

Contech buys U.S. pest-control company

BY ANDREW A. DUFFY, TIMES COLONIST OCTOBER 28, 2009

Victoria-based Contech Electronics has wedged its foot a little further into the door of the North American gardening market with the acquisition of a 125-year-old U.S. pest-control company.

Contech's purchase of Tanglefoot, which has been manufacturing chemical-free pest management products since 1885, should give the Victoria high-tech firm a strong base from which to pitch its suite of pest-control products.

"Among master gardeners, the Tanglefoot brand is very well recognized where Contech may not be, so it gives us one more way of getting better known in the gardening industry," said Contech CEO Mark Grambart. "This gives us a closer distribution hub to our U.S. customers."

Contech, a relative newcomer founded in 1987, produces animal training and control products such as the ScareCrow motion-activated sprinkler for pet owners and gardeners.

The deal, for an undisclosed sum, was six months in the making and establishes Contech as a \$10-million company with 55 employees. It will see Michigan-based Tanglefoot remain intact and operate as a wholly owned subsidiary of Contech.

Tanglefoot, which started life as a flypaper manufacturer, produces insect traps, tree care products and animal repellents geared toward city parks and urban forestry departments as well as lawn and garden centres, nurseries, and hardware stores.

"This expands our presence in green pest control," said Grambart. "We will continue to build the Tanglefoot brand."

"We have every confidence that Contech is the right company to carry the Tanglefoot brand to even greater heights in the years to come," said Tanglefoot president and owner Joe Skendzel. "It was critical that the buyer fit well with our brand, our commitment to pesticide-free pest management and our future ambitions."

Contech's head office will remain in Victoria, while re-search and development will stay in Vancouver. Tanglefoot will remain in Grand Rapids, Mich.

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