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USE READER SERVICE #100

Lawn & Landscape MAINTENANCE

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 10

OCTOBER 1994

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Bob Novak,
Cleveland, Ohio

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Editor's Focus

WHAT A difference a year makes.

Last year, when we were putting together our state of the industry report, lawn and landscape contractors were cautiously optimistic about their overall growth potential and longevity in the professional landscape industry.

While growth varied from poor to very good depending on geography, a sour economy had most contractors wondering if and when things would get better. At the time, almost no one predicted great things for 1994.

Apparently, better came sooner than expected. 1994 was considered a good year by almost everyone — both contractors and manufacturers alike. Sales and services to residential, commercial, municipal and government properties were bolstered by a strong economy as were product sales in nearly all industry categories.

Continued diversification and niche marketing also flourished leading to stronger overall landscape management firms, and full-service menu offerings opening up tremendous opportunities for first-time landscape buyers or long-time consumers wanting to upgrade or renovate individual properties.

And the industry is beginning to put its money and efforts into proactive marketing.

A recent Gallop poll sponsored by several green industry associations noted that nine of 10 U.S. households recognize the value of a well-maintained lawn and landscape. The same survey revealed that the average 1993 household spending on landscape services was \$721.

The largest average household expenditures were on landscape installation and construction at \$2,971, followed by lawn and landscape maintenance at \$445 and landscape design at \$424.

Educated homeowners know how important a landscape is to the re-sale value of their properties. Lawn and landscape contractors should play to this strength and market their services for the value they are.

Additionally, the industry is at work weighing the benefits of a promotion order which would result in a national publicity format for the nursery and landscape industry. Taxes aren't popular, but this effort is a creative stance initiated by The Garden Council to control its own destiny.

The economy can't take all the credit for this year's success. Contractors are getting smarter. Those who have taken the time to understand economic upturns and subsequent business principles, recognize and position themselves to take greatest advantage of their particular markets based on individual corporate strengths.

Such cognizance comes in the form of company downsizing in lean times and a



more selective project lists. Fast, almost uncontrolled growth was a harbinger of the 1980s. Today, savvy contractors realize they can't be all things to all people and realize there is no shame in less volume. Less volume can lead to increased profits.

The professional lawn and landscape industry is the fastest growing of all horticultural markets marked largely by the inroads contractors are making into formerly peripheral services such as irrigation design, installation and maintenance; nursery sales; landscape lighting; and tree services just to name a few.

Although the Federal Reserve Board and its chairman Alan Greenspan offer a somewhat mixed view of the economy, predicting a slowdown for the fourth quarter, I remain optimistic about continued growth in 1995. As the industry matures, I see lawn and landscape professionals becoming not only smarter, but more creative in their business efforts.

And to be productive in the remainder of the decade, it's going to take creativity — and lots of it. Hiring and retaining quality employees is an issue taking on greater urgency in the landscape and other industries. Additionally, as the Hispanic work force grows from coast to coast, their training and education needs must be addressed.

Economic growth, social responsibility and environmental protection are still the keys to survival in the green industry.

It's with sadness that the industry learned of the recent deaths of Joseph Marsh and Otto Damgard. Both tirelessly contributed their time and efforts to promote both their individual firms, the landscape industry in general and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, their national firm.

We hope their accomplishments won't be forgotten. — *Cindy Code*

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USE READER SERVICE #49

Business Watch

WHILE HOUSING starts rebounded in July after a sharp decline in June, the overall economy appears to be leveling off.

Factory orders for consumer goods and materials suggest consumer spending will remain weak. In July, only three of the top 11 indicators — change in prices of sensitive materials, building permits and average weekly claims for initial unemployment insurance — looked positive.

Housing starts rose 4.7 percent in July from June's revised 9.4 percent decline, which leads many analysts to believe the market is stabilizing. Single family homes, a significant housing starts component, increased a moderate 2.5 percent to an annual rate of 1,193,000 units. The slow gain was spurred by the rise in short-term interest rates on mortgages, according to economists.

Multifamily units in July rose 19 percent, to an annual rate of 222,000. Units for two to four families almost doubled, and starts of units for five or more families rose nearly 11 percent.

In other news, job growth in California has slowly increased since March of 1993, confirming earlier reports of revival.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX*

MAY.	JUN.	JUL.	AUG.
+0.1	+0.3	+0.3	+0.3

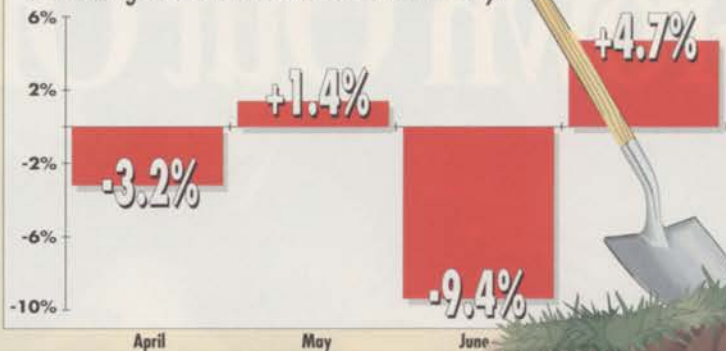
SALES OF EXISTING HOMES*

APR.	MAY.	JUN.	JUL.
+1.2	-0.7	-3.6	-0.3

*Percent change from preceding month (seasonally adjusted).

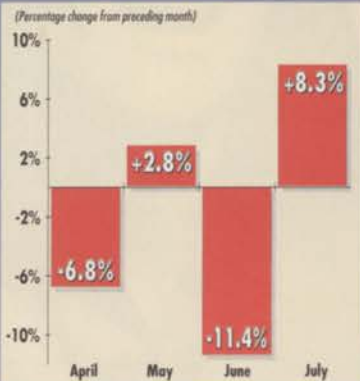
CONSTRUCTION REBOUNDS

U.S. housing starts moved back into the black in July.



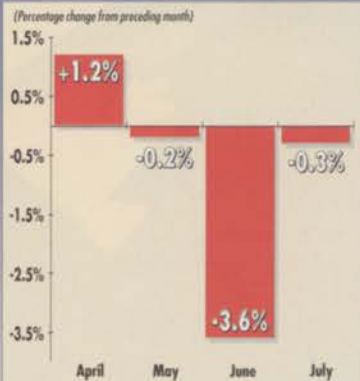
Source: Bureau of the Census

SALES OF NEW HOMES



Source: Bureau of the Census

SALES OF EXISTING HOMES

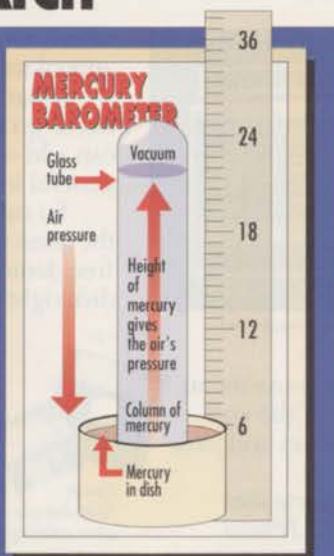


Source: National Association of Realtors

WEATHER WATCH

HOW BAROMETERS WORK

Mercury barometers are simple to use. The greater the air pressure, the higher the mercury will rise in the tube.



Source: American Meteorological Society

The National Weather Service's 60-day outlook calls for at least a 55 percent chance of below normal temperatures over an area of the north-central United States bounded by the North Dakota/Minnesota border and Detroit in the North, and extending south into northeastern Kansas and central Missouri.

Only the Southwest has a chance of above normal temperatures.

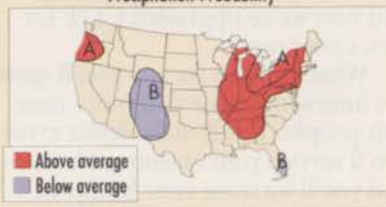
Greater than average precipitation is predicted for most of Oregon and a large portion of the East extending from the Canadian border almost to the Gulf of Mexico in Alabama.

60-DAY OUTLOOK FOR OCTOBER AND NOVEMBER

Temperature Probability



Precipitation Probability





Zero-radius Maneuverability



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USE READER SERVICE #42

Environmental Forum

CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS. Families are concerned about water quality as the number one environmental problem, according to a survey last year of *Better Homes and Gardens* readers. Potential water quality problems ranked first out of 13 options listed.

The survey also found that most readers remembered seeing "green" advertising, but 58 percent believe only half of the claims advertised. This perception problem is complicated by the fact that 77 percent of the respondents feel that environmental regulations and laws are not strict enough. Agriculture beat out other groups in readers' minds as the segment responding best to environmental concerns.

BANNING COSMETIC USE. Canadian environmental activists are applauding last year's Quebec Superior Court decision upholding the village of Hudson's ban on cosmetic use of pesticides.

The town's bylaw #270, passed in February of 1991, stated that "the spreading and use of a pesticide is prohibited throughout the territory of the Town," with six exceptions. According to *Wildflower*, the journal of the Canadian Wildflower Society, pesticides are prohibited for use:

- in swimming pools,
- in purifying water,
- in controlling or destroying animals which constitute a danger to humans,
- in controlling or destroying plants which are a danger to allergic people,
- inside buildings and
- as a wood preservative.

The bylaw was passed after intense pressure from outside environmental activists and residents concerned about groundwater pollution in their wells. Its first test came in 1972, when two chemical lawn care companies were charged. They filed suit, claiming that the bylaw is beyond the power of the local town council. Their cases centered on the fact that they carried provincial permits and all pesticides used had been registered by Agriculture Canada.

The battle over preemptive rights continued at the provincial level with an August 1993 decision by Judge James Kennedy, who ruled: "The Council acted in the public interest in virtue of inherent powers given them by the Cities and Towns Act."

He also stated that the council's actions reflected its citizens' concerns and that "20 years ago there was very little concern over the effect of chemicals such as pesticides on



the population. Today we are more conscious of what type of an environment we wish to live in and what quality of life we wish to expose our children..." Both lawn care companies are appealing the decision.

The Hudson decision is credited with encouraging similar, if weaker, initiatives in other small towns. For instance, *Wildflower* noted that the town of Baie d'Urfe in Quebec amended a 1992 bylaw limiting pesticide use to four days per week to include even more restrictions.

A Quebec-based anti-pesticide group, Citizens for Alternatives to Pesticides, has approached the federal Minister for Health with a petition to place a moratorium on the cosmetic use of pesticides in residential areas. The group maintains that the issue of pesticide use is now a health problem, rather than an environmental one. It's currently organizing a letter-writing campaign to generate more support for the issue.

PAUL HARVEY REDUX. Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment has taken steps to counteract syndicated radio commentator Paul Harvey's attacks on pesticide use for golf course maintenance.

Allen James, executive director of RISE, reports that the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, the United States Golf Association and RISE have sent factual materials to Harvey, whose broadcasts have included "blatant misstatements and errors" on the subject, according to a RISE memo. The effort has gotten no response from Harvey.

RISE and GCSAA then took another tack by issuing a "quote and answer" response sheet for GCSAA members to use when

questioned by club members and consumers. The sheet rebuts five of Harvey's statements about pesticide use, namely:

- Pesticides on golf courses kill people and birds.
- Golf course superintendents use pesticides casually.
- Tobacco and pesticide industries similarly downplay product dangers.
- Lung cancer is linked with golf course superintendents.
- Nematicides kill toads.

James also encouraged GCSAA to distribute additional copies of a jointly developed consumer information sheet, "Facts about Golf Course Pesticides." RISE also may work with GCSAA and related groups to form a cooperative effort in response to misleading publicity.

UPCLOSE & PERSONAL. The public is invited for the first time to view the products of turfgrass research in a project at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J.

The D.R.E.A.M. (Demonstration of Research, Experimentation and Management) project is sponsored by the New Jersey Turfgrass Association, Rutgers Turfgrass Alumni Association and Friends of Rutgers Gardens.

The 19 plots of different turfgrasses show experiments in progress and are intended to show the many benefits of turfgrass to the environment and the economy. Displays currently in place are weed identification plots, a golf green and tees with five varieties of bentgrass and a recycling display of 10 different container methods.

Future displays almost ready to debut will compare the water runoff characteristics of healthy turfgrass with bare ground, and also demonstrate high and low-lime effects on turfgrass types.

Irrigation equipment and maintenance were donated for this ongoing project. For more information, contact Joseph Bianco, Project Coordinator, 908/297-3333.

GREAT GREEN NEWS. Turf is an amazing commodity and the more customers know about its benefits, the better for the industry and the environment. A few facts courtesy of The Turf Resource Center:

- A dense lawn absorbs rainfall six times more effectively than a wheat field and four times better than a typical hayfield.
- Grass plants total 75 percent to 80 percent water by weight.
- A sodded area takes 28 to 46 times longer to runoff than any of five tested erosion control materials.

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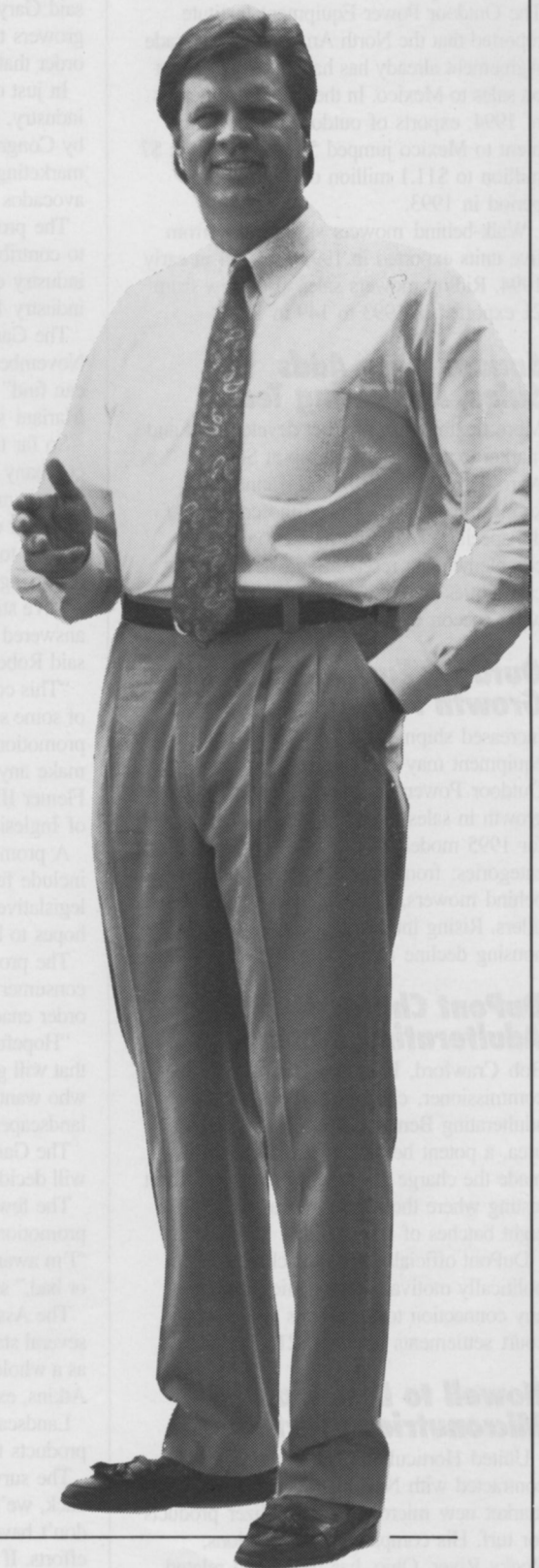
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ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA



News in Brief

NEWS DIGEST

NAFTA Boosts Mexican Sales by 58 Percent

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute reported that the North American Free Trade Agreement already has had a positive effect on sales to Mexico. In the first three months of 1994, exports of outdoor power equipment to Mexico jumped 58 percent, from \$7 million to \$11.1 million over the same period in 1993.

Walk-behind mowers skyrocketed from five units exported in 1993 to 3,244 in early 1994. Riding mowers sales also grew from 21 exported in 1993 to 149 in 1994.

Sandoz Agro Adds Sales, Marketing Team

More flexibility in product development and market expansion are on tap at Sandoz Agro, Des Plaines, Ill. Carl Tanner, marketing director, announced the creation of the specialty sales and marketing team to complement its research and development capabilities acquired in the recent merger with Zococon Corp.

Outdoor Equipment Sales Growth Forecast for 1995

Increased shipments of outdoor power equipment may continue into 1995, said the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute. Modest growth in sales over 1994 rates are expected for 1995 models in the following equipment categories: front-engine lawn tractors, walk-behind mowers, riding garden tractors and tillers. Rising interest rates and a late 1994 housing decline may dampen higher growth.

DuPont Charged with Adulterating Benlate

Bob Crawford, Florida Agriculture commissioner, charged DuPont with adulterating Benlate DF with a sulfonyl urea, a potent herbicide. His department made the charge after eight months of secret testing where the herbicide was found in eight batches of Benlate DF.

DuPont officials called the charges politically motivated and denied there was any connection to the claims and out-of-court settlements totaling \$214 million.

Howell to Develop UHS Micronutrient Fertilizer

United Horticultural Supply, Salem, Ore., contracted with Neal Howell to develop and market new micronutrient fertilizer products for turf. His company, Key Solutions, Rocky River, Ohio, has developed related products for other suppliers to the industry.

If the Survey Says Yay, the Garden Council's Promotion Order is a Go

"THIS IS AN important milestone for us. If results are positive we're going to give it a go," said Gary Mariani, president of the Chicago-based Garden Council, in reference to a survey of growers to determine whether or not they favor the Garden Council's proposed promotion order that's been cooking for more than a year.

In just one more move to unify, as well as promote, all segments of the lawn and landscape industry, the Chicago-based Garden Council proposed a national promotion order. If enacted by Congress, the order would set up a structure for the industry to fund and implement marketing targeted at the American public. Similar efforts have shown success for pork, cotton, avocados and other agricultural commodities.

The promotion order would require each grower to contribute 0.4 percent of sales directly to the industry commission managed by a selected industry board.

The Garden Council plans to launch a survey in November targeted toward "as many growers as we can find" to see if they would favor such a move, Mariani said.

So far the proposal has 1,000 individual and company supporters. The American Association of Nurserymen, which represents many of the companies that would have to contribute to the fund, has chosen to take a wait-and-see approach before endorsing the promotion order.

"We still have some big questions that need to be answered first. The program is really in its infancy," said Robert Dolibois, AAN executive vice president.

"This could place a serious burden on the budgets of some small nurseries. There are parts of the promotion order that we'll need to clarify before we make any kind of endorsement," added C. Fletcher Flemer III, the new president for AAN and owner of Ingleside Plantation Nurseries, Oak Grove, Va.

A promotion order for the nursery industry would include federal monitoring of an industry-managed system of contribution and marketing. The legislative end could take two years before the system becomes reality. The Garden Council hopes to have results back in time for a board meeting at the Mid-Am show in January.

The promotion order, geared to benefit growers of all sizes, would seek to increase national consumer awareness, sales and opportunities for co-op programs. Cost of getting the promotion order enacted is estimated at \$400,000 per year for two years.

"Hopefully it would get people who see the ads on TV to call and order plants. And hopefully that will get people to be less price sensitive and increase demand," Mariani said. "Those people who want to paint their bathrooms. Maybe we can convince them to spend the money on their landscapes. That's who we're competing against. We're not competing against ourselves."

The Garden Council's promotion order survey will reach AAN's membership as well. AAN will decide whether to endorse the program based on the the survey results, Dolibois said.

The few nursery growers contacted by *Lawn & Landscape Maintenance* magazine about the promotion order had either not heard of it or didn't feel comfortable giving an opinion about it. "I'm aware of the promotion order but I'm not up to date enough to say whether I think it's good or bad," said Stuart Sperber of Valley Crest Tree Co., Calabasas, Calif.

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America has already endorsed the program, as have several state nursery associations. "We think it's a good measure for promoting the green industry as a whole. The benefits will reach the landscape contractors as well as the growers," said Debra Atkins, executive director of ALCA.

Landscapers will help pay for the national tax indirectly as growers increase the cost of their products to users to cover the eventual grower contribution.

The survey's results will tell what happens next. "If we get a big enough positive response back, we'll go ahead with the promotion order. If we get a response back and growers say they don't have enough information, but those who do are positive, we'll continue our education efforts. If we get a negative response, we'll quit what we're doing and move on to other issues," Mariani said.



The nursery industry will consider a national promotion order's benefits.

Toro Gives Debris Management a Facelift

The Toro Co.'s debris management division has been renamed the recycling equipment division to better reflect the intended markets of its product line.

The division includes the line of tub grinders acquired earlier this year when Toro completed its acquisition of Olathe. Toro has held a minority interest in Olathe since acquiring its commercial product line in the early 1990s. The line includes sweepers, seeders, blowers and aerators.

Since the earlier acquisition, Olathe continued to exist as a separate entity manufacturing waste equipment, chippers and tub grinders. Toro will focus on the tub grinders. The chipper line is currently being reevaluated.

Manufacturing will remain in Olathe, Kan.

Mike Hoffman is the managing director of the recycling equipment division and Mike Moncrief is the marketing manager.

New RISE Board Members Take Office

The Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment elected three new officers and three new board members at its recent annual meeting.

The executive committee includes Jan Novak, Monsanto/The Solaris Group, chair; Bob Yarborough, LESCO, vice chair; and Tommy Reeves, Oldham Chemicals Co., treasurer. New board members serving three-year terms include Eugene Johanningsmeier, Turfgrass Inc.; Bill Liles, Ciba Turf & Ornamental; and Dick Stahl, The Scotts Co.

Dick Lehman of Rhone-Poulenc will serve the one year remaining in Scott Johnson's (also of Rhone-Poulenc) term and Peter Machin of The Andersons, Maumee, Ohio, will remain ex-officio.

Other members rounding out the board are: Ron Fister, Sandoz Agro; Dick Holzschu, DowElanco; Denny Salettel, Tyler Enterprises; and Jim Widman, AgrEvo USA Co. Allen James is executive director of the association.

Study Affirms Resale Value of Landscaping

Homeowners who upgrade landscapes from "poor" to "good" quality can expect an increase in the resale price between 8 percent and 10 percent. Upgrades to "excellent" quality can bring in another 4 percent to 5 percent of resale value, according to a Clemson University study. It compared values of similar single-family homes with variations in landscape condition.

A study initiated by the California Landscape Contractors Association found

that the average household spent approximately \$403 on landscaping goods and services, yet the value added by landscaping to an average house sold totaled \$15,519.

Husqvarna Honored for Environmental Efforts

Husqvarna Forest and Garden Co., Charlotte, N.C., was recognized for participating in an environmental education program developed by the Times Mirror magazine group. As advertisers, Husqvarna



Dave Zerfoss describes Husqvarna's program with EPA's Carol Browner.

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USE READER SERVICE #182

and other companies in the Partnership for Environmental Education program included messages designed to raise public awareness and encourage future environmental leadership.

The group was honored at a May reception attended by EPA Administrator Carol Browner. In three years, the program has raised more than \$250,000 in funds for environmental education programs nationwide.

EPA May Relax Worker Protection Standards

The American Association of Nurserymen reported that the Environmental Protection Agency is considering a relaxation of some worker protection standards affecting irrigation and biological pesticides.

The agency plans to complete an exception to the generic restricted entry intervals for several irrigation tasks by Dec. 30. It also might reduce restrictions for biological pesticides known to pose lower risks.

More stringent training requirements are also a possibility at EPA, which wants to eliminate the 15-day grace period for training and shorten the current retraining requirement from five to three years.

Technician Certification Program Goes National

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America has purchased the Certified Landscape Technician program from the California Landscape Contractors Association as the basis for a nationwide certification program.

California's program has been in place since 1983, with 484 Certified Landscape Technicians currently recognized. Colorado, Washington and Oregon also participate in the California program.

CLCA's National Review Committee, which reviews and updates the CLT test annually, will form the basis for a National Landscape Technician Council along with the addition of contractors from participating states and a member of ALCA's Board of Governors. The committee will administer the national program. ALCA will coordinate marketing, education and consultation.

The certification test includes a two-day, hands-on construction test with 28 stations, an eight-hour maintenance test with 18 problems and a 7-1/2-hour irrigation test of 13 technical elements. The national version will compress the test into one day. For

more information, call CLCA at 916/448-2522, or ALCA at 703/620-6363.

L.R. Nelson Builds \$8-Million Complex

A new 246,900-square-foot manufacturing and distributing complex will consolidate manufacturing, distribution and administration for L.R. Nelson Corp., Peoria, Ill. Formerly, three facilities were needed to hold the company's staff and equipment.

The complex is scheduled for occupation this fall for the manufacture of nearly 600 irrigation products and accessories.

The site, located on 42 acres of Peoria's northwest side, contains a 5,400-square-foot indoor sprinkler test area.

Natural Earth, Easy Gardener Combine

The Easy Gardener Acquisition Corp. has been formed by the combination of Easy Gardener Inc., Waco, Texas, and Natural Earth Technologies Inc., San Francisco. Easy Gardener makes landscape fabrics and netting products. Natural Earth provides natural pest controls and organic landscape materials.

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Association News

KAY BUNDEY, facilitator for the Disney University Seminars, will moderate the **Associated Landscape Contractors of America's** 1995 Executive Forum in January. Bunday, who began her career at the Walt Disney World Resort in 1986 as an instructor for its learning adventures for young people, will share the Disney style of management, service and creativity with exterior and interior landscape contractors. Her presentation will focus on how to develop creative strategies for maintaining a competitive edge.

In other news, ALCA surveyed its membership, as well as regional landscape associations, to determine how many women are members. Initial findings show: ALCA's membership is 24 percent females, including interior and exterior landscape firm representatives; the Arizona Landscape Contractors Association has a 21 percent female membership; the Associated Landscape Contractors of Colorado, 14 percent; Associated Landscape Contractors of Massachusetts, 8 percent; California Landscape Contractors Association, 7 percent; and the Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association, 14 percent.

For more information...



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703/739-2401

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800/458-3466

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Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006
202/789-2900

PNA

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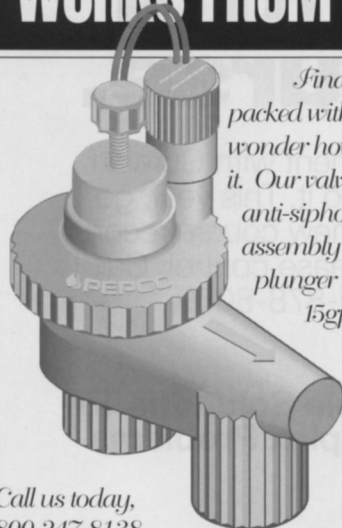
William Ruckelshaus, chief executive officer of Browning-Ferris Industries, will keynote the **Composting Council's** Fifth Annual Conference Nov. 16-18 in Washington, D.C. Ruckelshaus, former administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, will speak on the future of organics recovery.

Ruckelshaus became the first administrator for the U.S. EPA when the agency formed in December 1970. He served in the position for three years, and was then named deputy

attorney general of the U.S. Department of Justice. He moved on to become the fifth EPA administrator until 1985. Currently he serves as director of several corporations including Cummins Engine Co., Monsanto Co., Nordstrom, Texas Commerce Bancshares and Weyerhaeuser Corp.

The Compost Council's conference theme is "Expanding the Boundaries of Organics Recovery," to signify the industry's efforts to forge tools for business development, project innovation and technical evolution.

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Landscapes

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The **Professional Lawn Care Association of America** plans to hold 13 winter workshops. Beginning Dec. 13, PLCAA goes on the road with a travel schedule that includes Orlando and Madison, Wis. Workshops take place Dec. 13, in Madison, Wis.; Dec. 14, Pittsburgh; Dec. 15, Scranton, Pa.; Jan. 10, Denver; Jan. 11, Cincinnati; Jan. 17, Long Island, N.Y.; Jan. 19, Worcester, Mass.; Jan. 24, Atlanta, Ga.; Jan. 24, Dallas; Jan. 25, Nashville; Jan. 26, Orlando, Fla.; Feb. 22, Detroit; and Feb. 23 in Kansas City, Mo.

Topics for the day-long workshops include management, risk communications, business survival, regulatory and legal issues. Speakers include Richard Lehr, PLCAA's legal consultant; Bob Andrews, owner of two Indiana lawn care companies and past president of PLCAA; Tom Delaney, PLCAA's director of government affairs; and DowElanco representatives.

The **American Association of Nurserymen** and American Forests jointly developed "Selecting Trees — A Guide to Purchasing Quality Trees as a Wise Investment," a publication on selecting and purchasing quality trees in quantity.

The publication offers tips on selecting

species and sites, preparing bid specifications and locating sources of trees.

In other news, Dwight Hughes Jr., of Dwight Hughes Nursery, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, received the Wholesale Nursery Growers of America New Idea Award for his Robotic Tree Boss. The system allows one worker to handle heavy balled and burlapped plant material.

The **Pennsylvania Nurserymen's Association** hired Kim Wilkinson of Harrisburg as public affairs director. Wilkinson is responsible for marketing, communications and public relations for the trade association. She succeeds Denise Calabrese.

In other news, PNA plans to hold an EPA Worker Protection Standards Teleconference Dec. 7, to highlight what companies are covered by the standards; what the law requires and tips for compliance.

"The PNA is interested in building the use of satellite teleconferencing to deliver important information to our members in a timely and cost effective manner," said Corrine Shearer, PNA director of education.

IN BRIEF...The **Florida Turfgrass Association** released a new bermudagrass,

FloraTex, developed through the Florida and Texas Agriculture Experiment Stations. FloraTex will be used as a model for FTGA's new certification program. FloraTex is a low-maintenance, slow-growing turf requiring less water and fertilizer than other bermudagrasses. It was developed in preparation of state water regulations scheduled to take effect in 1995 ...The **California Association of Nurserymen** plans to sponsor the California Certified Nursery Professional exam Nov. 7 at the Marriott at Bishop Ranch in San Ramon, and Nov. 17 at the Grand Hotel in Anaheim...The **Oregon Association of Nurserymen** safety committee received a \$31,827 grant which will be used to develop a training video to teach how to use respirators. Apparently there was little communication taking place to teach Spanish speaking employees how to use them correctly, according to Mairi Scott, chairwoman for the OAN safety committee...The **Massachusetts Nurserymen's Association** and the University of Massachusetts Cooperative Extension System are sponsoring "A Step Ahead," a 1994 Business Short Course," Nov. 15-16 at the Worcester Marriott, Worcester, Mass. ■

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Irrigation News

KIMMELL SETS HIS SIGHTS ON INCREASED INDUSTRY EDUCATION

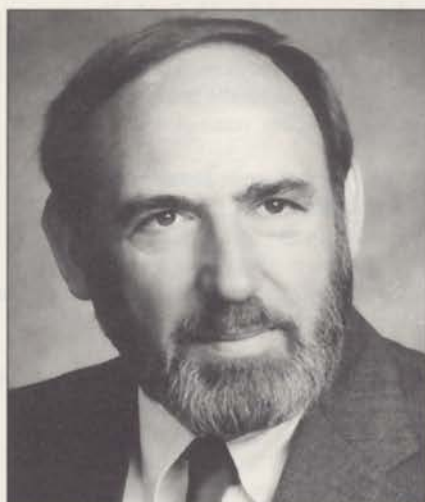
WHILE NEW TO the role of executive director of the Irrigation Association, Tom Kimmell is no stranger to the irrigation industry.

For more than 20 years, Kimmell gained experience in the professional, consumer and agricultural aspects of the irrigation industry. Most recently sales manager for Olson Irrigation Systems in Santee, Calif., Kimmell made the jump to the role of association executive after Charles "Pepper" Putnam resigned.

"I've always been active in the association and lived in California for 15 years. So, I've been there and did that and thought it'd be a challenge," Kimmell said.

Kimmell was involved in the national search two years ago that brought Putnam to the IA. The search committee made a commitment then to hiring somebody with industry experience over association experience and continues in that vein today.

And Kimmell has experience: 3-1/2 years with Olson, 14 years with Hardie Irrigation and more than 5 years with Spot Systems, a



Tom Kimmell brings 22 years of industry experience to the position of IA president.

small micro irrigation company. In 1992, he was president of the IA.

In the following interview, Kimmell shares his thoughts on the future of the IA.

Q. What immediate goals do you have for the IA?

A. One of the first orders of business was taking care of housekeeping items. We spent more on member services in 1994 than we took in. So we brought those numbers back in line and budgeted for 1995. I'm also writing a business plan to take to the board in November.

My main goal over the next year or so is to strengthen the education program. We have a certification program which is unique, but to make the education program bloom and bear fruit we have to market it to end users so they look to certified contractors or designers to install their systems. My overall goal is to market and increase the education program and generally raise the level of the industry.

In four certification categories — design, contracting, manager and auditor — 1,200 people have been certified to date since the program's inception 10 or so years ago.

We have also become very active in government issues. Most recently we were involved with a national science and



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According to Andrew Baldy, vice president of Oakwood A.P.C.I., half his company's 20 trucks are Isuzus. "As we keep growing, we'll keep on buying Isuzu trucks. Reason being, we get longer life out of them. We also get better fuel mileage, easier maintenance, lower

upkeep and much better overall durability."

Ken Thomas, owner of Landscape Techniques says, "I didn't know what cargo room was until I got an Isuzu."

Adds Greg, "My mechanic loves it. He likes the tilt cab. And if you take an Isuzu in a cul-de-sac, you can almost do a figure eight"

Terry Walton of Greenscape just bought two new Isuzu trucks. "People I talked to had nothing but good things to say about the trucks."

Andrew sums it all up, "I will never go to another truck. And that's truth."

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technology council designed to address nagging problems, one of which is water conservation. Since landscape irrigation is a big water user, we helped put together what we perceive are the impediments to water conservation. We've been well received.

Q. What's new at this year's IA show?

A. To increase attendance, we brought in 30 co-sponsoring organizations who made their membership lists available to us. We've invited those regional association members to attend our show and provide more potential customers for our exhibitors. We hope to increase the show size by one-third. Last year, 5,000 attendees visited the Expo in San Diego.

In addition, as the U.S. representative of the ISO 9000 (international standards organization), we'll host this year's meeting in Atlanta. Basically, we'll provide input for manufacturing standards and specifications for European product sales.

Q. What membership growth plans do you have for the IA?

A. Currently, we have 1,100 company members with equal representation from both the turf and agricultural markets. Contractors and distributors are our two

biggest membership categories.

Our membership has increased, but we've also seen a lot of consolidation in the industry. We've grown consistently at a 2 percent to 4 percent rate annually. But we hope to create a demand/pull from the marketplace through increased marketing of our certification program.

Q. In your opinion, what is the most pressing issue facing the turf irrigation industry?

A. In general, the whole water question and subsequent regulations which are going to impact the industry. We'd rather take a proactive role in working with local governments whose instant reaction is often to ban landscape watering in times of water shortages. We have to explain that the benefits of watering are more than aesthetic.

One of the interesting things we're going to experience this year is new technology for the evaluation of sprinkler heads. Distribution uniformity is not a small issue.

Reclamation Head To Give Keynote Speech

A major shift from dam building to water resource management at the United States Department of the Interior's Bureau of

Reclamation will have a huge impact across the country.

Commissioner Dan Beard's perspective on the changeover and future water management trends will be the topic of his keynote speech at the 15th annual International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference, Nov. 5-8 in Atlanta.

The bureau employs 6,500 people and currently serves as the largest wholesale water supplier in the United States. It is the sixth largest electric power generator in the nation, operating in 17 western states.

The switch to a new emphasis on water management addresses the "contemporary water problems" in western states and communities, Beard said. "Our goal is to make the Bureau of Reclamation the preeminent water resource management agency in the world."

Norum Rejoins CIT As Project Consultant

Edward Norum returned to the staff of the Center for Irrigation Technology as consultant on special projects and assignments. He served as director of the CIT from 1982 to 1986, and brings more than

(continued on page 29)

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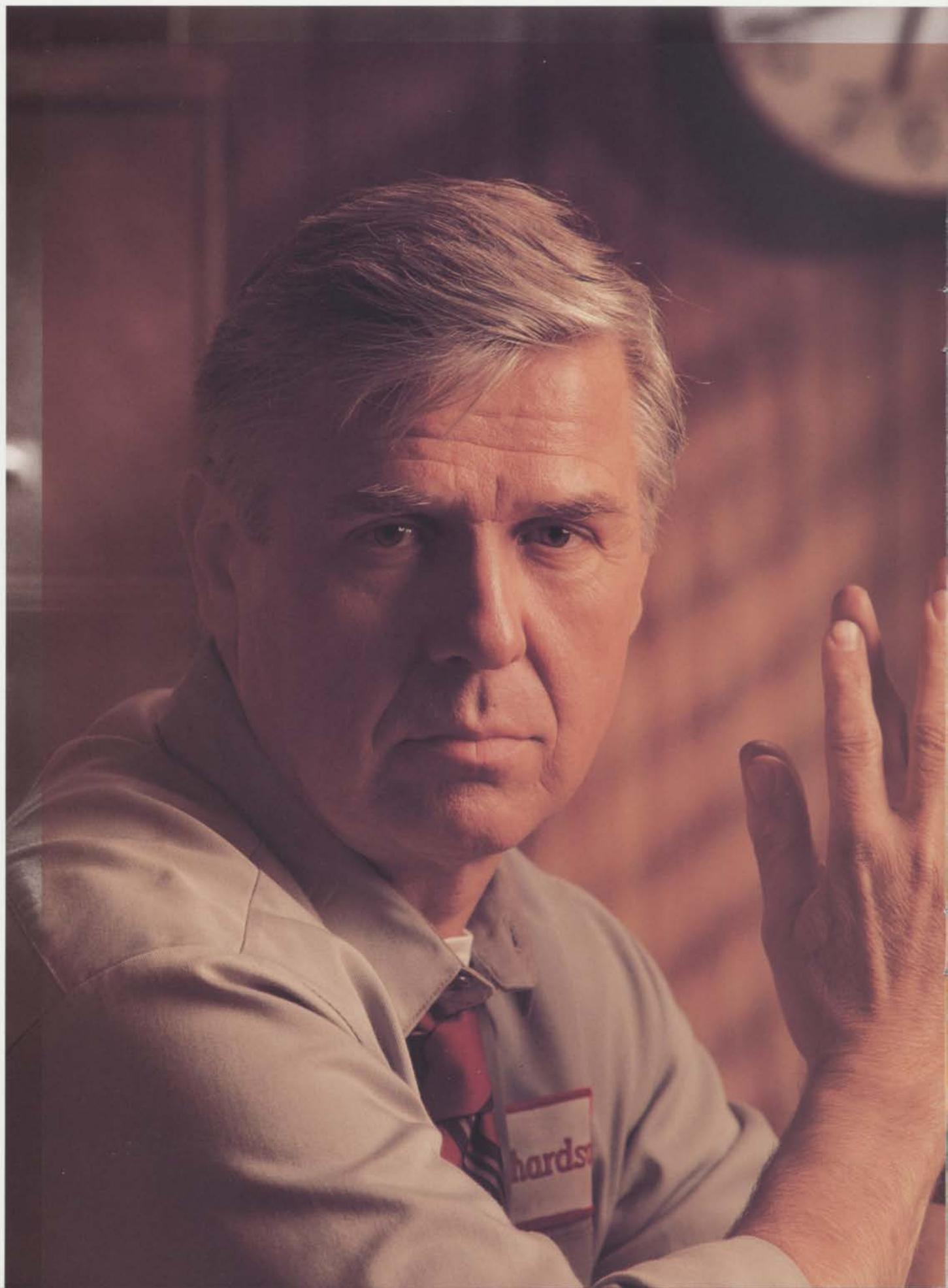
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ORNAMENTAL INSECTS:

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Irrigation News

(continued from page 20)

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Norum currently is working on CIT projects such as soil moisture sensor evaluation, hydraulic ram performance tests and a pumping plant motor efficiency study. To contact Norum about specialized studies, call CIT at 209/278-2066.

Buzzard Elected President of IA

Jack Buzzard, Rain Bird International, has been elected president of the Irrigation Association for 1995. Past president is Joe Goecke, Valmont Irrigation.

The slate also includes the following officers: Sam Duke, Russell Daniel Irrigation, president-elect; Louis Toth, Aqua-Lawn Inc., vice president; Sue York, Ewing Irrigation Products, treasurer; and Robert Morgan, retired, historian. They will take office at the association's International Irrigation Exposition and Technical Conference Nov. 5-8 in Atlanta.

IA and ASLA Combine On-Line Resources

A partnership agreement between the Irrigation Association and the American Society of Landscape Architects will give IA members access to ASLA's DesigNetwork database. The on-line system offers management and technical resources, design capabilities and consulting services, many of which are free.

IA also will organize its own on-line service to include electronic mail, searchable publication databases, bulletin boards, product catalogs, membership directories, certification program updates and employment listings.

For more information on DesigNetwork, call 202/686-2378.

Colorado Xeriscape Newspaper Debuts

Xeriscape news, methods, plant selections, calendars and humor abound in a new bimonthly newspaper, *WaterWise*, published by Xeriscape Colorado! Particular emphasis will be on profiles of people involved in xeriscaping and specific xeriscape projects.

One enjoyable element of this publication is its humorous anecdotes. An example is the definition of a "zeroscape": a rock and yucca landscape. It also lists common misspellings (and misconceptions) of the word xeriscape: Zorro's cape, xerox cape,

zeroscape and Zaire escape.

For more information on membership in Xeriscape Colorado! or receiving the newsletter, call 303/987-3994.

English/Spanish Sprinkler Video

A 10-minute training video highlighting the PGP family of gear-driven rotary sprinklers has been produced in both English and Spanish language versions. Hunter Industries, San Marcos, Calif., produced the

video as the first in its "Hall of Fame" irrigation training series.

The video focuses on PGP pop-up, shrub and high-pop sprinklers used in various residential and light commercial applications. Product features, performance characteristics proper installation techniques, maintenance and adjustment are highlighted in the presentation.

The VHS video is intended for training programs of landscape contractors, installers and distributors. To order, call Hunter Industries, 619/744-5240.

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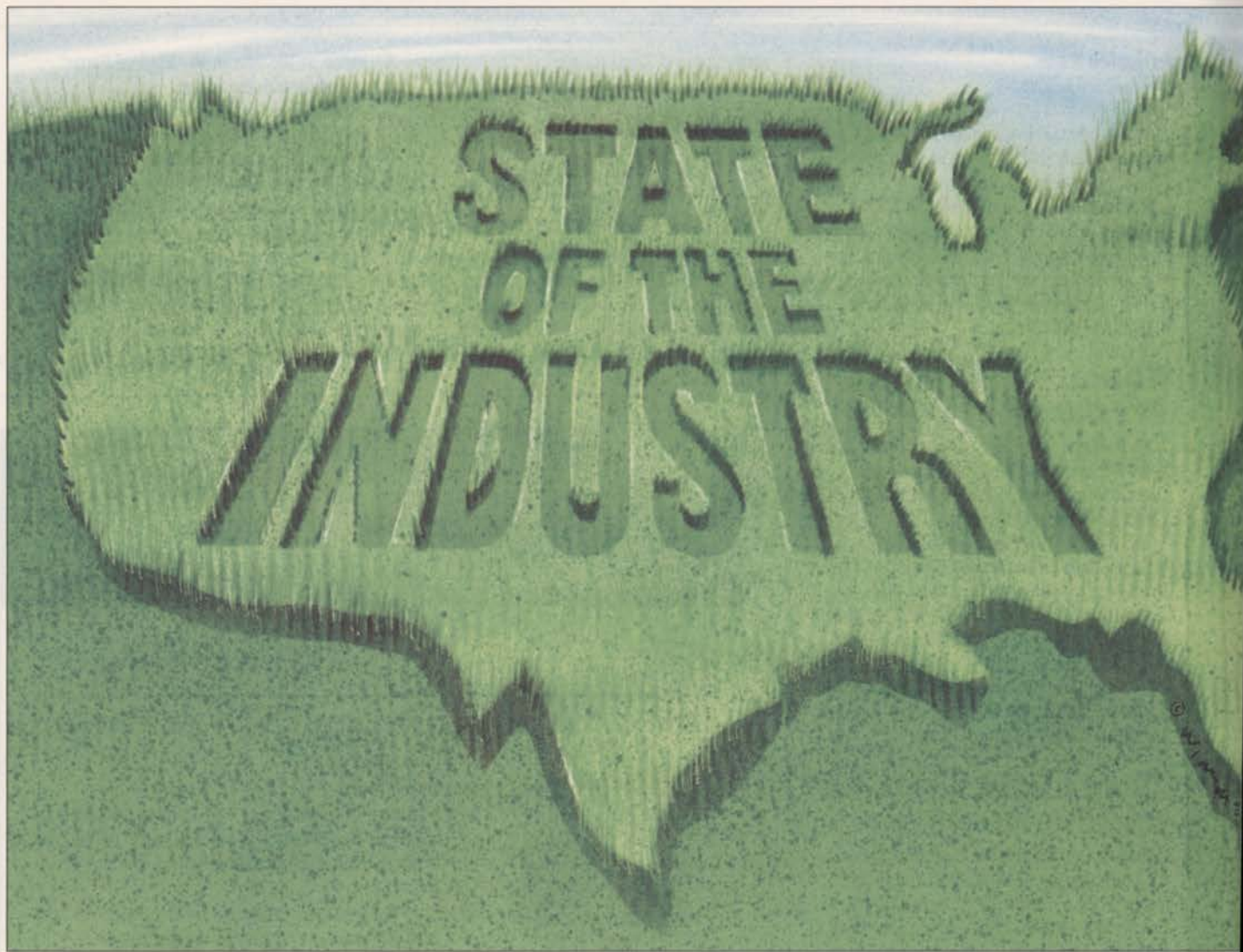
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Business was respectable this year for lawn and landscape contractors. And the outlook for 1995 is just as promising. Illustration: Bob Novak

JUST ONE OF many cars on the roller coaster known as the national economy, the lawn and landscape maintenance industry may find a bumpy but relatively stable ride ahead. The good news is, no stomach-dropping lurches are expected, according to market analysts.

The national economy has improved steadily over the past year, aided by lower mortgage rates which ignite new and existing home sales. For the lawn and landscape maintenance industry, that trend, combined with other factors, has spurred business across the board, from lawn and landscape services to tree care and nursery growing.

Consolidation continues among contracting firms and suppliers and has been initiated between some trade associations. Various segments of the green industry are also considering combining forces to better promote and market horticultural products and services.

The most significant potential unification is between the Associated Landscape Contractors of America and the American Association of Nurserymen. While the two groups are only beginning to research the benefits and feasibilities of melding under one umbrella organization, the combined memberships and partisanship could hold enviable representation on Capitol Hill and to the general public.

In addition, the Chicago-based Garden Council is spearheading efforts to get a promotion order enacted by Congress. The proposed federal law would mandate growers to contribute a small percentage of overall sales

toward an industrywide consumer advertising and promotion program.

The promotion order is part of a larger project aimed at educating the general public about the lesser-known benefits of plants — an effort which may cost up to \$25 million, according to Gary Mariani, president of the Garden Council.

Gary Thornton, president of Thornton Gardens, Maineville, Ohio, sees both the ALCA/AAN union and industry promotion order as positive actions. "The promotion order in effect would change the market we sell in. This type of action makes us proactive. My general feeling is that the promotion order would be good for the industry. It's a forward moving thing," he said. But, he added, growers would likely raise their prices to make up the lost income, so that landscape contractors would end up paying more.

Amid the talk of industry change, contractors and suppliers continue to do business — and do it well. Representatives from all market segments report steady growth of sales with random pockets of high profitability. Companies that generally experienced downsizing and belt tightening during the economic recession a few years ago stand ready for steady growth next season.

"In 1990 we purposely shrank back during the recession because we saw the market shrinking. We decided to find ways to reduce costs and expenses — at our pace and our thinking, rather than be forced into making decisions we didn't want to make," said Landon

Economic Revival Stirs Market Growth

As government continues to issue environmentally motivated mandates, contractors grapple with a different slate of issues such as health care reform, tax increases, noise and air quality, ground water issues, weather adversity and retention of quality customers.

By Cathy Hoehn

Reeve, president of Chapel Valley Landscape Co., Woodbine, Md.

Chapel Valley, a design/build/management firm, reduced its \$10.5 million revenues of 1990 to \$8.5 million in 1993. Like many firms, the company cut out its fat while focusing on customer satisfaction. It now plans to gear back up to \$9.5 million by year's end.

Similarly, Northern Lawns, Omaha, Neb., a \$500,000 firm currently seeing 5 percent to 10 percent sales growth, has found the best plan of attack — particularly for companies with revenues under \$1 million — is to focus on quality service vs. expansion.

"We really don't see a great deal of growth potential in the number of customers we attain. We focus on keeping the ones we have and growing additional services customers request of us," said owner Dale Amstutz.

Unfortunately, Northern Lawns experienced a serious setback in April when the landscape manager left. Amstutz decided to forego of-

fering landscape design and installation this year, thus giving up 12 percent of the business. But he reports that the other services have grown 10 percent to 12 percent.

The economic forecast for the next year, though distrusted and disagreed upon by many, looks favorable, according to several experts. Economic recovery experienced throughout the past year is expected to continue but at a slower pace, said Gary Thayer, senior economist for A.G. Edwards & Sons, St. Louis, Mo.

Interest rates for homes have begun creeping back up, but are expected to taper off, Thayer said. Other reports show that interest rates could jump again in three to six months due to a 50 percent drop in refinancing at mortgage banks.

Overall, housing starts are reported strongest in the South, with good recovery in the Midwest. The Northeast still looks the weakest. Slight improvement is being seen in the West.

"The (Federal Reserve) has

stopped throwing fuel on the fire, in terms of mortgage rates. Now they're just not throwing water on the fire," Thayer said.

Job starts look good for small businesses, which actually distresses lawn and landscape professionals in the Omaha, Neb.; Milwaukee; and Fort Collins, Colo., markets where good labor is getting hard to find.

"Unemployment is very low, and I think if anything, the problem this year was finding good people," said Steve Hyland of Hyland Bros. Lawn and Tree Care, Fort Collins. "I know several companies in this area that were looking for good people. I think the focus will increasingly be more of a personnel issue than an environmental or growth issue. The potential is certainly here (in terms of growth)."

ADDITIONAL INFLUENCES. While economic factors play a major role in the overall health of the green industry, other issues tug at contractors' attention and purse strings

as well. Increasing regulations continue to challenge pesticide manufacturers and end users, for example, with issues ranging from complex reregistration processes to hefty rinsing, mixing and storage mandates.

The most significant issues lawn maintenance professionals face include increased legislation for integrated pest management at schools and stricter advertising laws, according to Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. In particular, proposed legislation in Texas would provide a firmer definition for IPM and its impact on the environment.

Five to six states have laws pending that will regulate pesticide application at schools.

States also are tightening recertification and training laws, "making it more difficult to get and keep a license," Delaney said.

While contractors may resent regulations being imposed, blame rests partially on them for not taking action and reading between the lines on proposed legislation, according to Delaney. "They're so busy doing their work they aren't gauging regulations and the legislative process — they don't know what's being put in there," he said. "It's important to stay on top of that and to work with state legislators to implement reasonable directives."

Some optimistic contractors believe the general public is finally losing its zeal for perpetuating myths and misconstrued information about pesticide use and their potential health hazards.

"Public sensitivity to chemical usage is not as big as it was," said

Mike Davids, marketing agent for Clarence Davids & Co., Blue Island, Ill. "It's like country music — it's still big, but not the rage. It depends on how a company educates its customers about the impact of quality chemicals on their lawns."

Indeed, recent media reports have conceded the campaign against pesticide use has gone too far. Even key Congressional figures are inciting an environmental backlash. Rep. W.J. Billy Tauzin, D-La., for example, purports to scale back existing laws and delay or block new environmental legislation.

However, others recognize that the environmental movement, a different type of roller coaster, has gained such momentum that the ride won't lose speed for quite a while. Thornton, believes the environmental movement will remain strong, and rightly so.

"I don't think it's slowing down. It's becoming a way of life. The war against some chemical pesticides is



still strong, but it makes us better stewards of the environment. We're taking something that can be bad for the environment and making it into something good," he said.

Peter Machin, vice president and general manager of the lawn products group for The Andersons, Maumee, Ohio, as well as a representative of the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, expects the push for IPM to continue, and sees fighting and changing

misconceptions about pesticide use an on-going battle.

"It's a never-ending challenge to tell the truth about the industry. We always preach responsible use at all levels," he said.

Mixed feelings about pesticide use has not detracted from sales, at least not for The Andersons, according to Machin. The company reported a 10 percent to 12 percent growth increase in overall sales, with 15 percent growth through

Finding reliable labor is a critical quality issue.

August in the professional lawn and landscape market.

"Sales have been exceeding expectations," he said. "We have had a record year with commercial product lawn and garden sales and expect to finish a little better than that."

Machin said the company's strongest pesticide sales were in the golf course market. "We're definitely taking market share, particularly for our line of herbicides and fungicides."

In the lawn and landscape market, The Andersons sells mainly to larger lawn maintenance companies. "It appears their business is up but moderate," Machin said.

The Andersons has followed a trend set by LESCO, Rocky River, Ohio, by opening three drive-up Professional Turf Centers in Cincinnati, Ohio; Rockville, Md.; and Charlotte, N.C. The centers offer

(continued on page 34)

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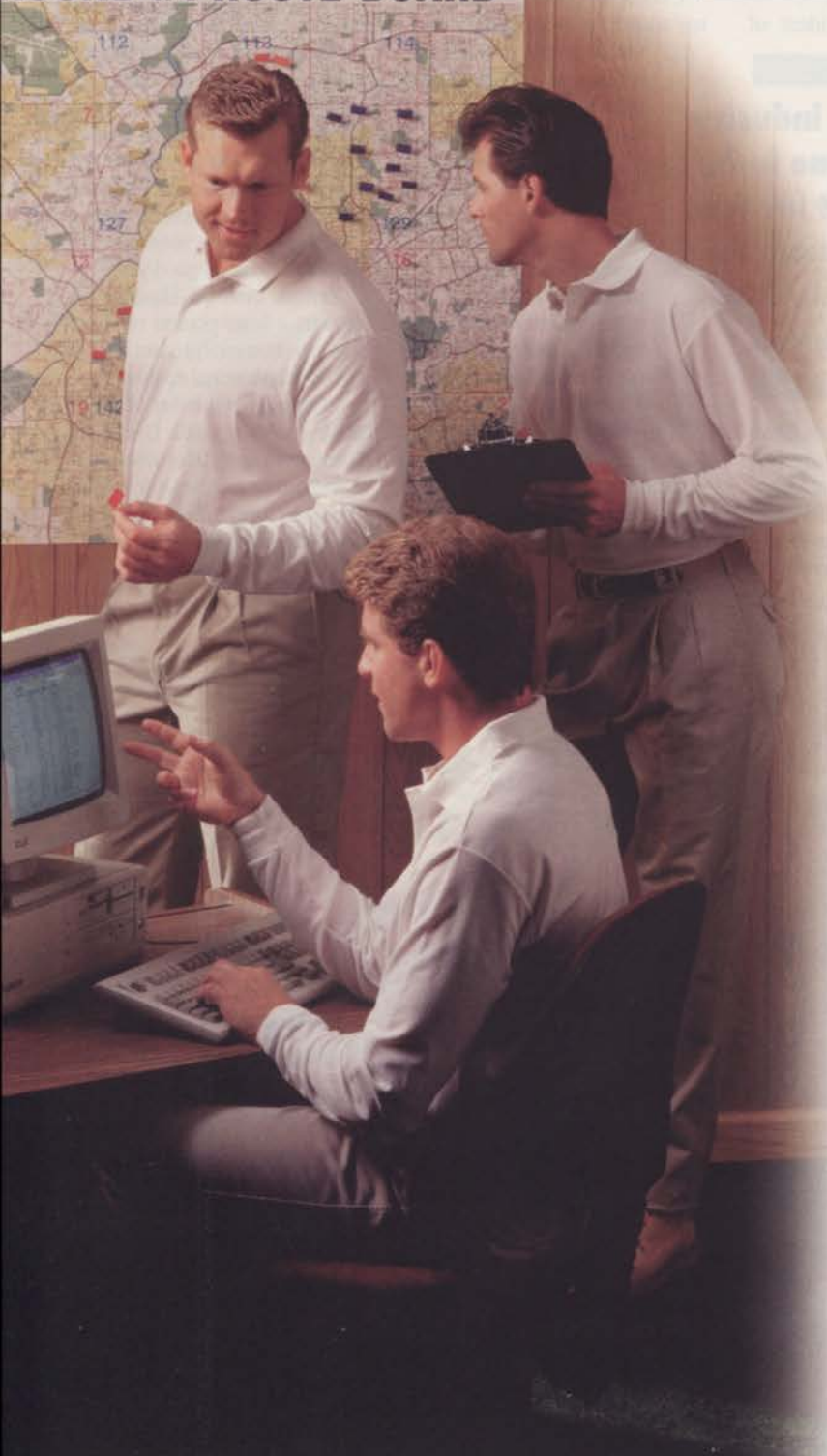
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Cover Story

(continued from page 32)

mid-sized contracting firms a complete package of products and technical support, as well as certification and training. The company plans to open a fourth center by year's end. LESCO in Rocky River, Ohio, claims to already hold about 200 such centers nationwide.

Machin noted that granular fertilizer sales continue to increase more rapidly than liquid fertilizers. "We've seen a definite shift from liquid to granular. Customers consider the granular safer, more controllable and better for the environment. Right or wrong, it's a fact that the company is geared more toward those products and we expect that to continue."

The pesticide industry is hardly alone in its battle to meet environmental regulations while ensuring the proposed rules are reasonable and logical. The outdoor power equipment industry has rallied its troops to meet California's emission standards, set to go in effect Jan. 1, 1995.

Meeting the CARB and proposed U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emission standards poses a challenge for producers of all sizes of outdoor power equipment. In fact, the National Manufacturers Association and Outdoor Power Equipment Institute unsuccessfully lobbied to delay the Jan. 1, 1995, CARB deadline.

David Zerfoss, president of

The pesticide industry is hardly alone in its battle to fight for fair, reasonable environmental regulations and standards.

Husqvarna Forest & Garden, Charlotte, N.C., and also chairman of the Portable Power Equipment Manufacturers Association, cited paper work as the most monstrous task set before manufacturers striving to

meet the emission standards. That, as well as the extensive research, testing and engineering, have already cost companies millions of dollars. "There will be a cost passed on. It will be minimal with the 1995 CARB regulations, but will increase as phase two kicks in for both the EPA and CARB," Zerfoss said.

Contractors generally concede any added cost from the standards will be passed on to customers, but don't anticipate high-impact price increases, at least not next year.

"The emissions standards will have a major impact on manufacturers. I don't think there will be a major cost increase for landscape companies. The additional costs of equipment will be made up for in efficiency. They'll take care of each other," Thornton said.

Ron Kujawa, president of Kujawa Enterprises, Cudahy, Wis., cautioned that regulations are getting to the point where they are inhibiting the industry's ability to do its job, and industry profession-

als are letting it happen.

"You can't cut down trees with electric chain saws. You can't cut grass on slopes with four-cycle engines. People affected by these laws are rarely involved in building the legislation. They become aware of the consequences at a later date, when it's too late," he said.

Despite the emissions challenge, outdoor power equipment manufacturers report steady to phenomenal growth. "We've seen solid growth the last two years, coming off some relatively slow years," Zerfoss said. "Husqvarna saw a 40 percent gain for the year. The company is doing extremely well. I look at gains on a continuum. It's been an extremely good year."

Zerfoss credited Husqvarna's growth, a large portion of which was in commercial product sales, to the healthy national economy.

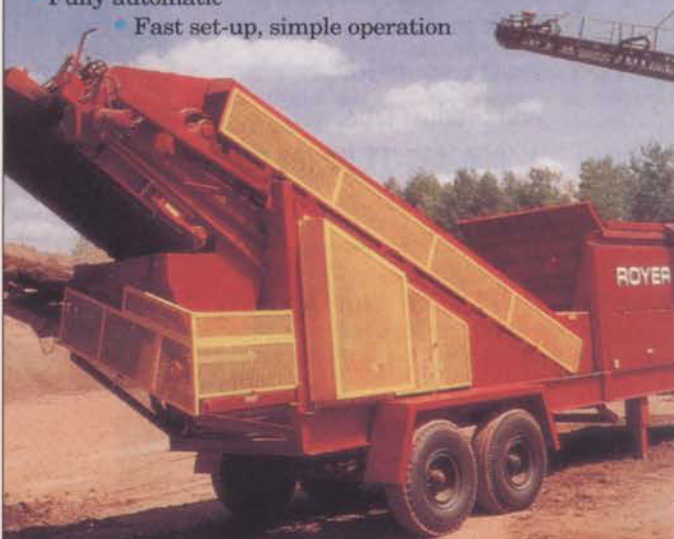
"There are a number of issues driving sales upward. One is the economy, although home sales and home starts are starting to level off," he said. He also attributed this year's high sales to an excessive amount

(continued on page 36)

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Cover Story

(continued from page 34)

of rain that fell on certain regions. "More homeowners opted to have their lawns cut and maintained commercially this year. The commercial market is where the growth is."

Zerfoss sees the industry focusing on offering equipment that reduces noise as well as emissions. Husqvarna will continue to focus on improved ergonomics for its handheld trimmers. The compact units will offer lower vibration and incorporate a design that makes them easier to hold and maneuver, he said.

Last year was a boon for John Deere's Lawn & Grounds Care Division, which reported worldwide sales of \$1.5 billion, at an 18 percent growth rate. The division's nine-month net sales reached \$908 million worldwide this year. That's an 18 percent increase over the same time last year.

Shipments of all lawn and garden equipment in the United States is expected to increase 6.6 percent to \$6.7 billion in 1995, with real growth of 2.7 percent annually, according to Darrin Brogan, research analyst for Cleveland-based The Freedonia Group.

In the irrigation industry, suppliers report that unruly competition continues, with numerous small companies fighting for market share. Product imitation appears to be almost standard practice.

Olson Irrigation, San Diego, which manufactures low-volume drip irrigation systems, predicts 10 percent growth in its landscape irrigation division for 1994. Kathleen Baldwin, spokeswoman for the company, said that areas of the country such as California, where commercial building construction has been slow to recover, have stilted landscape irrigation sales.

However, Olson has been receiving more requests for information about drip irrigation. Baldwin noted. "The process of drip irrigation is taking off right now as more people become aware of the need to conserve water," she said. "People are learning about the benefits of using drip. Not only that it saves water but it is used to for weed control and erosion control."

Baldwin noted a trend toward using ice plants on California hillsides where brush fires ravaged original growth. The hardy plants retain moisture and are fire retardant.

On the growers' end, sales of nursery goods are climbing 10 percent a year, including trees and shrubs, potted plants, cut flowers and turfgrass, according to *The Kiplinger Washington Letter* news report. Nursery growing is "the fastest growing sector of agriculture, accounting for 11 percent of the total value of ag production," the report stated.

Thornton said his nursery business was slow this season due to a glut of material on the market. "That should change in fall and spring," he said.

IN THE FIELD. So, in an industry fraught with regulation and environmental issues, are companies able to continue business as usual?

Yes, if they're assertive and wary, said Kujawa.

(continued on page 38)

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Cover Story

(continued from page 36)

"The industry has always been tied to the economy, and always facing some type of onerous legislation or issue that has to be dealt with. It's part of doing business. You just can't sit and watch it happen. You have to be proactive rather than reactive. Stay on your toes," he said.

The trick is to not get caught up in the daily mishmash of running a business. Small companies too often don't pay attention to issues and federal mandates until it's too late. The key is to plan ahead, learn to be foresightful and position the business where it has the most opportunity to grow and prosper.

Taking part in state and national trade associations can give small companies an edge on business management, said Chapel Valley's Reeve. "They provide you a network of peers with whom you can exchange ideas and information, and they provide seminars on how to run your business successfully and effectively."

There's no question that a host of major issues such as undercutting, increased competition, taxes, insurance and worker's compensation continue to plague both small and large businesses. According to several industry analysts, small firms already pay 15 percent more of payroll to provide health insurance and as much as 50 percent more than large firms for the same package of health benefits.

But again, it's a matter of taking charge of the business rather than playing victim. "I see a vast change in how lawn and landscape maintenance businesses are being run. It's changing to a leadership vs. management mode," Thornton said. "You have to develop niches, be a planner, be organized, in order to survive. You can't be a fly by the seat of your pants outfit anymore. Business today requires a new style."

Successful companies are continuing to promote total quality management, as well as more aggressive technical programs and certification requirements. To that end, national associations are taking the lead in offering certification training and testing for its members.

ALCA is working on a national certification program for technicians, based largely on the California Landscape Contractors Association's program. In addition, PLCAA has initiated a certification program in conjunction with the University of Georgia, and PGMS plans to offer certification training at its national conferences beginning with the St. Louis meeting in November. Additionally, the Irrigation Association continues to see a great deal of interest in its four levels of irrigation certification.

"Through increased national and state level certification, improved technical skills and establishing our work as a needed profession, we can charge more for our services...that's going to end up protecting our industry," said David Snodgrass, president of Dennis' 7 Dees, Portland, Ore.

Also key to survival is the ability to be flexible and adjust to the market. "Our business philosophies have changed with the way the marketplace has changed," said Douglas Cowan, presi-

dent and chief executive officer of The Davey Tree Expert Co, Kent, Ohio. "(We're) hiring the best people we can possibly hire, and trying to maintain a technical edge over the competition."

Davey Tree's 1993 sales were \$222 million. The company projects 1994 revenues of \$325 to \$350 million revenues in 1994.

GROWTH REPORTS. Sales reports across the country show that the lawn and landscape maintenance industry is back on track.

"The industry is in the rebound stage — landscape maintenance especially," Thornton said. "Maintenance has not slowed down. For the landscape contractor, there's more commercial work coming on-line. There's also residential development. Landscape contracting is slowing down, it appears. Commercial is on-line. Residential is on-line."

Kujawa remained cautious about growth trends. "We have five profit centers and we're really strong on all five cylinders. Landscape design/build and landscape management are doing very well. Interiorscape is very good. Commercial is way up. We have cautious optimism. The economy seems to have settled," Kujawa said.

Hyland Bros.' sales are up this year and are expected to continue increasing. "Projections for 1994 are about 20 percent," Hyland said. "It's been a 12 to 15 percent increase in sales for our tree and lawn care business. Maintenance is holding pretty steady."

The company's fastest growing service is tree care. "Five years ago, we told our customers about that service. They're now finally asking for it. That service has the most potential," he said.

Pat Norton, president of Barefoot Grass Lawn Service, Worthington, Ohio, said the company is looking to grow 33 percent this fiscal year, with revenues of \$75 million to \$100 million, up from \$48 million revenues in 1989. The company targets upper-end clients so that business doesn't rise and fall with the economy.

"We don't feel most of our customers, or potential customers, are that affected by upturns or downturns in the economy. We charge companies an average of \$200 a year. That's not really what you would consider discretionary spending at that level," Norton said.

Ground Control, a landscape and maintenance firm in Orlando, reports that its 1994 sales are the best in the company's 16-year history. The company expects to post \$7 million revenues, compared to \$6.2 million in 1991.

After the economic downturn in 1991, Ground Control reorganized, splitting construction and maintenance into two divisions. "Heading into the last half of '94 with \$3.2 million in construction contracts is a nice change, compared to the two previous lean years," said Mark Yahn, president. "Although Ground Control remained financially sound during the recession, the recent shot in the arm enables us to strengthen our resources." ■

The author is Senior Editor of Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine.

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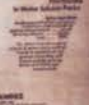
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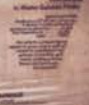
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USE READER SERVICE #57

Contractors Aiming For Smart Growth

Lawn and landscape contractors deliver quality services to please value-minded customers. Strategies for better management and add-on services give a competitive edge.

By Sue Gibson



THE ECONOMIC picture brightened in 1994, and operators in the lawn and landscape industry benefited from the surge of money flowing into the economy. Some owners experienced banner years in terms of growth and new opportunities.

Double-digit growth seems typical of many owners surveyed. In fact, most were surprised by a growth rate that exceeded their own expectations. In some cases, sales grew by more than 50 percent.

Many attributed the growth to last winter's weather, which gave a boost to services for snow removal and weather-related landscape repairs. But others credit their customers' perception that lawn care and landscape services are good investments.

While most owners cheerfully accepted increased revenues coming from last winter's weather, many companies devised strategies geared for long-term, strategic growth based on service quality and "smart" organizations. Usually, this meant a choice between two paths: focusing on "what we do best" or expanding services to become a "one-stop" provider.

The upsurge in business inevitably attracts competition, and that was one dark side to an otherwise rosy

picture. Price cutting, loyalty to mom-and-pop businesses and what some operators call "unethical" sales tactics have sharpened competition in some markets.

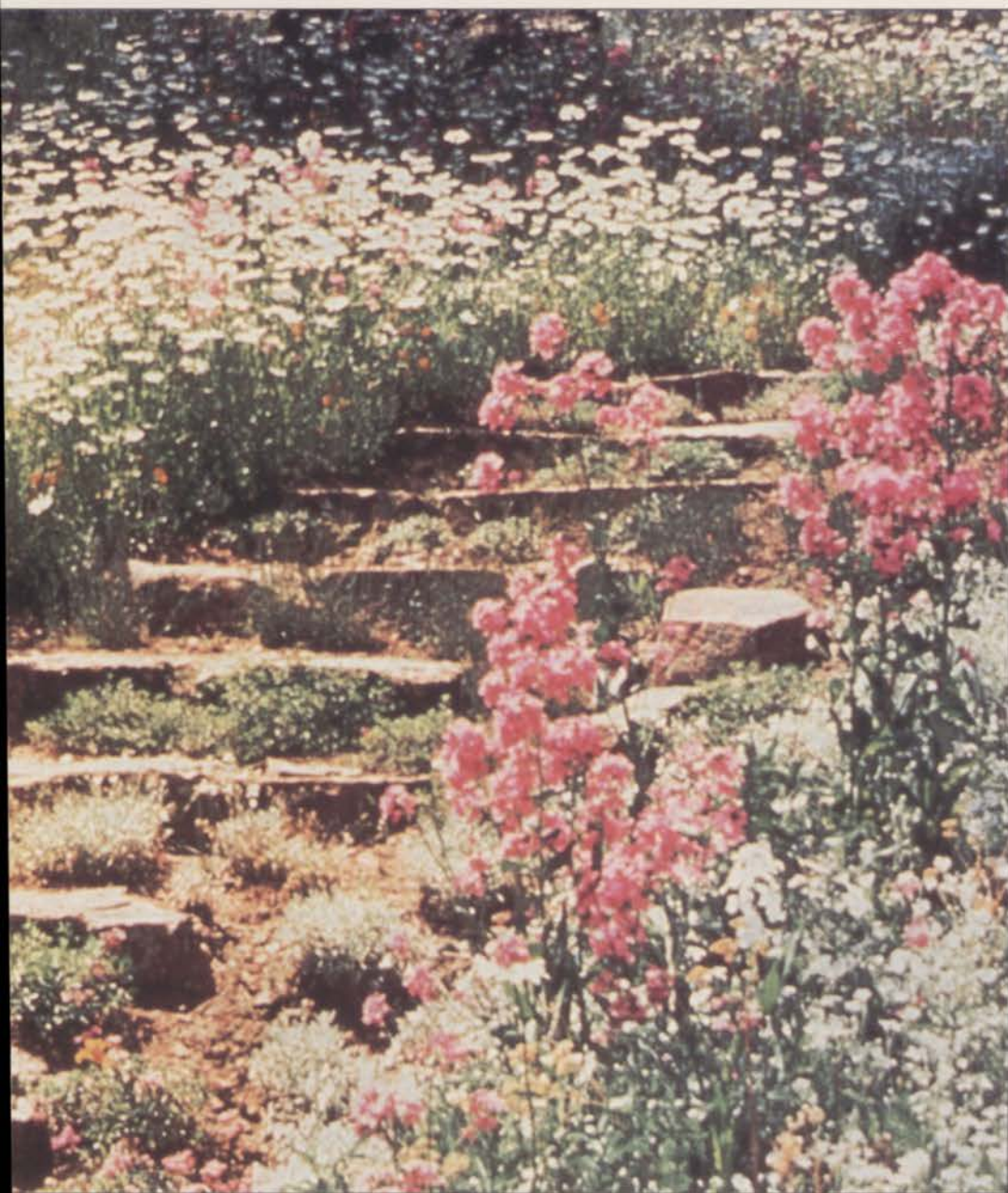
Areas in a slump have forced companies to focus on their strengths and listen more carefully to the customer. The industry has to accommodate ever stricter government regulations and nearly impossible labor markets. And it may not get easier, for these problems will not go away.

Many operators hesitate to forecast similar growth in 1995. While a good number report solid bookings through next year, others view the economy as changeable and wonder if business will continue at this rate.

MANAGED GROWTH. Those that took the "minding our own backyards" approach set tangible goals for improved customer relationships and retention rates, better service, smarter organizations, more effective management and reduced costs. The emphasis focused on building better companies and giving customers what they want.

"Back in the old days of our industry, everyone was fascinated with the biggest companies," recalled Dick





Landscape renovations are big business for lawn and landscape contractors. Pre-renovation (left) and post-renovation (right). Photos: Layne Maly.

Brickman, president of The Brickman Group, Long Grove, Ill. "I think the industry was encouraged to grow too fast and too big, which became a problem." He believes companies need to concentrate on doing what they do best.

Edmond Laflamme, president of Laflamme Services Inc., Bridgeport, Conn., agreed. "Business is good for those people who do quality work, and many could almost grow out of control. We could grow ourselves to death. Instead, we're

being more selective about our accounts. If it's not the right kind of account, we don't bid it." He advocated taking a "proactive" approach by suggesting cost-saving improvements to customers.

Laflamme keeps a close watch

GRAYWATER RULES GET THUMBS UP

INTENSE PRESSURE to conserve water, especially in the Western states, has resulted in numerous business opportunities. Lawn care and landscape owners alike report customer interest in irrigation installations, faulty system redesigns and modifications for better efficiency and water cost savings. Often, maintenance and retrofitting work follows.

The market grows even more with the passage of California's graywater standards this spring. The standards apply to subsurface drip irrigation systems that can be used even during mandatory water rationing.

These "drought-proof" systems accept untreated

waste water from clothes washers, bathtubs and showers, bathroom wash basins and laundry tubs — up to 70 percent of all household water used.

A homeowners' guide soon to be published will explain system setup, estimating water and landscape use and code regulations. Some experts see the possibility of similar graywater standards for multi-family units, health clubs and other commercial facilities.

They also predict development of more affordable and efficient system components. One more result may be the reformulation of laundry soaps and cleaners so plants may be irrigated with graywater.

on costs as a factor of quality. "We watch the costs associated with performing top quality work. I believe quality has a direct bearing on what we're spending to produce."

He cited labor costs, scheduled maintenance and other allocations that directly affect the customers' perceptions of quality. "They're money conscious, but they'll spend money if they see value. We have to reallocate our resources for cost effectiveness."

A true understanding of what customers define as quality may mean a redefinition of work.

"A lot of our work sites were driven by our own inspections and quality as we defined it," recalled James Martin, president of James Martin Associates, Vernon Hills, Ill. "This led to a realization that customers placed greater value on good communications and having frequent visits from the same crew rather than on performing specific horticultural practices."

Martin Associates responded by rerouting crews for more stability, surveying clients and having more contact, studying work site productivity and clearly defining services and schedules for the customers' benefit.

Most owners agreed that the influx of money for lawn and landscape services is tempered by the demand for good value. Customers will spend more for quality services, but also want more for their landscaping dollars. They're also more astute. "Customers are spending more but also paying more attention to what they're getting," said Mike Davids, marketing agent for Clarence Davids & Co., Blue Island, Ill. "They're also increasing their knowledge of negotiations and their expectations to be better buyers."

In light of customers' search for value, many companies have restructured for more productive management and more profitable operations. If it's more efficient to cut layers of management, resched-

ule crews or add foremen dedicated solely to quality, then companies are doing it. If keeping costs in line

means monitoring equipment maintenance closely or analyzing crew productivity, then it's done.

THE SERVICES SHUFFLE. Local markets dictate the success and level of competition for specific services.

Areas with new construction inevitably force landscapers into main-
(continued on page 44)

IN YOUR FACE: UNIONS PUSH LANDSCAPERS UP AGAINST THE WALL

THEY BURST INTO the office, throwing open the doors, shouting slogans, striking like lightning. In an instant, the normal office routine was chaos as 60 people demonstrated and disrupted business. They yelled through bullhorns, frightening the female office workers who backed up against the wall in fear.

Four Seasons Landscape & Maintenance Inc., San Jose, Calif., just got a wake-up call from the "Campaign for Justice," an organizing group for the Service Employees International Union.

"These guys will hit you from every side they can possibly hit," recalled Jim Marcus, president of Four Seasons. He calls their tactics "harassing," "intimidating," "not rational" and "close to racketeering."

He thinks the foray into his business started six months earlier, with a seemingly harmless graduate school project. "We had a graduate student call and say she was working on a project" for business. His cooperation led to disclosure of Four Season's typical operating procedures — details that the Campaign for Justice used to incite several employees.

The organizers reject traditional union election procedures for their own set of rules. They've picketed outside a health spa maintained by Four Seasons, demonstrating against the firm's "mistreatment" of workers and irritating the spa's customers and owners.

In a previous move to organize janitors in a Washington, D.C. building, the Campaign for Justice group disrupted lunch at the

building's restaurant by loudly shaking Coke cans filled with ball bearings and shouting: "Justice! Justice for janitors!"

The group has also enlisted the aid of officials from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Labor Relations Board to investigate their targets' allegedly poor working conditions.

POWER TRIP. Marcus believes the group is a "top-down" organization without any real interest in improving Hispanic workers' lives. "They promise a lot and then give nothing," he said.

Rob Zolezzi, co-owner of L&L Landscape Services, Santa Clara, agreed. He chairs an ad hoc committee of 15 large landscape maintenance firms feeling the union's heat. The group employs 1,400 workers in the Bay area.

"The Campaign won't give us a wage or benefit standard. They say 'We'll negotiate anything you want, just give us a contract.' We feel that's taking the right to decide out of our employees' hands."

Zolezzi worries about two tactics: the union's avoidance of any election in favor of direct pressure on employers and clients and its widespread use of incorrect facts about landscape working conditions.

Marcus cited their silence on promises to improve workers' education, provide English language training and guarantee benefits. As an

(continued on page 44)



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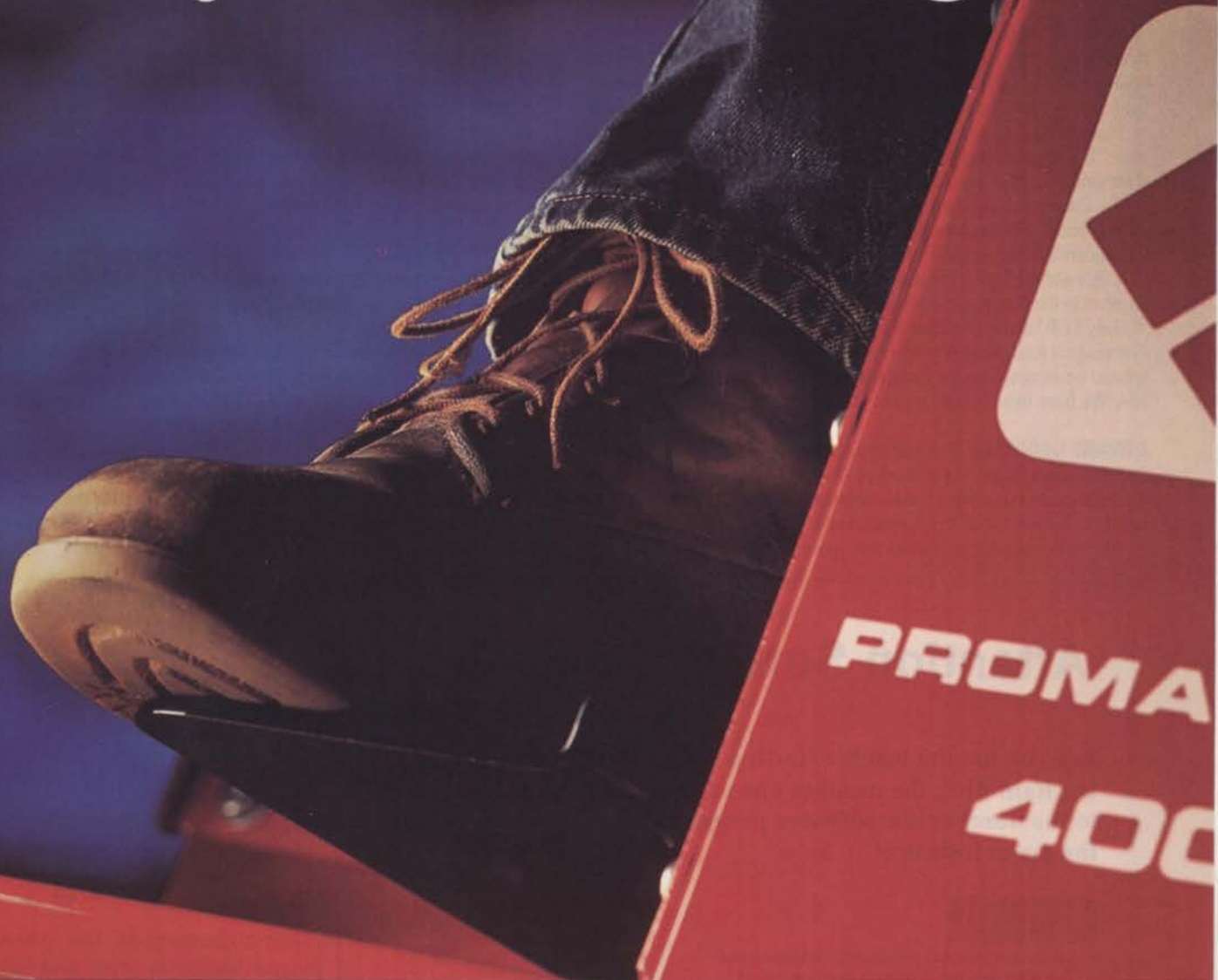
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Market Trends

(continued from page 42)

tenance, which then makes that market even more competitive.

Tight economies can result in cut-throat price wars or, ironically, more funds for lawn care and landscaping as property owners try to move properties with greater curb appeal.

Healthier economies with a booming construction industry give landscapers more leeway to specialize in a particular type of service or client base. In many areas that

have recovered from a lengthy recession, property owners look for landscape installations, renovations, safety-conscious modifications and

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In Your Face

(continued from page 42)

example, he calculated that a local homeowners group confronted by the company paid landscape workers the equivalent of \$21 per hour with benefits factored in. When it capitulated to the union, wages rose from approximately \$8.50 to \$13 per hour — but without any benefits.

The union's message does appeal to many landscape workers in the area. "It's an emotional issue" and many Hispanics felt there was no representation, Marcus explained.

The Campaign originally was supported by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, the Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders International Union, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers and the SEIU. Emphasis shifted toward Hispanic landscape workers in the Bay Area after it organized janitors.

Only SEIU actively supports the group now, a development that the Campaign's leadership downplays. Its director, Jon Barton, is quoted in several newspapers saying that the loss of support "is really meaningless. We have more people now to focus on the landscape campaign."

OWNERS ORGANIZE. The landscapers committee is supported by the California Landscape Contractors of America and meets often to share information and develop a "pro-employee" approach — one that encourages each owner to scrutinize and correct company practices.

"We're developing guidelines that specify our industry's standards on

job descriptions, holidays, pay scales and benefits," noted Zolezzi. "We want to make sure everyone is up to scale in all their practices.

"We're also putting together letters that tell customers what's happening before the union visits them."

The committee has support from local and national landscape organizations. The Associated Landscape Contractors of America has pledged funds to help area contractors in their efforts. "We hope it will increase their standards of professionalism and also help them to communicate their efforts with customers," said Debra Atkins, executive director. At this point, the union's campaign is relatively localized in that area, but may widen with success.

UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE. Ironically, Marcus is not against unions. He does question this group's tactics and motives. "I believe there is a place for unionism, but they haven't figured out where that is. They could be partners with the industry.

"We treat our workers as well or better than anyone else around here," he noted. "Our Hispanic workers are hardworking, loyal and dedicated people. This push has made me think about what I'm doing right and wrong. It could actually help our industry that way."

The reality is different, he pointed out. Marcus sees a continued push backed by an indulgent NLRB and more government scrutiny at the union's urging. He believes this strategy resulted when the group realized the difficulty involved with traditional elections. "I learned that most unions usually win only 28 percent of their elections."

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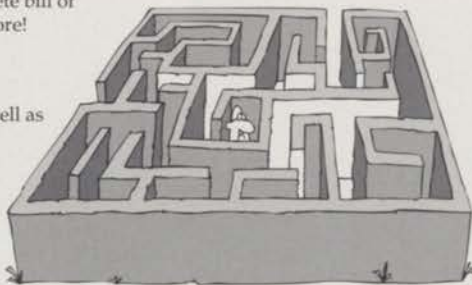
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Just Add (a Little) Water

Proper xeriscape requires few changes to the practices already followed by landscape professionals. But it does challenge contractors to alter how they think about the process.

By David Clancy

PURELY DEFINED, xeriscape is creative landscaping that requires low water consumption. However, the term is not often purely defined. In fact, many in the industry still believe xeriscaping to be landscaping with rocks and dirt — a system requiring no water.

However, many contractors involved in the process emphasize that proper xeriscape requires few changes to the practices already used by landscape professionals. Instead, it requires altering the thought process of the typical lawn and landscape contractor.

Many contractors began practicing xeriscape long before the concept was developed. Don Godi, president of Don Godi & Associates, Denver, was involved in the development of the original concept during the late 1970s. Yet, Godi said, xeriscape practices have been a part of his operation much longer.

"Long before the term xeriscape became a practice, we were using xeriscape principles at my firm here in Colorado," said Godi. "We were

practicing it without a name. We called it "reduced water landscape design."



Japanese black pines and California lilacs.

JUST GUIDELINES. The National Xeriscape Council outlines seven facets of a sound xeriscape practice: planning and design, soil improvement, appropriate plant selection, practical turf areas, efficient irrigation, mulching and appropriate maintenance.

While the factors listed are practical steps followed instinctively by many contractors, Ball advised that not every step is needed to significantly reduce water in a landscape design.

"The guidelines simply point out areas that contractors can concentrate on. Contractors might just want to improve the soil or tweak the irrigation system to improve the site," he said.

Similarly, landscape design projects not intended as xeriscape can actually pass as such. Godi cited a Mile High Stadium project in Denver as an example.

"That playing field is basically a xeriscape design. Although it takes a lot of water and is used for athletics, the grounds crew has been very careful about soil

Xeriscape practices are often misunderstood. But as this landscape shows, turf can be used in a xeriscape setting. Photos: Xeriscape: San Diego Style

preparation, which is just one of the seven principles of xeriscape," he said.

He added that Mile High's irrigation system was carefully designed to allow the best coverage possible, and that water is used appropriately. "The turf has been selected carefully, and it is maintained appropriately, so many of the xeriscape principles have been followed. Yet a lot of people don't relate to it as being a xeriscape project at all."

Many misconceptions exist about xeriscape, particularly that the landscaped parcel must require no water, according to Godi. "Xeriscape design can reduce water consumption on a project from 5 percent to 100 percent. You go totally dry or anywhere in between. It is still a xeriscape design," he explained.

The council's technical definition of xeriscaping might have caused some misconceptions held in the industry today, Ball said.

"While the actual definition means dry landscaping, xeriscaping is much more than that. It's basically conserving water through landscaping. It doesn't say use a particular type of plant. It doesn't say use a special irrigation system. The bottom line is that you reduce water use."

"In fact," added Godi, "people can be practicing xeriscape without knowing it. If they have a well-designed irrigation system that controls the water effectively — possibly using a water sensor, soil sensor or other things like that. That is almost a full application of one of the principles of xeriscape design."

"There are a lot of areas where we say we have xeriscape that still uses bluegrass or a fescue turf," Godi said. "For instance, if a residential customer has children who play in the yard, a dry turf might not





stand up, so it is better to use a bluegrass. These turfgrasses may use water, but if they are efficiently irrigated, we could still reduce their water consumption up to 50 percent or more in a very creative landscape design."

The question of turf usage lingers, agreed Douglas Welsh, Ph.D., professor of horticulture at Texas A&M University, College Station. "Some in the water industry continue to be overzealous in trying to regulate turf size or variety in the landscape," he said.

The city of San Antonio, for example, attempted to ban St. Augustinegrass because it was thought to require too much water. "When you look at San Antonio, you realize that your alternatives are very limited. Are you going to use bermudagrass? I don't think so," Welsh said.

PREPARATION IS KEY. Godi, a landscape architect, considers planning and design the most critical aspects of xeriscape. "If you start off with the wrong plan, you can

never achieve maximum results. The other six steps follow naturally," he said.

"Planning involves making the right selections of plants, getting the right materials and the right layout in the planning of the irrigation system. For example, it would be ludicrous to plan a school site project in the same manner that you would a residential piece of property and expect the same results."

Marvin Gross, president of Marvin's Gardens and Landscape Service, Sarasota, Fla., also pointed to preparation as the vital step in ensuring an effective xeriscape project. "When we have a xeriscape application, we make sure we follow the rules. But we make sure we think them out before we do anything," he said.

Part of that planning is determining the best method for selling the client on the concept. "We must get them to see the reasoning and benefits behind it," he said.

Gross explained that costs associated with xeriscaping are similar to the costs associated with digging

a well. "The main costs are upfront, but as time goes on, the costs come down considerably," he said. "Irrigation is the most expensive part of xeriscaping, and that payback begins immediately."

Proper plant selection and maintenance play significant roles as well. Contractors must do their homework to find the best plant material for a particular project, Godi said.

"That means becoming familiar with regional or adaptable plant material," he said. "Some people think that xeriscape means all native plants. That is not true. There are a lot of imported, non-indigenous plants in every region of the United States that do quite well. You need to know which ones will do well, with the soil and climatic conditions that you have."

Maintaining xeriscape projects, often a highly involved process, begins with a good design. "If you don't have the site properly designed, you will have these small areas where even the smallest irrigation head has to overspray in

order to cover them," Godi explained.

WISE WATER USE. The biggest problem with excess water usage is not the plants, but the people involved in maintaining them, said Welsh. "People waste water, turfgrass doesn't. I have done a lot of genetic engineering, yet I have not come up with a turfgrass yet that can reach up and turn on a faucet by itself."

Richard Sperber, president of Valley Crest Landscape Inc., Calabasas, Calif., said he believes effective irrigation leaves room for gutsy plant selections. "If you want turf, you should have it. If you want a certain tree, get it. If you irrigate properly, you will be able to have the plants you want and be able to save water at the same time."

No matter how careful the plant selection, "poor irrigation will offer no benefits. A well-designed, well-managed irrigation system will allow water savings," he added.

Unfortunately, irrigation is very difficult to evaluate at times. "With

WATCH YOUR PREFIXES

irrigation, you can't always see how much water is being placed where. A major part of xeriscape is efficient irrigation, but most irrigation is not as efficient as it could be," said Larry Keesen, president of Keesen Water Management, Aurora, Colo.

Keesen said that efficient watering in his market could reduce water use between 25 percent and 50 percent. "People can't see the water being used, so they don't know how much is enough and how much is too much."

"In many instances, our evaluations show double the water use than is necessary for a healthy landscape," he said.

Keesen blames a lot of the excess use on contractors. "Many times, contractors don't design the irrigation system efficiently. "They are more interested in profits rather than doing it right," he said.

"But profits and doing it right can go hand in hand — if the contractor sells quality and long-term water savings. Sell people on the idea that you are going to put in a system that is much more efficient

THE XERISCAPE concept is often referred to by many in the lawn and landscape industry as "zeroscaping," which, depending on who you talk to, is a sign of ignorance, or an attempt to degrade the concept. In fact, several contractors use a pronounced "zero" prefix when describing the process.

The term xeriscape is a trademark of the Denver Water Department. Many people have taken credit for the phrase and it is nearly impossible to determine where credit should lie. Likewise, the term zeroscape has found rampant use throughout the industry, and is actually offensive to some involved with the process.

"The term zeroscaping is a sign of ignorance," said Don Godi of Don Godi & Associates, Denver. When someone uses it, they show their ignorance or their contempt for the program."

Godi said the term originated with turf suppliers who "thought we were out to step on their turf, so to

peak. They were making money in traditional landscape construction and were afraid they were going to lose it," he said.

"If a contractor is doing all traditional work, involving the heavy use of non-indigenous plants and lots of water, and somebody comes along and tells him that he is wrong, then obviously you can see why there might be a conflict."

Don Ball, spokesman for the Denver Water Department, said some of his employees still need a lesson in the xeriscape concept. "We have people who have been here for more than 12 years calling it zeroscaping," he said. "That tells me there are some people who are so set in their ways that they will never change."

But, he continued, "that is only 15 percent of the population. We will work with the 85 percent that wants to learn more and be involved."

and will reduce your water bills over the next 15 to 20 years."

One thing contractors need to change, said Keesen, is their low-bid mentality. "Contractors have the mentality that only the low bid gets the project," he said. "Many more contractors could be success-

ful with xeriscape systems if they sold based on long-term savings. Anyone who is doing design or construction needs to sell that aspect of it."

REAL SAVINGS. Choosing an appropriate irrigation system is where real water savings come into play,

said Keesen. "You can save a lot more water by having an efficient system vs. the standard irrigation systems many contractors sell. You will see bigger savings in that area than you will by selecting plants that do not require as much water."

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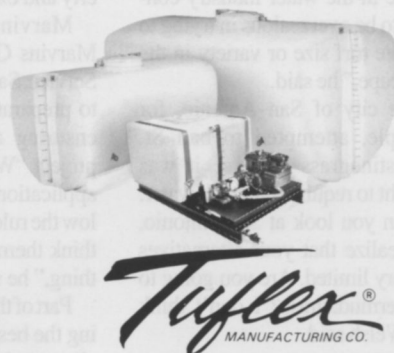
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Xeriscaping

(continued from page 48)

Water system evaluations are a major part of the planning and design aspect of xeriscaping, Keesen said. "Unfortunately, the average contractor does not know how to do a proper evaluation."

Keesen recommended analyzing the hydraulics and operating pressures of a system. "Operating pressure is very critical to good uniformity and efficiency. Pop-up spray heads should operate at about 30 pounds of pressure or less," he said.

Operating pressure that is too high causes smaller water droplets to the point of misting. "In addition, the spray radius will be reduced and uniformity will be sacrificed. A key aspect of xeriscaping is uniform distribution of the necessary water."

In addition to looking at the system's operating pressures, soil moisture sensors and rain sensors are necessary to prevent overwatering.

However, Welsh warned, "adding moisture sensors adds more concerns as well. Where do you put them? How many do you need? Are they

worth the cost? These all must be looked at in the planning stage.

"But, certainly rain shut-off devices are easy to install and very reliable," he said. "How many times have you seen a sprinkler operating in a rainstorm? That is not an effective use of water."

Sprinklers operating during rainstorms are often tied into an unrealistic watering schedule, Welsh said. "Landscapes should be watered based on how much water it needs, not whether it is the first or fifth of the month," he said. "Trying to schedule the water needs of the turf has nothing to do with a calendar. It depends on rainfall, temperature, the soil, humidity and other factors."

Keesen admitted that setting strict schedules requires more work than traditional landscaping allows for. "Operating the system is definitely a big aspect of this. You must make sure that it is maintained properly."

"A professional maintenance staff will enable the contractor to maintain the property and the system very effectively," said Valley Crest's Sperber. "While there are many fancy computerized systems

on the market, unless someone knows the systems, they will not work up to potential."

Sperber said his company's maintenance department understands irrigation needs effectively enough to be able to manage a customer's water needs off-site better than the client can on-site.

"Homeowners, especially, tend to overwater," he said. "If the lawn needs X amount of water, they will give it twice that amount. Homeowners want lush lawns and shrubs and they equate lush with watering," he said. "Unfortunately, they often go too far."

In Nashua, N.H., where Coronis Landscaping is based, overwatering isn't considered a problem, according to Laurence Coronis. "In New England there is more than adequate rainfall. So xeriscaping is not a major concern," he said.

However, poor irrigation systems have run rampant in the area because of a housing boom during the 80s. "As condos were being built, many contractors skimmed off soil from the lots and slapped cheap irrigation systems in.

"Because there is such a standard base at many of these places, the lawns need a tremendous amount of water," he said.

Consequently, Coronis practices xeriscaping when retrofitting these systems. By improving the irrigation system and soil base, less water is required in the landscape.

"Unfortunately this hurts us in the bidding process," he said. "The client doesn't see the top soil, so we have to explain to him all of the costs and benefits associated with the job.

"The soil is the foundation and the irrigation system is the support for the landscape. A house with a poor foundation or support will not be worth its cost. Neither will a poorly supported landscape."

To be certain, xeriscaping is not a cure-all for all water shortages, but it is a step in the right direction. And the effort required is not excessive. In fact, it just takes a little homework and the willingness to change one's thinking. ■

The author is a free-lance writer based in Westlake, Ohio.

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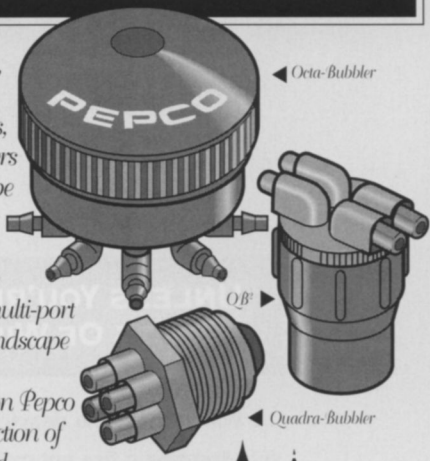


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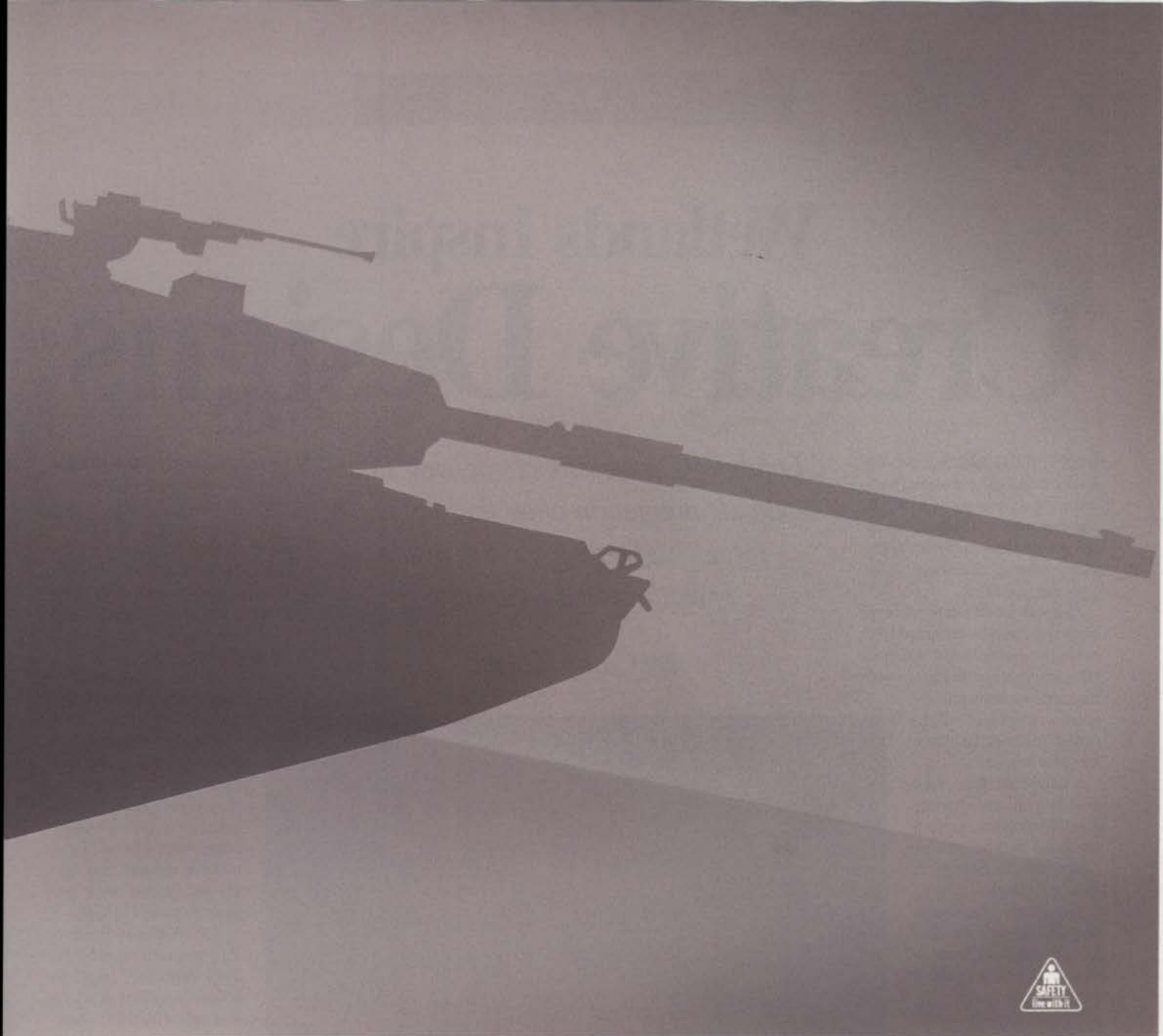
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USE READER SERVICE #21

Wetlands Inspire Creative Designs

WHILE WETLANDS restoration work attracts more lawn and landscape contractors nationwide, the lure and approach to handling the task changes like a politician's campaign promise, depending on region and type of job.

The goal of wetlands regulations, under the Clean Water Act of 1976 as well as a more recent voluntary program, is to ensure that if a wetland area is destroyed, another wetland area will be restored or created at or near the same job site.

Because of that, more commercial and government development projects involving wetland areas are calling for restoration or mitigation work.

Some landscape contractors start out actively seeking wetlands work, but most seem to fall into it by virtue of a profitable contract.

"Mitigation jobs in this area are mostly part of a larger proposal. Our first job, we got a bid that called for wetlands mitigation. I didn't even know how to spell mitigation," said Daniel Skinner, owner of Landscape Services in Fort Wayne, Ind. "But we did a little research and went into it. We found it was very profitable."

While most companies involved in mitigation work cite profit, they also claim hard work, preparation and commitment are needed to brave the often adventurous land of wetlands mitigation.

WHY WETLANDS? The protection of wetlands became a cause celebre for resource

Landscape professionals delving into wetlands mitigation often find the work more challenging but the result rewarding and innovative.

By Cathy Hoehn



Testing the degree of moisture at each grade level at the Piney Orchard mitigation pond in Maryland helped determine grading requirements and proper plant selection for each level. Photos: Ruppert Landscape Co. Inc.



Water pumped in from existing ponds helped establish spring-planted emergents. Piney Orchard is fully stabilized here, with a hydrology determined to be "right on." The water iris were planted to lend color to the fields.

conservationists and a serious point of contention between developers and environmental activists in the early 1970s. Historically drained for agricultural purposes, environmentalists' figures show that more than 100 million acres of the wetlands that existed 200 years ago have been lost, and an additional 500,000 acres are being destroyed each year, according to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency statistics.

The main argument for preserving wetlands is that they strain toxins from groundwater and serve as a haven for wildlife. Draining them lowers the earth's water table, reduces food supply and ground cover and destroys natural habitats.

The Wetlands Reserve Program, authorized by the 1990 Farm Bill, aimed to restore 1 million acres of wetlands within five years. Congress appropriated about \$46.4 million in fiscal year 1992 to fund a pilot program for restoring 50,000 acres of wetlands in nine states.

Regulations have been established nationwide to ensure wetland restoration. While in most areas, specialized companies traditionally landed the work, a larger number of commercial and government landscape job specs are including mitigation work.

"Wetlands mitigation has been a niche in the past, but more landscape maintenance contractors are stepping into that practice," said Richard Akerman, president

(continued on page 56)

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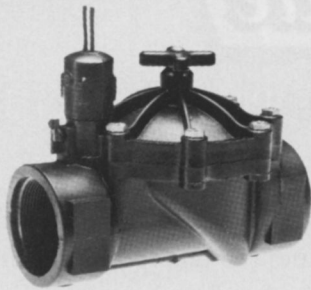
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USE READER SERVICE #12

Wetlands

(continued from page 54)

of Northwest Landscape Industries, Tigard, Ore. "That trend started about three years ago in this region. There are still a lot of large specialty companies out there doing the work."

Bob Konarck, owner of Jurassic Wetlands, West Palm Beach, Fla., who's been doing mitigation work for eight years, said the concept started attracting attention in Florida "somewhere between 1986-87. I worked for a very small company then. We thought we were pioneers. We didn't realize that other companies had been doing the work for years."

Whatever reason they get into it, most contractors find the work profitable, challenging and truly down and dirty. "It's hard to find labor that's willing to stand in water up to their hips to install plants for 10 to 12 hours," Konarck said. And, depending on the job site and region, you may run into some unusual job hazards. "I've been bitten by snakes, seen 'gators. I've seen panthers. You don't get that at your normal landscape job," he said.

And the hours can be a little crazy at times, according to John Talley, branch manager of the environmental contracting branch of Ruppert Landscape Co., Ashton, Md. "The job, especially for tidal (coastal) wetlands, does not respect the normal 9 to 5 working hours. You may have to work 2 p.m. to 5 a.m. to take advantage of the tide cycle," he said.

Konarck claimed that 50 percent of his jobs come from landscape contractors that either opt to sub out the wetland work or take on the projects and fail. "It looks like it'd be easy work to get into. But there's a lot to know," he said. "You have to put plants in at the correct place and correct depth. You need a resident biologist. The way things are regulated, you need permits to do everything and must interpret them correctly."

A company or individual does not need to be permitted or certified to do wetlands mitigation, but there are a number of steps within each project that requires permits. Permitting is generally coordinated through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other regulatory agencies, according to Cliff Rader, chief of wetlands enforcement and regulatory policy section, U.S. EPA. It appears most landscape contractors are not responsible for securing permits, however.

LEARNING THE SYSTEM. Despite being laden with regulations and permit requirements, wetland mitigation work seems as unfettered as the wind when it comes to determining the best way to handle a project. The only real ground rule is: don't think of it as a regular landscape job.

Of the two main types of wetlands — tidal (coastal) and freshwater — more work has traditionally been done in tidal wetlands projects, and usually more successfully. "There's more experience and success in that. The hydrology is more predictable vs. recreating a saturated system," Rader said.

Few landscape job specifications, which normally come from a government agency or pri-

A 12- to 18-inch planting medium is created here.

vate developer, call for the contractor to design, install and maintain the project. Instead, the design work is most often left to a biologist or other specialist.

Ruppert Landscape Co., which has offered wetlands mitigation since 1986, doesn't plan or design projects; it simply installs and maintains the material.

The advantage for the company is that it doesn't need a resident biologist, nor is it responsible for obtaining permits for obtaining plant materials and the like.

Traditionally sculpted by a biologist, the typical wetlands design focuses on functionality vs. aesthetics. "The design aspect can be very creative, but the most important aspect is restoring the wetland's biological functions," Rader said.

Green View Landscaping, Dunlap, Ill., which contracts wetlands jobs through its landscape design division, tries to integrate visual dryland landscaping with its wetland mitigation projects.

Bob Streitmatter, landscape architect for Green View, recently designed a 60-acre area for Peoria's park district. The job involved connecting three drylands separated by wetlands, and constructing a trail along the Illinois River. Streitmatter's design integrated hardscaping, dry and wet plantings and seeding. Mitigation work involved recouping the destroyed habitat where a road was torn up, and minimal destruction where walkway bridges were constructed over the wetlands.

Although familiar with Illinois' ecosystem, Streitmatter called on naturalists and wetland plant experts for advice on the best plant material. "Within this particular area is rich, herbaceous and woody material. It makes it quite beautiful. It also has dramatic season change, so there are spring flowers, summer flowers and fall color. And there's a lot of wildlife — egrets



and cranes and ducks and geese and beavers and muskrats. It almost seems like a natural zoo."

Akerman claims to have seen some unusual requests from wetland property owners, such as installing bat and butterfly boxes into the habitat for the Audubon Society. "It's a different kind of work. People want to have a natural setting in unnatural places," he said.

Sometimes the beauty of the plant material makes a preplanned aesthetic design unnecessary, according to Skinner. "We recreated a wetland about a year and a half ago. I saw it the other day and it was just beautiful. It has different types of plants that survive at different depths. Some seeds don't germinate for two years. Some are very temperamental; they need the right soil, the right temperature, etc. You have to be careful about that because if you're responsible for putting in the material and it doesn't come up, you may not get paid."

Most designs call for native plants which tend to be hardier, drought resistant and pesticide resistant. "They take care of themselves," Konarck said. "It's not your ordinary nursery grown stock. You get it off private land mostly. You used to be able to go and collect it from ditches, or other public land, but you can't do that anymore."

More recently, nurseries have sprung up nationwide that specialize in wetlands plant material. "That's a little industry in itself," Rader said.

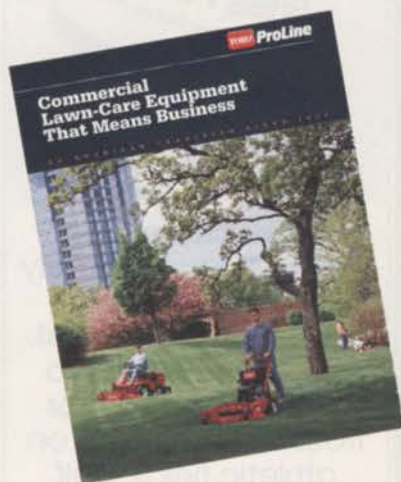
Contractors also have to be careful about using non-native plant material that takes over in

ENSURING SUCCESSFUL MITIGATION

WHILE LANDSCAPE contractors normally aren't the ones to draw up the mitigation plans, it's important to understand the key aspects involved in developing such a project. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, a successful mitigation plan should include the following components:

1. A clear statement of objectives. This should state unambiguous goals, such as 70 percent vegetative cover with native plants by the end of the first year; 90 percent by the second year and 100 percent by the third.
2. An assessment of the wetlands values or resources that will be lost due to fill-in, and those that will be replaced.
3. A statement of the location, elevation and hydrology of the new site. Hydrology is the most important factor in creating a wetland. If grades are just slightly off plumb, plants will either be left high and dry or flooded.
4. A description of what will be planted, where it will be planted and when.
5. A monitoring and maintenance plan.
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a natural setting, such as purple loosestrife. "We ran into that problem at one time. It was a mistake to use that plant material," Streitmatter said.

Another troublesome plant is the Australian Malaluka tree, first introduced in Florida to help clear wetlands for construction. "The malaluka drinks and stores up a lot of water. It's a subtropical tree that's done what it was designed to do, but it has taken over Florida," Konarck said.

Skinner's mitigation projects call for seeding vs. live plant installation. He said the seed is often premixed for certain types of projects. "That can

well see a mono-type planting scape. If the design is correct, it can look pretty good," Talley said.

The plant material used in wetlands is rarely containerized stock. "If you collect the material bare root, you leave at least one-third of the rhizome in the ground. You take the top part, say you're collecting 5,000 plants, then take them to the project and install them. The plants may be in shock for two or three weeks, depending. Then you get reshoots. New sprouts. Then you have good success," Konarck said.

Installation can get pretty interesting. It often requires waders, some type of pumping system and a boat.

"If you have a commercial site going in a freshwater wetland area, you want to take that water out and put it in another area to create another wetland," Skinner said.

"If it's swampy, the first thing you need is

water coming in on a regular basis," he explained. "But you have to be able to control how much water goes in. It might be dry right now but as soon as it rains, you're three or four feet under water. So you have a retention basin, like a big bathtub, with a meter flow outlet at the bottom, releasing water slowly into the wetland area via pipe. If you let it out on the site all at once, it would cause downstream flooding."

Other contractors use different, innovative approaches. "It depends on the project. There is no hard, fast rule on how to install material, or how to control water flow. The important thing is that you've got a good system for watering and dewatering, that you're able to prevent flooding or drying and can restore or create a natural habitat that will sustain wildlife," Talley said.

Water for most mitigation projects must be provided and controlled either by excavating down to the water table, by collecting and routing stormwater runoff to a wetland or by setting up a system of pumps, weirs and gates.

(continued on page 60)

Contractors involved in wetlands mitigation say companies looking to get into the business should do their homework first and be ready to commit to the challenge.

get really expensive. It can cost \$1,100 for a mix of seed."

Landscape Services uses a home-built "swamp buggy" and a salt spreader to broadcast seed on wetland areas. "It's an old pickup truck with basically no body work left. It's primitive but it works. There's nothing else you can pull through the swamp," he said.

Different types of wetland sites call for different plant species. "On hillsides, you can use sassafras. It depends on what part of the site you're planting in. You wouldn't use cattails on a dry hill," said Bob Papetti, owner of Bobtown Nursery, Melfa, Va.

Salt marsh grass is fairly common on the East Coast, as are cattails and other reeds. "I've been hired to kill phragmites in North Carolina where it's considered a weed, and have planted it in New Jersey, where that and cattails are all they can grow," Konarck said.

"For tidal wetlands, there's only a handful of plants you can use since it's such a high-energy environment," Talley said. "So most often you



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USE READER SERVICE #18

Wetlands

(continued from page 58)

THE LAST STEP. Installation of wetland projects can be labor intensive, but maintenance is often a breeze.

While regulations require most mitigation projects be monitored for one to five years after completion, contractors are often not the responsible party. Most companies, like Ruppert, will continue to watch the site's progress, however, just to ensure the design takes hold.

Konarck claimed many projects only need to be maintained every three months. "I spend about one or two days every three months doing maintenance. You can do that as long as you maintain it correctly. That's where lot of people get in trouble," he said.

Talley said his projects are maintained about once a week for several months. "With tidal wetlands it only takes a few months to know if it's successful. But freshwater wetlands can take up to two years."

Freshwater projects are more likely to fail. "They can fall apart. The difference between this type of work and 'normal' landscaping is that with your average landscape job, you're always trying to keep it in a strategic state. You're supposed to have a certain look. With wetlands, it's dynamic; it changes all the time. It can be visual but its function is the overriding concern," Talley said.

Actual maintenance of plant material is minimal. "It isn't like trying to keep a pristine appearance; it's mostly ridding of noxious weeds. Here in Florida we have cattails and torpedo grass. We have to monitor those. Maintain them a little bit," Konarck said.

Jurassic Park sometimes applies herbicide, spraying either from a boat or plane. Occasionally wicking plants individually with a sponge is required. Large, tough invasive plants must be torn out. "We do that by good old hand pulling. It's tough to take out Torpedo plants. The roots break easily," Konarck said.

Ruppert uses an herbicide on a restricted basis, via permit.

Most of the contractors involved in wetland mitigation say companies looking to get into the business must understand what they're doing and be willing to commit to work. Valley Crest Landscape, Orlando, currently handles small mitigation jobs, but is considering taking on 200- to 300-acre projects.

"A lot will depend on the growth of the landscape industry in Florida — how fast that phase grows as a whole — as to whether we want or need that work load," said Keith O'Neil, purchasing agent for Valley Crest. "Right now it seems to be growing quickly. And it appears to be lucrative. The question is whether the market is substantial enough to exist over the long haul. It's going on right now due to focus on the environment. Sometimes those things change as public interest fades." ■

The author is Senior Editor of Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine.



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USE READER SERVICE #32



LL 8/94

Reconditioning Sparks New Life In Old Equipment

How do you know when to put a tired piece of equipment to rest? When the machine has worn to a point that its resale value doesn't justify reconditioning and fails to give customers value, say experts.

By Bob Gitlin

THE LARGE COMMERCIAL lawn and landscape contracting firms often do their own maintenance, making decisions on what type and size of each particular type of equipment to recondition.

On the other end of the spectrum are the dealers who handle most of the engine overhauls and other major reconditionings. These deal-

ers also do a lot of refurbishing work for legions of small companies pulling two mowers in the back of a pickup truck.

In either case — whether it's the contractor doing the work or the dealership — a cost/benefit analysis must be done to determine if it's worth fixing a piece of equipment. Alternatives to reconditioning in-

clude junking the unit or turning it into the dealership for trade or cash.

DEALER ADVICE. Don Dakin, owner of Dakin's Yard-N-Garden dealership in Jackson, Mich., said his company handles major reconditioning for commercial and consumer mower engines.

"This often involves the drive

line, maybe mower attachments," he said. "The only units we handle that can feasibly be reconditioned are major-brand garden tractors. Lawn tractors are not worth a major overhaul."

The most common reconditioning jobs are new engines and "major rebuilds" on engines. "A tired aluminum engine on a \$2,000 mower means chances are the transmission is tired too," he said. "Steering spindles may need replacement, because these machines use — not bearings — but bushings that are mistaken as bearings."

Damaged mower decks aren't usually worth fixing or replacing, according to Dakin. "Those wear to a point that their resale value doesn't justify what you'd have to put into them to really recondition them and give the customer the value he deserves," he said.

For the purposes of his business (which also handles home/garden consumer traffic), he regards rear-engine lawn tractors as "one-way machines that go out and serve their usefulness for an eight- or 10-year period."

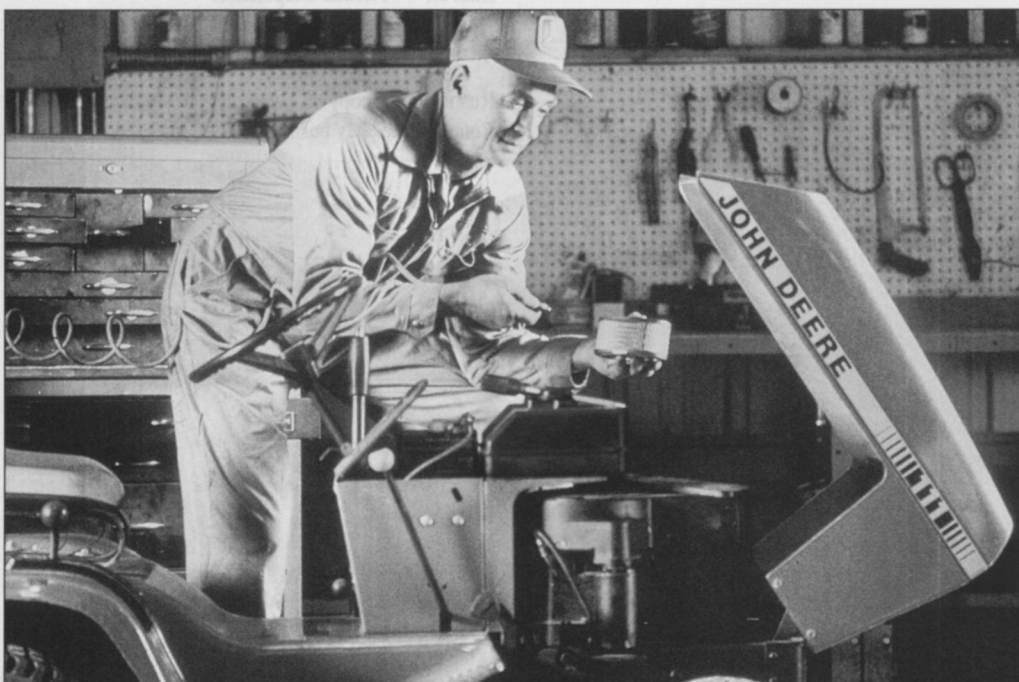
On the other hand, he said, "your garden tractors, like the Simplicity 16- and 18-horse models, or the Cub, or the small Kubotas — do justify it. Because they have value; they have components that can easily be replaced."

As far as how much it costs him to recondition and what he charges, Dakin used the example of a common commercial-application Kubota F-Series mower.

"That machine has an outfront deck. A unit like that, which has the new selling price in the \$14,000 range, I'll take with 2,000 or 3,000 hours on it; maybe it's six years old. To recondition it back to a usable condition, I'd spend \$2,000 to \$3,000. If you took the machine in trade or bought it from somebody, you could easily give him a \$2,000 trade, put \$3,000 in it — you have \$5,000 in it — and sell it for \$6,000. In a heartbeat, I've done that."

Parts most commonly needed for lawn and landscape maintenance equipment reconditionings include mower spindles, spindle bearings

(continued on page 64)



Preventive maintenance will help extend the lifetime of power equipment. Photo: John Deere

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Reconditioning Equipment

(continued from page 62)

and belt idler pivots, Dakin said. "Then, in the case of shaft-driven machines, your universal joints or

spline shafts."

What types of equipment does it not pay to recondition? "String trimmers, line trimmers where you end up with more money in them than they're worth," said Dakin. He also

fails to see the feasibility of reconditioning commercial walk-behinds, which generally get beat up. "You can't replace enough pieces to make it a good, usable piece of equipment and do it at a decent

price," Dakin said.

"When you start buying machinery by the piece, you're paying three times as much for it as you'd pay for new ones. You have to be very careful how many pieces you're going to put on them."

Greg German, general manager at German's Outdoor Power Equipment Co., East Peoria, Ill., said the decision of whether or not to recondition — obviously something commonly bruited about in dealerships between servicing technicians and the customer — depends on resale value.

"For us, items that cost \$150 or \$200 new are very questionable to even take on trade," German said. "Normally we recondition commercial equipment when we take the unit on a trade-in. Minor repairs? We might recondition it and sell it back to the open market again."

The most commonly reconditioned equipment types are the intermediate 36-inch to 60-inch walk-behind mowers, he said. "We don't do a whole lot of reconditioning on walk-behind mowers that are 21-



A cost/benefit analysis will help determine whether equipment should be reconditioned or used as a trade-in.

(continued on page 66)

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Reconditioning Equipment

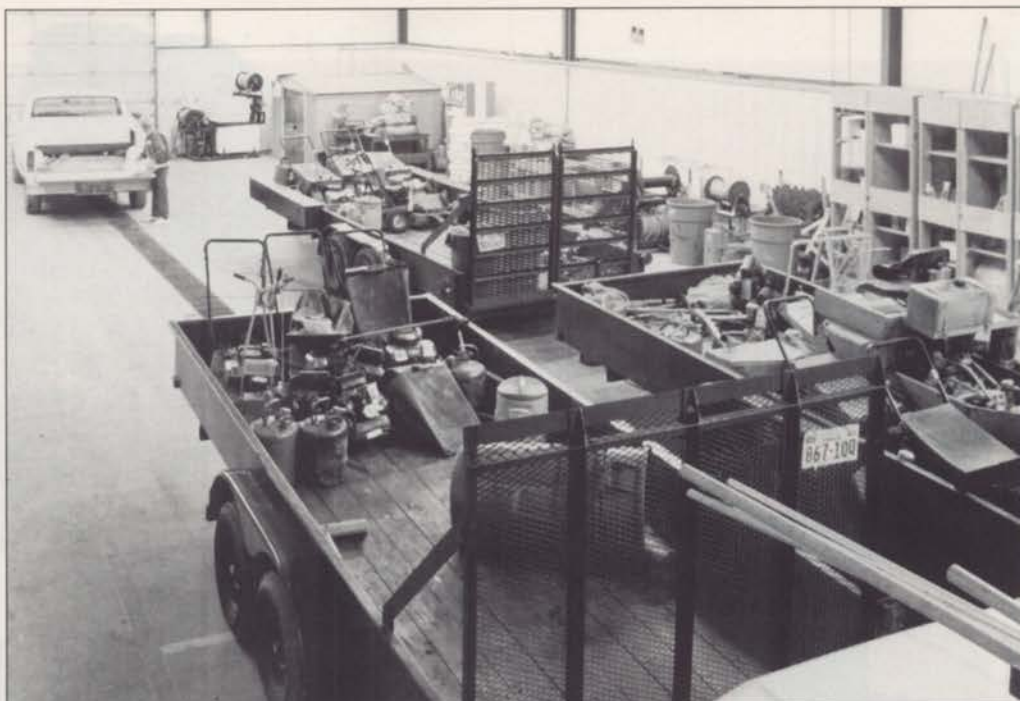
(continued from page 64)

inch or smaller," he added.

The company opts against reconditioning trimmers and chain saws as well. "We do very little on those type of items. We charge ourselves internally the same as we charge the customer: \$40 an hour," German said. "If I'm trying to recondition a chain saw or a trimmer that, new, may have sold for \$200, and I allow the guy \$30 for it on trade, I could easily get \$40 to \$80 wrapped up in that thing. Now will I be able to sell that for \$125? I doubt it. So those are the kinds of items we just stay away from."

Often the servicing dealer takes such units on trade and sells them to what the industry calls "jockeys" — mechanics who work out of their garages and onto whom the whole headache of product liability can be dumped.

"Jockeys come around and buy that stuff as is, in bulk," German explained. "They come in and buy all our walk-behind mowers or all our low-price lawn tractors. They're



Some contractors stock new parts to upgrade old equipment on an as-needed basis.

resellers, doing it on the side with low overhead. They'll come in and pay us what we need out of the piece of equipment. We don't make

money off jockeys, but we get our money back out of the tradeoff."

COMMERCIAL NEEDS. Lawn and

landscape professionals use dealer-reconditioned equipment as backups, German said. And some market newcomers run only recondi-



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tioned units.

"There's a big barrier of entry for a guy who wants to get in the commercial landscape business and has to go out and buy a couple of \$5,000 intermediate walk-behind mowers," German said. "He might get in the door for \$1,200 or \$1,500 with a couple of reconditioned pieces."

Contractors' needs for parts vary by type of equipment, he said. "Typically, if it's a piece of mowing equipment, they'll need lots of deck parts, spindles, bearings, blades and belts. If it's a major job, where you have to go into the engine and the unit is under \$5,000 in value, we just don't do it. We can't afford to rebuild something like that. Instead, we'll sell something like that as is."

Sometimes German installs a new engine on a machine, and that's all it takes to sell the mower at a commensurately higher price. "What we want to avoid is getting into a recondition job only to keep finding more and more things that need to be replaced," he said.

Big, engine-driven mowers occasionally merit engine overhauls.

Contractors' needs for parts vary by type of equipment, but mowers typically call for deck parts, spindles, bearings, blades and belts. Some question whether damaged mowing decks are worth fixing.

The consensus seems to be that any machine worth less than \$500 new is not worth the bother.

Do most commercial operators do their own fix-ups, or take it to the dealer? "Our customers do a lot of the minor stuff, but when it comes time to rebuild the deck or do engine work, they come in to us," German said.

J.D. Vick, owner of Tempe Power Equipment, Tempe, Ariz., performs a lot of tune-ups and service work.

"You don't work on cylinders and things like that if the dollars exceed what the machine's worth

—specifically what the engine part of it's worth," he said. "About the biggest thing I work on are 36- to 62-inch mowers."

Commercial 21-inch push mowers aren't worth engine overhauls, he said. "A lot of times we'll tell commercial customers the engines aren't worth fixing. We'll put new ones on them if they want."

William H. Potter III, owner of William H. Potter & Sons, Middletown, N.J., finds his shop generally reconditioning 36-, 48- and 52-inch walk-behinds.

"If it's going back to the customer," he said, "generally we put

on new spindles and belts, and maybe a new engine. If we take it as a trade-in, we've generally been scrapping them. We don't get involved in a whole lot of reconditioning for resale. I've got a couple jockeys around here that love to take them."

Potter almost always uses original equipment manufacturer parts rather than aftermarket parts. For example, a stricken engine tends to be replaced with a new one rather than rebuilt, he said.

"By the time you put the labor in the short blocks, you find it just doesn't pay," Potter said. "We used to do a lot of rebuilding on certain engines, but it's gotten to the point where you could put a new engine on cheaper than you could rebuild. And then, of course, a new engine means a new warranty."

CONTRACTOR PERSPECTIVE.

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scape Services, Santa Clara, Calif., which employs four full-time mechanics.

The company follows a basic philosophy in which "small equipment — string trimmers, blowers, edgers, gas shears, stuff running \$300 or less — we do not do any overhaul on," Zolezzi said. "Those are just fix-as-they-break jobs. It comes in broken; boom, we put the part on and send it out."

One of Zolezzi's innovations is the fleet of backup equipment used for the small equipment. "A guy has two string trimmers on his truck. We have backup equipment so when it comes in broken, he just picks up the backup and goes out. What he left in the shop gets repaired so that the next day, he uses it again."

L&L Landscape Services uses a "longevity period" computation. "If it lasts, say, 12 to 18 months of everyday usage we feel we have gotten our use out of it."

Continually malfunctioning engines are headed for scrap, he said. "Small equipment, we part out; we take off any good parts, and the rest

WHEN TO BENCH A MOWER

LAWN MAINTENANCE is like football. If your star halfback has a sprain, don't play him.

If a mower is hurt, there's a point at which it should not be stressed.

First of all, maintain equipment like a demon. This tip was echoed by all dealers contacted for this article.

But second, don't kid your self about what's fixable and what isn't.

"Don't use that piece of equipment one last season if you know it's going to be needing a new engine," said Greg German of German's Outdoor Power Equipment, Peoria, Ill. "That's the time to trade it into a dealer so you get some value for it. Once the engine is gone or the deck is torn up, it has no value to the dealer."

A word to the wise.

gets taken away for metal recycling."

It's the biggest — and the smallest — pieces of equipment that tend not to be worth reconditioning, he said. "It's usually the small stuff that's in the shop every day and goes back out in the field the same day that causes trouble. I have no problem going out and spending \$260 to replace a trimmer with a brand-new piece."

Intolerable frequency of repair is cross-checked against equipment history. "We have a log on every piece of equipment we have. Every time the man brings one in — it could be a spring that broke, and

our mechanics put a new one on — it's logged in the book."

Such an entry may be something like, "string trimmer, number ST-45: broke a string," he said.

"Every time they put an entry in that log book, they look back and see when was the last time they did a repair. Each page has a date at the top, indicating when we bought it and when it hit the field. The head mechanic checks that log and says, 'Hey, this thing's coming in every week for a small part.' We've reached our longevity period."

That means it's coming into the shop every week or even every day. That normally doesn't happen be-

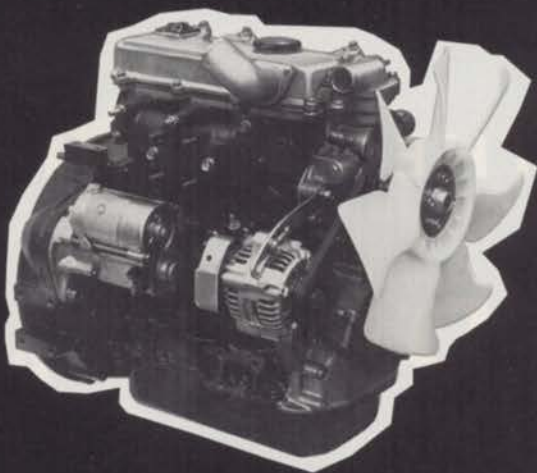
fore the first three months.

"But now this thing's coming in a lot. The mechanic looks at it and says, 'Gee, it's two years old. Time to pull it out of the field. It's taking up too much of our labor.'"

You need to be this diligent about records, he said. It won't do to just yank a certain equipment type based on the average of, say, two and a half years of solid use. There are always those anomalies that run great well past your expected target doom date.

Zolezzi's parting-out system may raise some eyebrows in the industry. He buys a certain quantity of

(continued on page 70)



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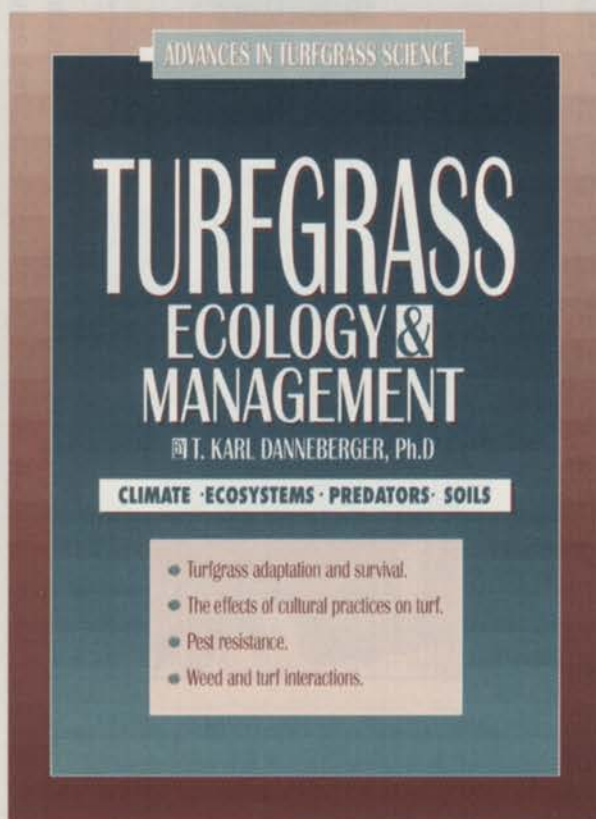
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Reconditioning Equipment

(continued from page 68)

new machines and immediately renders them into parts. This, added to what his crews remove from broke-beyond-fixing units, provides the total parts pool.

"We find it is cheaper to buy brand-new small equipment and part it out, and use those parts brand new, than it is to buy the parts

least. Some run one or two years without hitting the shop. If one comes in with a broken piece, the mechanic does a full check of all the linkage, nuts and bolts."

Zolezzi said he wishes the biggest equipment lasted as well as midsize mowers. L&L only owns three riding mowers; it owns more than 300 midsize (21-, 36- and 48-inch) walk-behinds.

"Riding mowers require the most

Professional landscape contractors need to be diligent about equipment maintenance records to track the longevity of the products in their fleets.

individually."

A lot of people never learned that trick, according to Zolezzi. "I can go out and buy a string trimmer for \$180, strip it down in parts and I'll have \$400 in parts," he said. "It works great. Granted, sometimes you need the same part four times — you'd have to break down four string trimmers. But it's almost double the cost to go buy the parts individually."

This tends to be the case more with smaller equipment, he stressed.

He reconditions a lot of 21-, 36- and 48-inch walk-behind mowers, which runs contrary to the views of a servicing individual like Greg German, who eschews working on the smallest push mowers.

"I've found that in 15 years, it pays sometimes to short block those little ones. We put new engines on many, and that can be very expensive. The bottom line is those 21-inch mowers now are \$600," Zolezzi said.

With industrial-grade equipment — even 21-inch mowers — you don't ride it into the ground. "It's got the IC engine on it, all of that. It'll run for a lot of years. It might run six or eight years due to your refurbishing it. When they start smoking or having trouble, we short block. But we don't recondition if the deck gets bent."

Zolezzi considers 36- and 48-inch mowers the pride of his equipment fleet. "They break down the

maintenance of any piece of equipment we have. They're always in the shop. A lot of that is our obsession with preventive maintenance, granted. But it just seems like every time we put a riding mower out for eight hours, we have to bring it in to the shop to tighten bolts and nuts, make sure it's ready for the next day."

His big riding mowers have a shorter longevity period than do his 21-, 36- and 48-inch walk-behinds.

"I get four to eight years out of midsize mowers. If I get two years out of a big riding mower, or three, I feel like I've gotten my money's worth. We do not refurbish those. We often sell them through the newspaper."

Who buys them?

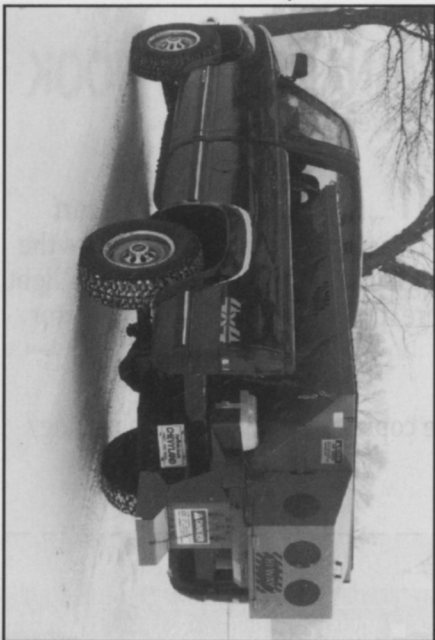
"A guy who needs it one day a week for one five-hour commercial job. Let's say the mower has 100 hours left in it. That'll last that guy a few years. But I can't afford the downtime and customer complaints. I like that 48-inch walk-behind. It cost me \$3,000 or \$4,000 and lets my guy mow a lot of lawn with little breakdown time. The big mower cost me \$15,000, I got two to three years out of it, and I'm done. For what? The 2 feet wider swath of lawn?"

The author is a contributing editor to Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine.

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**PESTICIDES
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PART 11

Pesticide Licensing

With the lawn and landscape industry facing greater scrutiny, an increasing number of states are tightening licensing requirements for all applicators handling pesticides.

By John Buechner

Ed. Note: This is the 11th in an ongoing series on effectively using and promoting specialty pesticides in the urban environment.

SOME OF the nation's current pesticide trends and regulations not only affect the operations of a lawn application business, but they can affect the ability of an individual to become a licensed certified applicator.

While some states require applicators to be licensed before venturing on to a homeowner's lawn, other states allow a grace period — either with or without direct supervision.



PESTICIDES IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

An increasing number of states — now totaling 16 — have restricted the opportunity of an individual to become a licensed certified applicator. A combination of experience and education in the category you are seeking certification is standard in those states.

In some states, for instance, a lawn service professional can make an application the first day on the job under the direct supervision of a licensed applicator. Other states offer a registered technician program in which new applicators are required to carry written instructions on pesticide use and applications.

Although most specialty pesticides used today are general use — the same products a homeowner might use on his lawn — a few restricted-use products are still available. In these instances, only certified lawn care applicators can apply restricted-use pesticides in some states. Other regulations require direct supervision of the applicator.

Education requirements to achieve licensing require a minimum of 20 college credits to a maximum of a four-year degree. Experience requirements can vary among the states from one to three years before an individual is able to become certified. Recertification occurs every three years on average; some states mandate it every two years while others allow up to five years for recertification.

Five states — New York, New Mexico, Maine, Kansas and Massachusetts — now recognize the Certified Turfgrass Professional correspondence course offered by the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and the University of Georgia as an alternative to the individual states' licensing requirements.

Additionally, 25 states recognize the turf certification program as meeting the requirements for pesticide recertification credits. These states are Idaho, Maryland, Tennessee, Arkansas, Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Wyoming, Maine, Rhode Island, Georgia, West Virginia, Mississippi, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, Kansas, New Mexico, Colorado, Alabama, South Carolina, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Washington. Texas approved the course only for technician apprentice classroom training.



States With Registries

STATE	# PEOPLE MAY 1993	# OF ADDRESSES	WHEN STARTED	PHYSICIAN STATEMENT	INITIAL OR ANNUAL FEE
Connecticut	143	364	1991	none	none
Pennsylvania	435	38	1988	yes	none
Florida	56		1991	yes	yes
Colorado	13	50	1990	yes	yes
Maryland	86	473	1989	yes	none
West Virginia	19		1991	yes	none
Louisiana	28		1989	yes	none
Michigan	57	800	1993	yes	none
Washington	35	175	1992	yes	none
Wisconsin	503	*10,000+	1993	none	none
New Jersey	Presently working on one by regulation				
New York	Presently has a bill introduced into assembly				

*Allows listing of addresses on their block or an adjacent block.

Five more states — Nebraska, South Dakota, Oregon, Indiana and Oklahoma — are reviewing the course for recertification credits, according to

Tom Delaney, director of government affairs for PLCAA.

Other regulations affecting business operations and, ultimately, lawn service professionals are notification standards, disclosure of pesticide information to consumers, state notification registries and specific rules for making pesticide applications on school properties.

Currently, about 20 states require lawn service professionals to post notification flags on properties following a pesticide application including Connecticut, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire (commercial jobs only), New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin.

Consistency of size, color and basic information for inclusion on the flag does not exist between the states. Consequently, lawn maintenance compa-

Pesticide applicators need to be aware of local, state and federal legislation regulating the application of pesticides.

nies working across state lines — and in some instances city lines — must stock several different inventories of posting signs. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is preparing guidelines for states to standardize posting flags.

It's hoped that standardization among the states will reduce confusion and enable the EPA and the states to develop a national education program which would encourage compliance among lawn service companies operating in more than one jurisdiction.

Furthermore, the EPA is expected to recommend that the states include do-it-yourself applicators in a voluntary posting program. This standardization of signs would enable EPA to go into schools and educate students on the meaning and purpose of the posting signs.

Regulations concerning the disclosure of pesticide information to consumers is a growing trend evidenced by the establishment of rules in Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, Texas, Washington, Wisconsin and New York, among others. The rules require applicator companies to provide consumers with specific information on pesticides applied to their lawns and landscapes.

Information generally required to be provided to consumers includes the product name, the rate of application and language from the label pertaining to the health and safety of a consumer's family or pets.

In New Jersey, for instance, Lawn Doctor pro-

Source: The Professional Lawn Care Association of America.



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vides its customers with a consumer information sheet which includes its name, address and phone number; 1-800 numbers for the state health department and poison information and education; approximate application dates; and the names of weed, insect and disease control products that may be applied.

If warranted, the following disclaimer appears: "Do not enter treated area until these materials have dried."

Additionally, the consumer information sheet provides the following definition of a pesticide from the New Jersey Pesticide Control Code: "Pesticides are chemical substances used to control living organisms and vary in degree of toxicity. Pesticides may be a part of a good pest control program. Sanitation, as well as physical and biological control measures, should be considered as another part of a good pest control program."

New York and Maryland require applicator businesses to provide full product labels to customers as part of their disclosure requirements. New York also requires a signed contract between the company and consumer which provides proposed application dates and cancellation procedures.

Pesticide notification registries have been established in several states. One such example is a registry in Pennsylvania requires applicator companies to notify chemically sensitive individuals when they are going to apply pesticides in close proximity to their homes.

Other registries currently in place — and one proposed for New Jersey — use broader language to include people for reasons

The image shows two overlapping forms. The top form is titled "TREE & SHRUB TALK" and "NEW JERSEY CONSUMER INFORMATION". It includes fields for "Application Business Name", "Address", "Telephone", and "New Jersey Department of Health Information & Education - Emergency Telephone". It also has a section for "APPROXIMATE APPLICATION DATES" with a table for "SEASON" (Early Spring, Late Spring, Summer, Early Fall) and "APPLICATION PERIOD BETWEEN" (February 20 and April 30, April 10 and August 25, August 20 and October 20). Below this is a list of "Insect and Disease Control Materials Which May Be Applied As Needed" with columns for "Insect Controls" (Horticultural Oil, Sevin, Carbaryl, Dursban, Cyfluthrin, Fenprophate, Lambda, Trifluoromethylpyridazine, Cyfluthrin, Fenprophate, Lambda, Cyfluthrin, Fenprophate, Lambda, Cyfluthrin, Fenprophate, Lambda) and "Disease Controls" (Cherry's 333E, Fungicide). The bottom form is titled "COMMERCIAL APPLICATOR NOTIFICATION COVER SHEET" and contains a grid for recording application details.

Documentation of pesticide use is a reality in today's market.

other than chemical sensitivity. In all state registries it is the responsibility of the homeowner to register with the state if he wishes to be notified.

Pesticide applications in and around schools have also been addressed in numerous state regulations. Lawn service companies are required to apply pesticides in off-school hours or on weekends to reduce the potential exposure to students and faculty. State rules also require prenotification and preposting for school applications.

Some states are more proactive in enforcement of notification and posting regulations. Additionally, some regulators may look to the intent of the law rather than the letter of the law.

What it boils down to is the need for all applicators to not only follow rules and regulations to protect their own business, but the overall image and perception of the entire professional lawn and landscape maintenance industry. ■

The author is director of technical services for Lawn Doctor Inc., Matawan, N.J. He also is the vice president of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America.

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In the November issue of *Lawn & Landscape Maintenance* magazine, we'll bring you ideas and recommendations on running your business from the industry's leading contractors.

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Maintenance Matters

NEWLY SHREDDED LEAVES PROTECT TURF FROM THE ELEMENTS

Ed. Note: This new column in Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine is designed to answer industry-related maintenance questions from our readers. Send your questions to Maintenance Matters, LLM, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113 or fax them to 216/961-0364.

Q: With the warmer weather ending, what can I do to ensure a clean, healthy looking lawn well into the fall?

A: One of the major obstacles to fall lawn maintenance is handling the large number of leaves that can collect in a seemingly short time frame. Raking or blowing the leaves can mean a significant increase in time and man-hours spent on lawn maintenance in the cooler months. An excellent and hassle-free way of addressing this problem is to invest in a leaf mulching kit.

Not to be confused with a grass mulching kit, which is a distinct piece of equipment that serves a separate function, leaf mulchers are bolt-on attachments that fit underneath mowers. Rather than blocking



Steve Farmer

the mower discharge, leaf mulchers enable the foliage to be completely ground and evenly distributed across the entire cutting swath of the mower. The discharge is so fine that lawns will retain an attractive appearance without raking or blowing either before or after mowing. An added advantage is that the newly shredded leaves will act as a mulch, protecting the lawn throughout the cooler months.

Q: I'm very happy with a new mower I bought this season, but I'm concerned about how it will survive the winter. What is the best way to make sure it will run well when I need it next spring?

A: There are a number of commonly overlooked steps you can take to properly prepare your equipment for winter storage, thereby preventing problems in the spring. For example, some people who own gas-powered mowers faithfully drain the gas because they are concerned about the effects of freezing temperatures on the gas in their fuel system. What they may not realize is that even the smallest amount of residue will evaporate, drying out into a "varnish" that can harm the workings of the engine.

A better approach is to completely fill the gas tank, and then treat the gas with some form of stabilizer. If you have engine-powered equipment, it's also a good idea to change the oil before storing for the off-season.

Another important measure that some people underestimate is the need to clean all

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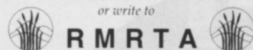
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equipment thoroughly. Make sure you clean the mower of any grass, leaves or debris that may have adhered to the deck, paying particular attention to the underside. Once you are satisfied that the deck is clean, coat it with a quality rust preventive product.

Finally, consider the mower blades. Sharpening the blades before storing your equipment is a good idea, although dull blades will not cause any harm. Generally, it's always a good idea to handle as much as possible during the off-season.

Q: I've heard that you can run into trouble if your mower blades aren't the right sharpness. Why is this a concern? Are there any guide-lines I can use to prevent these problems?

A: That's an excellent question. Problems resulting from blades that are too sharp or too dull are one of the most common yet preventable questions raised by customers.

Many people sharpen their mower blades to a razor's edge because they believe the sharper the blades, the better the cut. But blades that are overly fine become susceptible to costly damage when they come in contact with small rocks or roots which can nick the edge of the blade.

The thinner the blade, the more likely that anything other than grass, even the smallest hidden stones, will chip the cutting surface. For this reason, it's a good idea to leave 1/32 to 1/16 of an inch blunt edge on the blade.

On the other hand, you don't want to allow your blades to wear down too much. Rather than cutting smoothly, dull blades leave a ragged edge which causes lawns to appear brown and unattractive. Therefore we suggest checking your blades frequently to make sure the cutting edge doesn't get any flatter than 1/8 of an inch.

Care and maintenance of your mower blades on a regular basis is the best way to ensure longer blade life as well as a lush, well-manicured lawn.

Q: My blade spindle-bearings seem to be failing a lot more often than they used to. Are there any warning signs that this is going to happen? How can I prevent this?

A: Spindle-bearing failure is not unusual, but fortunately, it is easily prevented. The most common reason spindle-bearings fail is the lack of lubrication. It's a good idea to lubricate your spindles at least once every 24 hours of operation to keep them running smoothly all of the time.

Unfortunately, when spindles deteriorate, there are often no warning signs. Occasionally, however, you might notice an increase in the noise level. As with all equipment, it's a good idea to be aware of variations in the type of sound and noise level, checking to determine if the change could signal a significant problem.

When purchasing a mower, it's a good idea to keep your question about spindles in mind. Ask about the service life of the blade spindles and the manufacturer's reputation in this area. Also question the dealer about the type of bearings on the model. Look for tapered roller bearings, which are more durable and long-lasting.

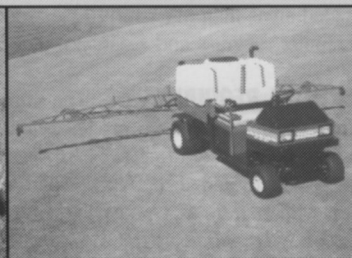
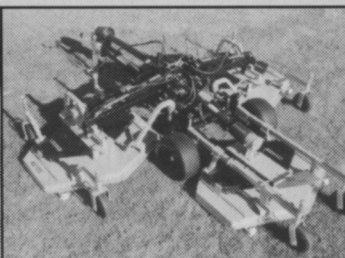
And as long as you are greasing the blade spindles, be sure not to overlook other important areas. Remember that gauge wheels and universal shafts need to be lubricated after every eight hours of use, and make it a point to check the gear box lubrication level daily.

Taking the time to follow through on these simple maintenance steps will reduce the mower's down-time, and ensure that it meets the cutting challenge in the future. ■

Steve Farmer is director of national sales at Woods Equipment Co., Oregon, Ill.

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Seed News

FINE FESCUES: ABUNDANT SUPPLY SPURS MODERATE PRICES

FOR REASONS ranging from environmental altruism to economic necessity, people are investigating methods to reduce the use of water, fertilizers and pesticides on turf. Fine fescues — a hardy, attractive, low-maintenance turf — can help reduce turf input; and abundant supplies this fall have resulted in moderate prices.

The group of grasses referred to as “fine fescues” are, as the name implies, members of the genus *Festuca* characterized by fine leaf blades. The fine fescues commonly used as turfgrass species include strong creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra rubra*), chewings fescue (*Festuca rubra commutata*), slender creeping red fescue (*Festuca rubra litoralis*), hard fescue (*Festuca longifolia*) and sheep fescue (*Festuca ovina*). These grasses differ greatly from the much coarser tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) in their appearance and cultural requirements.

Fine fescues are well adapted to the cool, humid regions of North America with certain cultivars performing satisfactorily even in parts of the transition zone. Fine fescues tolerate infertile, droughty and acidic soils. They are adapted to sunny conditions, but they also persist better in shaded areas than other turfgrasses such as perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass.

FERTILITY REQUIREMENTS. The nitrogen fertility requirements of fine fescues are quite low compared to other cool-season grasses. Hard and sheep fescues perform well with as little as 1 pound N/1,000 square feet per year, while strong and slender creeping red fescues and chewings fescue in turf situations require from 2 to 5 pounds N/1,000 square feet depending on the



Improved fine fescues are good for maintaining ground cover in low maintenance areas.

environment and desirable turf density.

Keeping nitrogen fertility to a minimum when managing turfs containing fine fescue can actually increase turf quality. Lower fertility levels, especially during times of high heat and humidity, appear to lessen the susceptibility of fine fescues to attack by fungal disease.

Fine fescues require less water to maintain adequate turf quality and have the ability to survive, and even thrive, under conditions that would result in severe stress in many bluegrass and ryegrass cultivars. This is accomplished through a variety of physiological and morphological mechanisms including low evapotranspiration rates and thick cuticles. Hard and sheep fescues, in particular, will maintain their color and leaf turgor with little supplemental irrigation.

Following long dry periods fine fescues, especially chewings fescue and strong creeping fescue, also have the ability to recover quickly when water becomes available. This characteristic helps maintain a dense turf even if dormancy sets in during an extended drought.

ENDOPHYTES. Plant breeders have begun to develop and release chewings, hard and strong creeping red fescues containing the seed borne endophytic fungus *Epichloa typhina*.

The benefits of the endophyte in fine fescues are similar to those conferred by the endophytes in perennial ryegrass and tall fescue: resistance to many foliage-feeding insects, enhanced drought tolerance and

(continued on page 80)

CHARACTERISTICS OF FINE FESCUE SPECIES

Species	Growth Habit	Tolerance to Low Mowing	Traffic Tolerance	Thatch Production
CHEWINGS FESCUE	Bunch	Good	Good	High
STRONG CREEPING RED FESCUE	Strong Rhizomes	Fair	Fair	Medium
HARD FESCUE	Bunch	Poor	Fair/Poor	Low
SHEEP FESCUE	Bunch	Fair/Poor	Fair/Poor	Low



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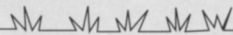
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Seed News

(continued from page 78)

improved turf persistence. In the fine fescues, however, the presence of the endophyte has also been documented to reduce susceptibility to summer patch and dollar spot diseases.

COMPATIBILITY. Few grass species are as compatible in mixtures as fine fescues. Fine fescues are not overly competitive during early establishment and therefore may be readily combined with difficult-to-establish species such as Kentucky bluegrass.

The seedlings have enough vigor, however, to compete with rapidly growing ryegrasses. Once established in polyspecie



An example of a sheep fescue (*festuca ovina*) plant.

mixtures, the narrow-leaved fine fescues blend in well with the coarser-bladed Kentucky bluegrasses and perennial ryegrasses.

SPECIES SPECIFICS. While the fine fescues often are treated as a homogenous group, differing anatomical, morphological and physiological attributes give each of the species its own particular attributes and optimum areas for use.

Strong creeping red fescue is the most commonly used fine fescue species. The species is strongly rhizomatous and forms a moderate to dense turf width. It is quite compatible with other turfgrasses and is most often used in combination with Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass. In these mixes, strong creeping red fescue will dominate in stressful areas such as in the shade and on sandy soil.

Slender creeping red fescues, like the strong creeping fescues, form rhizomes which gives them the ability to fill in

damaged turf more rapidly than bunch-type grasses. Slender creeping fescue is well adapted to fairways, tees, ornamental lawns and other closely mown turfs.

Several slender creeping fescue cultivars have been found to tolerate high salt levels. This makes them a good choice for use in coastal areas, on the borders of roads and walkways where salt is used for wintertime de-icing and where turf managers are forced to use low quality irrigation water.

Chewings fescue is a bunch-type grass. When seeded alone, it forms a turf that can be cut quite low (less than 0.5 inches) and still maintain its density. Chewings fescue is often included in polyspecie blends with bluegrass, ryegrass and creeping red fescue. It also performs well when combined with hard fescue and/or sheep fescue for use in low maintenance areas. The major drawback to chewings fescue is its tendency to form thatch.

Hard fescue is also a bunch-type grass. Hard fescues are slow to establish, but once they have grown in they tolerate heat and moisture stress better than the other fine fescues. Hard fescues are slow to grow and do not recover well from wear. In areas that receive little or no traffic pressure, however, hard fescues can produce better quality turf than the other fine fescues.

Sheep fescue is a bunch-type grass that may vary in color from blue-gray to dark green. Like the hard fescues, most sheep fescue varieties have only fair to poor wear tolerance and recuperative ability. The drought and shade tolerance of sheep fescues is excellent.

OVERALL USE. Fine fescues can be used in multiple settings including golf courses, roadsides, parks and homes and institutional lawns. Their use in any of these settings can allow for lower levels of fertilizer and other inputs.

The largest percentage of fine fescue seed in North America is used in turfgrass mixtures for home and institutional lawns. These mixtures typically consist of 20 percent to 60 percent fine fescue with the rest a combination of Kentucky bluegrass and ryegrass.

The quality of the varieties in these mixtures can vary greatly, so the wise consumer should check labels listing the components carefully. Best long-term results are obtained by avoiding mixtures containing annual ryegrass, and to choose mixtures that contain proprietary rather than common-type fine fescue.

Many state departments of transportation specify fine fescues — particularly hard fescue — for use on roadsides. Because of their slow rate of vertical elongation and relatively low mature plant height, fine fescue based roadside mixtures require



Creeping red fescue/perennial rye mix.

relatively few mowings.

In the upper Midwest where salt is applied to the roads in the winter, slender creeping fescues are also frequently recommended for use on roadsides because of their tolerance to saline conditions. Fine fescues also are used on roadsides because of their persistence. A study in Virginia recently found that some fine fescue cultivars maintained ground cover better than even tall fescue in actual roadside testing situations.

The same traits which make fine fescues desirable for use on roadsides make them useful for low maintenance areas on golf courses such as roughs and bunker faces. Fine fescues can also have a place in the more manicured areas of a golf course.

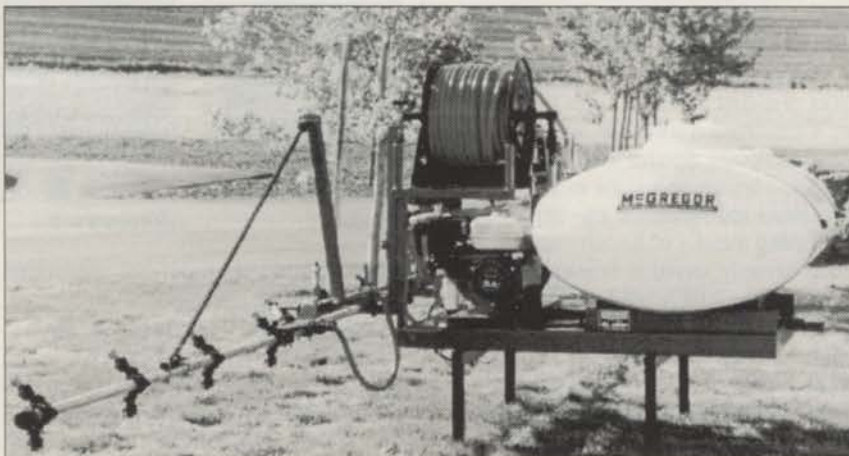
In regions with maritime environments like the Pacific Northwest and New England, chewings fescue in combination with perennial ryegrass and sometimes hard fescue can produce durable and attractive fairways and tee tops.

LOWER PRICES. Canada is the world's largest producer of common (non-proprietary) strong creeping red fescue. For the past two years, Canadian creeping red fescue production has been well in excess of normal demand. This has led to a dramatic decrease in prices for both common and proprietary creeping red fescues. The lower prices in turn have brought down prices of other fine fescue species.

The decline in fine fescue prices has led to the increased use of fine fescue in some turfgrass mixtures, especially low-cost mixes which contain annual ryegrass. Low inventories of annual ryegrass raise prices to the same or even higher than common red creeping fescue prices. ■

Stephen Johnson is senior research scientist for International Seeds, Tangent, Ore.

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People

ENVIRONMENTAL INDUSTRIES Inc., Calabasas, Calif., named **Richard Sperber** president and chief operating officer of its construction division. Sperber also holds the title of president of Valley Crest Landscape Inc., a construction subsidiary of Environmental Industries. Sperber is responsible for developing branch operations in 10 states.

Environmental Industries also appointed **Phil Young** director of human resources. Young formerly served as human resources manager at the ABEX/NWL Aerospace Division.

Chapel Valley, Woodbine, Md., promoted **James Reeve** to Maryland landscape branch manager, in charge of 30 employees and \$1.5 million in annual sales. Reeve coordinates commercial design/build and landscape projects in Maryland and Washington, D.C.

The Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio, elected **Thomas Murdough Jr.** to its board of directors. Murdough is president and founder of the Step 2 Corp. in Streetsboro, Ohio, and founder of The Little Tikes Co. He replaced **Thomas Blazey** who retired in May from the board of directors. **Michael Weber** joined The Davey Tree Expert Co.'s



Sperber



Murdough, Jr.

Santa Clara, Calif., residential-commercial office as district manager.

Cathy Thrash, formerly of Gardens Landscape Co., now serves as sales manager for Environmental Accents, a full-service landscape company in Houston. Thrash plans to add grounds maintenance to Environmental Accent's range of services.

Kawasaki Motors Corp. appointed **Hisayoshi Hosoi** as executive vice president, a newly created position. Hosoi oversees the company's research and development and technical services.

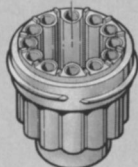
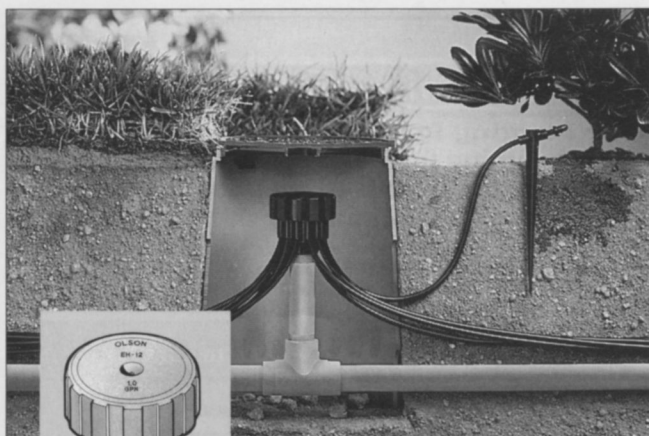
EverGreen International appointed **Keith Tully** North American sales manager for the EasyRake line of outdoor power equipment. Tully formerly served in a regional territory position for Skil Corp. The company also

named **Bradon Barnes** chief engineer, responsible for research and product development, and **Ingrid Corser** accounting assistant.

Griffin Corp. named **Dr. Richard Collier** director of regulatory affairs, in charge of developing registration services and helping the company comply with government regulations. Collier formerly served as director of the center for environmental and regulatory information systems for Purdue University.

Lofts Seed appointed **John Brader** manager of its Maryland facility. Brader replaces **John Patton** who was named national sales coordinator. Lofts added **Vickie Wallace** as technical service coordinator, to assist Patton in sod seed sales and other areas. Lofts also promoted **Michael Celletto** to vice president of finance and operations. He formerly served as comptroller.

Lebanon Chemical Corp. appointed **Harry Mathis** corporate director of purchasing, responsible for administering and overseeing all aspects of Lebanon's purchasing. Mathis formerly served as national sales and marketing manager.



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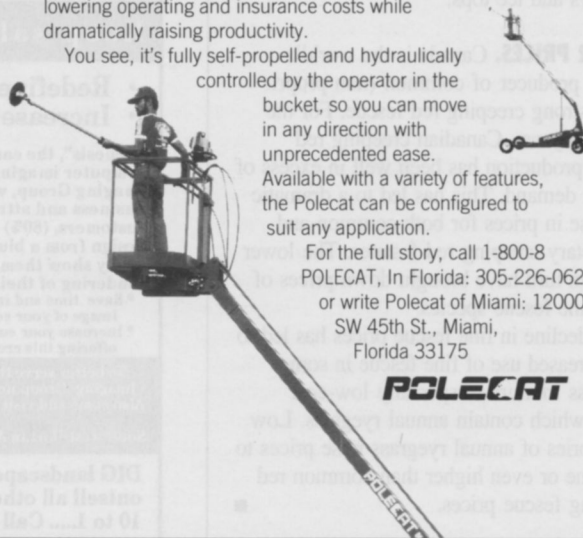
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Progress Products offers a 27-minute VHS training video on snow plowing, including how to save money on equipment repairs and operate more efficiently. Other topics include dress and equipment, hook-up, plow



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The training video costs \$59.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling.

Circle 126 on reader service card

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

A "CLOSED" SPRAY boom from **Environmental Technologies** is billed to improve personal and environmental safety and eliminate drift.

The Drift Guard B180 replaces the standard "open" boom on new and existing sprayers. Integrated design ensures no spray buildup on the shroud or drift seal. The B180 comes standard with nozzle flow monitors. Wing lift actuators are available.

Two additional Drift Guard models are also available: a 7-foot walking boom with "wings" that follow ground contours and fold for easy transport and storage; and a 6-foot front or rear mountable sprayer that replaces the cutting deck on front mowers. The FM/TM60 has a 35-gallon tank, 12-volt pump and jet agitation. Both models come with a flow monitor and digital speedometer.

Circle 125 on reader service card



The **Warren Model AC-1410** self-contained spreader mounts on pick-up, light-duty dump and flat trucks. Powered by an air-cooled engine with full cab controls, it spreads abrasives and/or chemicals for ice and dust control.

The conveyor is 14 inches wide with a 4-inch by 8-inch maximum feedgate opening.

Optional attachments include hopper screens, electric throttle, inverted "V" shield, side extensions and hydraulic drive.

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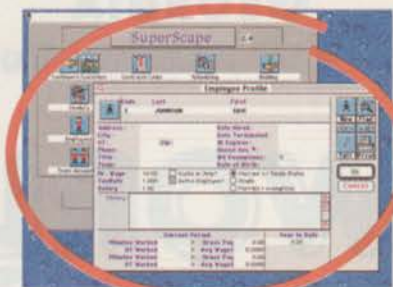
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The activity recorder is equipped with an electronic clock that runs on a 1 1/2-volt battery. The ATROL II is compact, weighing less than 4 pounds.

Abbott Tachograph also offers the ATROL II in 12-hour, 24-hour and 7-day models.

Circle 128 on reader service card

Terra International offers the insecticide

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The granulated insecticide controls fire ants, army worms, mites, billbugs, ticks, chiggers, crickets, wasps, fleas, moths, leafhoppers and white grubs in lawns and other recreational areas. In gardens, Diazinon 5 Bait controls a number of common garden insects. It comes in 40-pound bags.

Circle 129 on reader service card

The 96-10-24 model **Stellar Shuttle** hydraulic hook lift loader is used at sites where a short wheelbase, single rear axle truck with a heavy load carrying capacity is needed. The 96-10-24 is designed to fit trucks with a cab-to-axle (CA) measurement from 84 feet to 102 feet and a gross vehicle weight rating of 25,000 to 33,000 pounds.

The 96-10-24 can load a body with a gross weight of up to 24,000 pounds from the ground up onto the truck in less than 1 minute. The loader can then dump the 24,000-pound load up to a 51-degree dump angle just like a normal dump hoist. Body lengths may vary from 10 feet to 13 feet long and still achieve a maximum dump angle. All operations can be controlled from the truck cab.

Circle 130 on reader service card

National Mower offers a deluxe model of its 68-inch riding reel type mower. The new model is priced at \$5,400, allowing professional grooming and trimming in one



compact mower. Compared to similar-sized rotary mowers that cost \$15,000 and up, the Deluxe 68-inch is said to provide substantial savings and capabilities not found with rotary mowers.

The Deluxe 68-inch includes electric ignition and gauges. It has been engineered to provide a fast, 7-mph transport speed. Users find that it grooms half an acre in about 15 minutes. Specially designed with a low center of gravity and a high efficiency transmission, users can have this one mower cut almost any terrain including steep inclines, hills and crowns.

Circle 131 on reader service card

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USE READER SERVICE #37

The "Spacemaker Kit" from **One-Up Inc.** provides more hauling area on lawn service trailers and other trailers. One or more "mowers-up" provides extra hauling area underneath.

The kit's break winch allows for fast loading and unloading. Additional ramps can be purchased for loading from the curb.

Remove the Spacemaker from the trailer and use free standing or as a service lift or for storage underneath.

The Spacemaker can be customized for storing a multitude of other equipment.

Circle 132 on reader service card



Metos-Compact, developed by **Gottfried Pessl Co.**, offers a complete weather station, including air temperature, relative humidity, rainfall, soil temperature, a photocell and two leaf wetness sensors. The Metos-Compact includes a solar panel for continuous operation, a serial communications port for data transfer to personal computers by direct line, telephone or radio

modem, and comprehensive communication and data management software.

The advantages of this system include helping to reduce pesticide applications for many insect pests and for dollar spot, pythium blight, brown patch, and anthracnose diseases. It also gives optimum timing of required treatments.

Circle 133 on reader service card



Irrrometer Co. released a 14-minute videotape, "Irrigation Management - Soil Moisture Measurement and Control." It outlines the technology of soil measurement and how landscape irrigation systems can be made to operate "automatically," by applying only the water actually needed by the plants or turf.

The video covers both the Irrrometer tensiometer as well as the newest technology, the Watermark sensor. It also shows how to design and apply the sensors to various landscape situations, and demonstrates available savings in water and labor.

Circle 134 on reader service card

Peugeot Citroen offers a 2.5-liter diesel, resulting from an intensive research and development program.

The naturally aspirated version of the new diesel (model DJ5) delivers 86 h.p. at 4,350 rpm. Turbocharged versions (model DJ5T) deliver 103 h.p. They are smaller and lighter and produce lower sound and emission levels, while at the same time improve engine durability, reliability and efficiency.

New features of the DJ5 and DJ5T diesels are found in the cylinder block, cylinder head, reciprocating parts, timing, camshaft, fuel system, glow plugs, intake/exhaust, cooling, lubrication and emissions control.

The thin-wall cast-iron block of the new engine is



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split. One section houses bearing caps; the other, the crankshaft. Overall rigidity, reduced vibrations, improved sealing at the ends of the crankshaft and more compact dimensions result.

Circle 135 on reader service card

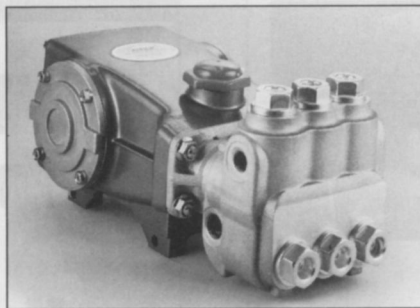
Dursban 50W insecticide in water soluble packets, manufactured by **DowElanco**, is now available in an easy-to-use resealable plastic pouch.

Previously, eight, 4-ounce water soluble packets were provided in a cardboard cylinder container. The new pouch contains seven 4-ounce packets.

The package has another advantage: Because it contains less than 1 pound of the active ingredient chlorpyrifos, it is considered a non-regulated product under Department of Transportation regulations.

Circle 136 on reader service card

Cat Pumps offers a new ultra-compact high pressure plunger pump. The Model 70 Pump is 70 percent smaller than most 5000 psi pumps and delivers an impressive 4.5 gpm at 5000 psi. Its compact size makes it extremely portable and offers greater flexibility where high pressure is needed to get the job done. This powerful, lightweight pump is



ideal for commercial and industrial cleaning and sandblasting, injection of fertilizers and pesticides and tube cleaning.

The drive-end is built with proven quality components: chrome-moly crankshaft for strength, Zamac connecting rods for superior bearing quality and oversized bearings for maximum load capacity and long life. The wet-end is housed in an oversized, forged, high-strength alloy manifold for endurance under high pressure conditions.

Circle 137 on reader service card

The **Moisture Smart** watering gauge is a miniature evaporimeter that indicates the timeliness and appropriate amount of irrigation for plants and lawns. It visually and easily permits the user to know the

amount of water required to replace that which has evaporated since the previous rainfall or irrigation.

The **Moisture Smart Watering Gauge** is a unique instrument that accurately measures the water requirement of turfgrass area. The user places or "plants" the **Moisture Smart Watering Gauge** in a selected turf area. The instrument then begins accounting for evaporation, rainfall, irrigation and soil-stored moisture within the turf area's



established micro climate.

Circle 138 on reader service card

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Product Profile

THIS PART-TIMER RUNS HIS BUSINESS LIKE A PROFESSIONAL

DENNIS SLOAN teaches 6th grade science, along with a couple PE classes, in the Ardmore, Okla., public school system. When he leaves school, he puts on another hat and becomes "Sloan Landscape Services." Sloan has made a science out of operating his business, to make maximum use of his spare time and generate income year-round.

Sloan started mowing lawns out of necessity when the first teaching job he found was part time. But when full-time teaching came his way, he gave up the mowing business and chalked it up to a good learning experience. That was until he discovered his customers wouldn't let him go.

After trading in that first mower for another 21-inch unit with a 5-h.p. engine, he made the decision to keep the mowing business going. Soon he bought a 36-inch walk-behind unit with an 11-h.p. engine.

Sloan's business continued to grow, as he refined his operation and established new services like dethatching and fertilizing. Finally, in 1990, he decided it was time for



Dennis Sloan uses his 48-inch rider to mow this large St. Augustine lawn.

a riding mower. He traveled to Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Dallas to look at several makes of riding mowers. Then he saw an ad for Walker mowers in a trade magazine and called the company's 800 number. He was referred to a Walker dealer in Stillwater and they agreed to demonstrate one of the compact riding mowers for him. He ordered one on the spot.

"It was nearly a disaster, though," recalled Sloan. "When I told my wife I had just ordered a \$7,000 mower, she nearly fainted. 'Cancel the order,' she said. I called the dealer, but they were already on the way to deliver it. So, we took it, and I've been glad ever since."

In fact, Sloan now has three Walker mowers. With his teen-age son at home, he bought a second unit in 1991. When both were using the 36-inch models they could cut eight 7,000-square-foot lawns in four hours. "We once did a 7,000-square-foot lawn in 20 minutes," he said.

Now, his son is away at college, but Sloan uses the second unit as a back-up. And when weather puts him behind, he sometimes enlists the help of his mechanic, Dan Tanner, to operate the second mower. Last year, he added another Walker, a 48-inch model with a 20-h.p. Kohler engine. He uses the 48-inch unit on two larger lawns, plus keeps it as a demonstration unit.

"I'm working on the possibility of setting

(continued on page 93)

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USE READER SERVICE #44

Calendar

NOV. 5-8 IA International Irrigation Exposition, Inforum/Apparel Mart, Atlanta. Contact: Irrigation Association, 5260 Willow Oaks Corporate Dr., Suite 120, Fairfax, VA 22031; 703/573-3551.

NOV. 8-11 Turf and Grounds Exposition, Rochester Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association, 518/783-1229.

NOV. 10-12 1994 Equipment Show and Conference, West Palm Beach, Fla. Contact: Landscape Maintenance Association, 41 Lake Morton Dr., Suite 26, Lakeland, FL 33801; 813/680-4008.

NOV. 14-17 Green Industry Expo, St. Louis, Mo. Co-sponsored by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, the Professional Grounds Management Society and the Professional Lawn Care Association of America. Contact: GIE, 1000 Johnson Ferry Road, NE, Suite C-135, Marietta, GA 30068-2112; 404/973-2019.

NOV. 15 ALCA Certified Landscape Professional exam, St. Louis, Mo. Contact:

ALCA, 12200 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 150, Reston, VA 22091; 703/620-6363.

NOV. 15-16 1994 Business Short Course, Worcester Marriott, Worcester, Mass. Contact: Kathleen Carroll, UMass Cooperative Extension System, 413/545-0895.

NOV. 16-18 Landscape Design Short Course II for Residential Properties, Advanced Design, Richfield. Contact: Ohio Landscapers Association, 216/659-9755 or 800/335-OLA1.

NOV. 17-19 Tree Care Industry Expo, Pennsylvania Convention Center, Philadelphia. Contact: National Arborist Association, 800/733-2622.

NOV. 19 Women in Horticulture Conference, Double Tree Suites (Southcenter), Seattle, Wash. Contact: Anne Bustion, 206/525-7844 or Lyn Dillman, 206/937-2815.

NOV. 28-29 Southern Turfgrass Association annual conference and show, Memphis Cook Convention Center, Memphis, Tenn. Contact: STA, 1611 St. Andrews Dr., Lawrence, KS 66047; 913/749-5885.

NOV. 28-30 North Central Turfgrass Exposition, Pheasant Run Resort, St. Charles, Ill. Contact: NCTE, 11 S. LaSalle, Suite 1400, Chicago, IL 60603; 312/201-0101.

Nov. 29-Dec. 1 New Jersey Turfgrass Expo 94, Taj Mahal Hotel and Casino, Atlantic City. Contact: New Jersey Turfgrass Association, P.O. Box 340, Milltown, NJ 08850-0340; 201/932-9453.

NOV. 30-DEC. 2 Landscape Design Short Course V for Residential Properties, Planting Design, Richfield, Ohio. Contact: Ohio Landscapers Association, 216/659-9755 or 800/335-OLA1.

DEC. 5-6 Tree Hazards: The Ultimate Session seminar with Dr. Alex Shigo and physicist Claus Mattheck, Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, Mass. Contact: John Kirkland, Tree Care Educators, 503/254-0482.

DEC. 6-9 Ohio Turfgrass Foundation's 28th Annual Conference and Trade Show, Columbus. Contact: Julie Guenther, OTF, P.O. Box 14824, Columbus, Ohio 43214-0901; 614/261-6750. ■

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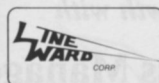
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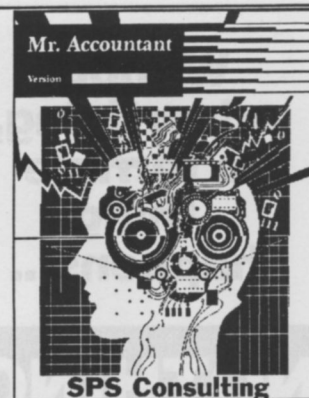


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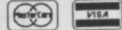
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USE READER SERVICE #41

Buyers' Market



■ The EAGLE 44, manufactured by AmeriQuip, is a trailer-mounted, articulated aerial lift with a 25-foot side reach and 44-foot working height. It features positive bucket leveling, 360-degree continuous rotation and offers outstanding portability for easy access for a variety of maintenance tasks.

An electrically operated proportional control valve featuring joystick operation with neutral position interlock allows simultaneous two-function operation and complete feathering capability. Heavy-duty, quick-adjust outriggers are an integral part of the lift. Ease of operation and portability make the EAGLE 44 ideal for most maintenance tasks requiring aerial access.

Circle 160 on reader service card



■ The Grotech DBS-300 replaceable tailgate spreader is a completely self-contained, 5-h.p. model with complete in-cab controls. A gasoline engine powers the auger and spinner. The spreader is powder coated, easy to access and has easy on/off mounting. Ideal for automatic dump trucks. The engine and spinner are self leveled.

Circle 161 on reader service card



■ The world's smallest hydroseeding system was recently added to the Turbo Turf line from Badger. The HS-50 is a 50-gallon unit capable of applying seed, mulch and fertilizer in one step over a 650-square-foot area per tank. The skid unit with a 3 1/2-h.p. motor and high-volume centrifugal pump has a base price of \$1,295. It's also available as a pull-type unit and as a combination seeder and sprayer. Other models are available to 1,600 gallons in size.

Circle 162 on reader service card



■ The new model YZ48 walk-behind from Yazoo Manufacturing Co. Inc. is a commercial mower designed with all industrial grade components to provide operators with high-production mowing capability.

Featuring a 48-inch cut, this new midsize, walk-behind unit operates with a durable 14-h.p. Kawasaki engine. The cutting deck is constructed of 10-gauge steel with seven-gauge reinforcements. Cutting height can be adjusted in 1/4-inch increments between 1 and 4 inches.

Twin "V" band drive belts offer operators extra traction while dual-traction belt idlers provide additional downhill control.

Like all Yazoo walk-behind mowers, this model is designed to mow heavy grass and take the punishment of tough mowing conditions.

Circle 163 on reader service card



■ The Toro™ ProLine lawn care equipment is designed for commercial use and offers a complete line of midsize walk-behind mowers, riding mowers, zero-turn-radius tractors and commercial walk-behind power mowers. A 19-page product brochure describes the many features of Toro's durable, high-performing and versatile equipment.

Circle 164 on reader service card



■ Engineered for municipalities and the demands winter road maintenance places upon them, Hi-Way Equipment's self-contained, hopper-type, Model P and Super P truck-mounted spreaders are also ideal for lawn service professionals wanting to turn their off-seasons into all-season profitability.

Designed for the application of sand and other deicing material on the access roads and parking lots of hospitals, airports, universities, civic auditoriums, public utilities and private businesses, these sturdy and reliable units make a uniform spread and material up to 40 inches and feature 8-1/2-h.p. engines, 10- and 12-gauge steel construction and hardened chain conveyor systems.

Circle 165 on reader service card

Classifieds

RATES

All classified advertising is 75 cents per word. For box numbers, add \$1 plus six words. All classified ads must be received by the publisher before the first of the month preceding publication and be accompanied by cash or money order covering full payment. Submit ads to: *Lawn & Landscape Maintenance* magazine, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113. Fax: 216/961-0364.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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A large, established Northeast irrigation/landscape firm seeks work informants with a minimum of five years-plus experience required. Individuals will be required to be hands on work informants for blue chip clientele. Positions available: Irrigation foremen, landscape maintenance and construction foremen. Fax resume to: 914/357-8086, or mail to: P.O. Box 627, Suffern, NY 10901.

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LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE/CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN: Northern New Jersey landscape design/build and maintenance firm seeking hard-working individuals. Must have good attitude, be familiar with residential and commercial installation and maintenance and be able to operate equipment. CDL license and/or commercial certified pesticide applicator license a plus. Wages commensurate with experience. Send resumes to: Farmside Landscape & Design Inc., 103 Main St., Sussex, NJ 07461-2311.

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Product Profile

(continued from page 89)

up a dealership here in Ardmore," he said. "Besides, the income from the two bigger lawns is sufficient to make my bank loan payments for the mower."

Sloan uses a unique billing system, which he said makes it easier for his customers to budget, and "it provides me the cash flow to make mower payments through winter."

Sloan has 20 accounts now, 13 of which are on a 12-month billing cycle. The other seven accounts are seasonal, but he expects some of them to switch to year-round billing next year.

Each year (usually in January, although some contracts begin in February or March), Sloan makes out a landscape service agreement for each account. The agreement outlines the services he plans to provide for the year, even the planned dates of mowing and other services. The cost for each mowing and other service is totaled, divided by 12 and the homeowner is billed monthly.

"Monthly billing makes it easier for my clients to budget," he said. "Plus, they don't have higher mowing expenses in the summer. They get billed the same amount each month. One disadvantage is that my expenses are higher in summer, of course, but I'm usually able to offset that with the few seasonal accounts I have."

Once the owner accepts the service agreement, Sloan transfers the service dates to a monthly planning calendar, on which each job is coded so he knows where to go each day.

During the school year, he does his landscape service work from about 4:30 to 8 p.m., but sometimes runs until dark and usually cuts five days a week. He also cuts on Saturday, but "if I've been able to get the scheduled lawns done during the week, Saturday is usually an easy day." He seldom cuts on Sunday, unless weather conditions have interrupted his schedule.

Summers, of course, find him busy almost every day mowing or trimming customer lawns. He maintains a few lawns where he has to use his walk-behind reel mowers, but most he cuts with the 36-inch Walker units. "My biggest day this past summer was July 15, when I cut 10 lawns by myself. Two were done with the reel mowers, the rest with my 36-inch Walker mower."

Sloan generally gets his work under way in February or March, with dethatching or "scalping" with the mowers. About 25 percent of his customers take the dethatching option. Mowing usually begins in late March and April. If the customer's agreement includes fertilizing, Sloan puts on the first application after the initial mowing and dethatching, and about every other month thereafter, through October. ■

Market Trends

(continued from page 44)

water-conserving adjustments to irrigation systems. Some property owners are more willing to invest in peripheral lawn care services to rectify damage done by extreme weather last year.

Industry company owners do not ignore the obvious: many customers want a one-stop shop for outside services. It's convenient. The response is a dizzying array of services contractors take on themselves or subcontract to others.

"We're in the business of meeting our customers' needs," said Don Horowitz, vice president of Plantscape Inc., Pittsburgh, Pa. The company, which has provided interiorscapes as a "mainstay," recently beefed-up its fast-growing exterior division. "We offer a complete range of services, a comprehensive palette. The market's looking for certain comfort levels."

Customers don't necessarily want landscape operators to perform add-on services, just to be responsible for them, pointed out Ronald Kujawa, president, Kujawa Enterprises Inc., Cudahy, Wis.

The request for many extra services usually comes from customers that are "long-term, substantial accounts. We have to make sure we have good subcontractor relationships, do it profitably and don't jeopardize any quality" in the management of those areas, he noted.

Dave Klier, horticultural services manager at Torre and Bruglio Inc., Pontiac, Mich., agreed that add-on services have a way of developing even more services in the future.

"We've added services because it's been desired by property owners who want one-stop shopping," he said. "They want one vendor to do the mowing, planting, reconstructing, irrigation and maybe even parking lot sweeping."

In lawn care, these trends encompass perimeter pest control, soil testing, flea and tick treatments, landscape maintenance, irrigation installation, organic applications, root fertilization, winter care and other specialties.

Landscaping trends include turn-key landscapes, erosion control, interiorscapes, retrofitting and re-designing irrigation systems, hard surface management, landscaping for security, renovations, color plantings, driveway and pool installation, night and holiday lighting, retail centers and public classes, native plantings, winter care and more.

Some companies prefer a balance of residential or commercial business. Others have taken root in niche markets like new construction, multifamily complexes, high-end residential, malls and even municipalities that are privatizing services.

PUSH FOR PRIVATIZATION.

Budget constraints and a public pressing for value have forced many municipalities and other institutions to privatize lawn care, landscape maintenance and landscape contracting work. Some owners see this kind of work as a great opportunity that is relatively immune to economic factors. It may involve educating the bidders, raising their expectations and dealing with mys-

terious and often frustrating bureaucracies.

Torre and Bruglio has had a few years' experience with local municipalities and found there was a definite learning curve needed to work within the system. "One of the problems is that more and more channels have to be worked through," said Klier. He cited the need to consult with a city's departments of landscape design, recreation, forestry, water, streets and parking in the course of a job.

"The rewards are definitely there, but the contractor has to be the main contact and tie-in with the various departments. Their expectation of service normally begins lower than what the normal commercial customer expects," he explained. The company realized it had to educate government customers on what levels of service were available.

Some localities need educating in the process of privatization work. "We consulted with one city locally to help them develop successful procedures for farming out work," recalled Rodney Bailey, president of Evergreen Services Corp., Bellevue, Wash. He noted that many local areas are just starting to privatize all types of landscape work and said that his company was placing more emphasis on that area of business.

Political pressures and a strong union presence have kept many large cities from privatizing services. While some have always bid out landscape construction work, most lawn care and maintenance services are in-house.

Dauids sees potential for more municipal lawn care and mainte-

nance work in the future. "The move toward privatization is fueled by cost-cutting, by regulations on chemical handling and by the public's perception that more open landscapes and functional-use areas are needed," he said. "Just a few years ago, you had to find that type of work. Now people care."

Dauids pointed out that one downside of municipal work is the prevailing wage issue. Kenneth Gerlack, vice president of Contra Costa Landscaping Inc., Martinez, Calif., named another. His firm's experience with municipalities goes back to the days following passage of California's Proposition 13.

"It knocked out the local tax base" and as a result, cities privatized services, Gerlack explained. "They didn't realize how over-staffed they were until we did the job for them."

Gerlack recalled that specialty tree removal work included in the contracts kept his firm from making a profit until the second year. "Then after six years, they got enough taxes to take the work back inside."

The economic conditions are much different from the early 1980s, and privatization may last this time around. Brickman thinks it will have an enormous impact on the lawn and landscape industry. "Taxpayers are fed up paying for bureaucratic inefficiency." Many areas will realize that governments can't afford the luxury of performing those services in-house, he predicted. "I think the growth of that sector will be more dramatic than we think." ■

The author is Senior Editor of Lawn & Landscape Maintenance magazine.

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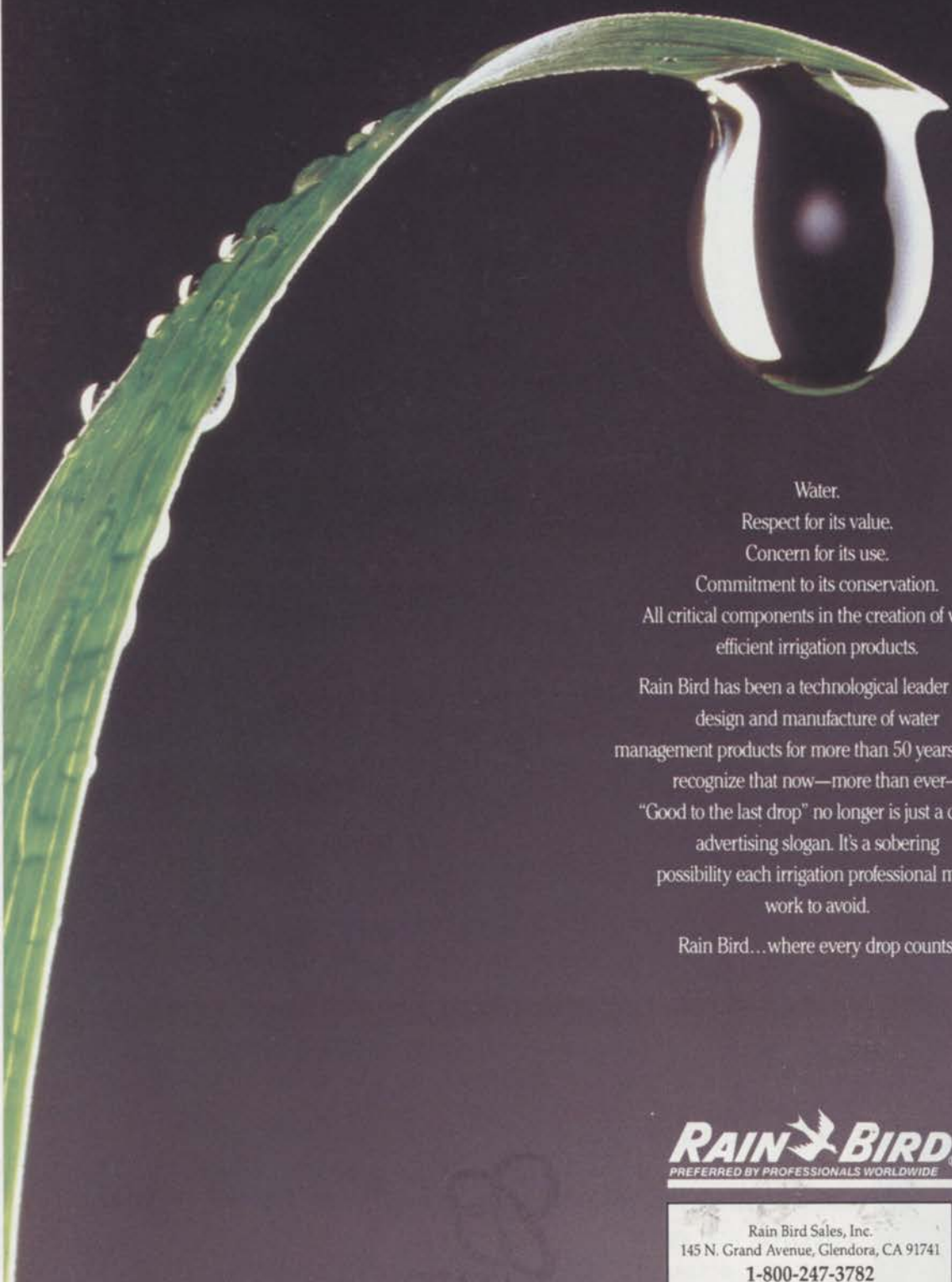
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