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- Software for Design
- Tree Care Systems
- Watch Out For Grubs

Coast to Coast



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Cover Photo



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Most landscape contractors will plant trees and ornamentals throughout the growing season, but planting in the fall makes sense for many reasons.





Sue Gibson
Editor

U

nderstanding the economics of doing business does not come easy to everyone. Many lawn or landscape contractors know a lot about agronomy, horticulture, landscape design, and even marketing and customer relations. That knowledge and a can-do attitude can certainly win many customers.

In fact, you'll probably retain many customers if you and your employees provide the services you promise and that keep your customers happy. But if you want a business to be more than just "a living," you'll have to make some changes. You have to move up to new levels of risk, expense and opportunities.

At many companies, the first new leap is hiring employees, taking on new work or buying rather than renting equipment. At some point, you must reinvest a good chunk of your profits in the most productive equipment possible. You'll need that extra edge to be more profitable and competitive. And at some point in your business' life, you can't afford not to buy bigger and better equipment. Those are the tools of your trade.

But don't forget the other tools that also save you money and time, and often help you increase business — computers. Many contractors see computers as a luxury, when they should be using them as a basic business tool. For some contractors, computers are as vital as desks, trucks and mowers. Those companies use computers and specialized software to save time and money in billing and accounting, scheduling and other management operations. Some even use them as a sales tool.

In this issue, we start a three-part series on computer software available for the lawn and landscape industry. Part 1 looks at the use of design software both as a time saver and also as a sales resource (see page 42). Next month, we'll explore the uses of accounting programs to simplify billing, estimating and number crunching. In October, we'll look at new software that combines electronic technology and user-friendly operation to facilitate management.

The investment in hardware and software can be puzzling since it's on such a fast track. Upgrades are almost an ongoing expense, unlike the one-time investment in goods like mowers, trimmers, chippers and office equipment. That's another reason some contractors put off buying a computer, trying new software or even spending the time learning to operate their systems.

Maybe that's why it's smart to remember the economics of computerization. Can you afford not to buy a decent system, not to simplify your operations, not to explore the sales opportunities that design software offers to an installation or renovation business?

Like it or not, computers are becoming a vital part of this industry, and those that understand the power of computers will have a competitive edge. — *Susan Gibson*

Lawn & Landscape

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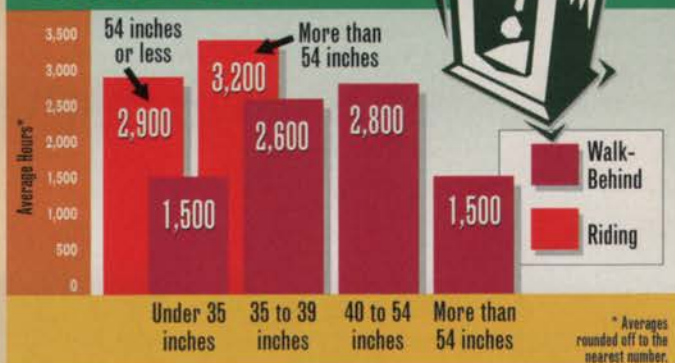
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Those lawn & landscape contractors who replace engines on walk-behind mowers got an average of 1,500 hours for engines on walk-behind mowers either smaller than 35 inches wide or larger than 54 inches wide; 2,600 hours for mowers 35 to 39 inches wide; and 2,800 hours for mowers from 40 to 54 inches wide. Average hours for riding mower engines were 2,900 hours for models up to 54 inches wide and as much as 3,200 hours for mowers larger than 54 inches wide.

EXTENDING MOWER ENGINE LIFE



Source: Research USA Inc.

LOCAL ANTI-PESTICIDE ACTIVITY ON THE UPSWING

After years of relative calm on the local legislative front, anti-pesticide activists have taken aim at pesticide use in communities and schools with greater tenacity over the past few months.

According to Fred Langley, manager of state government

relations for the Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, national groups such as the National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides are beginning to focus more on affecting municipal government.

"We've begun to see some more challenges (to legislation), and more pressure on legislators to reduce pesticide use at the local level," said Langley.

One of the more significant attempts was in Nassau County on Long Island, N.Y., where local activists succeeded in pressuring legislators to pass a five-day notification ordinance for licensed applicators. (It was later overturned

because of the state's existing preemption law.)

Other proposed pesticide restrictions being considered by legislators, especially schools and local parks and recreation departments, can be passed without facing a preemption

eliminate pesticide use.

"The trouble with legislation of this type is the rationale behind it," said Delaney. "They say they are doing it to protect the public from pesticides, but it makes people begin to ask, 'Why aren't we restricting others from using pesticides?'"

At the state level in New York, the lobby group for breast cancer research, called 1 in 9, was successful in getting the state legislators to pass a law requiring extensive pesticide application record

keeping. The law requires applicators to report the nine-digit zip code of a residence where an application is made. The data may then be used to test for a cause and effect link to high incidences of cancer within the zip codes.

Langley noted that legislators had figured this bill would satisfy the anti-pesticide groups. However, just before

(continued on page 8)

'No one in Congress wants to be perceived as anti-environment before the elections...'



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USE READER SERVICE #12

MARKET TRENDS

(continued from page 6)

the close of this year's legislative session, pro-activist legislators laid down another series of demands they intend to pursue in 1997.

Along with fighting these fires, Delaney noted that the

Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act remains a question mark in terms of federal preemption, due to its link to the controversial Food Safety bill and the proximity of national elections. "No one in Congress wants to be perceived as anti-environment before the elections, so we may not get any movement on this legislation before the recess," he explained.

The House version of FIFRA, which recently passed through the Agriculture Committee, continues to keep the preemption language intact, but the Senate version of the bill does not.

— Paul Schrimpf

MISSION STATEMENT:

LAWN & LANDSCAPE magazine delivers superior, total coverage of the continually evolving professional lawn and landscape contractor market, from in-depth business trends and technical research reports to market analysis and new product introductions. For 17 years, L&L has provided industry presidents, business owners and top-level managers the most up-to-date information needed to effectively run their businesses.

WEATHER AFFECTS POWER EQUIPMENT PROJECTIONS

Updated predictions for shipments of commercial power equipment by the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Va., show shipments should grow in both 1996 and 1997. The predictions, which are loosely based on OPEI's larger industry base, have taken into account the affects of record levels of snow and unusual cold earlier this year.

The commercial equipment forecast calls for increases of 2.5 percent in 1996 and 4.2 percent in 1997 for intermedi-

ate walk-behind rotary mowers; as well as increases of 9.1 percent for 1996 and 7.3 percent for 1997 for riding rotary mowers. OPEI's economic model also forecast slow and steady economic growth into 1997.

BAREFOOT BUYS HYDRO-LAWN INC.

Barefoot Inc., Worthington, Ohio, announced that on Friday, July 12, its officers signed a deal to purchase Hydro Lawn Inc., Gaithersburg, Md. Hydro Lawn has been in the lawn care business for 24 years

(continued on page 10)

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SET OUT TO TAKE A LARGER SHARE OF THE COMMERCIAL
MARKET, LITTLE DID THEY KNOW THAT THE EXTREMELY WET
SPRING WOULD ACTUALLY BENEFIT THEM.**

Bobbie Anderson, owner of Anderson Lawn Care, told us:

"The week before Memorial Day we were asked if we were interested in taking on 15 bank locations in Elkart, Indiana. There was a catch; the previous mowing contractor had been fired, the grass was overgrown (almost 2 feet high in places), we had to complete the first mowing in one week, and rain was expected for the rest of the week. Without hesitation, we accepted the challenge and mowed the first bank the next day in pouring rain. The Walker ran through standing water, and in some places, grass that exceeded the height of the wheels. We mowed in conditions that our competitors literally stopped by the road to watch us work in... We have signed a 3-year contract with the bank and because of our performance secured additional select accounts in the community. Mowing with the Walker is just another way our service is set apart from the rest."

"There isn't another machine on the market that runs like a Walker."

- Bobbie Anderson



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USE READER SERVICE #58

TRANSITION

Jacklin Seed named **Kevin Becar** controller and **Tom Stoesser** chief financial officer.

Stano Landscaping appointed **Brian Miller** sales manager for the landscape management department.

Seed Research of Oregon named **Stephanie Ward** advertising manager.

Spring Valley Turf Products named **Linda Bould** customer service manager for North America.

Leo Crosby joined Vigoro Professional Products as territory manager for Georgia and **Mark Brandenburg** was appointed territory manager for the southwestern U.S.

Charles Putnum is the new Pacific Northwest sales manager for L.R. Nelson.

American Cyanamid named **Roger Bechle** and **Bart Fox** territory managers for turf, ornamental and pest control products in the Northeast and Southwest areas, respectively.

New president and CEO of Lofts Seed is **Ken Budd**; new chief executive officer is **Richard Budd**; and new chief financial officer is **Gerald Chrisco**.

United Horticultural Supply appointed **John Walther** manager of its new southern division.



Stephanie Ward



Charles Putnum

(continued from page 8)

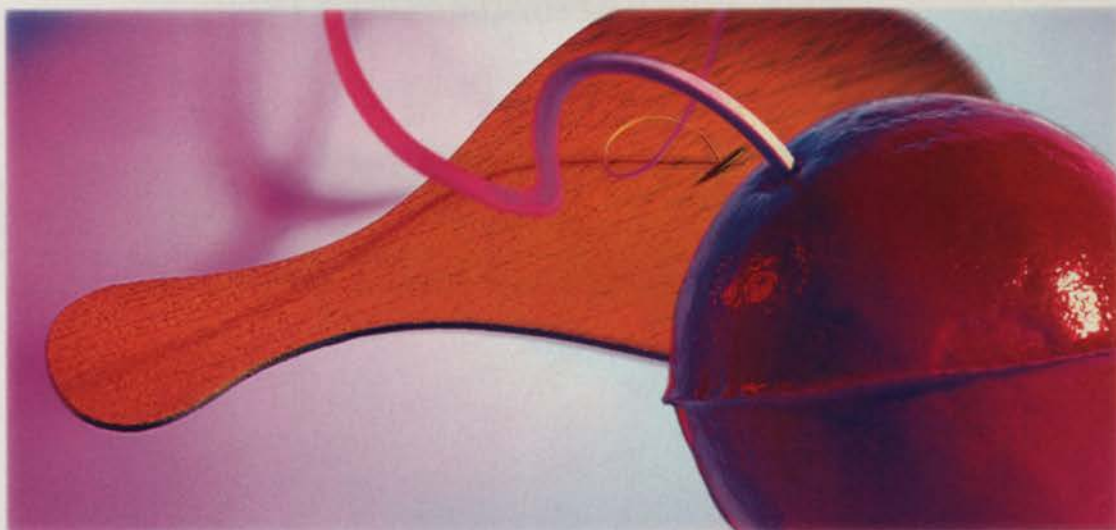
and had branches in the Washington, D.C., and Baltimore, Md., areas. Company revenues for 1995 totalled just under \$4 million.

Patrick Norton, president and CEO of Barefoot, said the addition of the two Hydro Lawn branches to Barefoot Grass Lawn Services' three branches in the Washington and Baltimore area will "create synergies in those markets." He added, "Some branches will have much of the same customer base and will have benefits in productivity" from the acquisition.

Norton said the newly acquired branches will retain their service mix for their existing customers.



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HEATING, COOLING BENEFITS OF TREES STUDIED

ACRT is teaming up with utility companies in Ohio and Michigan to study the effect of large trees on heating and cooling costs for homeowners. Researchers compare energy use of specific homes before and after large trees are removed from a property. Computer-generated studies estimate summer savings of 10 to 50 percent with properly placed trees and winter heating reductions of 20 percent, but this 18-month study will provide actual figures on energy savings.

ASSOCIATION NEWS

The Associated Landscape Contractors of America published its *Internship Guide* to assist contractors in starting internship programs. The 24-page book includes job descriptions, sample résumés, evaluation forms and internship policies in use.

In related news, ALCA announced new member benefits include a discounted long-distance program, a drug and alcohol testing program and a personnel services program. Contact ALCA at 800/395-2522.

More than 4,000 people have logged on to the Professional Lawn Care Association of America's home page on the Internet since its debut last October. It is updated regularly to offer pertinent information such

as news, abstracts and access to PLCAA's national certification course. PLCAA's home page address is plcaa@atlcom.net.

The Ohio Turfgrass Foundation created the Don Sweda Memorial Scholarship with more than \$5,000 of initial donations. He was past president when he passed away in August of 1995. For more information, contact 614/261-6750.

The Composting Council's Annual Conference in Arlington, Va., on Nov. 13 to 15, will study innovation and new opportunities in organics recovery and composting. For information, call 703/739-2401.

Finding the right speaker for a presentation is a little easier with the Association of Professional Landscape Designers' Speakers Bureau. It lists all APLD member speakers available for programs. Contact the APLD at 312/201-0101.

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MARKET TRENDS

TOCA AWARDS ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP

The Turf and Ornamental Communicators Association, an association of editors, writers, public relations practitioners and others involved in green industry communications, awarded the eighth \$1,000 TOCA Publishers Scholarship in five years to Rebecca Williams, a student at Michigan State University. GIE Publishing Inc. is one of the scholarship's sponsors.

TOCA was organized in 1989 to foster better communications within the industry and provide for professional improvement for members. **LL**

CALENDAR

To ensure that your meeting date is published, send an announcement at least 10 to 12 weeks in advance to *Lawn & Landscape*, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113.

AUG. 20-24 American Association of Nurserymen Conference/ Far-west Show, Portland, Ore. Contact: 202/789-2900.

AUG. 22 Indiana State Lawn Care Association Field Day, Carmel. Contact: 317/575-9010.

AUG. 23 RISE Seminar on Idiopathic Environmental Intolerance, Sanford, Fla. Contact: 202/872-3860.

AUG. 23-26 Florida Turfgrass Association Conference and Show, Tampa. Contact: 800/882-6721.

SEP. 4-8 RISE Annual Meeting, West Palm Beach, Fla. Contact: 202/872-3860.

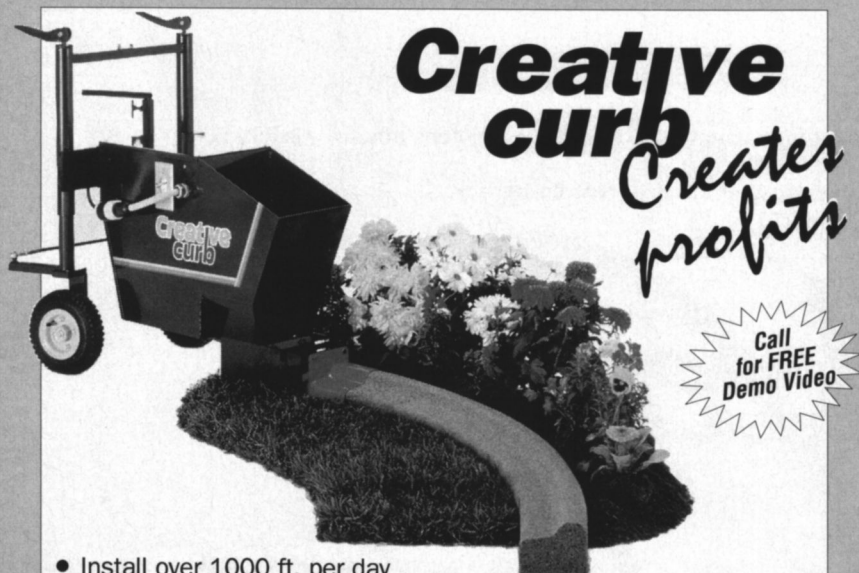
SEP. 5-6 Southwest Horticultural Trade Show, Phoenix. Contact: 602/966-1610.

SEP. 6-9 ALCA Interior Plantscape Conference & Trade Show, Nashville, Tenn. Contact: 800/395-2522.

SEP. 8-10 GrowTech '96 International Horticultural Exhibition and Conference, Miami, Fla. Contact: 508/664-6455.

SEP. 10 Building With Trees Workshop, Newark, N.J. Contact: 402/474-5655.

OCT. 10-11 Northeast Shade Tree Seminar with Dr. Alex Shigo, Portsmouth, N.H. Contact: 603/436-4804.



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Signature (required) _____ Date _____

2. What is your primary business at this location? (please check one)

CONTRACTOR or SERVICES:

- ☐ Landscape Contractor (maintenance & installation)
☐ Chemical Lawn Care Company (excluding mowing maintenance service)
☐ Lawn Maintenance Contractor
☐ Ornamental Shrub & Tree Service
☐ Irrigation Contractor
☐ Landscape Architect
☐ Other Contract Services (please describe): _____

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- ☐ Extension Agent (Federal, State, County, City, Regulatory Agency)
☐ School, College, University
☐ Trade Association, Library
☐ Others (please describe): _____

3. What were your approximate 1995 revenues?

- ☐ 0 - \$50,000
☐ \$50,001 - \$100,000
☐ \$100,001 - \$250,000
☐ \$250,001 - \$500,000
☐ \$500,001 - \$1 million
☐ + \$1 million

4. How many of your employees are:

- _____ Full time _____ Applicators
_____ Seasonal _____ Maintenance

5. What percentage of your business is:

- _____ % Commercial/Industrial
_____ % Residential
_____ % Gov't/Municipal
_____ % Golf

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6. Circle what percent of your business is:

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| Lawn Care | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
| Maint. Serv. | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
| Irrigation Serv. | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
| Pest Control | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
| Installation | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |
| Trees & Ornmtls. | 10% | 20% | 30% | 40% | 50% | 60% | 70% | 80% | 90% | 100% |

7. How much did your company spend in 1995 on?

- Turf Chemicals \$ _____
Ornamental Chemicals \$ _____
Equipment \$ _____

8. How many does your business operate?

- _____ Walk Behind Mowers
_____ Riding Mowers
_____ Trimmers
_____ Chain Saws
_____ Blowers

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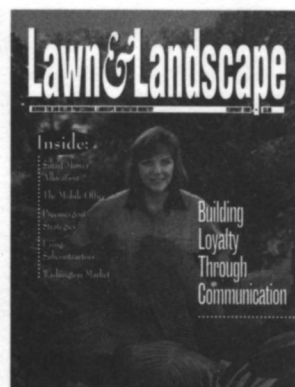
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- ☐ 1. Landscape Contractor (maintenance & installation)
☐ 2. Chemical Lawn Care Company (excluding mowing maintenance service)
☐ 3. Lawn Maintenance Contractor
☐ 4. Ornamental Shrub & Tree Service
☐ 5. Irrigation Contractor
☐ 6. Landscape Architect
☐ 7. Other Contract Services (please describe) _____

II. IN-HOUSE LAWN/CARE MAINTENANCE

- ☐ 1. In-House Maintenance including: Educational Facilities, Health Care Facilities, Government Grounds, Parks & Military Installations, Condominium Complexes, Housing Developments, Private Estates, Commercial & Industrial Parks.

III. DISTRIBUTOR/ MANUFACTURER:

- ☐ 1. Dealer
☐ 2. Distributor
☐ 3. Formulator
☐ 4. Manufacturer

IV. OTHERS ALLIED TO THE FIELD:

- ☐ 1. Extension Agent (Federal, State, County, City, Regulatory Agency)
☐ 2. School, College, University
☐ 3. Trade Association, Library
☐ 4. Others (please describe) _____

2. What best describes your title?

- ☐ Owner, Pres., Vice Pres., Corp. Officer
☐ Manager, Director, Supt., Foreman
☐ Agronomist, Horticulturist
☐ Entomologist, Plant Pathologist
☐ Serviceman, Technician
☐ Scientist, Researcher
☐ Company, Library copy only
☐ Other (please specify) _____

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DESIGN NOTES

THIS water-front home is situated on a steep slope overlooking Seattle's Puget Sound. During a heavy storm runoff, the city's storm drain erupted, causing the southern half of the two-acre

site to slide into the Sound. This disaster created two challenges — the slide not only destroyed all the native landscape, it also created a 35-foot sheer cliff that undermined the foundation of the home's upper building. Without repair, erosion would spread through the entire hillside.

DESIGN CHALLENGES. Securing the 34-degree hillside against future erosion was the priority, while revitalizing the hillside landscape into an arboretum setting. Access



Topsoil was kept on the 35-foot sheer cliff with three-foot retaining walls and erosion netting. Credits: Hendrikus Schraven Landscape Construction & Design

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| PROJECT: | Bloome Residence |
| LANDSCAPE COMPANY: | Hendrikus Schraven Landscape Construction & Design, Inc., Issaquah, Wash. |
| | Hendrikus Schraven, President |
| DESIGNER: | Hendrikus Schraven |
| SIZE OF PROPERTY: | 2 Acres |
| MAN-HOURS TO CONSTRUCT: | Approximately 5,530 |
| PLANTS INSTALLED: | Approximately 15,350 |

to the site was difficult so smaller materials were either sent down metal chutes or carried down, while 85 percent of the materials, including all larger plant materials, rock, topsoil, mulch and equipment, were brought in by barge. Careful planning and timing were needed for delivery onto the shore's limited staging area as tides dictated a mere 10-week window for access to the shore.

DESIGN SOLUTION. Reclamation started with the city installing 225 feet of new 12-inch storm drainpipe, running from the street above down to just above the shoreline. This was anchored into the hillside with metal clamps onto a concrete footer so heavy runoff could not kick it out. The drain pipe and entire hillside was covered with 380 yards of new topsoil.

With erosion as the major concern, tiers of three-foot timber retaining walls were constructed at the upper and steepest parts of the slope, secured by cabling into the storm drain footer and additional concrete footers augured into the hillside. Untreated boards were then secured across the entire slope at regular intervals so the new topsoil would not slough off the steep bank.

Erosion netting was secured over that and English ivy and a variety of trees and shrubs were planted to provide a quick and extensive root system to hold the

(continued on page 18)

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USE READER SERVICE #17

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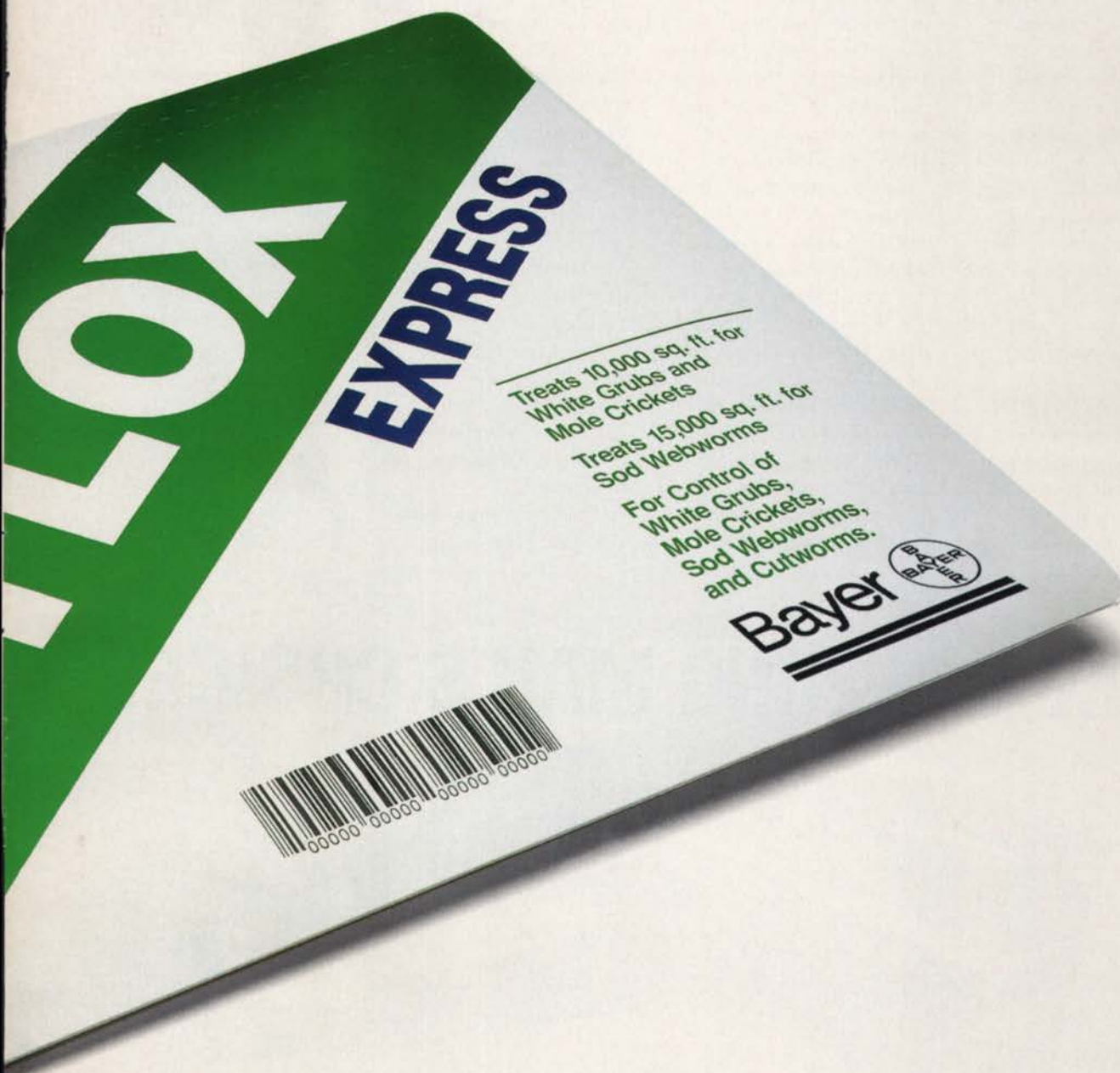
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After grubs hatch and begin to feed, apply DYLOX. Within 24 to 48 hours, the grubs are dead. And since DYLOX has a very short soil residual, it's an insecticide you can feel good about using.

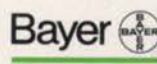
What's more, unlike other subsurface insecticides, DYLOX has no label restrictions on land-



scape and recreational turfgrass varieties or sites. In fact, with the 80% water-soluble powder formulation, you can even spray flowers, shrubs and trees and get first-class control of ornamental insect pests.

DYLOX is a low-odor compound and is also available in a 6.2% granular formulation. To find out more, contact Bayer Corporation, Specialty Products, Box 4913, Kansas City, MO 64120. (800) 842-8020.

And get fast grub control signed, sealed and delivered.



DESIGN NOTEBOOK

(continued from page 15)

soil. The boards and netting would compost over time after the new plantings had taken over, stabilizing the slope.

Extensive rockeries and outcroppings totaling more than 300 tons of basalt rock were set in place to further support the hillside.

Tapping into and routing the outflow from the hillside natural spring into two 500-gallon storage tanks helped to create two waterfalls, which handle any potential excess runoff, control erosion potential, partially serve the irrigation system and add to the new beauty of the site.

A series of pathways traverse the hillside, connecting the street, house and beach. Timber steps are anchored

with galvanized pipe piles and filled with crushed rock. Smaller, intimate pathways of cedar rounds overgrown with Irish and Scottish mosses wind through the garden and lead to a small, cedar patio that provides excellent views of the surrounding garden and Puget Sound.

The entire hillside was densely planted with 28 evergreen and deciduous trees, including cedars, Douglas firs, hemlocks and shore pines.

Unusual specimens highlight the many native plantings and include: Julia Phelps ceanothus, Mariess hydrangea, red huckleberry, columbine, calla lily, and many rare ferns.

Walking through the landscape is a journey from heavily shaded areas of tall trees and lush undergrowth, through

semi-sunny areas opening through fruit trees and meadows of Dutch wall flowers onto the lower lawn and the beach area.

The lawn meanders along the shore and up to the lower house where inlaid stepping stones lead along a series of timber retaining walls built to stabilize the house and to provide planting boxes that are filled with trees, rhododendrons, azaleas, ornamental grasses, groundcovers, irises and a bed for vegetables.

A rich mixture of topsoil, peat moss, worm castings,



Limited access required many materials to be shipped to the site by barge.

granular kelp, phosphate and compost was used for all plantings and fertilized

with only organic fertilizers to add microorganisms to the soil.

The success of this project is seen not only in its beauty but in its history of no settling or erosion since its completion three and a half years ago.

— Hendrikus Schraven



The author is president, Hendrikus Schraven Landscape Construction & Design, Issaquah, Wash.

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USE READER SERVICE #21

Paul Anderegg (left), All Green's president, talks with Roger Albrecht, the new director of franchise development. Credit: Mike Hallmark, Atlanta, Ga.

All Green Corp.

HEADQUARTERS: Marietta, Ga.

BRANCHES: 57 branches in 18 Eastern and Midwestern states plus 38 Nitro-Green franchises in 14 Western and Midwestern states.

FOUNDED: 1987

PRINCIPAL: Ed Barant, Chairman

PRIMARY SERVICES: Chemical lawn care, tree and shrub care, specialty services (aeration, overseeding, flea and tick treatments, etc.), commercial lawn care services. Mix is approximately 88 percent residential, 12 percent commercial.

Executive Summary

THE CONCEPT: QUEST — Quality Uncompromised Every Single Time.

FUTURE CHALLENGES: Providing the highest level of service in the industry.

The President

Paul Anderegg

AGE: 46

BACKGROUND: After graduating from Michigan State University, East Lansing, and several years at Proctor & Gamble Co. in sales and marketing, he earned an M.B.A. in marketing. He joined TruGreen Corp., founded by his college friend, Ed Barant, in 1980. Anderegg became vice president of sales and marketing at TruGreen until 1987, when he joined Barant in forming All Green.



Coast to Coast



All Green's recent purchase of Nitro-Green's franchises gives it a nationwide presence in both large and small markets.

By Susan Gibson

Coast

O

So what caused All Green to even consider buying the franchises, license agreements and name of Nitro-Green Corp.? This firm, based in Fairfield, Calif., is an award-winning franchise company that has purposely chosen to grow slowly and carefully, limiting itself to secondary markets of up to 200,000 people and measuring its growth by an index of customer satisfaction.

Ordinarily, companies this diverse don't have much in common, but the unlikely combination now blends the best of both firms into one much larger, more versatile All Green Corp. Although their methods of operation differed, Anderegg and Roger Albrecht, president of Nitro-Green, recognized they shared similar philosophies of business, customer service and quality.

"For Nitro-Green as well as All Green, our goal has been to go into every market and provide as good a service as we could," Anderegg noted. "We also wanted people with good experience in the industry and were fortunate to get a number of outstanding people to join us. Another thing we did differently from our competition was to move from tanker trucks to enclosed vans, offering a mixture of liquid and dry products."

Nitro-Green is now a division of All Green and Albrecht serves as the director of franchise development. The purchase allows All Green to expand westward and demographically into smaller, more secondary markets through franchises. For Nitro-Green, the purchase offers greater purchasing power and more enhanced and sophisticated market support for its individual franchisees.

CLEAR COMMUNICATIONS. All Green handles the challenges of communicating across 18 states with an organization based on geographic zones. It uses an in-house training program based on individual modules that can be used on a regular basis in each branch. The company recently recruited Gary Clayton as director of technical services, who was assigned the task of developing a train-the-trainer program. The enhanced program will establish uniform training procedures throughout the company.

Clayton also negotiates purchases of all equipment and products for all branches on a national basis. In addition to its service branches, All Green has its own fleet development division in Angola, Ind., which assembles all chassis and equipment, adds safety features and applies company decals to all its vehicles.

Anderegg is a firm believer in the power of telemarketing, which drives the company's growth strategy. This belief is based on his experiences at TruGreen, which pioneered many lawn care industry telemarketing techniques.

Brad Culver, owner of a Nitro-Green franchise in Helena, Mont., often pilots his hot-air balloon to promote the company and provide free entertainment.

(continued on page 24)

LAWN & LANDSCAPE • AUGUST 1996

21

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(continued from page 21)

One element of All Green's telemarketing approach is to continue selling to existing customers. "I think the only way a company can stay in business over the long term is to talk to its customers," Andereggs said. "We communicate regularly about the condition

of our customers' properties and the things we can do to help improve their landscapes."

For instance, a lawn care technician who sees a potential tree or shrub problem will report it to All Green's tree and shrub department, who then calls the customer, discusses the problem and determines if they

want the service. "We see that as an important call — actually as an obligation we owe to the customer to let them know if they have a problem on their property," he explained.

QUEST FOR SATISFACTION. All lawn care companies strive to maintain high levels of customer retention. All Green's solution can be summarized by its QUEST program — Quality Uncompromised Every Single Time. This program was developed internally a few years ago and it affects all operations, from yearly corporate accounting audits to step-by-step guidelines for technicians' visits.

"Ask about QUEST at any of our branches

(continued on page 26)

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USE READER SERVICE #23

Nitro-Green Division

FOUNDED: 1977

PRIMARY SERVICES: Chemical lawn care, tree and shrub care, industrial weed control, aeration and related special services. Service mix is approximately 80 percent residential and 20 percent commercial.

FRANCHISES: 38 franchises nationwide.

Executive Summary

THE CONCEPT: Customers are the focus of everything we do.

CHALLENGES: Meet goals, objectives and dreams of franchisees who put their trust in us. Expand franchises in a wider geographical area, at a faster pace.

Director of Franchise Development

Roger Albrecht

AGE: 45

BACKGROUND: After graduating from North Dakota State University with a degree in biology, he bought a pest control business he had worked for through his years in school. Revenues quadrupled in three years. He established Nitro-Green lawn care service division in 1977, then franchised it soon afterward.

Getting lots of really good new customers is a pain in the you-know-what, but...

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Dayton, Ohio- Are you frustrated by advertising that never makes the phone ring? By being beat out of good jobs by cheap bidders? Feeling like you're starting your business all over again every season? Stuck at a certain level?

A million dollar per year "entrepreneur of the year" says that most of his peers' and competitors' marketing is anemic, me-too-istic, dull, full of costly waste, and ineffective. Arrogant? Egotistical? Marty Grunder says: "React to me any way you like—but one thing is for sure, if you are in the landscaping business or maintenance business, whether you are small or large, my marketing methods can easily double or triple your business in just one year, provide better customers, help you target and get exactly the kind of business you want, increase profitability and stability, and absolutely mystify and trump your competitors."

Big talk? Yes, it is, but this Grunder wisacre has been showing off—and blowing sceptics away—his entire life. As a freckle-faced, red headed Dennis-the-Menace type kid, he started his business with nothing more than a "push" lawn mower and chutzpah. That little business went to 75 regular customers almost overnight. As a full-time student at the University of Dayton, while his buddies drove to school in old "beater" cars and flipped burgers for pocket money, Marty arrived in his Grunder Landscaping Company truck and, at age 21, did over \$300,000.00 in business. This year he was named Young Entrepreneur of the Year by the Small Business Administration's Midwest Region, in the 1 to 25 employees category. Currently, Marty oversees a staff of 30, 15 trucks, a backhoe, an assortment of other equipment, and a diversified business doing everything from basic residential lawn maintenance to complicated commercial landscaping projects—and, this year, breaking the one million dollar mark in annual sales. He's also investing in land, lecturing from time to time, and working with other landscapers as their "marketing coach."

Million Dollar Marketing Secrets Revealed In A Free Report—If You Qualify!

Grunder DOES have "secrets" for building these types of businesses, too. Here are just a few examples:

1. How to **spark referrals**... how to turn "small accounts" into big business.
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3. The 5 biggest mistakes 95% of the people in this business make when advertising and how to avoid them.
4. **How to stop the "price shopper" in his tracks. How to get good business without being the lowest bidder or offering cheapest price.**



Here's the smart-aleck kid standing next to his first truck. Who'd have guessed he'd quickly create the biggest and best company in southern Ohio, confound established, entrenched competitors, and break the million dollar annual sales mark? Betcha he has a marketing secret or two in his pocket that you'd love to steal, if you could!

5. How to avoid the **fatal mistake** of confusing 'marketing' with 'selling'.
6. **Forget wasteful "name recognition" or "getting your name out there"**—learn to "target," create and deliver a "market-matched" message, and **attract exactly the type and size of clients you really want.**
7. Why your "service" should never be the #1 focus of your marketing.
8. Powerful but simple letters and things to say to existent customers to **cause demand for a variety of additional, highly profitable services.**
9. The "secret" borrowed from the fad-diet business that sells high-priced, high-profit landscaping work like crazy.
10. How to get people working for you and with you to really contribute like a championship team!
11. How to use "**automated, autopilot marketing**" to bring in new business without you or anyone else even talking with prospects on the phone!
12. Even "poor boy" **dirt cheap marketing** strategies, like what to write on a simple postcard to bring in a flood of new customers.

13. The "**4-Page**" marketing tool used 6 to 10x a year that is **guaranteed to increase your business by at least 30% year after year...automatically!**
14. How to position yourself as a "famous expert" in your area, get a ton of free advertising and "**fry**" the competition.

And there's a whole lot more. At the urging of a big-time, nationally respected direct marketing consultant and professional speaker who discovered and was "blown away" by everything Marty was doing, Marty prepared an easy-to-read but very complete, provocative Special Report—"How To Re-Invent Your Lawn-Garden/Landscaping Business With Million Dollar Marketing Secrets"—and you may be able to obtain a copy at absolutely no cost whatsoever.

Who Should Get Marty Grunder's Special Report?

Marty asks that you call for his free Report ONLY if: (1) you own your own business or are the President, CEO, manager or marketing manager for the business; (2) you make the decisions about advertising, marketing, and customer service investments; (3) you are currently unhappy with some aspect(s) of your business; (4) you recognize that in today's competitive environment, just "doing a great job" isn't enough to sustain a business; and (5) you are willing to make progressive innovative changes in your business if convinced, even reasonably assured that doing so will dramatically improve sales, profits, customer satisfaction, referrals, growth, and community prominence. (Please do NOT waste your time or Marty's money getting this Special Report if you are close-minded, change resistance, fully satisfied with your income, or just a curiosity-seeker without sincere interest in changing your business for the better.)

How To Get Your Free Report:

Simply write "Report" on your business card or a sheet of your letterhead and FAX it to 513-847-8067 or, for even more information and to get your Report, call 1-800-399-7135, listen to a brief free recorded message, then leave your name, company name, and address as instructed. You can FAX or call anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you prefer having your report sent confidentially to your home address, just let us know. Incidentally, requesting your free Report does not obligate you in any way; no salesperson will call to follow-up, nothing of the sort. However, this is a limited free offer, so please take care of it right now, while it's fresh in your mind.

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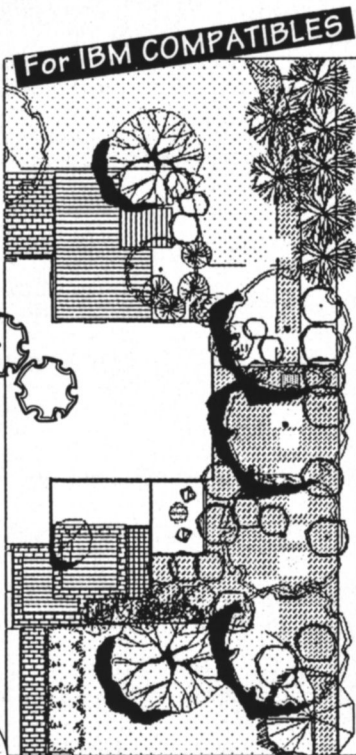
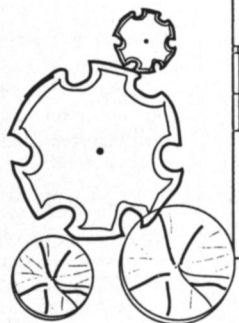
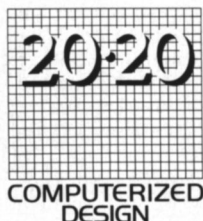
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to find out how you can get with the programs.

USE READER SERVICE #25

cover story

(continued from page 24)

and they'll tell you about it," Anderegg said. "Our technicians have a 15-step approach that covers everything from introducing themselves to saying goodbye when they leave the property. We try hard to provide a quality service and communicate after the sales by reinforcing what the program is with the customer, the number of treatments included and the costs. We also have a service agreement we give to the customer which again lays it all out and reinforces the program. It also stresses that this is a partnership and we both have mutual responsibilities."

Anderegg believes that building brand loyalty in consumers is an uphill battle. "I think that to improve customer retention we must have a branch manager at each location who really cares about customers. We have to encourage that manager to want to keep his customers and to enhance the level of the technicians. It gets down to making the technician feel that it's important to provide a professional, courteous service for each customer."

FRANCHISE ADVANTAGE. All Green's purchase of Nitro-Green's franchises came after the opportunity emerged this past year. "We wouldn't have considered it if we didn't think it was the best way to attack the secondary markets, and also if Roger Albrecht wouldn't have stayed with us," he added.

What All Green's management saw in Nitro-Green was a company that chose a course of slow, steady growth, expanding to 38 franchises in 17 years. Its success is based on this careful approach, which provides in-depth training and support for franchisees often unfamiliar with the lawn care industry.

"After a week of training at headquarters and more in their location, we provide ongoing training for the first year," Albrecht said. "We stay really close to them until they understand the business. In the second year, we stay closely in touch and in the third year, we visit and provide plenty of telephone support."

The program builds consistency in the services that franchisees offer their customers. Individual people, many without industry experience, may invest their life savings into Nitro-Green. It's a responsibility Albrecht takes seriously: "It's a burden and

(continued on page 28)

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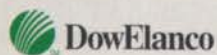
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(continued from page 26)

we've taken it seriously. I'm not going to let these people fail."

He describes the qualification process much like employment interviews. "We use a computerized profile of the ideal personalities, but it's still complex. Sometimes, we get a person who wants to be out on his own, and he or she may or may not work out to be a team player. The franchisee has room to move around and make decisions on his own, but is also held accountable."

Nitro-Green's criteria rate financial and personal abilities, plus compatibility with the company's values. "After we evaluate them, they have to evaluate us with a checklist of things for them to consider, so they don't rely solely on emotion."

Once the franchise is awarded, the learning process begins. "It's easy to teach a person about the industry, but the successful franchisee has to be business minded," he said.

'It's easy to teach a person about the industry, but the successful franchisee has to be business minded...'

"It's tough qualifying new franchisees because we don't really know about their personality until they've started."

Albrecht said the All Green purchase will expand services for the Nitro-Green franchisees. In addition to more training resources and greater purchasing power, the Nitro-Green franchises will be able to tap into the larger company's telemarketing expertise.

Albrecht plans to offer telemarketing or direct mail programs for franchisees just starting out. "When they start out, the franchisees have a new truck and no customers.

It's scary because they've invested their life savings into this.

"Telemarketing is one of the more successful and easier ways of getting customers," he continued. "It's controllable like a water faucet and it's predictable. We make a certain number of calls, get a certain number of leads and trans-

late that into a certain number of sales. If we need more sales, we turn on the faucet again. No other marketing can do that."

Nitro-Green will offer telemarketing or direct mail for a week to get a new franchise off the ground. On occasion, the company sponsors radio shows to celebrate and announce a new franchise's opening.

FUTURE ISSUES. The purchase of Nitro-Green underscored similarities shared by Anderegg and Albrecht:

Q. How do you find the kind of employee

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USE READER SERVICE #27

who is right for your company?

A. Anderegg: Give me the right branch manager, marketing manager and technicians in any market and we will win. The number one issue is having the right people because the distribution system of lawn care companies is basically the same. It comes down to who's running the facility and what kind of people are working out on the lawns. We've been fortunate to have some of the very best industry people in our company.

Albrecht: We look for someone who shares our vision of what our business can be. During the qualifying process, I paint the downside of the business without pressuring the sale. If they share our values and goals, if they want to dominate their market, if they plan to offer unequalled customer service, then they'll be a good team player.

Q. How do you top your competition?

A. Anderegg: We have people with more excitement about their growth opportunities

than those at most other companies. When I visit the branches and see well organized facilities, clean vehicles and plenty of smiles, I know immediately it's a winning operation. They have found a way to instill pride.

Albrecht: It's taken us 17 years to grow to 38 franchises, but we haven't had a franchise failure. The transfers have been successful. We've been ranked in several magazines' top franchise operations for the last five years because our franchisees are happy. There's a high motivation for us to make franchisees happy. They can't buy our system; they are granted a license to operate under our name. They have to maintain the integrity of our company and share our values and goals.

Q. What issues will affect the industry most in the next few years?

A. Anderegg: I see more licensing coming for recycling systems, locked storage of materials and pesticide use. Costs will also be more of an issue with health insurance, work-

men's compensation and other insurance.

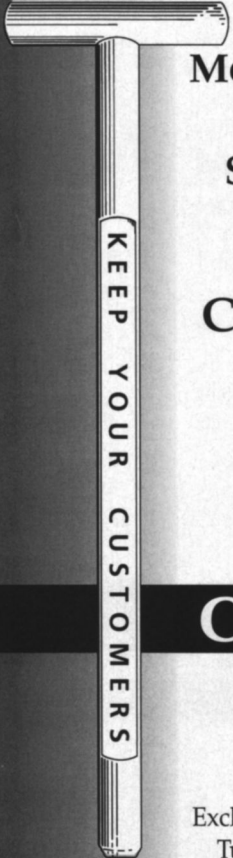
It will also be more difficult to maintain huge growth through customer addition. The industry will have to get better at retention. Consumers don't have a lot of brand loyalty and our industry has a hard time establishing brand loyalty in their eyes.

Albrecht: This purchase will expand brand recognition because there are more opportunities to get the brand out in front of consumers and to dominate our markets. **■**

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The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape Magazine.



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USE READER SERVICE #29

Cultivating Healthy Soils

By knowing each property's soil characteristics, you can improve the health of both turf and ornamental plants. This is the first of a four part series.

By C. Neal Howell



What do we in the green industry owe the Russians? We owe the classification of the most important ingredient in our line of work: the soil. V. V. Dokuchaev (1846-1903) is credited with developing the system by which we now classify soils and trace their development.

Scientists following Dokuchaev's lead developed a complicated system to name soils based on the kinds of minerals they contain, the different ways they were formed and their physical characteristics. Knowing these characteristic names will give you clues to the soil's physical characteristics.

CLASSIFICATION IN DETAIL. The system that soil scientists use to classify soils uses 10 major orders. For example, in the temperate region of the northeastern United States where forests were the major natural vegetation, the soil order "spodosols" is most common. These soils were formed from coarse-textured parent materials, are low in mineral nutrients and are generally acidic. Soils formed in some areas of the Southwest are called "aridosols," meaning they were formed under much drier conditions. They are more finely textured, are generally high in mineral nutrients and are basic in pH reaction.

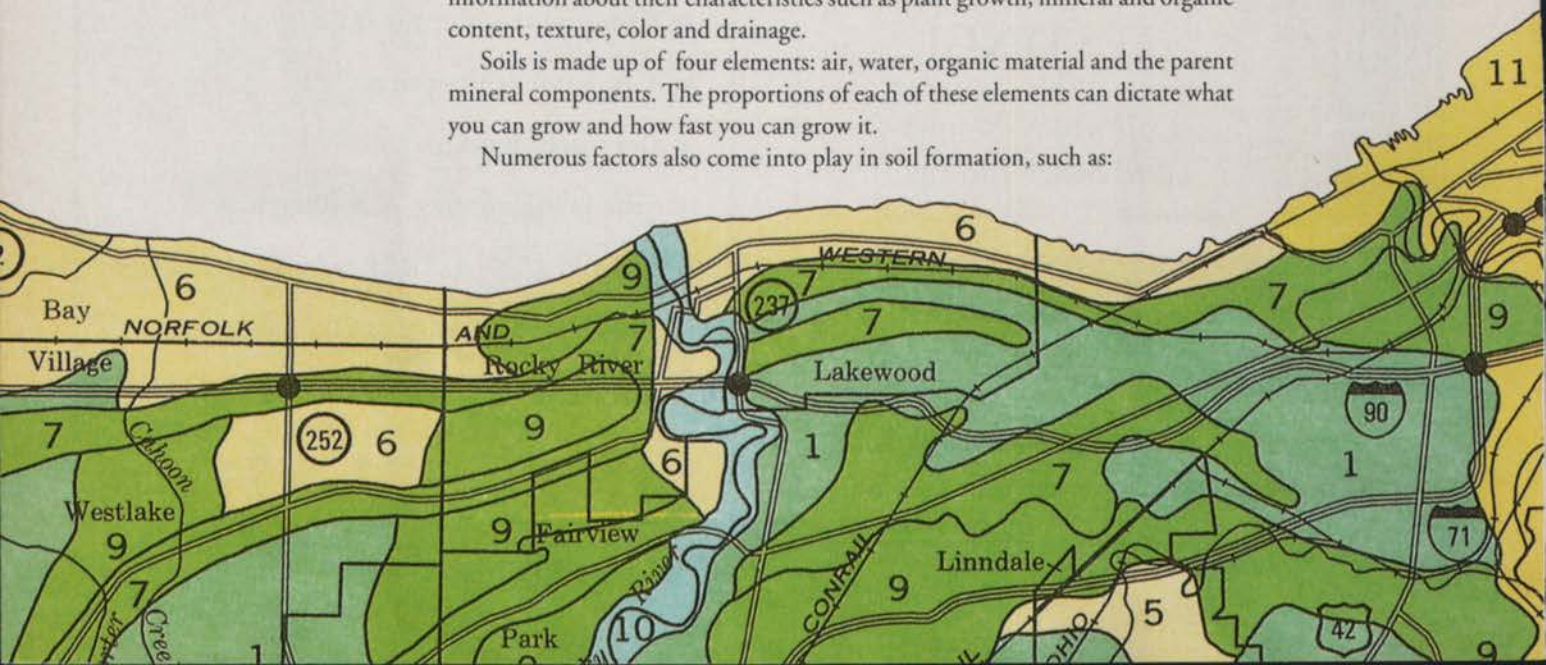
Each of the 10 orders are broken down further into suborders, great groups and subgroups. Additional breakdowns, called families, associations and series, provide information about their characteristics such as plant growth, mineral and organic content, texture, color and drainage.

Soils is made up of four elements: air, water, organic material and the parent mineral components. The proportions of each of these elements can dictate what you can grow and how fast you can grow it.

Numerous factors also come into play in soil formation, such as:



County extension agents can provide maps detailing soil types throughout a region (see Cuyahoga County, Ohio, map below). They can also provide charts with recommended shrubs, trees, ground covers and turf suited to different soils.



- **Climate** — Temperature and rainfall levels.

- **Time** — The length of time the parent material has been subjected to the soil formation processes.

- **Topography** — The position of the parent material in relation to the environment.

- **Biological activity** — The action of both microscopic bacteria and larger plant and animal entities on the parent material.

All these factors combine to produce the stuff in which you can plant your begonias or bluegrass. But can this knowledge of soil formation and composition add to the bottom line? Can you use this knowledge to produce happy customers and a bulging bank account? Yes, you can, but don't rush to the bank just yet.

Most areas of the United States have been mapped according to soil classification by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. These Soil Conservation Service Soil Survey maps (see below) were originally intended to assist in agricultural practices, but have also been used for building and real estate development, site location and tax assessment as well as for the planning,

location and layout of various outdoor recreation facilities.

These maps are available through county extension agents and can provide valuable insights into soil types and problems for the landscape contractor or turf manager. Agents may also have accompanying charts showing vines and ground covers, shrubs, trees and grasses that are suitable for each particular soil type in the county.

KNOW YOUR SOILS. Soils are made up of an infinite number of shapes and sizes. Particle sizes are divided into three categories:

clay, sand and silt. Combinations of these three determine much about plant growth possibilities, water retention and fertility or nutrient-holding capacity.

Since you can't just order up the perfect soil, it's advisable to have the knowledge to modify existing soil conditions to best fit the property's needs.

Heavy clay soils have some excellent characteristics in that they have a tremendous capacity to hold both water and plant nutrients. The drawbacks are that clay soils are also prone to compaction and slow water absorption.

In an area of heavy clay soils, an aeration program should be a mandatory part of turf services. Compacted soils hinder moisture and air movement and make it difficult to grow roots. Proper irrigation can be difficult since water infiltration rates

(continued on page 34)

Adding Organics Equals Add-On Profits

ORGANIC SOIL amendments or enhancers can be a valuable tool in your service arsenal. Most soils can benefit from an introduction of highly organic materials and there are many products to use.

On turf, organics can be used as topdressing for soil with high clay, silt or sand content. They can also perk up soils that receive a lot of

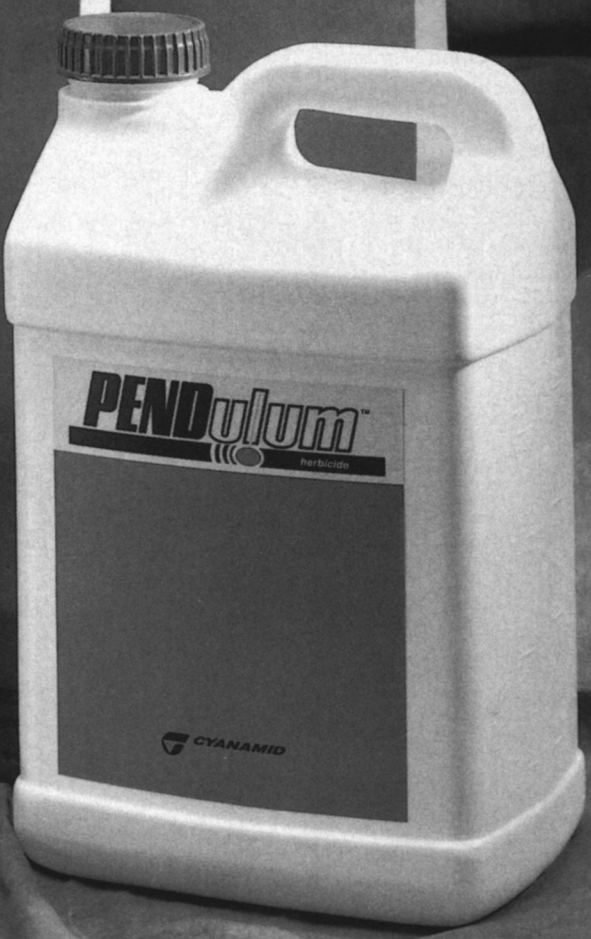
traffic. Use organics on newly established lawns and newly seeded areas. Around ornamentals, use them to loosen heavy clay or silt soils and help provide water and nutrient retention in sandy soils. Organics can also be an effective mulch for newly planted trees, shrubs and plants.

For a company offering total lawn care, an organic add-on can be a profitable service. With the advent of clipping bans in landfills, it's a win-win scenario to recycle yard waste back into the lawn.

Materials that can be used include composts, sludges, manures, ground fir bark, peat and sphagnum moss, wood shavings, calcined clay,

(continued on page 34)





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USE READER SERVICE #31

soil basics - part 1

(continued from page 31)

may be very slow. Irrigation should be completed through low output nozzles or using short sets to prevent water from puddling.

Soils with a high silt content act very similar to clay soils in terms of both benefits and problems. As an additional drawback, though, high silt soils usually occur along stream beds and are sometimes prone to flooding.

Aeration and topdressing with compost or sand can help both clay and silt soil types.

It may take 100 to 150 years of optimum conditions to add a single inch of topsoil, so it becomes very important to conserve the soil that we have.

ADDING ORGANICS

(continued from page 31)

perlite, vermiculite and sand. For more information on their use, see *Lawn & Landscape*, December 1995, page 37.

Costs for these products will vary from one area to another. Use bulk materials to get a cost advantage if you have the space.

One of the greatest bargains available to contractors is the compost produced by city grass and tree collection projects. In some areas, this excellent compost is free or available in bulk for a nominal fee. It scores high in most areas of soil benefit except longevity, and since repeat business is the key to lawn and ornamental services, longevity should not be a major obstacle.

This material can be used to great benefit under chip mulches for those who prefer the look of bark mulches. Compost decomposes rapidly and should not directly contact plant roots without a thorough mixing with the soil, as it could burn new roots or discourage root growth. Roots in direct contact might grow into pockets formed by high concentrations of the compost/soil mix. Compost that is not aged thoroughly can also be detrimental to young seedlings.

Check your soil for texture and, depending on the soil mix, add whatever medium will allow maximum improvement. With a little education, your customers should endorse your efforts to improve the soil and hopefully, you will have a profitable add-on service.

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USE READER SERVICE #85

Last year's high grub populations may return if your summer has been hot and wet. Several new strategies can work against aggressive infestations.

By David Shetlar

In most of the northern, cool-season turf areas east of the Rocky Mountains last year, landscape contractors dealt with a common problem — excessive white grub populations. There is one overriding environmental factor that allows for white grub increases, which is above average soil moisture in July and early August. While irrigated turf can mask this factor, having slightly above average rainfall allows white grub populations to explode over vast areas. Virtually all the white grub species lay eggs that need to absorb water from the surrounding soil to develop.

Certain white grub species are more sensitive to this problem than others. Masked chafers, European chafers and oriental beetles, which mate and fly at night, often dig back into the turf they came from to lay eggs. If the soil under the turf is dry, they may lay significant numbers of their eggs in this habitat and reduce their populations. On the other hand, Japanese beetles, green June beetles and black turfgrass atenius beetles fly during the day or at dusk and these adults actively select sites for egg laying.

This is why the lawn that is irrigated, fertilized or otherwise actively growing in July and early August is often attacked by Japanese beetles, while surrounding lawns or areas that were allowed to go dormant have no infestations. For lawn care professionals, this can be especially worrisome when the customer complains



Above average rainfall during the summer of 1995 set the stage for heavy grub infestations in turfgrass this year. If July and August rainfall is above average in your area, you'll need to monitor grub activity. Credit: D. Shetlar

that his lawn is the "only one in the neighborhood that gets hit," while "my neighbor who lets the lawn go doesn't have any grub problem."

The summer of 1995 was unusual because most places had above average rainfall until mid-August, when a mini-drought occurred. Since this drought occurred after grub egg laying and hatch, the grubs reproduced prolifically. They hung on during the drought and when the rains did return in mid-September, the screaming and hollering started.

This year, a large population of white grubs survived the winter and pupated in May and June. Although many areas had saturated soils from heavy spring rains, the grubs seemed to survive well where there was no standing water. Therefore, there should be large numbers of adults with the potential to lay enough eggs to overwhelm many turf areas. If your area was hot and dry in July and August, grubs will not be a problem. If it was wetter than average, watch out!

WHERE TO TREAT? The first reaction is to reach for the best grub insecticide and "go wall-to-wall." However, even in the worst of grub years, rarely did more than 30 percent to 50 percent of the turf areas have grub populations worthy of controls.

If we are to follow the integrated pest management principles, we should only treat those areas that will have grub populations high enough to cause visible damage. We now know that these numbers depend on many other factors. Turf with high fertility and

(continued on page 38)

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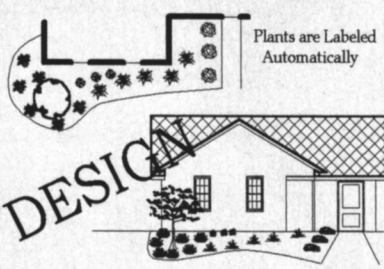
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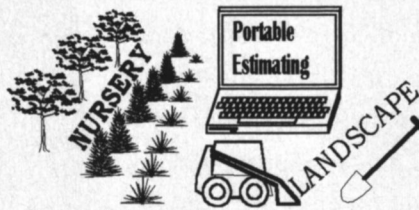
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USE READER SERVICE #36

grub management

(continued from page 36)

irrigation can tolerate populations well in excess of 10 grubs per square foot. On the other hand, skunks and raccoons may dig up an area that has less than six per square foot. So each contractor must set thresholds depending on turf quality and predators.

Turfgrass entomologists have studied the problem of sampling and determining when a treatment should be made. Cornell University's IPM programs have yielded the most interesting data. Mike Villani and Jennifer Grant have identified reliable sampling techniques for lawns, using a standard golf course cup changer, which rapidly and efficiently pulls a 4¼-inch circular plug from the turf. The plug is held upside down and the soil is separated in several directions towards the turf. Any grubs present are easily exposed and counted. Approximately 10 plugs equal a square foot in area.

Analysis of lawn data by Jan Nyrop and Dan Dalthorp (also of Cornell) suggest that 20 samples should be taken from the average lawn. If six to nine of the samples have a grub and you don't treat, then you have a 15 percent to 25 percent chance of missing a damaging grub population. An experienced sampler could sample an average lawn in 30 minutes (remember to stop as soon as you reach the six to nine grub threshold). They estimate that 65 percent of the lawns treated with preventive treatments could be eliminated through sampling.

Many contractors are not willing to use grub sampling, so other factors can be used to determine if a specific area of turf is at risk. Generally, areas with a history of recent grub damage are most at risk of having another heavy grub population. Grub damage seems to occur over a three- to five-year span. Other high risk factors include: sunny exposure, thatch levels over ¾-inch thick and turf established for more than three years. For instance, a Kentucky bluegrass/perennial ryegrass lawn with one inch of thatch in a sunny location is at risk, especially if neighboring lawns have a recent record of damage.

NEW CHEMISTRIES. With the recent introduction of imidacloprid, many traditionalists have had a hard time matching the compound's attributes with IPM thinking.

(continued on page 40)

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(continued from page 38)

IPM principles state that a pesticide shouldn't be used unless the population has been sampled and deemed high enough to cause damage. Unfortunately, most white grubs are difficult to sample until after they have reached the second instar grub stage. For most white grubs, this is in late August. Imidacloprid works best against newly hatched first instars.

Several entomologists suggest that risk assessment techniques should be used to determine where to use imidacloprid. Turf at risk should be targeted with a reasonable certainty that grub populations will be present. Areas not at risk should be sampled during late August and treated with one of the remedial pesticides. It can then be placed on the higher risk list for the next season.

Imidacloprid is only the first of some new pesticides being developed with the need to be applied before grub populations can be

Generally, areas with a history of recent grub damage are most at risk of having another heavy grub population.

fully assessed. Halofenozide also works best against first instar white grubs. This product will likely be available in 1997 and it works best against white grubs if it is applied when the adults are actively laying eggs.

Bacillus thuringiensis japonensis variety "buihui" is being developed and may be on the market in 1997. This variety of *Bt* seems to work best against Japanese beetle, masked chafer grubs and green June beetles. It gives moderate control of some other grub species and appears to work best if applied when first and second instar white grubs are present.

In entomopathogenic nematodes, the *Heterorhabditis bacteriophoria* has been reintroduced. This nematode has always been the best species at killing white grubs but it was difficult to produce in sufficient quantities to make it economically feasible to use. While additional testing should be carried out this season, there is no reason not to try this biological control strategy.

The milky disease of white grubs, *Bacillus popilliae*, continues to be misrepresented in the consumer press. Commercially, it contains a strain that is active only against the Japanese beetle. It will not infect European chafers, masked chafers or any other annual white grubs. In addition, tests in Ohio and Kentucky rendered only 20 percent to 30 percent control of Japanese beetles. **ll**

The author is associate professor of Landscape Entomology at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.



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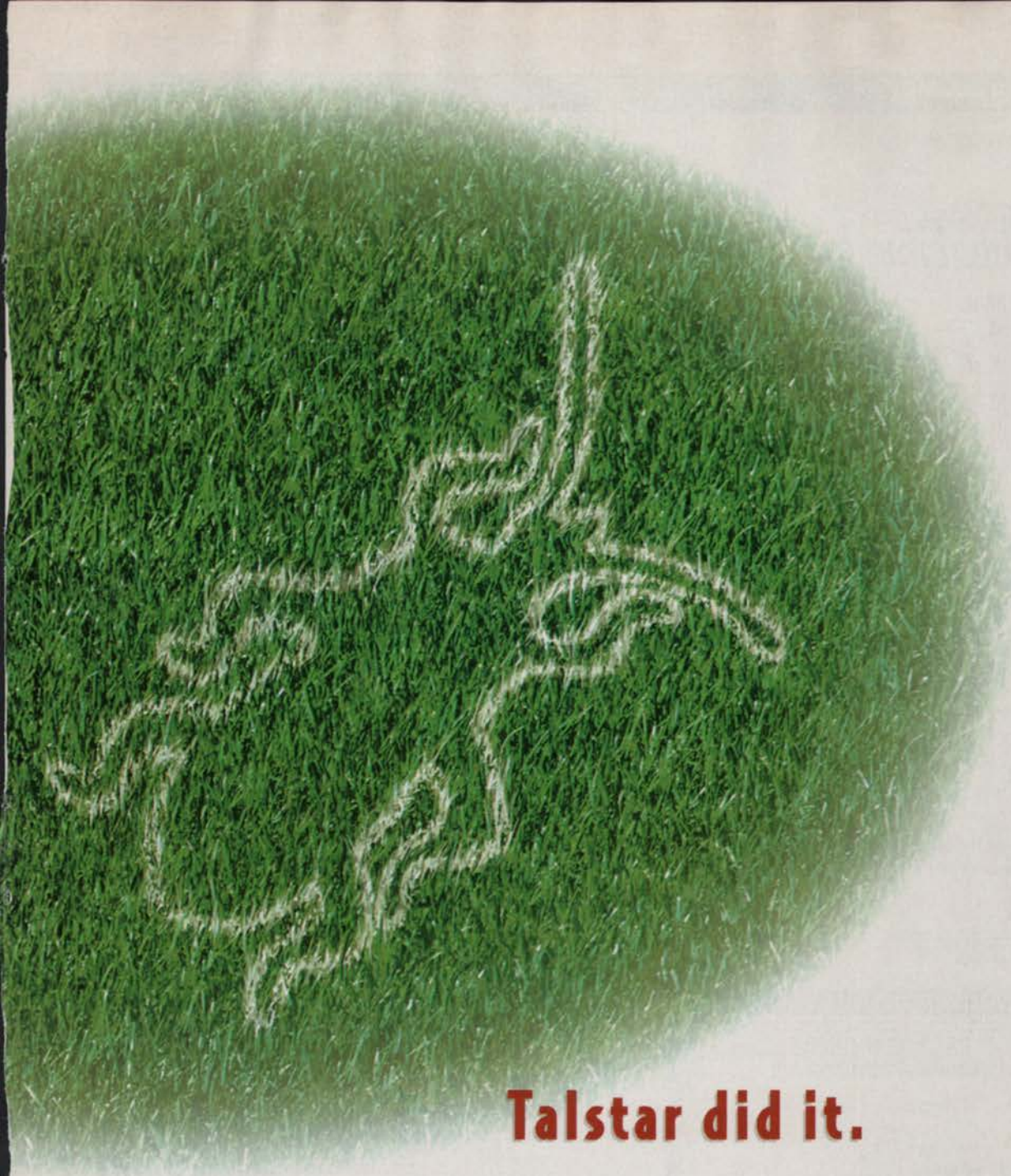
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USE READER SERVICE #38

The Time for Design

Technology is Now



ow much time does the average landscape designer spend actually creating landscape plans? More than he or she wants.

After visiting a site, taking measurements and discussing plans, a draft is created. A return visit allows the customer to review the proposal. Finally, if the proposal is accepted, a new drawing is created to add any changes or new ideas.

What if this entire process could be managed in just one or two steps and could also create a color picture of the landscape? How much time and money would that save contractors?

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES. Some design packages offer more than just design capabilities with imaging that creates a real color picture of a customer's property.

"Computer aided design is a design tool and imaging is a sales tool," noted Garry Galpin, president of Design Imaging Group, Holtsville, N.Y. "CAD deals with the nuts and bolts of a project, like the square footage of the lawn. You need CAD for estimating the job costs and doing the installation."

But it's the imaging capabilities software retailers think can be most valuable to contractors.

"Imaging completely changes the sales approach," Galpin explained. "If you go to someone's house with a hand-drawn plot plan, a pine tree looks nothing like a pine tree. Imaging uses a real photo of that person's house and lets the designer place pictures of plants around the house."

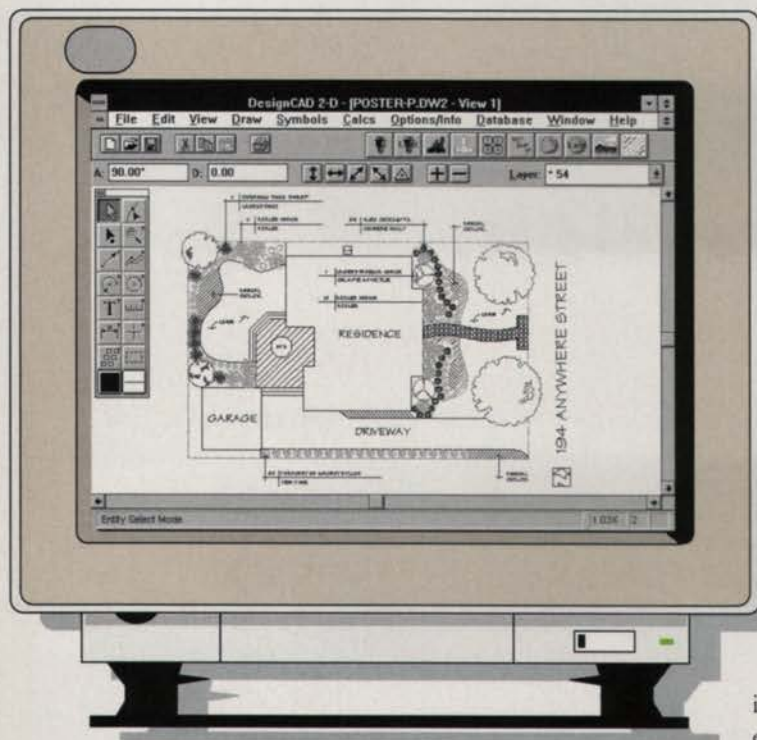
Jay Scott, landscape designer, Combs Landscape, Evansville, Ind., said his company purchased CAD software and the time savings from the software has been tremendous. "Customers are blown out of the water with computerized plans," he said. "A job that used to take half a day to draw now takes one hour including making all of the other calculations for the proposal."

Scott said Combs expects to add imaging capabilities this winter, but emphasized the added importance this brings to customer communication. "The concern we have is that customers want

(continued on page 46)

Landscape design software has evolved into an effective sales tool as well as a time-saving design device.

By Bob West



Computer aided design software simplifies the design and revision process and creates a plan that crews can use to perform the installation. Credit: Rain Bird Sales

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After



Before



After

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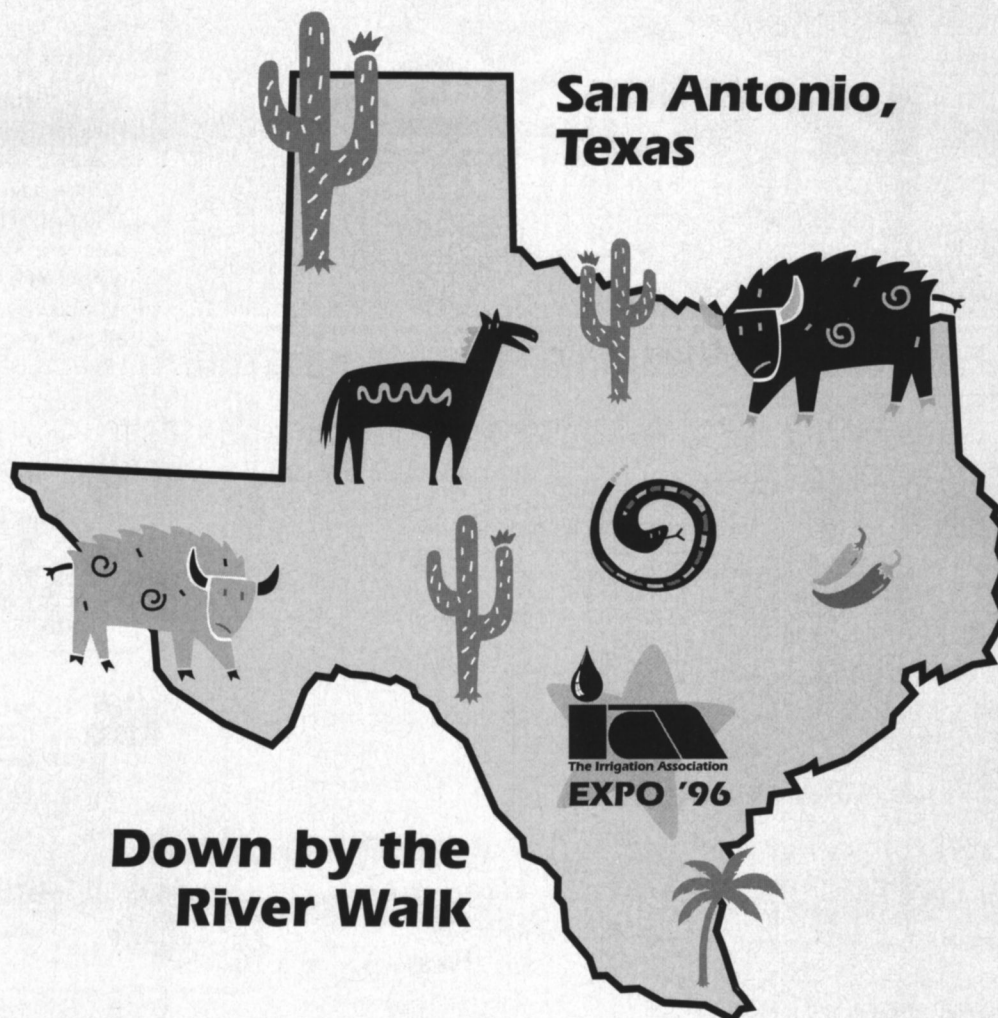
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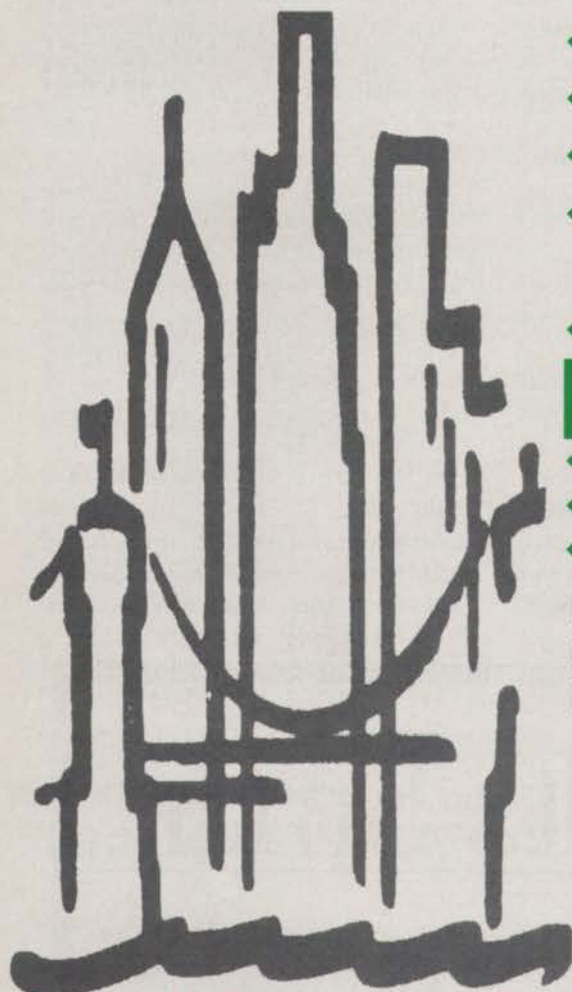
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(continued from page 42)

the final project to look as perfect as the image on which they were sold. They have understood the more conceptual idea and the fact that everything won't always be in full bloom simultaneously," he warned.

Designers can also use some of the software to plan an irrigation system for a prop-

erty. Chris Davey, software and marketing program manager for Rain Bird Sales Inc., Azusa, Calif., explained that Rain Bird offers software which does irrigation system design or does both irrigation and landscape design. "Our product also runs hydraulic calculations on a design to make sure the system will function properly," he said, "and it includes warning messages for any improper designs."

SIMPLE OPERATIONS. One roadblock software companies continually encounter with design software is convincing contractors to invest in a quality computer system. It is often a matter of educating contractors to the potential value of new technologies.

"They'll spend \$50,000 on a backhoe, but they have problems spending \$10,000 on a computer because they don't understand what it can do for

them," commented Brian Dontje, owner of UDS, Grand Rapids, Mich.

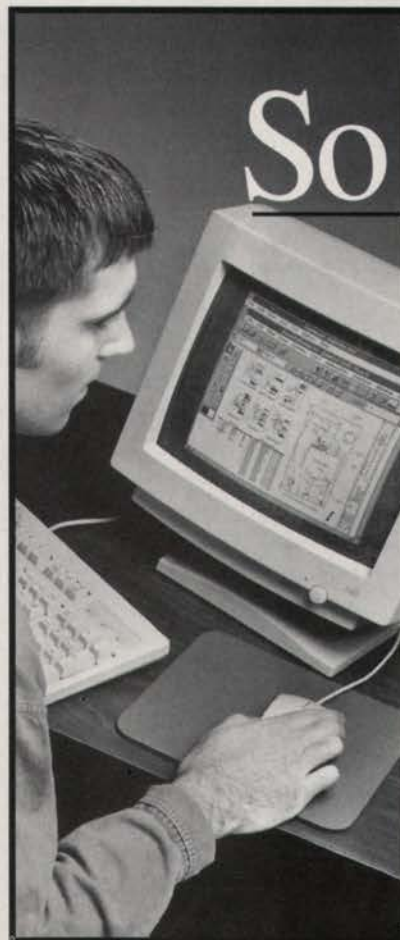
Software companies stress, however, that computer systems are worth the investment and design software is relatively simple to use. Most firms indicated they provide a CD-ROM module for training and offer users technical support lines at no extra charge.

John DeCell, president of TKO Software, Houston, Texas, admitted there can be a considerable learning curve for users of the software. "How long it takes for a user to get comfortable with the software will depend on how experienced he is with computers and how dedicated he is to learning," he added. "Some people pick it up in two weeks and some take nine months."

Chris Warren, vice president of Twin Oaks Nursery Inc., Ruston, La., said contractors need to consider the long-term benefits. "It took us six to nine months to get real comfortable with the software, but now



Imaging capabilities let contractors create an actual picture proposal of a property. Credit: Softdesk Inc.



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Can You Handle the Hardware?

The first question many contractors ask about design software is about the hardware — what is required in the actual computer itself to effectively run these programs.

This is a question anyone shopping for design software should discuss with the software retailer to make sure they get the best system for their company and their budget.

The following offers the recommended and ideal systems that 20/20 Computerized Design, Laval, Quebec, Canada, provides its customers.

| RECOMMENDED CONFIGURATION | IDEAL CONFIGURATION |
|---|--|
| Pentium 100 | Pentium 133 |
| 16-MB RAM | 32-MB RAM |
| 1-GB hard drive | 1-GB hard drive |
| Quad speed CD-ROM drive | Six speed CD-ROM drive |
| 15-inch SVGA color monitor | 17-inch SVGA color monitor |
| 32-bit local Bus graphic card, 2-MB of RAM, 24-bit color (True Color) | PCI Bus video card, 4-MB of RAM, 24-bit color (True Color) |
| Windows 3.1X or Windows 95 | Windows 95 |
| MSDOS 6.2 | MSDOS 6.2 |
| 3-button serial mouse | 3-button serial mouse |
| 2 serial ports | 2 serial ports |
| 2 parallel ports | 2 parallel ports |
| Windows compliant sound card (for Multimedia Guide) | Windows compliant sound card (for Multimedia Guide) |

there's no comparison to how we used to work," he said, noting Twin Oaks uses the software also to integrate bookkeeping and point-of-sale inventory for a retail nursery shop it runs. "But the real time saver is how quickly we can now revise designs — in a matter of minutes."

Galpin suggested contractors shopping for design software consider the design tools offered in different packages. "Everyone

doesn't offer a cutting tool or a perspective tool," he explained, "but these all become important so you don't limit your design capabilities."

Diane Michel, product manager at 20/20 Computerized Design, Laval, Quebec, Canada, also noted the importance of selecting software that offers different screen layers. "Layers allow the designer to change one part of the design without having to start all

over, as with paper and pencil," she added. "That makes it much easier working with the customers when they want to make changes."

GIVE ME AN ESTIMATE. Dontje claimed the most valuable benefit of design software may be what it does once the design is complete. "This software can save designers half of the time spent on drawing, but estimating job costs is really where the big savings are."

Users can purchase general materials price lists from their software company or enter the data themselves to use the exact prices they pay their supplier. When the design is completed, the contractor can generate all of the necessary information for a price estimate and bill of materials automatically.

"Another benefit to generating the bill of materials this way is that you know you have all of the product you need for the job when you show up on the site," added Davey.

Scott said his company began using the software at a time when business had fallen off the desired pace. "We made up all the ground we lost," he noted, "and I have to attribute it mostly to the computer system. I'd say it saves us between 30 percent and 35 percent of our time and money." **LL**

This article is the first in a three-part series on software for the green industry. Next month we will cover various software packages available to help with accounting functions.

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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From soil injection to microinjection, today's tree care delivery systems are giving contractors more tools to keep plants healthy.

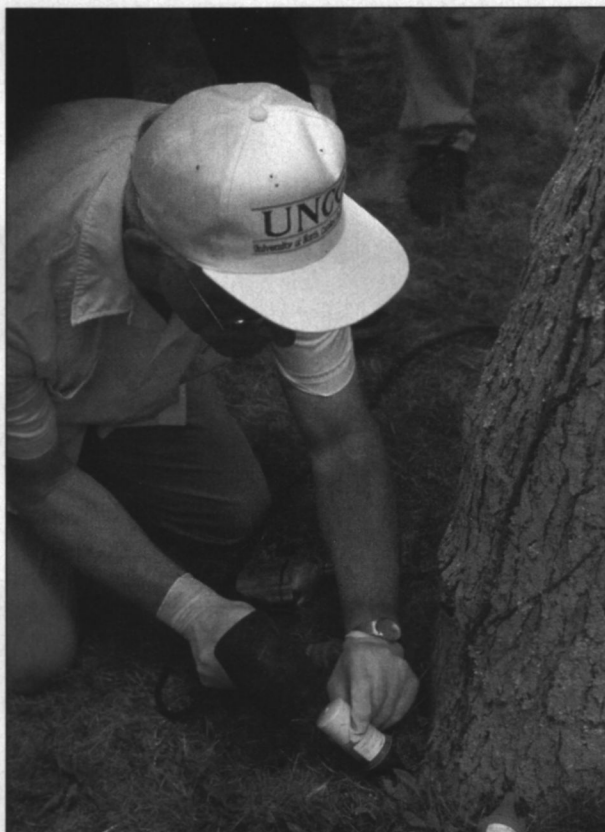
By Paul Schrimpf

T

ree and shrub care is becoming an ever more important service component of the diversified professional landscape operation. Companies who want to make the most from their customers have learned, or are learning, to care for the trees on the clients' properties.

And while nothing can replace expertise and experience in tree and ornamental care, the products available today can help the novice get started and the seasoned veteran perform at a higher level.

STATE OF THINGS. Among lawn and landscape contractors, the typical level of tree service per-



Tree injection systems have proven effective in delivering trace minerals and a variety of products to control fungi and insect pests. Credit: Ciba Turf and Ornamental Products

formed varies widely, from just fertilization to diagnostic work and pesticide application for insect and fungus problems.

With fertilization, contractors and tree care specialists prefer to use the deep root injection method. Deep root injection uses truck based spray equipment to get the job done. The pump, set at 150 to 200 psi of pressure, sends about ½ gallon of fertilizer material through a hose to an application apparatus. The "needle" is pushed into the ground at a depth of 4 inches to 12 inches, depending on the system, and the fertilizer is dispensed into the ground.

The system works well because it puts the fertilizer into the root zone, making it available to the feeder roots. It also gets the product past turf on the surface, which tends to use up fertilizer that is surface applied. Finally, the pressure of the injection aerates the soil, reducing compaction and allowing for better root growth.

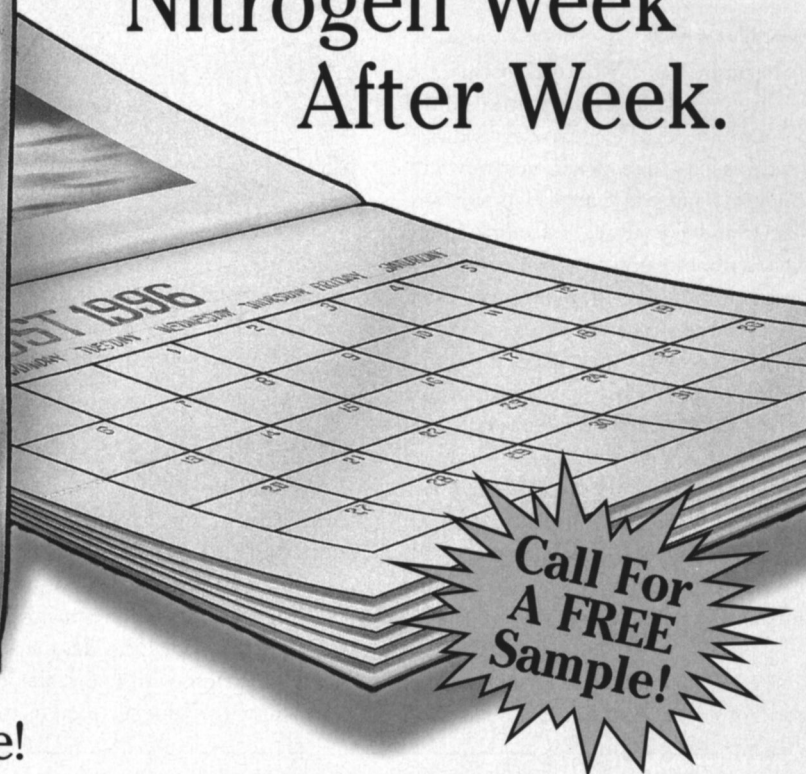
Most fertilizers used in the soil injection method are slow release, which hold the majority of their nutrients until natural processes break them down and make them available to the plant.

(continued on page 50)

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USE READER SERVICE #42

(continued from page 48)

The business positive is that this method is relatively quick to perform in the field and is not as weather dependent as other landscape activities, such as tree spraying and mowing.

Steve Hyland, president of Hyland Brothers Lawn and Tree Care, Ft. Collins, Colo., has had a tree care program in place for eight years and has relied on the injection method.

Hyland Brothers fertilizes trees once each year. Evergreens are injected in the spring and deciduous trees in the fall. Hyland noted that fertilization and spraying are performed at roughly the same time, but fertilization can be performed rain or shine. When spraying can't be done, fertilization can.

John Carson, division manager of the Ehrlich Green Team, Reading, Pa., said the company also relies on the injection of slow release products for tree fertilization.

"We use a complete fertilizer with a high percent of slow release for the annual ferti-

The system works because it puts fertilizer into the root zone where it's available to the feeder roots.

zation program," explained Carson. "We used to go every other year, but recalibrated to an annual program because it works better in our market."

NEW OPTION. Landscapers getting into tree fertilization for the first time commonly suffer from sticker shock with the price of equipment. A hose and pump system can cost from \$5,000 to \$7,000 to start.

An in-between system, actually in use for more than a decade, provides the ability to do root injections with a portable, self-contained unit that doesn't require the high

pressure or high volume of liquid.

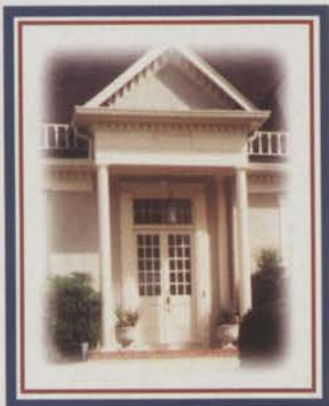
The unit injects one ounce of food grade fertilizer per injection, with a capacity of 95 ounces. Marc Dantuma, product consultant and certified

arborist with Midwest Arborist Supply, Grand Rapids, Mich., said the unit sells for about \$250. Nu-Arbor, a division of Midwest Arborist, makes the unit.

"It's a great way for contractors to take baby steps into tree care," said Dantuma. "They can start simple, build a client base and then eventually upgrade to a pump system."

PRESCRIPTION SERVICE. Much has changed in the last decade in the cultural practices of tree care. Many of the old "truths" about planting and caring for trees have been

(continued on page 52)




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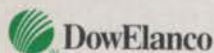
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(continued from page 50)

changed or rewritten based on new research.

Today, more is known about the importance of micronutrients in trees and about the symptoms that deficiencies in these trace elements can cause. More sophisticated contractors are learning to recognize these symptoms and to deliver the elements effectively.

Trace elements can be delivered within a fertilizer that is root injected or amended to the soil, but soil conditions are sometimes not favorable for their uptake. Another way to deliver the needed nutrient is directly into the cambium, the tree's vascular system.

Direct injection is not a new concept, according to Nathan Dodds, director of marketing with J.J. Mauget, Los Angeles. Centuries ago, Leonardo DaVinci injected his apple trees with arsenic to keep neighborhood hooligans from stealing the fruit. Today's microinjection products have evolved from systems developed by Mauget

On new sites, crews test soil for chemical and physical characteristics to determine nutrient needs.

in the 1950s that were used to treat the devastating Dutch elm disease.

Depending on the tree size and product being injected, holes are drilled near the base of the trunk around its circumference to accommodate the unit's feeder tube. The unit is inserted and the tree takes in the fluid, usually taking a few minutes to an hour to complete the process.

In addition to fluids, some systems use capsules that are inserted into a drilled hole. The capsule is dissolved by the tree and gradually enters the entire vascular system.

Along with micronutrients, these sys-

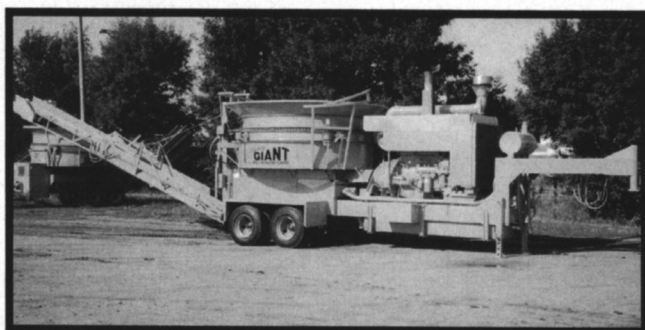
tems are gaining popularity as viable alternatives to spraying pesticides.

"The benefit with microinjection is that 100 percent of the chemical enters the tree, without leaching into the ground and

hitting nontarget plants," noted Dodds. "You can also use relatively minuscule amounts of a chemical vs. other application methods."

In addition, a microinjected product is not at the mercy of soil conditions. Doug Houseworth, technical unit advisor with Ciba Turf and Ornamental Products, Greensboro, N.C., said this is an advantage when using propiconazole, a systemic fungicide used to treat Dutch elm disease and oak wilt. Because the chemistry is broken down by microbes in the soil, direct tree injection improves its efficacy.

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USE READER SERVICE #46

Drilling Debate Lingers

The great debate about invasive procedures such as microinjection asks, "How much drilling into trees is too much?" For some, any invasive procedure should be avoided entirely, while others believe that limited use is not a problem.

"Davey's philosophy is to never wound a tree unless it is absolutely necessary," said Richard Rathjens, horticulturist and senior agronomist with Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio. "We try placing the needed treatment into the root zone and if there is no response, then we will consider it as a last resort. I think most arborists agree."

"I would consider injection as a last ditch activity," agreed Larry Hall, senior vice president of Hendrickson — The Care

of Trees, Wheeling, Ill. "We look at the individual sites, and will inject into the trunk when it is the only choice, such as a tree in a parking island."

The tide of opinion is strongly weighted in the direction of caution, but Terry Tattar, professor of microbiology at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, said the pressure to be smarter environmentally with pesticides will push the industry toward using more injection.

"The days of spraying (pesticides on trees) will soon be gone," Tattar predicted. "Spraying is difficult to do, and drift is a big issue environmentally and in terms of liability."

"The biggest concern," Tattar continued, "is whether the wound causes harm to the trees. In most cases, a small wound is all right."

Tattar said he has seen and performed thousands of injections, and has found that negative effects from wounding have been negligible.

jection area is the Wedgle from Arbor Systems. The unit has a wedge-shaped applicator that is inserted into the bark up to the cambial zone. The product is then dispensed by squeezing a handle.

The advantage is that the drilling step is eliminated, reducing time spent on the site and causing less trauma to the outer surface of the tree, according to Chip Doolittle, president of Arbor Systems.

URBAN TORTURE. A landscape design can be a terrible thing to do to a tree, depending on what kind of soil and hardscape environment surrounds a particular plant. In the wilderness, trees regenerate nutrients by dropping leaves and reabsorbing nutrients as dead leaves decompose. In the urban setting, leaves can't provide this benefit.

Another problem, according to consulting arborist Larry Hall, who is senior vice president of Hendrickson — The Care of

Trees, Wheeling, Ill., is the quality of soil, especially near new home construction.

"Subsoil that has been buried for centuries, which contains almost no nutrient quality gets backfilled and suddenly becomes the top soil," noted Hall. This can create great stress on a plant.

Other urban hazards in terms of nutrients include plantings on parking islands, trees encircled up to the trunk in turf and planting in the vicinity of pavement that does not allow nutrients into the soil. In these cases, direct injection of nutrients can be the only solution.

Addressing the unique needs of urban plants takes more of an IPM approach, according to Hall. On new sites, crews test soil for chemical and physical characteristics to determine nutrient. **LL**

The author is Managing Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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USE READER SERVICE #47

LAWN & LANDSCAPE • AUGUST 1996

53

Most landscape contractors will plant trees and ornamentals throughout the growing season, but planting in the fall makes sense for many reasons.

By Paul Schrimpf



It isn't always possible for the busy landscape contractor to choose his or her fate when it comes to installing landscape plants. Wet, miserable springs like the one many regions experienced this year can delay work on job sites and even turn the most well planned schedule into a frantic exercise.

As hard as it can be to plan tree and shrub plantings to give them the best chance to survive and thrive, most contractors try to work within their regional windows of opportunity to achieve optimum planting success. Spring has always been recognized as a good time to get plants started, but in recent years fall planting has proven an advantageous option for many species and regions of the country.

LOGIC RULES. The logic behind fall planting is simple. While winter's harshly cold temperatures, whipping winds and heavy snows can be a big problem for a newly planted tree, another real problem is a lack of moisture and high heat in the summer.

Trees and shrubs planted in the early spring will average three months of cool, wet weather before summer heat and less frequent rains bring stress. In

Cooler temperatures and a greater chance of regular precipitation are two primary benefits of planting trees and shrubs in the fall. Credit: Davey Tree Expert Co.

(continued on page 56)

Fall Planting Grows Success

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(continued from page 54)

addition, spring is when trees are experiencing top growth more than root growth.

In the fall, the tree or shrub can take advantage of the moisture to get its roots established before entering winter. Snow also helps keep the moisture level high, and in the spring the tree or shrub comes out of dormancy normally and is kept moist by spring rains until summer arrives.

"Fall is a superb time for planting," said Steve Sullivan, regional horticultural specialist in the mid-Atlantic region for The Brickman Group, Bethesda, Md. "In fact, it's our favorite time for planting. In our area, we go through the winter without much hard frost, and with the cooler, wetter weather you don't have as much watering to do. Really, from the middle of fall through late spring you get about six months of favorable

Choosing good plant material, as well as the right plant material, is critical to fall planting success.

conditions until the first bad push of summer heat and dryness."

Chris Hillenmeyer of Hillenmeyer Nurseries, Lexington, Ky., noted that fall is the company's favorite time to plant, but often it is not realistic for meeting customer demands. "There's been a lot of promotion out there about planting in the fall, but spring is still our busiest time. We have to be geared to what the customer wants.

"I wish we could get our customers to realize that fall is the good time for planting," he continued. "In the spring, you may get a plant that is already in full bloom, but

you don't get that view for very long. With a fall planting, the customers get a tree that establishes itself through winter, then comes out of dormancy and blooms naturally, right in front of them."

Some contractors feel that fall is a more predictable weather time.

"It's not unusual in the spring to be rained out in April, and once digging begins to have the weather turn dry as a bone," explained Karen Morby, senior project manager and certified arborist with D. R. Church Landscaping Co., Lombard, Ill.

Morby said the leaf shedding that occasionally occurs in new plantings is less conspicuous in the fall. "Many newly planted trees may still have their leaves fall off, and it looks a lot more natural and doesn't panic clients if this occurs in the fall rather than the spring," she added.

(continued on page 58)

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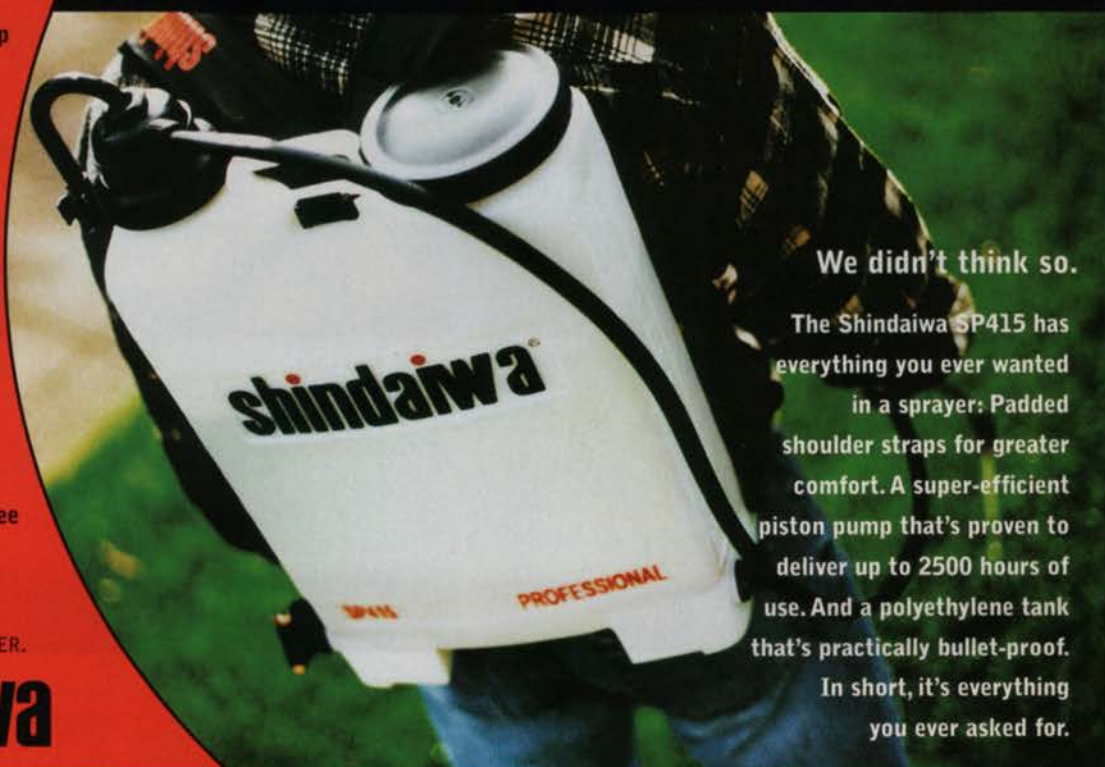
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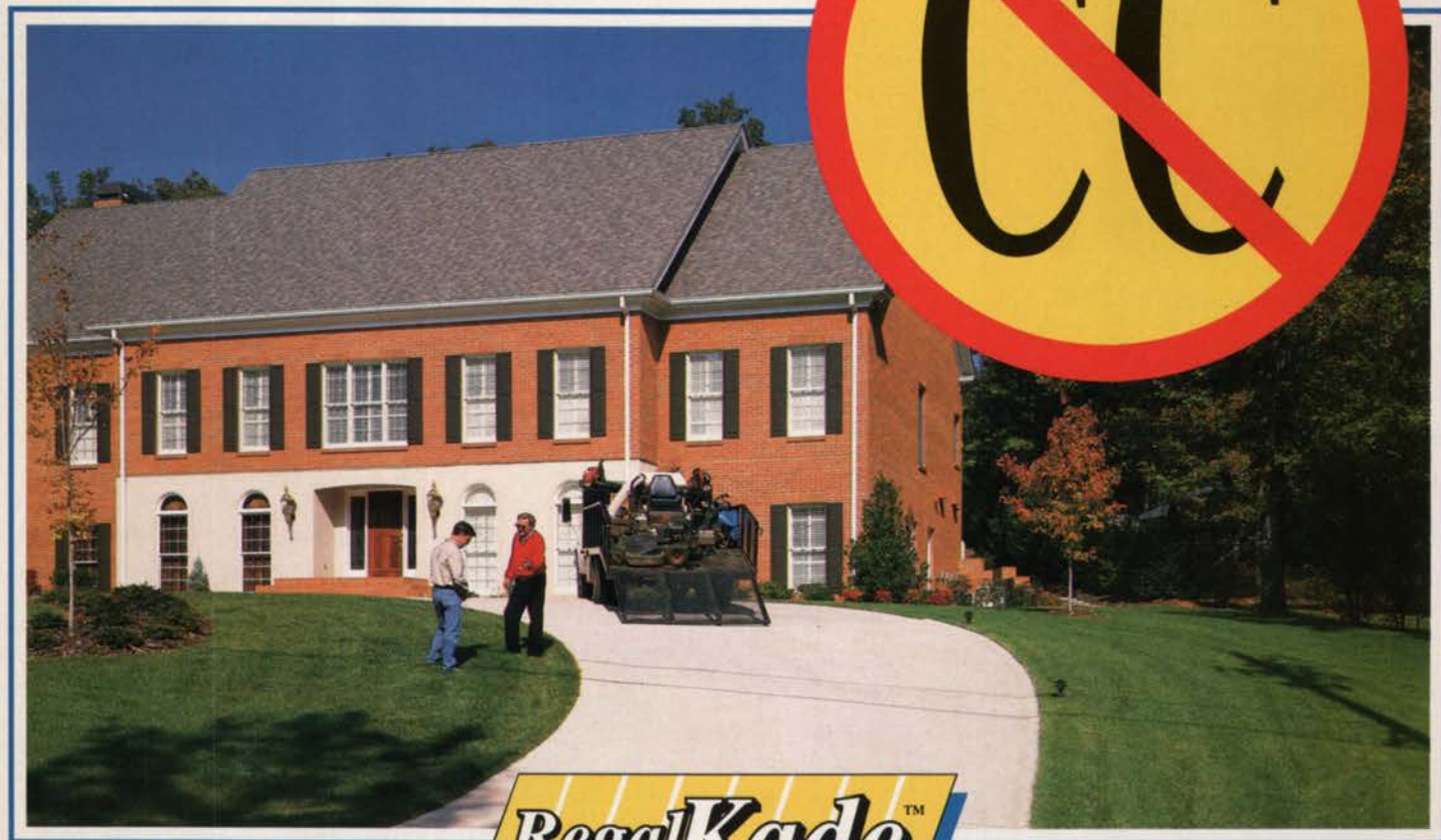
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USE READER SERVICE #50

fall planting

(continued from page 56)

Peter DeBrusk, manager of design and construction with Coronis Landscaping, Nashua, N.H., said that the company rarely schedules its tree installations around seasons, but admitted that it takes extra care to make midseason installations work. "We won't accept a project unless we know the trees are going to get watered," noted DeBrusk. "The water needs to be there. If we are doing a midsummer planting, we will install irrigation systems with rain sensors to ensure proper watering.

"Fall plantings can be easier because, statistically, the weather is on your side," DeBrusk continued. "However, you can't always bet on a cool, wet spring or fall."

MAKING IT WORK. The definition of the word "fall" in fall planting varies from region to region and company to company, depending on the clientele being served, the species of trees planted, the amount of after-planting care a tree will receive and what types of guarantees are being made on the plant's survival.

Larry Kuhns, professor in the department of horticulture at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, noted that fall planting in the northern areas of the country is better defined as mid-August through mid-October. "When the leaves are yellowing and falling off the trees, you're already looking at the end of the season," he remarked.

For D. R. Church, the planting starts as soon as middle to late August and usually finishes by Thanksgiving, depending on the species. Shade trees can be pushed back to the last minute, while the cutoff for evergreens is the end of October. "We state on the contract that beyond a certain date, we cannot guarantee that a tree will survive," said Morby.

Working with plant material in the fall does present challenges, but making good decisions about timing, plant material and cultural care can help the rate of success.

Communicating with clients and land-

scape architects about the reality of meeting specifications for plant material based on timing can be critical. Morby explained that when there is a serious problem with planting timing based on a landscape specification she will encourage clients and landscape architects to substitute material or delay planting to the fall to increase planting success.

"When a landscape plan comes in, we will generally order what's specified on the plan," she said. "Sometimes, for certain species such as red maples, we will place the order and then go back and try to convince the client to change a plant or the planting schedule. The reality is, though, that there are a lot of other considerations on the client's end, such as occupancy permits, deadlines and grand openings that need to be

'Ideally, the less time the plants are out of the ground and the less handling the plants receive, the better off they are.'

met. Sometimes these deadlines are set with no consideration for the landscape plan, so we need to have the order ready."

Morby tries to keep the materials' transportation time from nursery to site as tight as possible, and generally can keep it down to a few days. "We stay in touch with the nursery and keep them apprised of conditions on the site and when we think we will be ready for the material. Ideally, the less time the plants are out of the ground and the less handling the plants receive, the better off they are."

In cases where the plants must be held, keeping the root ball well irrigated is the most critical procedure, said Morby. "You lose 95 percent to 98 percent of the root mass in the digging process, so if plants should be held for a while they need to be watered." Holding on large sites sometimes requires the addition of an automatic irrigation system to keep the root ball moist, she noted.

(continued on page 60)

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USE READER SERVICE #53

fall planting

(continued from page 58)

Watering trees after transplanting should include the root ball, which some professionals neglect to check after planting. "Because water has such a high surface tension, it tends to stay in soil where it is applied until the soil becomes saturated," noted Morby. "The water around the root ball can be well soaked, but the root ball still remains dry unless irrigation is applied to the root ball directly. If you are using a moisture meter for testing you should test the root ball area to ensure it is getting the proper moisture."

Morby avoids using anything other than the original soil for backfill and doesn't stake trees in most cases. "Root hairs are sensitive to an inconsistent backfill — they actually stop and turn back. What we used to think was a help actually hurts the tree."

In addition to good cultural practices, Bill Mason, division manager with DuBrow's Nurseries, Livingston, N.J., said that choosing good plant material, as well as the right plant material, is critical to fall planting success. "If you speak to the major nurseries in your area, they will usually be able to provide a recommended plant material list that they have developed over the years through personal experience."

Typically, Mason said, his company will expect to lose 10 percent of the plant material it installs during any given year. "Lots of times, it's beyond our control," he explained. "This is true on construction sites where we can't control the watering."

Sullivan said that despite the overall positive conditions for fall planting, some species are still tricky. For example, broadleaf evergreens need to be planted and established early in the fall, and treated with an antitranspirant to keep dry winter winds from desiccating the foliage.

Kuhns explained that, even with plant material labeled as fall planting sensitive, it's mostly cultural practices that are a concern for nurseries and extension agents. "If you do what you are supposed to do when you're planting a so-called sensitive species, the majority of the time, plantings will turn out just fine." **LL**

The author is Managing Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.



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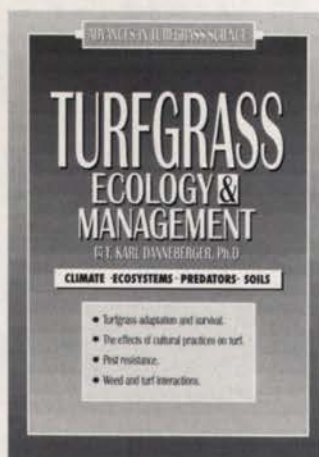
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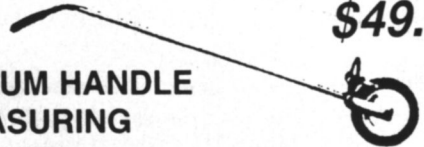
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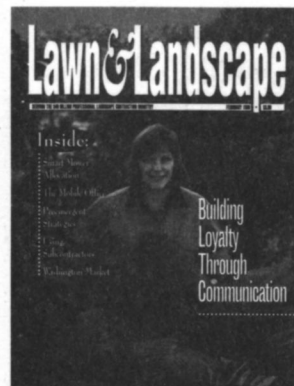
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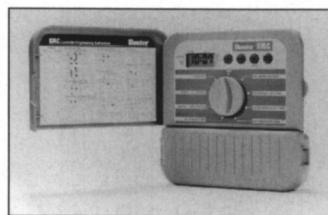
Circle 206 on reader service card

Husqvarna upgraded the ST21 and ST21E single-stage snow throwers with 5-hp Tecumseh 2-cycle engines to clear 21-inch

widths, with the ST21E offering electronic start. The dual stage ST724 and ST927E have Tecumseh Snow King 7- and 9-hp engines, respectively. The ST724 clears 24 inches and the ST927E handles 27-inch paths with single-hand operation.

Circle 207 on reader service card

Hunter Industries' 6-station SRC controller is designed for indoor residential use and has dial programming and a large



LCD display for clear viewing. The SRC includes three independent programs with four daily start times each and a rain sensor bypass.

Circle 209 on reader service card

Presto Products' Geoweb® cellular confinement system is an expandable honeycomb structure used to control unstable soils when used with infill materials. The heavy duty polyethylene material is available with smooth and textured surfaces, and comes in standard

sheets 8-feet by 20-feet wide.

Circle 210 on reader service card

Grasshopper's largest air-cooled unit is the Model 725K zero-radius outfront mower with a



25-hp Kohler Command V-Twin OHV engine. The 725K

(continued on page 68)

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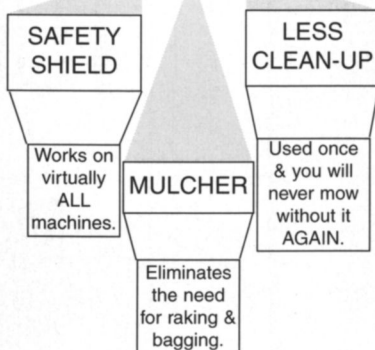
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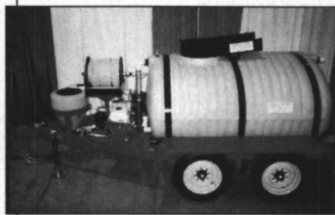
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NEW PRODUCTS

is compatible with all Grasshopper decks including the Combo Mulching™ deck, which ranges in size from 44 to 72 inches and offers bagging, mulching and discharging capabilities.

Circle 211 on reader service card

The HTI 750 Twin hydro-seeder from **Hydro Turf** is a twin engine pumping system capable of seeding 10,000 square feet per hour. A 9-hp engine provides constant agitation while a 5-hp engine powers the discharge sprayer



for up to 300 feet. It includes a 16-inch fill well and a mulch bale chute and is available in either trailer or skid mounting.

Circle 212 on reader service card

Kubota added the AE4500 and AE6500 models to its AE-Series generator line. The 4,500 and 6,500 watts of maximum output, respectively, come from Kubota 4-cycle OHV gasoline engines with 5.3-gallon fuel tanks for all-day operations.

Circle 213 on reader service card

The Trencherman II™ backhoe from **Northern Hydraulics** digs 7

DowElanco's Gallery™ 75 dry flowable preemergence herbicide is said to prevent 95 broadleaf weeds such as dandelion and chickweed for up to eight months without injury to existing broadleaf or grass landscape species. It has received interim registration in California.

Circle 214 on reader service card



feet deep and dumps up to 5 feet high with an 8-hp Briggs & Stratton engine coupled to a 3-gpm hydraulic pump. The Trencherman measures less

than 11 feet long by 7 feet wide to fit in tight areas and provides 4,400 pounds of ripping force.

Circle 215 on reader service card

The Terra Rider is a riding aerator from **Terracare** which uses 98 tines to pull plugs along



a 22-inch wide pattern. The aerator is powered by an 8-hp Briggs & Stratton engine with electric start capabilities. A hydrostatic drive with an electric screw jack lifts the tines in and out of the ground.

Circle 216 on reader service card

(continued on page 68)

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67

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FOUR.

Softdesk landscape marketing tools show you how to use new technology to build your business by closing more sales faster.

USE READER SERVICE #65

NEW PRODUCTS

(continued from page 66)

Border Solutions' Landscape Edging has a wide profile design for less maintenance requirements and offers unlimited layout and design possibilities. The edging pieces of various shapes and lengths are made of polyethylene polymer and accommodate any landscape elevation changes.
Circle 217 on reader service card

Intermatic offers three low voltage lighting fixtures with a new white finish electrostatically applied to the diecast metal fixtures. The CL131W floodlight meets



lighting needs in compact settings while the CL506W floodlight stands 13 inches tall. The CL619W is an 18-inch tall mushroom style light.
Circle 218 on reader service card

Tec Laboratories' PowerDeet 25 insect repellent combines deet with various natural substances for a pleasant scent. PowerDeet 25 is designed to repel ticks, mosquitoes, deerflies, chiggers and horseflies among other insect pests for working comfort.
Circle 219 on reader service card

The Bobcat® 863 skid-steer loader from **Melroe** has a 73.5-hp, 167-cubic inch, 4-cylinder, turbo-charged, oil-cooled diesel engine for 4-wd drive, and an 18-gpm



pump and 3,000 psi powering the hydraulic breakout force. The 863 has an operating capacity of 1,900 pounds.
Circle 220 on reader service card

Ruud Lighting's Luma line uses #10-gauge 3-wire, self-sealing cable to prevent voltage drops and all fixtures include an electrocoated primer with acrylic topcoat for protection from weather. Power transformers are available in either 300W or 600W with a dual circuit design.
Circle 221 on reader service card

Onset Computer developed a weatherproof logger with a 6-inch stainless steel probe for pinpoint soil temperature recording. Stored data can be downloaded to a PC or a hand-held data transporter to read out and restart up to 16 temperature loggers on location.
Circle 222 on reader service card



Pennant II Perennial ryegrass from **Burlingham Seeds** has dark green color and a shorter growth habit for closely mowed turf. Other benefits include fine leaf texture for less clipping, strong fill rates and improved resistance to rust and dollar spot.
Circle 223 on reader service card

NEW PRODUCTS

W.A. Cleary Chemical's 3336 G systemic fungicide comes in 30-pound bags in a new granular formulation. It is said to protect against anthracnose, dollar spot, fusarium blight, pink snow mold, brown patch and other turf diseases, as well as various ornamental diseases such as black root rot, stem and crown rots and cylindrocladium root rot.

Circle 224 on reader service card

Double edge, gasoline-powered hedge trimmers from **Little Wonder**

use 16-, 24- and 30-inch blades to handle growth up to 1 inch thick. The double reciprocating, high carbon steel blades are powered by a 21.2-cc engine with electronic ignition and a primer bulb carburetor.



Circle 225 on reader service card

Tex-R® Agroliners and Geodiscs are now coated with Spin Out®, a root growth regulator, to eliminate root circling, reduce pruning needs in tree production and eliminate the need to weed container plants. The Agroliners come in cone shapes and rounded shapes for various stages of tree production, while the Geodiscs are manufactured in various diameters to fit most plastic containers.

Circle 226 on reader service card

Black Edg-Knight from **Oly-Ola Sales** has a double fin bottom designed to keep the edging firmly planted in the ground, prevent frost heave and provide added anchoring capabilities. The edging is 5 inches high with a 1-inch rounded top.

Circle 227 on reader service card

Structron's fiberglass-handled hand tools for landscape work are illustrated in a 20-page catalog. Drain spades, tampers, rakes, irrigation shovels and general purpose steel scoops are among the featured items.

Circle 228 on reader service card

Robin America's Model EH18V OHV gasoline engine is rated at 6 hp at 3,600 rpm with a displacement of 11.16 cubic inches. The air-cooled, vertical shaft engine come in two configurations.

Circle 229 on reader service card



Rainmaid Manufacturing's Poly-Stretch Coupling eliminates unnecessary digging and makes pipe repairs easy. The coupling replaces faulty piping in

a simple repair process and is available for 3/4-, 1- and 2-inch pipe systems.

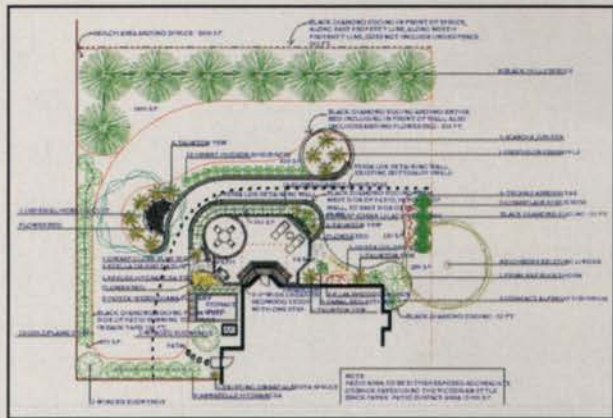
Circle 230 on reader service card

A new catalog from **Prime Line** power equipment parts presents available aftermarket power equipment parts in a 2-color display format. The user-friendly catalog includes both domestic and imported parts to help aftermarket distributors locate the parts they need quickly and easily.

Circle 231 on reader service card

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| 545644 | Shrub-dwarf | Lilac, Dwarf Korean | 1 | Y | Y | Y | 36.00 | | | | | |
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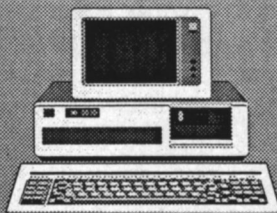
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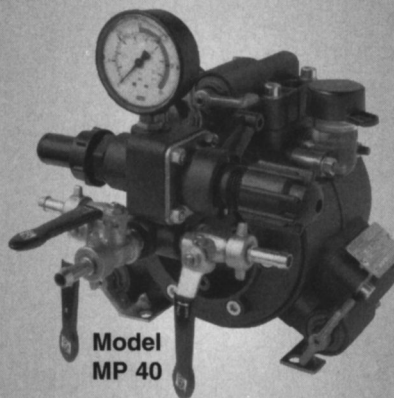
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soil basics - part 1

(continued from page 34)

On the opposite side of the equation are sand soils. Compaction and slow water absorption are seldom a problem, but water and nutrient retention are very low.

As a result of these tendencies, frequent fertilization and watering are necessary for optimum growth. High sand content soils need additional organic matter and, anytime the soils are worked, adding some type of organic matter helps to increase water and nutrient holding capabilities. Since both clay particles and decomposed plant organic material are electrically active and carry a negative charge, they can attract and hold positively charged particles of plant nutrients. This is one of the greatest advantages of adding plant humus to less-than-perfect soils.

The ideal soils for turf and ornamentals would probably be sandy loams, loamy sands or silty loam soils. All have good to excellent water infiltration rates but are porous enough to resist compaction.

The organic content of these soils is also high enough for good to excellent nutrient retention. Additional topdressing with either sand or compost can be a benefit following aeration.

ECONOMICS OF MODIFICATION. Changing or modifying soil is a very slow and often costly process. The soil is not a static entity and its content is changing constantly. Constructive changes are exceedingly slow. In fact, destructive changes like erosion can take away in one week of long rains what Mother Nature has taken hundreds of years to accomplish.

Natural soil build-up is so slow that soil may be considered a resource that is not renewable in our lifetime. It may take 100 to 150 years of optimum conditions to add a single inch of topsoil, so it becomes very important to conserve the soil that we have.

Modifying soil development can be a very expensive process. In most cases, the addition of less than 25 percent of the volume of the amendment will not produce the desired result. Massive changes in soil structure are only viable when extreme problems exist. If a property owner is struggling to grow a particular non-native plant on a marginal or poor soil and is willing to absorb

Take care when incorporating any soil enhancers to avoid soil layering, which could inhibit root growth and the movement of fertilizer, water and air.

the cost, soil modification can be the answer.

Pure sands or heavy clays will require up to 35 percent of an amendment to successfully correct problems. For heavily trafficked areas consisting of fine clays and silts, the amount of soil enhancers may be increased to 40 percent by volume to minimize problems. Silty loam, clay loams, loamy sands and sandy loams will require up to 30 percent of the amendment to successfully correct problems. "Ideal" soils such as sandy clays, loams and sandy clay loams can require up to 25 percent of an amendment to offset some problems.

Take care when incorporating any soil enhancers to avoid soil layering which could inhibit root growth and the movement of fertilizer, water and air. Since such modification is often a one-time shot for most permanent ornamentals, the amendments should be mixed well into the top soil. Fracturing or breaking the subsoil by tilling or deep spading will allow plant roots to extend deeply.

As with any service-oriented business, the more knowledgeable and professional the lawn or landscape contractor, the better service clients will receive.

Detailed soil type and location information can be obtained from the county extension service. Some simple map reading and footwork can confirm problem areas and offer you new opportunities for expanded services and a much more professional approach to your work.

The author is an industry consultant with Key Solutions, a division of Iris Sales & Solutions Inc., Rocky River, Ohio.



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