely more on mapping as a means of planning treatment programs. As previously mentioned, mole crickets tend to infest the same areas year after year. Using this information and keeping detailed records, turfgrass managers can more effectively time their treatments for optimum control.

Treatment programs using baits containing Sevin or Dursban have per-

formed well in tests against adults and large nymphs. In many cases, they are easier and more economical to use than sprays. Oftanol, once a mainstay in mole-cricket control programs, has fallen off in popularity but is once again being programmed. Used properly, it can provide excellent results. (As with all chemicals, make sure to read the label carefully prior to use and adhere strictly to manufacturer-specified application rates.)

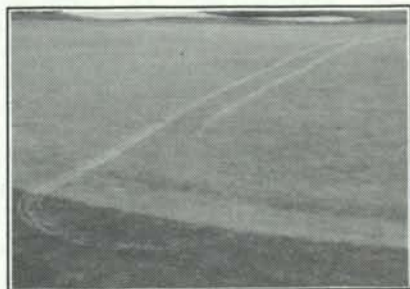
Several new products are due out in late 1993, including Scimitar from Zeneca and Merit from Miles. Only time will tell if they are successful new tools in the never-ending battle against mole crickets.

*Editor's note: Jim Shuford is with United Horticultural Supply.*

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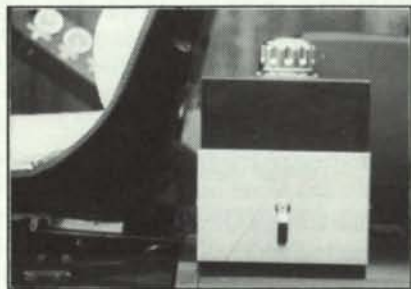
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