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FEBRUARY 1996

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#### Inside:

Low Maintenance Design

Mower Safety

Golf Course Market

Quality in Landscaping

10 Hiring Tips

The Value of Family

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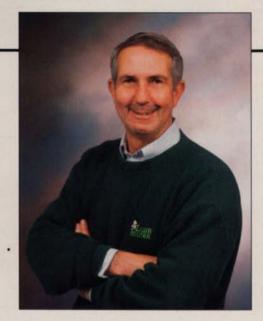
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# Lawn&Landscape

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T. J. Clayton, Pensacola, Fla.

Cover Photo





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#### Cover Story

The Value of Family

Strong family ties have helped Lawn Master become a fixture in Pensacola's market.



p. 28

Features

Making Green in Golf Course Maintenance

Odd hours, shortened seasons and eagle-eyed superintendents make golf course accounts challenging.

More Clients Want More for Less

Clients' requests for low maintenance landscapes are challenging contractors to find new ways to build value into desians.

Mower Accidents Don't Have to Happen

Manufacturers are constantly trying to make their mowers more safe, but safety ultimately is in the hands of the

Lessons From Mother Nature

\* Rain, wind, snow, hurricanes, drought and other weather extremes made 1995 a very challenging year for pest and disease stress in several areas of the United States.

**Quality in Landscaping: Make Them Say Wow!** 

Quality gurus tell us that constant improvement is the name of the game. But how do you constantly improve a landscape? One tangible goal is to delight the customer.

Ready, Aim, Hire!

It's not easy to find and keep good employees, but the lawn or landscape contractor who is prepared will have a jump

on the competition.

#### Florida Contractor Wins Sweepstakes

Jim Cleary Jr., owner of Cleary's Landscape & Lawn Service, was the recipient of \$20,000 in products in the Lawn & Landscape sweepstakes. See page 10 for details.





#### EDITOR'S NOTES

: : Sue Gibson Editor



f you're like me, you may have already forgotten some of your New Year's resolutions by the middle of February. I have to admit that the ones I've conveniently "forgotten" were also some of the tougher ones to accomplish. It's hard to focus on a list that long.

It reminds me of the current maneuvering going on in Washington over the balanced budget. At this writing, both sides are at an impasse and just making ominous rumblings about the issue being decided at the polls next November. Talk about a lack of focus! The participants seemed to have decided jointly to dodge that bullet and let us voters do all the hard work. I thought the issues had already been clarified by the electorate in the last election.

Just because the leadership of both parties has passed the buck doesn't mean that you have that luxury in your business. It's so hard to stay focused with all the distractions of gearing up for spring, hiring new people, purchasing, marketing and just getting the work done. As an owner or manager, you're responsible for all those tasks and I'm sure you're well aware that each requires a lot of your focus — yesterday.

We all have plates full of distractions that can keep us so busy we forget to focus on the central issue of doing our business well. So it helps to have that "vision thing" down pat, before you get even more distracted with the business of a busy spring. It helps to remember the special qualities that set your company apart in the marketplace.

When we interview the subjects of our cover profile stories, a standard question we ask is, "What makes your company different from your competition?" And the answer is always there, without hesitation. They know exactly what's special about their companies and their employees do, too.

If you're not sure what sets your business apart from the competition, focus on that right now. Make it your mid-February resolution and do it immediately. If your answer has something to do with the word "quality," you're on the right track. But if price is the only distinguishing element, ask yourself if you have any long-term goals for success. This is a service industry, and while many customers are lured into a relationship by price, many will also leave quickly if quality service isn't "Job 1."

A clear vision of the quality you bring to your customers, employees and suppliers will make all those day-to-day distractions less distracting. And you'll also have the satisfaction of accomplishing at least one resolution in 1996! — Susan Gibson

## <u>Lawn&Landscape</u>

#### EDITORIAL

Cindy Code Group Publisher e-mail: ccode@cerfnet.com

Susan Gibson Editor e-mail: 102770,56@compuserve.com

Paul Schrimpf Managing Editor

e-mail: schrimpf@cerfnet.com

Bob West

Assistant Editor

#### GRAPHICS/PRODUCTION

Mark Rook Creative Director
Charlotte Turcotte Art Director
Tracy Green Graphic Designer
Helen Duerr Production Coordinator
Lori Zachmann Coordinator
Carolyn Badger Graphic Image Artist

Rosalie Slusher Circulation

Rosalie Slusher Circulation Manager
Fran Franzak Books Manager

#### ADVERTISING/MARKETING

Maureen Mertz
1723 South Hill
Milford, Michigan 48381

Milford, Michigan 48381 810/685-2065 Fax: 810/685-2136

Kendra Greenwald
Tim McNichols
Account Manager
National Accounts Manager,
Specialty Chemicals
Kevin Gilbride
Account Representative

#### CORPORATE STAFF

Richard J. W. Foster President and CEO Christopher W. Foster Vice President/General

Jim Keefe Manager, Sales and Marketing
Lori Gray Director/Marketing
Database Operations

Jami Childs Production Manager Marco Urbanic MIS Director

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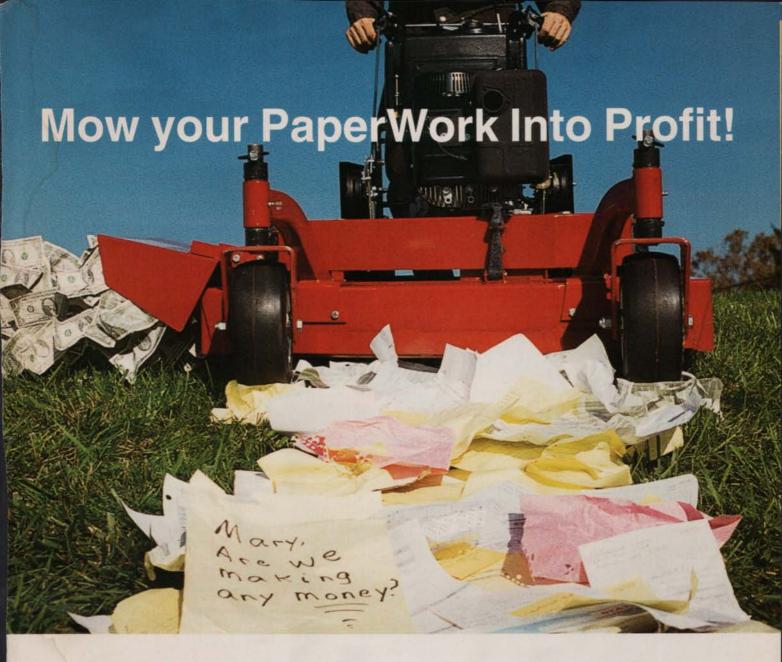
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#### MARKET TRENDS

#### WHOLESALE GROWERS RATE BIG

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS are most likely to buy their landscape materials from wholesale growers than other sources, according to new research done for Lawn & Landscape magazine. The independent survey, conducted by Research USA, showed that 66.9 percent of those surveyed usually purchase landscape materials from wholesale growers, while 22.5 percent use nursery retailers. The survey also noted that 14.7 percent of those surveyed use nursery brokers, 9.2 get their materials from a company-owned nursery and 3.8 percent get their materials elsewhere.

The survey also showed that the 1995 average expenditures for trees and ornamentals totaled \$26,340, while expenditures for bedding plants averaged \$10,450.

#### **REVEALING YOUR SOURCE...**



Survey results

companies are

indicated that more

offering profit sharing

and 401(k) plans to

their employees,

especially to those

employees on salary.

. . . . . . .

Source: Research USA

#### LABOR SURVEY: HOW DO YOU COMPARE?

IN THE November issue of Lawn & Landscape we focused our reader survey on the status of labor in the green industry. Who are your employees? What do you pay them? What benefits do you provide? More and more landscape companies are asking these questions, so we decided to ask them too, and here's what you said.

The average responding company has 27 full-time

employees and 17 seasonal employees. Nearly four times as many of these employees are paid hourly as are on salary (all figures are averages based on this survey's responses).

Entry-level laborers are earning \$6.59 an hour on the average with overall laborers earning \$7.74. Equipment operators are paid \$9 hourly and the highest rates go to foremen

at \$10.70 hourly and supervisors at \$13.32. Some foreman and supervisors are salaried employees, with the average foreman paid \$22,400 a year and supervisors paid \$29,726.

A significant number of companies are paying various benefits to hourly employees, with considerably

more salaried employees enjoying them. Health insurance is provided for 37 percent of the hourly employees and is shared for an additional 41 percent, while 41 percent of salaried employees receive coverage and 47 percent share the cost with their emplovers. Dental

and disability insurance coverages drop off substantially for all employees, with approximately 30 percent of the hourly employees receiving at least some dental and some disability insurance and about 40 percent of those on salary being covered.

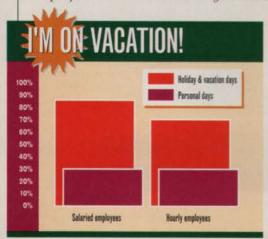
Paid holidays and vacation days are provided for most hourly employees (about 70 percent) and

nearly all salaried employees (89 percent), while personal days are much less common (about 30 percent average for all employees). Both groups receive about six paid holidays annually and 10 paid vacation days.

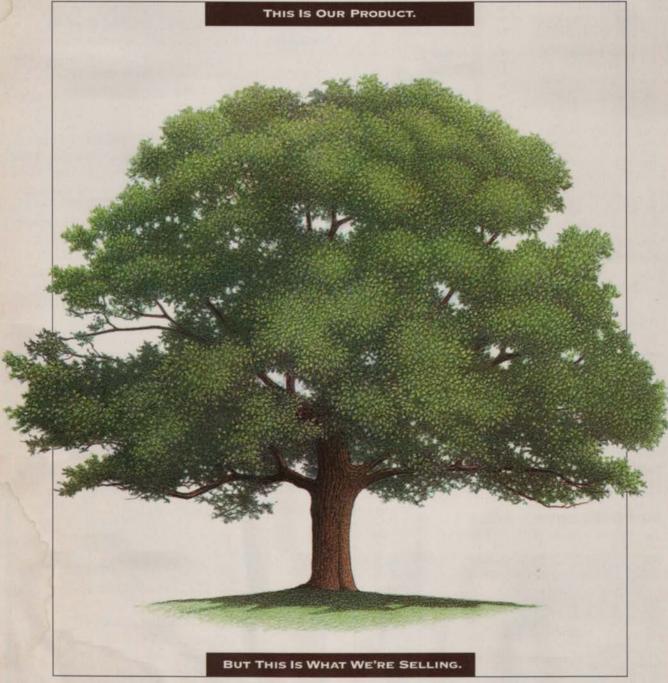
Profit sharing and 401(k)

plans are becoming more common among landscape companies, with 16 percent of hourly employees taking part in each type. Among salaried employees, 48 percent enjoy profit sharing and 36 percent contribute to a 401(k).

(continued on page 8)







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#### MARKET TRENDS

(continued from page 6)



#### POWER EQUIPMENT SHIPMENT STATS ARE MIXED FOR 1995

The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute reported mostly good news about shipments of lawn and garden equipment last year, but disappointing estimates in commercial turf care equipment shipments.

Overall shipments of key lawn and garden products were estimated at 7,944,000 units, a 2 percent increase over 1994 estimates. Shipments of riding garden tractors increased by 20 percent over 1994,

# GALENDAR

that your meeting date is published, send an announcement at least. To 12 wee to Lawn & Landscape, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113. FEB. 20 1996 Landscape and Turf Seminar, Dayton, Ohio. Contact: Plant Health Care Technologies, 614/548-6003.

FEB. 20-22 Illinois Landscape Contractors Association Winter Seminar '96, Lisle, III. Contact: 708/932-8443.

FEB. 21 PLCAA Regional Workshop, Valley Forge, Pa. Contact: 800/458-3466.

FEB. 26-MAR. 1 University of Wisconsin School of Turfgrass Management, Madison. Contact: 608/263-1672.

FEB. 27 Michigan Arborist Association Seminar: Tree Insects & Diseases, Southfield. Contact: 800/622-4055. FEB. 27-29 Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference and Trade Show, Monroeville. Contact: 412/796-5692.

FEB 27-MAR. 1 International Erosion Control Association Conference and Trade Exposition, Seattle, Wash. Contact: 800/455-4322.

FEB. 28 New Jersey Landscape '96 Secaucus. Contact: 201/664-6310.

FEB. 28-29 Turf and Grounds Exposition II. Contact: New York State Turfgrass Association, 800/873-8873.

FEB. 28-29 Southern Illinois Grounds Maintenance School, Collinsville. Contact: Ron Cornwell, 618/692-9434.

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#### MARKET TRENDS

MAR. 1-2 ALCA Masters in Management for the Landscape Industry, Chicago. Contact: 703/620-6363.

MAR. 13 Michigan Arborist Association Seminar: Tree Insects & Diseases, Southfield. Contact: 800/622-4055.

MAR. 14 Tree Health Management, Phoenix. Contact: Artistic Arborist, 602/263-8889.

MAR. 15 Tree Health Management, Climbing & Rigging, Portland, Ore. Contact: Pruett Inc., 800/635-4294.

MAR. 21-24 ALCA Student Field Days, San Luis Obispo, Calif. Contact: 800/395-2522. JUL. 25-27 Turfgrass Producers International Summer Field Day, Sacramento, Calif. Contact: 708/705-9898.

JUL. 28-30 International Lawn, Garden & Power Equipment EXPO, Louisville, Ky. Contact: 800/588-8767.

AUG. 9-11 Southern Nurserymen's Association SNA '96, Atlanta. Contact: 770/973-6363.

AUG. 16-18 TAN-MISSLARK Show, Houston. Contact: 512/280-5182.

AUG. 20 Wisconsin Turfgrass Field Day, Madison. Contact: 608/845-6536. followed by front engine lawn tractors at 15 percent. Walk-behind rotary tillers jumped 11 percent, while rear engine riding mowers struggled, falling by 5 percent. Just under 6 million walk-behind rotary mowers were shipped, a drop of 1 percent.

The estimates of commercial turf care equipment, performed for just the second year, showed a 6 percent decrease in shipments of commercial walk-behind units and no change in shipments of commercial riding units. The OPEI will be provid-

#### **MISSION STATEMENT:**

AWN & 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.

ing a forecast of riding and intermediate walk-behind commercial unit shipments in the near future.

#### POSTING SIGNS





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**USE READER SERVICE #13** 



#### L&L BOOSTS STAFF WITH WEST AND GILBRIDE

Lawn & Landscape is pleased to announce the addition of two new people on our staff: Bob West as



assistant editor and Kevin Gilbride as account representative.

West is a 1995 graduate of Ohio Weslevan University with a

Bachelor of Arts degree in English and journalism. In his role as assistant editor,

## FLORIDA CONTRACTOR

Zeneca.





1995

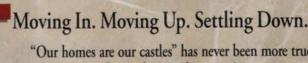
JIM CLEARY JR., owner of Cleary's Landscape & Lawn Service, Lakeland, Fla., weathered the hot sun and drenching rains last summer and is now poised for a fresh start. And he couldn't be any luckier. He'll begin this year as the recipient of a \$20,000 product giveaway sponsored by Lawn & Landscape, The Toro Co., Husqvarna and

Cleary's name was drawn from thousands of contest entries, according to Lori Gray, Lawn & Landscape's director of marketing/ database operations. "We received entry forms from lawn and landscape contractors throughout the United States and Canada, more than 6,000 in all," she said. "The winning entry was selected by a random drawing of all the entries we received."

"I don't win many things, so I'm definitely surprised," said an elated Cleary, "You don't know how much I can use this. I'm stunned, and I'm









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in need of some equipment."

Jim Cleary Jr.

Cleary started his lawn maintenance company in 1984 servicing high-end residential accounts in and around Lakeland. While lawn maintenance represents the lion's share of his business, he's steadily

expanding into both landscape installation and irrigation. His firm subcontracts pest control work.

"We were always recognized as a lawn maintenance company, but now we're gaining a reputation with our designs and installation work," he said.

Cleary's has grown to 13 employees year-round and

expects 1995 sales to reach \$600,000. The firm has experienced consistent growth, increasing by 10 percent in 1993 and 40 percent in 1994.

"I wish it was better, but overall it was a good year," Cleary said. "We're just trying to maintain our service level and make steady progress and growth. It seems the larger we get the harder it is to keep and find good people."

His firm made 300 residential service calls to lawn maintenance customers in 1994 with an average residential square footage of 12,000. Cleary's also performed about 50 commercial/industrial service calls in 1994 averaging 43,560 square feet.

Originally from Albany, N.Y., Cleary and his wife moved to Florida about 15 years ago. The shop sits on three acres and is minutes from his home.

he will handle a variety of writing and editing duties, including coverage of industry trade shows and special editorial projects.

Gilbride
is a 1992
graduate
of John
Carroll
University with a
Bachelor
of Science de-



Kevin Gilbride

ence degree in business administration. He will work closely with Kendra Greenwald, account manager, on advertising accounts in the Midwest and western United States.

(continued on page 16)





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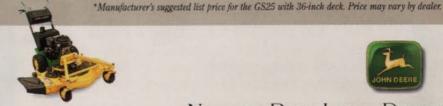
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#### MARKET TRENDS

(continued from page 13)

#### LESCO PURCHASES AGWAYTURF UNIT

LESCO Inc., Cleveland, Ohio, announced the acquisition of the Pro-Lawn division of Agway, Syracuse, N.Y., in early January. Pro-Lawn has annual revenues of \$30 million supplying a variety of turf care products to golf courses and commercial landscape contracting firms.

"We believe this move strengthens our position in the strategically important northeastern U.S. market," William Foley, LESCO's president and CEO said.

Paul Arling, acting chief

#### **ASSOCIATION NEWS**

he Responsible Industry for a
Sound Environment elected new
members and officers to its board at
its annual meeting. New members are: James
Champion, Riverdale Chemical; Janet Giesselman,
Rohm and Haas; and Trevor Thorley, Bayer Corporation. New officers for 1996 include chairman Richard
Holzschu, DowElanco, vice chairman Tommy Reeves,
Oldham Chemicals and treasurer Trevor Thorley.

The American Association of Nurserymen has signed up 31 state/regional associations as members of its AAN Lighthouse Fund. The Fund was established to advance the interests of industry businesses by

increasing companies' understanding of pertinent issues and developing a grassroots legislative network.

A new educational program is available from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America to assist firms with media relations presentations. The ALCA Public Relations Kit features a manual on the benefits of plants and landscaping, news clips, presentation tips, a slide show and script and research facts. For additional information about purchasing the kit, contact ALCA at 800/395-2522.

The Professional Lawn Care Association of America announced Massey Services as its 1995 Community Service Award winner. Massey was honored for sponsoring Earth Day activities in the Maitland, Fla., community last year.

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**USE READER SERVICE #19** 

financial officer at LESCO, said Pro-Lawn will continue to operate as it has been in regards to all customer sales and service.

#### FAIRVIEW PREEMPTION CASE MOTION IS DENIED

A court case in Ohio could have considerable ramifications for lawn care companies in the state and possibly throughout the country. Barefoot Grass Lawn Service was cited last June by Fairview Park, a suburb of Cleveland, for failing to comply with a city notification ordinance. The company's motion to have the charges dismissed was denied and it will now go to trial.

Barefoot claims the city's charges are more strict than Ohio's state laws, and this type of preemption is not allowed in Ohio, nor any other state in the country.

Barefoot is receiving support in the case from the Ohio Professional Applicators for Responsible Regula-

The Barefoot grass

case could affect

companies nation-

wide as Barefoot

claims the city's

ordinance is more

strict than the state

ordinance thus pre-

empting it, which is

illegal in every state.

tion and the Ohio Lawn Care Association.

Jim Betts, executive director of OPARR, said that Fairview Park has cited six other companies under the same ordinance since citing Barefoot, all of which OPARR is delaying action on until after Barefoot's case.

"What this litigation does is point out to other members of the industry that we are going to do

our best to support the industry and work to strike down these local ordinances that might violate the preemption statute," said Betts. A trial date had was not set at press time.

#### SUPERTURF FOR SUPER BOWL

For one day at least, it was the most famous turf in the world, and International Seeds supplied it. International Seeds' Ph.D°. Perennial Ryegrass Blend was used as the seed for Super Bowl XXX. This marks the 11th Super Bowl appearance for the blend.

"Anybody who thinks the Super Bowl is just another football game should think again," said George Toma, turf consultant for the National Football League. "Ph.D. Perennial Ryegrass Blend is selected for several reasons. It



#### MARKET TRENDS

creates beautiful, deep green turf and is tough enough to handle the punishment."

#### DOWELANCO, MICRO FLO SETTLE LAW SUIT

DowElanco and Micro Flo settled their dispute over a 1993 lawsuit brought by DowElanco against Micro Flo regarding chlorpyrifos insecticides. DowElanco claimed Micro Flo violated the Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act by not compensating DowElanco for its product registration data and also violated the law by misrepresenting its products as

(continued on page 20)

#### TRANSITION

**Robert Yarborough** was appointed northern division professional products manager for Terra International, handling the turf and ornamental business.

Dane Scag has left Snapper as director of the commercial products division.

Ciba hired **Dennis Shepard** as a technical support specialist.

**Douglas Counts** joined The Davey Tree Expert Company as national accounts representative with the commercial services division.

Vigoro named Jay Ferguson chief financial officer of its consumer and professional products group, and Ronald Gagne as vice president and general manager of the group's

professional products unit.

Sandoz Agro

promoted

**Dennis Shepard** 



Terri Lohmann

Gene Hintze to turf and ornamental business manager for its specialty business unit. Terri Lohmann was named marketing services manager.

James Ormond joined Barringer & Barringer as vice president and now heads the company's new landscape management division.

Stihl Southeast appointed Randy Lail vice president of finance and resources, and Rob Sosnowski district manager for south Florida.

American Cyanamid named Curtis Clark sales manager of the turf, ornamental and pest control group.

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#### MARKET TRENDS

CORRECTION: The photograph on page 85 of our November, 1995 issue should be credited to Anchor Wall Systems.

(continued from page 18)

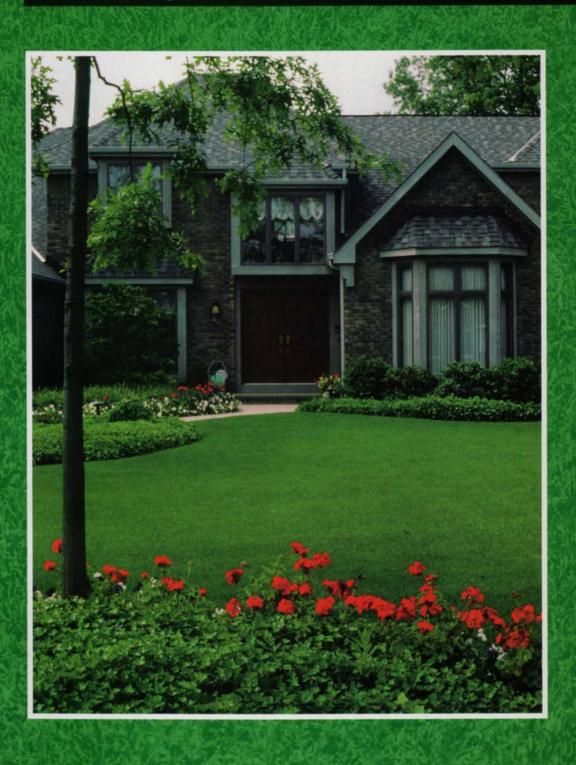
containing DowElanco's Dursban insecticide. As part of the undisclosed settlement, Micro Flo agreed not to commit such acts in the future while not admitting to DowElanco's claims.

#### IN BUSINESS

artners Quality Lawn Care, Easton, Mass., was purchased by Barefoot Grass Lawn Care... **Emerald Green Lawn Care** was purchased Shrub and Turf, Athens, Ga...Natural Lawns Inc., Merrifield, Va., purchased Willis Lawn Care of Fredericksburg, Va...The new name for Lebanon Chemical, Lebanon, Pa., is Lebanon Seaboard Corp...Jacobsen Division of Textron Inc., Racine, Wis., has formed an alliance with Gravely International, Brillion, Wis., for product distribution in Europe and Australia...Becker-Underwood, Ames, Iowa, and Plant Health Care, Pittsburgh, announced a joint venture to provide biologically derived specialty products to the golf and turf industries. The new company, Turf Health Care L.C., will be headquartered in Ames, lowa...The Garick Corp., Cleveland, announced the development of the Gar-Gro division to supply bulk products directly to growers...L.R. Nelson, Peoria, III., purchased Rain-Matic, Omaha, Neb...Softdesk, Henniker, N.H., will distribute design software from Integrated Digital Products, Eden Prairie, Minn.

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Maintaining healthy, weed-free turf is as important to the environment for cooling, filtration, and erosion control as it is to the aesthetic value of a home.

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- 2,4-D based or 2,4-D free products.
- Esters or Amines.
- The right mix for your turf situation.



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- Dicamba-free
- Totally water soluble amine formulation
- No measuring, mixing, pouring or handling of concentrates
- No triple rinsing or disposal problems
- Cool and warm season turf

#### TRIPLET® W.S. (2,4-D, Mecoprop, Dicamba)



- Proven performance improved formulation and packaging
- Totally water soluble amine formulation
- No measuring, mixing, pouring or handling of concentrates
- No triple rinsing or disposal problems
- Cool and warm season turf

#### TRI-POWER®DRY (MCPA, Mecoprop, Dicamba)



- 2,4-D free
- Highly soluble acid formulation
- No measuring, mixing, pouring or handling of concentrates
- No triple rinsing or disposal problems
- Cool and warm season turf

#### Liquid, 2,4-D Based Herbicides

#### TRI-ESTER"(2,4-D, Mecoprop, Dichlorprop)



- Ester formulation
- Improved cool weather weed control
- Increased efficacy on hard-to-control species
- Dicamba-free
- Cool and warm season turf

#### TRIPLET (2,4-D, Mecoprop, Dicamba)



- Amine formulation
- One product for all use sites
- Flexible rate ranges
- Effective, economical broadleaf weed control
- Cool and warm season turf

#### TRIAMINE (2,4-D, Mecoprop, Dichlorprop)



- Amine formulation
- Dicamba-free
- Tank-mix compatible
- Effective, economical broadleaf weed control
- Cool and warm season turf

#### Liquid, 2,4-D Free Herbicides

#### TRI-ESTER" II (MCPA, Mecoprop, Dichlorprop)



- Ester formulation
- 2,4-D and Dicamba-free
- Improved cool weather weed control
- Increased efficacy on hard-to-control species
- Cool and warm season turf

#### TRI-POWER® (MCPA, Mecoprop, Dicamba)



- 2,4-D free
- Amine formulation
- Low use rates and flexible rate ranges
- Effective, economical broadleaf weed control
- Cool and warm season turf

#### TRIAMINE II (MCPA, Mecoprop, Dichlorprop)



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#### **ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM**









HE BEST WAY. Will integrated pest management ever become the standard by which all lawn and landscape contractors service their customers, or will it stay a great concept that never really gets off the ground?

This question has led legislators to ask whether it best to implement hard and fast regulations or develop guidelines that are more voluntary. Industry lobbyists have argued that mandates are overburdening and unnecessary, while environmentalists and other groups believe nothing will get done without having the enforcable rules in place.

West Virginia is now grappling with the issue of IPM at schools and daycare centers, and industry groups are getting involved in affecting the outcome.

Last year, the state legislature passed a law requiring the Department of Agriculture to develop rules regarding the use of IPM in schools and day-care centers. They complied, handing down mandatory compliance regulations to an interim legislative committee for consideration.

According to Peggy
Powell, compliance assistant specialist with the state
Department of Agriculture,
the committee recommended the rules be withdrawn. Despite this, state
Department of Agriculture
Chairman Gus Douglass decided the rules should be
presented as is to the full



legislature, feeling that not doing so would violate the previously passed law.

On the other side. Powell said the legislative committee felt the rules did not factor in the additional financial burden that would be incurred by contractors for implementing IPM, and the state for enforcing it. Industry groups who concur with this opinion are Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, the Professional Lawn Care Association Of America and the National Pest Control Association. according to Allen James, executive director of RISE.

The legislature reconvened on Jan. 11, and it was unknown when the

rules issue would be considered. lames said that RISE. in cooperation with PLCAA and NPCA, will

be working with the legislature to rework the mandates or recommend new wording to make the legislation voluntary.

to develop an Environmental Stewardship Program for the association. Tom Delaney said companies

of IPM at schools and day-care centers, and industry groups are getting involved in affecting the outcome.

GREEN STEWARDSHIP, How can you market good environmental practices in your lawn care business? Thanks to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, PLCAA may have the answer.

EPA recently awarded a \$25,000 grant to PLCAA

West Virginia is now grappling with the issue

will be assigned points based on agronomic and safety practices and other activities that reduce risks associated with pesticides.

Companies will be recognized in one of three categories: apprentice steward, steward and master steward. IPM-PHASIS. The movement toward the use of integrated pest management, as well as public awareness of IPM as a turfgrass management tool, is increasing significantly, predicted David Shetlar, extension entomologist with The Ohio State University, at the recent Ohio Turfgrass Foundation's Conference.

Shetlar said IPM is receiving increased attention on the East Coast, especially in Marvland, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersev, where he attended a symposium on IPM that was requested by the public.

Shetlar encouraged contractors in the audience to understand and incorporate IPM practices.

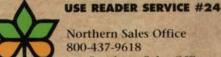


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Strong family
ties and industry
involvement
have helped
Lawn Master
become a fixture in
Pensacola's market.

By Paul Schrimpf

The Value of OEWILLIAMS, president of Lawn Master Inc., has always known exactly what he wanted his company to be. In the third generation of a fourth-generation family rooted in the Pensacola, Fla., community, Williams' priority has been to build his company to endure the long haul on loyal clients and gradual growth. His success has not been measured by dramatic increases in sales and clients or the addition of branch offices, but the satisfaction of customers.

Using the advice of industry professionals in state and national organizations, training from regional universities and the support of his extended family, his business grew from three employees doing chemical lawn care to 15 full time and 21 peak season employees performing lawn care and landscape maintenance services.

DOING THE HOMEWORK. For 22 years, Williams had a secure job in the quality control department of an American Cyanamid plant in Milton, Fla. He also, however, inherited an entrepreneurial desire from his father, who owned and operated a successful men's clothing store and a variety of restaurants throughout his life.

So at 43, with the financial backing and business help of brothers-in-law Ray and Ken Weekley, Williams went about learning the lawn care industry.

"Both of my brothers-in-law have backgrounds in business," said Williams. "Ray is a sod grower in Virginia, and Ken is a senior account agent with a national insurance company. We took time off from work and on weekends to travel to state and national trade shows. We talked to many folks in the industry who provided a lot of great advice."

Coinciding with the beginnings of Lawn Mas-







(Above) Joe
Williams, along
with sons Jeff
(left) and
Scott, has built
a successful
family business
through slow,
measured
growth and
staying focused
on what the
company does
best.

Credit: T.J. Clayton, Pensacola, Fla.



ter was the founding of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America, which Williams said was an invaluable resource for planning many initial business details. He joined in 1980 and attended the first national conference.

Williams also took advantage of regional education opportunities, joining the Florida Turfgrass Association and taking a turfgrass short course at Mississippi State University. Armed with knowledge and resources, Williams opened up shop in 1981.

The initial ownership of the company was a 60-20-20 split, with the brothers-in-law becoming silent partners. They continued to provide advice and direction while Williams went about running the company.

FOCUSING IN. With three employees, including his wife, Elaine, Williams started stomping for business. He took out an advertisement in the telephone directory, mailed out brochures and relied heavily on positive referrals.

The most important thing Williams was able to do was to maintain his focus on the goal — to be a professional, high-quality lawn care company that provides top service to customers.

Simple things, such as cleaning trucks every day and insisting on clean uni-

continued on page 32)

#### Lawn Master Inc.

HEADQUARTERS: Pensacola, Fla. FOUNDED: 1981

**OWNER:** Joe Williams

PRIMARY SERVICES: The company is divided into lawn care and landscape maintenance divisions. About 85 percent of the lawn care business is chemical, while 15 percent is mowing. The lawn care clients are 75 percent residential and 25 percent commercial. The maintenance customer breakdown is 80 percent commercial and 20 residential.

EMPLOYEES: 15 year round, 21 peak season

1995 SALES: \$1.3 million

1996 PROJECTION: 5 to 7 percent increase

#### **Executive Summary**

THE CONCEPT: Provide sound and superior quality lawn and landscape services ensuring customer satisfaction along the Gulf Coast. FUTURE CHALLENGES: Continue steady growth while maintaining a consistent level of customer quality.

#### The President

#### JOE WILLIAMS

AGE: 57

BACKGROUND: Worked in quality control and research and development for American Cyanamid for 22 years before starting business. Served on the board of directors of the Professional Lawn Care Association of America from 1991-95, as the PLCAA Education Committee chairman 1993-95 and as the PLCAA representative to the Green Industry Expo 1993-95. Served as president of the Alabama Turfgrass Association 1986-87, and as a Florida Turfgrass Association member since 1980. EQUITY: Joe Williams owns 80 percent; the remaining 20 percent is split between Jeff and Scott Williams. two of his five children.







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(continued from page 29)

forms made a big difference in an industry still developing professionalism.

company Ambassadors. Another essential element to professionalism is a quality base of employees. Williams has long recognized that employees build image, engage in communication and, when properly trained, can be the primary reason why a customer is loyal to Lawn Master.

It's no accident that more than half of the employees of Lawn Master have been there at least 10 years.

"One of the biggest challenges is keeping quality people, but we do provide incentives, such as vacation and sick leave, seven paid holidays, medical and dental insurance and profit sharing. It's hard to put a dollar value on these things, but I think it's important and it is one of the reasons we have held onto employees."

Williams also creates incentive programs that focus on the company philosophy of service and quality. Most of the employees are paid on an hourly basis, and are also compensated based on incentive promotions that change from time to time.

Employees receive an incentive for meeting a base amount of square footage or number of lawns per day in production, and the company holds both sales and cancellation contests, as well as contests based on customer satisfaction. Technicians also receive commissions for sales they make.

Another important factor is empowerment. Through communication with managers and training at regional university short courses, employees understand both the technical and inter-

Along with an hourly wage, employees are paid incentives based on the company philosophy of service and quality, such as total daily production and fewest cancellations.

'We took time off from work and on weekends to travel to state and national trade shows. We talked to many folks in the industry who provided a lot of great advice.'

personal aspects of the business, and are able to handle problems in the field without constant supervision.

"Our employees are our ambassadors, and we let them know that they are responsible for keeping the customer and for meeting their expectations for a beautiful lawn," he explained.

"We have regular weekly meetings to keep informed of feedback from customers. We update them on problems they may encounter, such as diseases and pests, so they can communicate this to the customer — we constantly give and get feedback so we can respond to problems quickly.

"It takes about three years for us to really feel comfortable when employees go out on their own," Williams said.

A new employee at Lawn Master will ride with a crew for several months before they get the opportunity to go out alone. "For the first couple of weeks, a new employee will go out with an experienced person and just observe — maybe pull a hose or push a spreader," said Williams. "Then, they move into shrub care, applying fertilizer and insect control on shrubs. We train them

in-house on identification of shrubs and problems that occur at different times of the year."

Along with in-house training, Williams sends all the applicators to the same short course that he attended at Mississippi State University.

EXPANSION AND CHANGE. Over the years, Lawn Master has been able to add about one full-time employee each year. But it became apparent that a more significant expansion was in order in 1987.

The move toward "one-stop shopping" through one contractor for commercial clients was growing, and Williams was faced with adding a landscape maintenance division or losing business.

Again, Williams turned to PLCAA for advice on expanding the business. "It was much more difficult to expand in maintenance than in lawn care, and at times we questioned the decision, but by the fifth year we turned a profit," he said.

In 1993, with the business stabilized, Williams' brothers-in-law sold their stake in the company back to Williams. He, in turn, gave his two sons in the business, Scott and Jeff, 10 percent each. Scott is serving as the office manager for Lawn Master, and Jeff as the production manager.

ERIN AND OPAL. The 1995 hurricane season was one to remember in the Florida panhandle, where two major hurricanes tore up homes, buildings and the landscape. There was a lot of opportunity for increased business through cleanup in the aftermath of the storm, but Williams kept the crews focused on taking care of customers and not pushing them to do more than they could handle.

Hurricane Erin caused massive damage to trees throughout Lawn Master's service area, creating stress for both turf and ornamentals. "It's been a challenging year — the stress on the landscape has been tremendous," he said. "Shade turf that was under trees is now in sun, and the trees that were damaged heavily

(continued on page 34)





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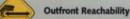


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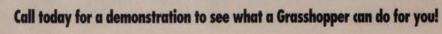
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(continued from page 32)

will probably die very gradually. We won't see the full effect of these storms for maybe two or three years."

LOTS OF HELP. As an active member of state and national organizations, including the Florida and Alabama Turfgrass Associations and PLCAA, Joe Williams said he owes much of his success in business to the agronomic and business training and networking opportunities these organizations provide. He discussed this in a recent interview:

Q. How have you used the state associations?

A. Initially for everything — the state associations used to be smaller, but they have grown a lot and they offer many programs. Most of them are agronomic. The states do their own research, so I am able to keep up with the latest problems

'Our employees are our ambassadors, and we let them know that they are responsible for keeping the customer and for meeting their expectations for a beautiful lawn'.

in the lawn and landscape in our area.

Q. How has PLCAA helped?

A. From the business standpoint of the lawn and landscape industry, you can't get a better organization than PLCAA. It keeps you on top of legislation, helps you with education and addresses business issues that the state associations do not get involved with. PLCAA has several workshops they have been putting on the last couple of years that are reaching out to people that need to improve their skills as a lawn care operator.

Q. How does networking help?
A. Personally, meeting people in these

organizations motivates me. I think that people who want to get anything out of the lawn care and landscape industry need to be involved in these national organizations.

• Q. As chairman of PLCAA's education committee, what accomplishments are you most proud of?

A. We were able to start regional workshops two years ago, and they have been a big success. We also were able to bring a full-time technical resource specialist on board. PLCAA today is able to offer members quality educational programs.

Lawn Master Inc. is located at 3200 E. Johnson Avenue, Pensacola, Fla., 32514. Phone is 904/476-1601.

The author is Managing Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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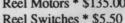


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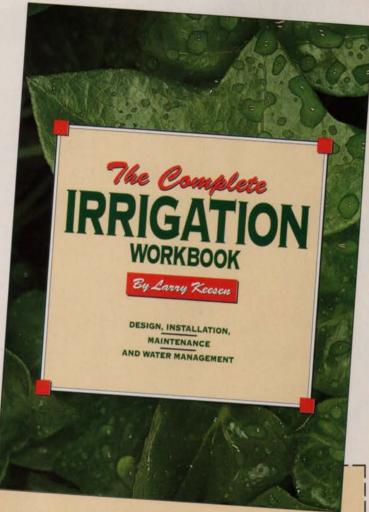
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## Making Enough Green in

## Golf Course Maintenance

Odd hours, shortened seasons and eagle-eyed superintendents make golf course accounts challenging.

By Kevin Tanzillo

IGH-POWERED executives aren't the only ones making big-money deals on the golf course. There can be riches for lawn and landscape contractors out on the back nine—but only if they understand the differences between those 18-hole expanses of green and their other commercial customers.

Golf course work is more demanding, the customers more critical and if the contractor doesn't make the right moves, he could create an enemy in the golf course superintendent. But those contractors who do the work seem to like it, although they say it usually isn't any more profitable than other markets.

REBUILDING WORK. At Eastern Land Management Inc. in Stamford, Conn., golf course work accounts for some 40 percent of rev-

enue for the \$2 million a year commercial maintenance company, said Bruce Moore, president and CEO.

The company, which has worked with golf courses for about 10 years, does mostly construction and renovation and is exploring golf course maintenance work. Jobs are usually short ones, but there are also long-term contracts, such as a sand bunker renovation involving revamping 18 holes over three years.

"Golf course work, more than any other landscape work, is tedious and detail-oriented," Moore said. "That attention to detail is what the superintendents require."

One difference Moore cites in golf course work is the knowledgeable customer.

"You are dealing with a superintendent who is educated in turfgrass, as opposed to a

commercial situation, where you may deal with a facilities manager who probably knows what he wants, but not in detail."

The time factor is also critical, he pointed out. In Connecticut, the golf season runs from April to the end of October, and unless the work involved is a

(continued on page 40)



Golf course maintenance work tends to be more demanding, and the customers more critical than other types of landscape contracting.



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## golf courses

(continued from page 38)

major project, clubs don't want play disrupted.

"Our window of opportunity is in October and November," he explained. "That gives the area a chance to recover, and then there is a month or so in the spring where the seed can germinate and the sod can root, and specific holes will be open on time," he explained

Moore's advice is to remember that "golf course work is very demanding. The expectations are high and when you are finished with the work, it has to look like nothing was ever disturbed."

FROM A TO Z. At ISS Landscape Management Services Inc. in Orlando, Fla., golf courses represent about 20 percent of the business. Ron Schmoyer, president, said the company has been doing the work — "anything from A to Z" — for about nine years.

Schmoyer explained this type of outsourcing is the wave of the future, because of the expertise an outside company can offer.

"I was in golf course maintenance early in my career," he noted. "The focus of a superintendent is turf. But there is more to a golf course. You have ornamentals, trees and shrubs and

landscaping, especially in areas around the clubhouse.

"An organization like ours has a lot of specialists and we can use them to solve problems, unlike an in-house operation where a club manager has to wear many hats."

Schmoyer said golf course maintenance is on a par with other commercial work. It is usually a seven-day-a-week job, but so are some commercial properties. Most fine turf mowing is done in the morning, with mowing of the fairways and roughs done during play.

## Superintendents:

## Handle With Care

OME contractors who service golf courses say the course superintendent can be a friend or an enemy, depending in part how the contractor handles the relationship. Ron Schmoyer of ISS Landscape Management Services said there is resistance on the part of superintendents and club managers, but "the wall is weakening. Five or six years ago, I would have said that in my lifetime I would never see country clubs look at outsourcing. Now a lot of them are looking at it."

Superintendents need to fear outsourcing "only if they aren't doing what they are supposed to be doing, if they are not responding to the membership's needs and desires," Schmoyer said.

However, Bruce Moore of Eastern Land Management reported no resistance from superintendents. "Sometimes we are even met with open arms," Moore recalled. "The superintendents may have had to fight with the members to let a contractor come in because they didn't want to do the work themselves.

"Others are concerned, if they haven't worked with a contractor before, about what they are going to get. Their jobs are on the line every day; it is a very difficult position. But they are coming to realize that we can often get in and get a job done more quickly and maybe better than they can with their own people. Then they can concentrate their crews on maintaining the course."

**SUPERINTENDENTS SPEAK UP.** Bob Farren, assistant director of golf course and grounds maintenance at Pinehurst Resort in Pinehurst, N.C., which boasts eight courses, said he didn't see any reason for conflict between contractors and superintendents. "Maybe I am naive in thinking we all get along well," he said, but "the experiences I have had have been good, working with various landscape contractors.

"The biggest issue is communication between the two parties. The superintendent always has his interests at heart with what is going on within the property boundaries. He may be a little defensive until the communications are in place."

A contractor and a superintendent can even be allies, Farren said, and part of that depends on how the relationship begins. "If the contractor approaches the superintendent it's one thing, but if he approaches the club president or owner with a proposal for maintaining and mowing, something that is within the superintendent's domain, that is setting things up for a conflict."

The superintendent, Farren added, needs to be in on the ground floor of all new project installation decisions as well. "If he has been left out of the loop he might feel a little put out, especially if the contractor will design a landscape that is up to the superintendent to maintain once it is finished."

Golf course work is at least equal to the profitability of other commercial work at ISS, Schmoyer said, and the company plans to pursue more of it.

"We have added a salesperson specifically for golf, and we do plan to move outside Florida during 1996. It will be a vital part of our growth moving forward," he predicted.

GROWING SEGMENT. C. Caramanico & Sons Inc., in Springfield, Pa., has been in business 50 years and has done golf course work for the past five years. It has

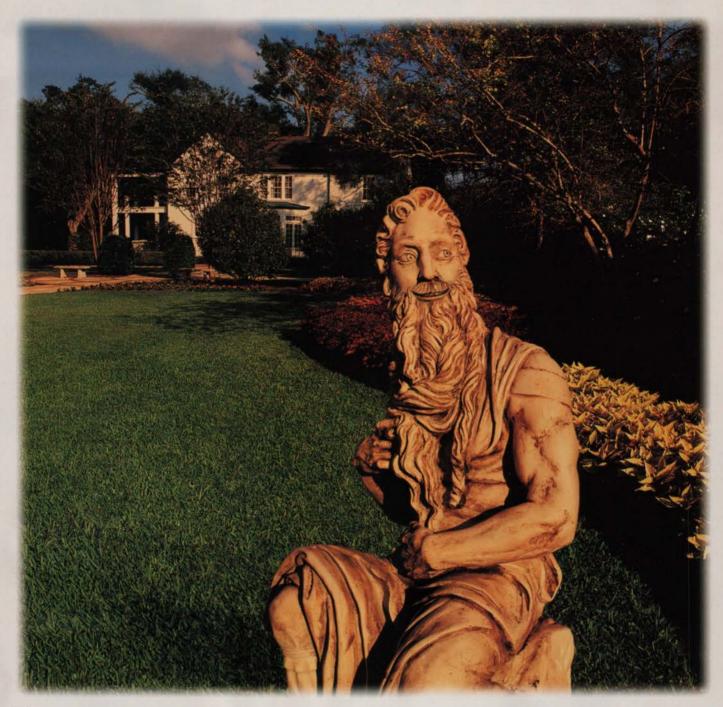
grown to a 15 percent share of the company's business. So far, the company does construction work — building tees, greens and bunkers — at courses within 100 miles.

Mike Caramanico, company president, said he likes golf course work because "this may be one of the few aspects of commercial landscaping where you might be able to sell some artistic ability as opposed to just being the low bid.

"In a lot of cases you do have to be the low bid, but your track record and capa-

(continued on page 42)

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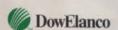


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(continued from page 40)

bilities can help. I still have some of the same superintendents I worked for five years ago call me to shape mounds for them," he added.

While courses may be good for the creative side, they can be tough on the business side, Caramanico said.

"Bidding golf course work can be precarious. Sometimes there is a difference between what the course needs and what it can afford. Therein lies the stress. The superintendent will tell you what he needs, but then he tells you he doesn't want the hole out of play that long."

The solution, he explained, is to add plenty of options in the bid. "You want them to look at you as the most versatile contractor."

The different grasses, plant materials and landscape style on a golf course shouldn't challenge a contractor,



Caraminco said, in part because the superintendent usually specifies that.

"At least half the time the superintendent is asking you to bid on a solution he has already come up with. He knows the drainage and the play and he knows where he is getting his pain and usually he knows how to solve it."

Professional Grounds Inc. in Lorton, Va., does some golf course turf applications and fertilizing, and the work is a small segment of the company's overall

With installation work. superintendents usually specify the grasses, plant material and landscape style.

commercial and residential focus.

Bill Trimmer, owner and president,

said his company doesn't actively solicit golf course work.

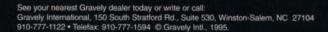
"They call us," Trimmer explained. "Usually it is a resource problem with them, maybe a key person has left or they don't have a certified applicator on staff. We come in on a temporary basis. They are always looking for someone who has certified people on staff. We have an agronomist and a horticulturist and that's important to them."

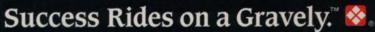
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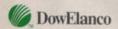
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(continued from page 42)

When to do the work is a challenge, Trimmer added, but he said the odd hours don't cause personnel problems. "We do other tasks in our maintenance division that mean we have to be out at unusual hours, so that is not a problem. Our applicators get out much earlier than our maintenance and mowing crews. There is always the environmental issue too; the fewer people that see us apply chemicals, the better off we are."

Trimmer's advice: "You had better have the credentials to do the job. If you make a mistake on a golf course it is very visible and you will hear about it."

Ruppert Landscape Co., based in Ashton, Md., has a dozen branches from Atlanta to New Jersey and is actively seeking more golf course customers.

Don Jarratt, vice president and director of landscape management for the 'An organization like ours has a lot of specialists and we can use them to solve problems, unlike an in-house operation where a club manager has to wear many hats'.

company, said the firm does it all—chemical application, mowing, irrigation management, landscape work, renovation of greens— "everything horticulturally that has to be done."

The biggest challenge golf courses present, Jarratt said, "is that you are dealing with a landscape exclusively used for its landscape amenities. When you come from office parks you aren't used to the landscape being the attraction.

"The obstacles are maintaining a high quality landscape without infringing on pedestrian traffic. You need a different approach to putting down chemicals and a mowing cycle that doesn't infringe on play," Jarratt explained.

"You try to mow as much as possible in the least played times. If a group tees up, the mowers pull over and let them play

through. Your productivity ratings aren't as high. It's unavoidable."

Jarratt said golf courses are about as profitable as other commercial work. But more than other commercial customers, he noted, a golf course maintenance contract means landscape upgrades aren't likely to be bid competitively.

"The upgrades and enhancements tend not to be as price driven," Jarratt stated. "The courses have a \$600,000 to \$1 million contract and you have 15

(continued on page 106)







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## low maintenance design

Clients' requests for low maintenance landscapes are challenging contractors to find new ways to build value into designs.

By Bob West

More Clients
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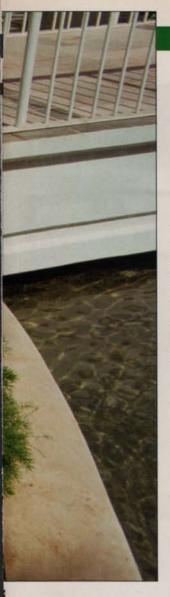


WANT this beautiful, fancy landscape, but I don't want to have to spend a lot of time or money maintaining it."

This is something every landscape contractor has heard numerous times. Whether the project is commercial or residential, a new installation or a renovation, clients want it to be low maintenance, but don't want to sacrifice anything in appearance.

So what exactly is low maintenance design, and how does a contractor handle the client who essentially wants no maintenance design?

WHAT IS IT? "We often hear clients who have a dream of how they want their landscape, but they always want low maintenance. So one thing I tell them is that there's such a thing as low maintenance, but there's no such thing as no maintenance," said Peter Wilkerson, a landscape architect with Lifescapes, Canton, Ga.



Every contractor and architect we spoke with agreed on the importance of emphasizing this point to clients early in the design process. "I've never been able to design a no maintenance design," said Drew St. John II, owner of St. John & Associates, Hattiesburg, Miss.

"Tome, low maintenance is a property that doesn't make unreasonable tradeoffs for the aesthetics of the property," said Eric Keesen, executive vice president of Allen Keesen Landscape, Denver, Colo., who pointed out that the value of low maintenance design is often realized more in time and energy saved than actual money saved. "Cost isn't always relevant. Sometimes those changes that make it much easier to maintain really don't gain you that much

back unless they're on a major scale."

EDUCATING THE CLIENT. Problems with clients can occur because they know what the term low maintenance means so they assume they know what low maintenance design means for landscaping. "Customers don't understand low maintenance design because nobody's ever taught it to them," said John Ross, president and owner of John R. Ross & Co., Dallas, Texas, who estimated the annual cost of the average maintenance project to be 20 percent to 25 percent of the installation cost.

Contractors repeatedly talked about the need to first educate clients about what low maintenance-design really means for their properties. "Customers don't understand that savings come from low maintenance design over the long term," said Keesen.

"People look in these garden books and get excited about the huge beds of flowers they see and say, 'I want that, but I don't want to have to work on it a lot," said Judson Griggs, senior landscape architect at Lied's Landscape Design & Development, Sussex, Wis. "But the two just don't go hand-in-hand. You have to educate them on what they can do, and it comes down to some real give-and-take."

Wilkerson echoed Griggs' sentiments. "It's really an educational process to get them to buy into what we're trying to create," he said. "We will work to achieve their dream, but let's make that as low maintenance as possible with the elements available."

He said his architects spend a significant amount of their time teaching clients about how an attractive landscape can be achieved through a strategic combination of plants and ground materials in order to avoid using glamorous plants that will require regular pruning and extra care.

LOW MAINTENANCE KEYS. Companies in different regions of the country favor different specific techniques to control the amount of maintenance required for a project, depending on the natural landscape already established and the plantings which do well in the area. But the general strategies used by these companies are nearly identical, whether they're in Wisconsin or Texas.

"The key to low maintenance design is the plant selection," according to Ross. His firm specializes in renovation work and, he said, many of the projects he encounters have required a lot of maintenance because of the plants installed by the original design/build companies.

"They used a lot of cheap, fast growing shrubs, like honeysuckle, because they grow quick from the nursery," Ross said. "But these are the most expensive and least efficient to maintain and now the whole South is covered with them."

"What we're trying to do is put plants on proper spacing so that as they grow and reach their proper dimensions, maintenance goes way down," said Wilkerson. "Then Mother Nature does all the water-



(Left) Understanding the needs of different plant materials is crucial to creating low maintenance landscapes. Here, plants with very different water requirements are planted together. (Above) Elements of a well planned landscape include plenty of room for plants, the use of mulch and turf areas that accommodate a mower in an even number of passes. Credit: David Hensley

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## low maintenance design

## Low Maintenance Roadblocks

aintenance problems in the landscape are all too common, but few just happen. The great majority of maintenance nightmares are caused by poor planning, sloppy work or just plain ignorance.

What can go wrong? Plenty, according to David Hensley, landscape extension specialist in the Department of Horticulture with the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Before leaving the mainland, he spent several years noting and recording landscape mistakes. Here are what he considers some common design oversights and maintenance miscues that lead to problems:

- Poor plant selection. The consequences of putting a plant into a location it isn't suited for range from a minor inconvenience to devastation. Placing large growing trees too close to structures, fast growing shrubs in obtrusive areas where constant pruning will be required or an inappropriate turf cultivar for existing sun and water conditions are only a handful of potential problems. The solution is to thoroughly understand the plants being installed in the landscape.
- Poor site preparation. Just like the house painter knows the finish coat is only as good as the surface prep work, the landscaper knows that proper site preparation is a key to fewer maintenance problems in the future. Improper grading, poor soil quality, failure to amend the soil, relying on "magic" and improper plant placement will all reveal themselves in time.
- Choosing poor quality plant material. The old saying is true for plants too you get what you pay for. A bargain tree that dies in a couple of years or the economy blend of turfgrass will cost more to replace down the road than doing it right the first time.
- Poor cultural practices. Improper watering and fertilizing, too much or too little mulch, poor
  pruning, mowing turf too low or too high and using the wrong equipment can, at best, make for an
  unattractive landscape. At worst, these practices can encourage pest and disease infestation or
  even stress and kill plants. No one wants to re-establish and replace expensive plant material.
- Bad design or installation. Excellent maintenance practices cannot overcome front-end disasters created by someone else. Sometimes it's time to "punt" and start over.

ing, all the mulches are not necessary and disease and insect resistance grows."

Wilkerson added that maintenance costs can be cut by as much as half with simple attention to plant choices, like using more self-sustaining ground covers as opposed to multiplying grasses which move by rhizomes and lead to unnecessary weeding in plant beds.

St. John said he sees most maintenance expenses in the area of caring for large sections of turf and planting beds, which has created a popular new trend in the area. People are blending natural, pre-existing wooded landscapes more in conjunction with the landscape projects for lower maintenance. "I think low maintenance design creates a property that looks finished but that doesn't require a whole lot of effort to maintain," he said. "So we're doing real intense things right next to the house, with 2/3 of the property left wooded. People don't want to be married to an acre-anda-half of turf."

**DESIGN FOCUS.** The intent of the original design for the project was often mentioned as a key to the amount of maintenance

(continued on page 50)

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## low maintenance design

(continued from page 48)

required for the landscape. When a project is being installed simply to increase the marketability of a new property for sale, as opposed to enhancing a property's appearance for specific owners' aesthetic tastes, high maintenance design are used more often.

Keesen said this short-term focus is especially apparent in new multifamily units and apartment complexes. "We're seeing more spaces so cut up and disjointed that you can't get a big mower into them, so you use a 21-inch mower or string trimmer instead, which takes more time at a higher cost and has a poor

appearance," he noted. "It's a situation where the developer is trying to produce properties yielding the highest return."

Ross sees part of high maintenance design installations being more severe than that. "The problem with many landscape architects today is that they lack experi-

While low maintenance design is growing in popularity with residential clients, the more costly high maintenance designs remain popular with many commerical accounts.

ence and knowledge about the maintenance field. They don't know about the turning radius of large mowers, the chemicals and nutrients that will be necessary, irrigation systems and current trends in the market when they're designing a project," he said. "They are more production oriented — get the job done, in and out."

Griggs said his company thinks it is important to involve its maintenance division on new design projects. "We will always show a design to the maintenance people for suggestions on how to make the plans more low maintenance. Using them at the front-end like this can really help to cut down on maintenance costs."

(continued on page 52)



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## low maintenance design

(continued from page 50)

commercial Design. While low maintenance design is growing in popularity with residential clients, the more costly high maintenance designs remain popular with many commercial accounts.

"High maintenance designs are necessary for commercial curb appeal and company signs, where you're setting a corporate image," said Ross.

"It's really a competition of who's place looks the spiffiest," said Wilkerson about commercial projects.

Wilkerson has taken high maintenance projects one step further. "One of the things we have our crews say is not just that they're planting flowers, but that they are renting office space," he said, claiming companies are more likely to rent office space at a building with an attractive landscape. "We are actually a marketing branch for our clients." FUTURE TRENDS. Contractors continue to look for ways to combine low maintenance with quality appearance.

St. John has developed a program for owners looking to decrease their hands-on involvement with their landscapes.

He said about 50 percent of their maintenance contracts are

through the HortCare program, where the company handles fertilizing, herbicide application, pruning and other technical labor every two weeks while the customer is responsible for mowing and leaf removal.

Keesen said he sees more new instal-

Showing early plans to the maintenance division of the company can help to create low maintenance design projects and reduce unnecessary long-term maintenance costs.

lation projects in the Denver area using weed barriers and other preemergents in plant beds to cut down on the long-term costs of maintaining those areas. "That definitely means higher frontend costs, but it's great to see from a maintenance perspective," he said.

Dallas' hot, dry climate necessitates constant attention to irrigation and Ross thinks this will lead to a new technological development. Some companies are working on irrigation sys-

tems linked via modem to bring complete system control and monitoring in the maintenance company's office so that site visit costs can be reduced.

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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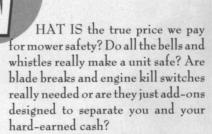
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Tough Jobs Demand Tough Equipment."

## Mower Accidents

# Don't Have to Happen

Manufacturers are constantly trying to make their mowers more safe, but safety ultimately is in the hands of the operator.

By C. Neal Howell



Who is responsible for operator safety? Are the operators themselves ultimately responsible for using ma-

chines that cut, slice, dice and mulch? If the operator is not, who is? The dealer? The distributor? The manufacturer?

Time Same

While manufacturers have designed safety into their mowers, contractors should provide ample training for operators. Credit: Ferris

HORSE SENSE. The concern for safety seems to have sprung, full-blown, as a result of the changing times. In earlier times, as an agrarian society, horses supplied the brawn and, hopefully, humans supplied the brains. The farm was an excellent training ground where one started off with a simple machine like a manure fork and simple instructions like, "Dig and throw!"

As the operator worked up to more complex, horse-powered machinery, it was always assumed that at least one of the participants had some horse sense. Some say this assumption doesn't always hold true. With all the horsepower now separated from the horse, some

operators are given only the instructions: "Get out there and mow!"

With no background or training in simple machines, untrained employees can be easily confused or injured. It's a sign of the times, unfortunately. The untrained operator can be like the person who sued McDonald's for failing to inform the customer that the coffee inside the cup was hot and could be injurious if placed on the seat between one's legs while operating a moving vehicle.

Certainly, cases like these are the exception. A mower or aerating machine in the hands of an

operator with limited knowledge can be infinitely more hazardous to both the operator and innocent bystanders.

The lawn and landscape contracting industry has recognized safety as a matter of prime importance and manufacturers, for the most part, have cheerfully endorsed the voluntary safety standards suggested by the American National Standards Institute. This



Hillside mowing is a learned art and operators should be taught how to handle the mower to reduce the chance of losing balance.
Credit: Exmark Mfg.

(continued on page 58

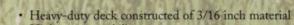
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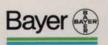
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(continued from page 54)

organization tries to make certain that safety features are comparable on competing pieces of equipment. To wear an ANSI-approved label, a machine must pass certain tests that help ensure that no serious design defects exist.

Many manufacturers also submit their machines to an objective third party for testing according to ANSI specifications. Ideally, this third-party testing arrangement eliminates any biases which might be found toward a particular type of machine or manufacturer.

TOUCHY SUBJECT. While safety is of prime importance to operators, their employers and manufacturers, it is also a "touchy subject" according to one manufacturer's spokesperson. "It's not safe to comment on safety due to problems of legality," the spokesperson said.

## Countdown to Trouble

HE LEADING causes of operator injury on mowers, according to manufacturers' representatives, include:

- 1. Injuries caused by moving blades.
- 2. Thrown objects (injuries to bystanders or damage to property).
- 3. Hillside tips caused by mowing sideways instead of up and down.
- 4. Wet or slick mowing surfaces. Usually the operator slips and comes in contact with blade.
- 5. Machine runs away/ operator loses control.
- 6. Operator fatique. Vibration and noise can slow operator response.
- 7. Speed excessive for conditions.

Insurance companies which bear a major portion of the increasing liability are becoming much more insistent on clients becoming safety conscious. Dick Tegtmeier, president and chief executive officer of Encore Manufacturing,



Beatrice, Neb., feels that, "Our industry is very safety conscious. Ensuring that we manufacture very safe machines keeps us out of the courts."

Ken Rainey of Excel Industries, Hesston, Kan., agreed: "Safety is of prime importance." Excel uses icons instead of words on decals to insure that machines can be operated safely by non-English speaking or non-reading personnel.

Rick Curlett, director of marketing for Exmark Manufacturing, Beatrice, Neb., said that safety features must pass a number of tests before they are incorporated into one of that company's machines. "Safety shouldn't be a liability and should pass the following criteria. First, it must be reliable. Second, it must be simple. Third, it must be foolproof."

Safety, he added, must be engineered into a machine. "Since the moving blades are the most dangerous factors, we make every effort to design equipment that is stable and less likely to throw an operator or accidentally expose him to those blades."

Mike Veal, marketing manager for Snapper Inc., McDonough, Ga., agreed that moving blades are probably the major hazard. "Automatic blade stop systems are now standard on all our rearengine riders," he noted. "We feel that hillside tips are one of the major causes of accidents and we try to make the machines very stable as well as incorporate devices like deadman switches and the ABS system to prevent accidents."

Bob Walker, president of Walker Manufacturing, Fort Collins, Colo., explained that some safety switches must be of an active nature in order to work best. "We have latch-type safety switches on the hoods of our machines and we feel this is an innovative feature."

While safety is vitally important he said, "The designs must strike a balance of safety and performance." Walker feels that educational programs directed at the operator will play a major role in reducing accidents.

Paul Kiel from Snapper's legal department said, "Snapper feels that the operators are becoming more aware of safety requirements and safety must be emphasized on all equipment literature and decals."

Kiel feels that the company's active educational program has helped to reduce the number of claims last year.

Last June, Kubota Tractor Corp., Los Angeles, Calif., launched an extensive



Newer riding mowers can include safety features such as seat belts and roll-over protective structures. Credit: Excel Industries

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## mowing management

safety campaign promoting use of rollover protective structures and seats belts with its tractors. The campaign urges owners of older Kubota tractors to add ROPS to their equipment. ROPS have been standard equipment on Kubota tractors since May 1985. Kubota provides dealers with in-store videos, posters and brochures promoting ROPS use.

OPERATING REALITIES. Rick Cuddihie of Ferris Industries, Vernon, N.Y., noted, "Safety must be a major concern for all manufacturers. Speed has been increasing on all machines and the machine design must take that into consideration. The machine has to perform well under all conditions, but it must be safe."

Users, too, agree that safety must be emphasized but not at the expense of causing unnecessary

delays and holding
up production. Brian Battaglia, vice
president of Gazebo Landscaping,
Delray Beach, Fla., agreed that safety
features are important, yet equipment
must be useable.

. . . . . . .

'If it (the switch)

doesn't work

properly, it will

become a safety

problem. Make

safety features

useable!

He said, "Some of the devices and switches look like they were put on as an afterthought. I think they're made cheaply and too often they don't work properly. This area needs more money and time spent on it or it needs to be done differently. We don't mind paying for it if it works. If it (the switch) doesn't work properly, it will become a safety problem. Make safety features useable."

Other end users agree that safety is a multifaceted problem. Michael Gaffney, technical services specialist for the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and former maintenance division manager for White Oak Landscaping, Kennesaw, Ga., said that mower safety on slopes is a major concern, as is working with wet grass on any surface. "Wet grass causes clumps and sometimes people try to clear them without shutting off the machine."

operator misuse. The general feeling among many mowing contractors is that, especially on older mowers, the safety switches and interlocks could not survive the dirt and vibration. When a safety switch would fail, the operator would simply wire around it and, thus, defeat its purpose. With a heavy production schedule, safety devices were often viewed as a liability rather than devices

(continued on page 02)

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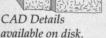
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#### **USE READER SERVICE #36**

## mowing management

(continued from page 60)

to prevent injury and were wired around or disconnected.

This perception has changed with increasing pressure from insurance companies who were faced with increased costs. These costs often result from injuries incurred on safety-disabled machines or machines that simply didn't have safety devices incorporated into their design.

Mowing manufacturers have tried to address most of these problems on newer models. Automatic blade stop systems bring the blades to a quick halt when the operator

falls or loses control. The blades stop but they do not stop instantly. A blade spinning at several thousand revolutions per minute takes some time to stop completely.

A blade spinning at

several thousand

revolutions per

minute takes

some time to

complete stop.

come to a

Deflectors eliminate most damage caused by thrown objects but they sometimes cause clogs in heavy or wet grass. Operators must understand the reason for these devices and be cautioned not to remove them.

Mowing hillsides is a learned art and operators need instruction to mow up and down the slope and not perpendicular to it.

Mowing on slick surfaces is also tricky and operators should be cautioned to take care, especially when using walkbehind mowers. Here again, good instruction is important.

Most riding mowers have safety parking brakes to prevent start-up runaways. These brakes can be subject to wear and tear. Spot checks on these as well as deadman or seat switches can prevent many accidents.

Operator fatigue is greatly reduced by comfortable seats with armrests and ergonomic controls. Let the operator use a machine that fits. Some of the old hand brake controls required fingers 14-inches long. Some people just can't manipulate some hand switches.

Excessive speed, even if it is a need for speed by your best operator, can be dangerous. Caution operators to use equipment at prudent and reasonable speeds.

Remember, the best thing you can do to prevent accidents is to make sure that your operators understand the machines and are thoroughly versed in how to get the most out of them while staying within the safety envelope.

Inspect your machines and make sure all safety equipment is operable. Keep spares for switches to prevent losing valuable time due to a low-cost switch disabling a high-cost mower.

Conduct operator clinics and ask for their input. Make sure they understand the reasons for your safety efforts. Work with your insurance agent to let him know you are doing everything you can to prevent claims and injuries. You might even get a reduction in your rates.

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

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## Lessons From

# Mother Nature

Weather
extremes made
1995 a
challenging
year for pest
and disease
stress in
several
areas of
the country.

ANY LAWN and landscape contractors want to forget what Mother Nature wrought through the 1995 season. From rain to wind to unforgiving heat and humidity, the weather took its toll on the landscape in the form of disease and pest stress in many regions of the country.

There are, however, some things to be learned when weather extremes push landscapes to the limit. By understanding what works and what doesn't in various weather conditions, the professional can be prepared for this year's offerings.

NORTHEAST DROUGHT. From midsummer through early fall, much of New England and the northern mid-Atlantic states suffered through a severe drought that caused some immediate damage to trees and turf, and opened the prospect for problems in 1996 due to stress.

Ann Gould, extension specialist in ornamental pathology with Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N. J., said drought stress can cause trees to lose foliage, grow slowly and become more susceptible to attack by insects and diseases, as well as to damage from severe weather.

When drought is an issue in any given year, Gould said, regular monitoring of stressed trees for pest injury is essential. Then, because of the potential for a long-term effect, trees should also be observed the following year for any residual drought damage.

(continued on page 00)





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(continued from page 04)

There are several symptoms of drought stress that are recognizable, according to Gould. Leaves may develop a yellow color due to a slowing or ceasing of photosynthesis. Leaves, stems, roots and fruit may shrink and sunken sapwood may develop radial cracks.

Leaves on drought-stressed trees may droop, wilt, curl, turn yellow, turn brown at the tips and margins or drop prematurely. In pines, needles may lose turgor and droop near the base. In some cases, needles turn brown and fade; in others, the needles will stay green and remain permanently drooped. Over subsequent years dead tree tops, shortened needles and sparse foliage are signs of a decline in vigor that can follow severe drought stress, she noted.

Affects on turf were varied on the pest side, according to James Murphy,

## Pineapple Express

## Dampens Nursery Stock Supplies

ive years ago, nurserymen operating
along the rivers of northwestern Washington were told the worst was past, according to the weather bureau. They had survived the heaviest rainstorm of the century.

Not so. A jet stream picking up moisture over the warm, humid Hawaiian Islands last November destroyed much of the nursery stock headed for U.S. nurseries over the next few years.

The economic impact of the Pineapple Express was still being tallied as Lawn & Landscape

went to press. The experts predict, however, that the price of many landscape materials will be significantly higher this spring. "Nurseries on the flood plain of just about any river in the state of Washington have suffered major losses," reported Peggy Farrell, executive director of the Washington Association of Landscape Professionals. "Seattle was not affected, but the foothills had up to five inches of rain per day for three days." Contractors might want to call their regular suppliers and check about their orders

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More than 80 percent of the trees, shrubs, seed and bulbs sold at retail garden centers each year are raised from seeds or cuttings in the Northwest. Dry, cool, disease-free summers and moderate winters with plenty of moisture and drainage make the Northwest perfect for growing ornamental, fruit and agricultural plants. A tree for paper production in the Northwest takes only eight years to grow, compared with nearly 20 years in other regions.

Ironically, California suffered through one of its driest autumns on record while Oregon and Washington were drenched. — *Bruce Shank* 

The author is a free-lance writer based in Banning, Calif.

extension turfgrass specialist at Rutgers. "The drought conditions tend to reduce the survival of some species of pests, assuming irrigation was not applied," said Murphy. "It actually may have helped control problems in certain areas."

Crabgrass was a big complaint from the public, according to Ray Taylorson, adjunct professor of turf/weed management with the University of Rhode Island in Kingston.

On the disease side, early summer brown patch stress was immediately followed by stress from lack of water. Some lawns made a recovery in the fall due to a catching up in moisture, but Murphy predicted a busy 1996 for renovations.

JEKYLL AND HYDE. The cool, wet spring that preceded the record heat and humidity in the Midwest last summer was a big culprit in terms of damage to land-

scapes, according to Henry Wilkinson at the University of Illinois in Urbana.

The cool, damp spring encouraged the turf to grow leaves and not the root mass, stolons or rhizomes essential to the drought stress survival of turfgrasses.

Dry heat in June put turf into summer dormancy, and an increase in humidity and temperatures ranging to nearly 100 degrees opened the turf up to fungal diseases, especially brown patch, he reported. With much of the turf in dormancy, it had a difficult time regenerating itself from damage.

Farther south, ornamental shade trees have been a primary concern because of two consecutive springs of abnormally wet weather, according to Lee Mueller, president of Reliable Landscape and Tree Care, St Louis, Mo. "We have suffered enormous losses of trees that don't like wet feet from root rot," he said.



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#### landscape management

Adding insult to injury, the area also suffered drought conditions in the summer that did not allow the recovery of root systems lost in the spring.

Turf in the area also suffered, with infestations of brown patch and fairy ring. Crabgrass and nutsedge posed additional problems, Mueller said.

"The excessive rains washed the pre-

emergents out — it simply did not do the job," he said. This past fall, he aerated lawns, seeded and fertilized with a no-nitrogen product. "I know we will have a lot of renovation in the spring."

SEPTEMBER SURPRISE. Colorado started out 1995 a bit behind the eight ball, as a mild winter accelerated the development of in-

## Florida: From Sunshine to Soggy

he Sunshine State didn't quite live up to its name this past summer. Record rainfalls turned Florida soggy. Near the Cape Canaveral Space Center on the east coast, rainfall was 27 inches above normal through mid-November, making 1995 the third wettest year on record. Similar conditions were found throughout the state.

Now, Florida's lawn and landscape professionals are coping with serious pest, disease and other stress to turf and ornamentals in the aftermath of the deluge.

INCREASED FUNGUS, COSTS. Lawson Turner, director of land and maintenance operations for the Boca West Master Association, said the summer deluge strained operating budgets. The nonprofit association and its 27-person staff manage the 1,500-acre Boca West resort community in Boca Raton.

Increased fungus growth from warm temperatures, high humidity, lack of sun and constant moisture impacted Turner's bottom line. "The fungicide bill went out the roof," he said.

"We got on a fungicide program pretty quick," as a preventive measure, said Turner, who's battling various fungus diseases including fairy ring and dollar spot. Although most of Boca West's St. Augustine turf and four Bermudagrass golf courses are well established, he expects to "replace some here and there."

WEAKENED SYSTEMS. Ironically, turf and shrubs in some areas actually exhibit drought symptoms. Heavy rains saturated the ground, raising water tables and cutting off oxygen to plants' roots. Deeper roots rotted or became unusable, and the plants developed shallow root systems to survive, according to Jeff Petry, landscape designer for Naples-based Michael/Todd, Inc.

As the ground dries out, these plants are now strapped for water. The plants will emerge from winter with weakened root systems, which may cause problems this spring.

"The amount of weeds is definitely a maintenance problem," said Alyn Kay, landscape architect and manager of landscape services for Foliage By Flora Inc. in Miami. Rain washed out most preemergent herbicides, he said. Water-loving weeds like dichondra, penny grass and sedge are moving in.

Kay has found that incorrectly mulched plants
— mulch touching plant material — has aided
rotting. He said mulch is likely to decompose
quicker and need replacement earlier.

**SPRING SURVIVAL.** Petry expects a heavy demand for irrigation this winter to help shallow-rooted plant material survive. He also anticipates replacing

sects early in the year, according to Whitney Cranshaw, extension entomologist with Colorado State University in Ft. Collins. A late April freeze knocked down some species, but simply served to extend the life cycles of many others.

The most potentially devastating occurrence weatherwise in the area, how-

(continued on page 103)

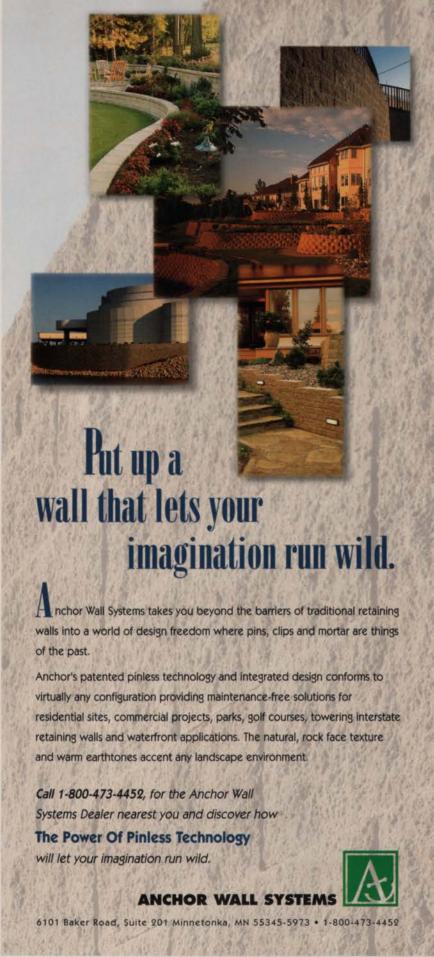
some plant material. Smaller plants have definitely been affected, added Kay. "It's too early to tell" about the impact on larger plant material.

Good fertilization is key during this stressful period. To compensate for leaching, Barry Troutman, technical director for Massey Services Inc. in Maitland plans to boost fertility rates — iron, nitrogen and potassium — now while turf is developing roots and storing nutrition to help it survive winter. "Two or three frosts could be a problem," he said. "We may see some winter kill and spring die-back. All the symptoms are there that we could have a bad spring."

A DIFFERENT PROBLEM. Landscape professionals in Florida's panhandle faced different problems this summer: namely Erin and Opal. Hurricane Erin slammed the coast in August, bringing just 4 inches of rain but "a tremendous amount of debris," according to Joe Williams, president of Lawn Master Inc., in Pensacola. Spraying was pushed 10 days behind schedule, he said.

Two months later, hurricane Opal brought 21 inches of rain and severe destruction. Many areas are recovering slowly, such as Navarre Island, where people were prohibited from visiting their homes for some time. "Grass is not high on the priority list, and we understand that," sympathized Williams. — Anne Wemhoff

The author is a free-lance writer based in Hudgins, Va.



## Quality in Landscaping:

# Make Them Say WOW!

Quality gurus tell us that constant improvement is the name of the game. But how do you constantly improve a landscape? One tangible goal is to delight the customer.

By Rob McCartney

lcicle plant appropriately surround the feet of these penguins at Sea World of Ohio. Credit: R. McCartney



OW DO YOU measure your efforts in landscaping? What response from a client will assure you that you are on the mark? One of the first lessons we learn in any quality program is to measure progress, but how can you measure quality in landscape design and maintenance?

As one young landscape supervisor asked her boss, "How will we know if the owners are pleased? Will they think it looks nice?" Her boss smiled and replied, "I'm afraid looking nice doesn't cut it anymore. We'll know we've done good work when we make them say 'wow!'

HIGHER STANDARDS. Is there a new standard developing in what customers expect of landscaping performance? Most likely, the expectations have risen due to multiple factors. Landscape architects and designers have improved with better resources and technology. Automation and computer assistance have an impact on accuracy, efficiency and even design creativity.

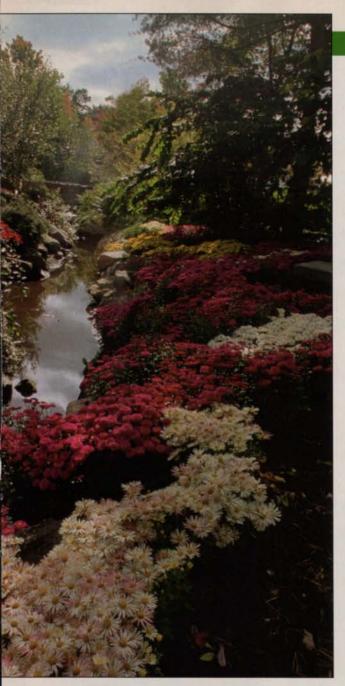
Contractors are driven by competition and heightened consumer awareness. They must deal with visitors and residents who are far more educated, as well as interested in their environment. John Gillan, executive director of the Professional Grounds Management Society, noted, "Emphasis has always been high on

embellishing and developing bricks and mortar. We've focused on the utility functions of landscaping all too long. But we are crossing a threshold. Not only are the grounds facilitating the need, but they're also becoming an expression of art."

There was a time when well-groomed turf was adequate. In recent years, floral beds and displays are popping up where once turf was appropriate enough. Clubhouses and office parks are beginning to look like arboretums. Zoos are taking on



As some annuals fade in early autumn, dense mum plantings are used to brighten this stream at Sea World of Ohio.



the appearance of botanical gardens. Some are retitling themselves, such as Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden.

RAISING EXPECTATIONS. It's fair to say that consumers expect more and are more value conscious than ever before. Each year, the bar is raised a notch higher and what was once acceptable and good has become commonplace.

How can we ignore the positive marketing appeal of the landscape? This quality has long been recognized by established businesses and institutions.

In recent years, this practice is be-

coming evident with the floral displays at interstate motels, fast food restaurants and even gas stations. Property managers speak of "flower power and curb appeal." They know how color can impact and turn a head for a second look. A well-landscaped entrance suggests that quality resides inside also.

Theme parks that formerly attributed their appeal solely to their rides or attractions are now gaining recognition for their display gardens.

Finally, the cooperative interaction and networking between the various disciplines of the green industry also has a positive effect.

PLAN FOR EXCELLENCE. As the standard for a successful landscape climbs, what is a good plan to meet the challenge? One approach is based not on technical expertise but on human behavior. After years of ob-

serving people in gardens, parks and various outdoor settings, as well as reviewing hundreds of surveys at Sea World, some common elements have surfaced that are noteworthy.

Our observers noticed what people touched, smelled, lingered at in a land-scape — why they stayed or why they moved on. We identified three elements: color, interactivity and theme.

**COLOR.** When horticulturists describe a flower bed having the ability to turn a motorist's head at 65 miles per hour, we are talking about color. Nothing against

the classic white garden or monochromatic designs, but most mainstream Americans have been raised on Walt Disney, Fruit Loops and Rainbow Connections. Color and lots of it is a part of our lives. Color catches the eye, especially when it is big and bold. Dainty little collections of speckled floral color have their place, but to appeal to the masses, consider large masses of color.

In the 1970s and 1980s a traveler could easily spot the Knights Inn motels along interstate highways. The buildings were plain and simple, but the property managers planted hundreds of big, bold African marigolds, petunias and geraniums around them. All were in plain view of passing freeway traffic and one could not help take notice.

Anyone who has visited Cypress Gardens during its Mum Festival in December knows the impact of floral color. Strolling the pathways among thousands of mums of brilliant colors, the visitor gets the impression he or she has entered a fantasy land.

Floral color should be carefully planned and appropriate to the design and purpose. When used effectively, it's essential to catching the eye, providing both movement and continuity in the landscape.

Standing on one of the small scenic bridges in Cypress Gardens and taking in the vista, one will notice a blazing glow of red celosia at 20 feet along the stream bank, another bed of red on the opposite bank, another red celosia planting 120 feet in the distance and the same color meandering through a sea of blue ageratum at 200 feet.

Finally, 300 feet in the distance, the red celosia completes its journey by spilling over some rocks and up onto another arched bridge where one of the trademark Southern belles is standing. What a clever use of color!

INTERACTIVE OPTIONS. From visits to the major theme parks, we see that common static exhibits are no longer acceptable. People want to touch, taste, smell, hear, see and otherwise experience the event.

Why not incorporate this in our landscapes? As long as safety is considered and accessibility for all people is provided, inviting people to move close and interact with our landscapes is bound to make them more memorable.

At Sea World of Ohio, the grounds crew are encouraged to visit with guests, as well as to pick and distribute flowers. Guests are encouraged to smell, touch and even rest in the gardens. People can sit on large boulders at a path's edge, becoming part of the landscape and interacting with the strategically placed sensory plants within their reach. Fences and barriers were removed from key sites so guests can access the lawn areas.

It is not uncommon to see entire families stretched out for a midday nap on the lawn beneath the trees. Interaction does not have to be complex or technical. It is simply encouraging the customer to do more than just look.

Unfortunately, ever since our childhoods, we have been instructed to "stay on the path and not touch a thing." Designers probably need to

go out of their way to get people to move closer to the landscape.

Topiaries are effectively used for this purpose at Sea World. Subtly placed dolphins, penguins, sharks, turtles and birds are nestled in the landscape along

... Most mainstream
Americans have
been raised on Walt
Disney, Fruit Loops
and Rainbow
Connections. Color
and lots of it is a
part of our lives...

the pathways. Often they catch guests by surprise. It is common to see guests having their photo taken beside the various beasts.

Notice what happens at the local flower and garden show. A beautiful woodland display with an inviting brick pathway curves into a scenic courtyard and bench alongside a pond filled with live turtles and goldfish. Before you can take one step forward, a chain barrier with a sign "No Admittance" catches you across the knees. Perhaps the design purpose is to provoke interest, but

wouldn't it be nice to experience it?

The award-winning "Access for All Garden" at Sea World demonstrates how to accommodate people with disabilities in a garden setting. It is amazing to

(continued on page 74)

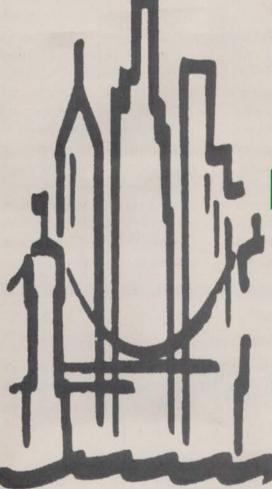




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(continued from page 72)

see the interaction of children and adults as they experience sensory plants in elevated beds and dip their hands into the water features.

Structures modified for the disabled pull all people a bit closer to touch, smell and experience the gardens. Gentle slopes and flower baskets that can be lowered via pulleys make this garden particularly accessible to all.

CREATE A THEME. A nice landscape setting may have a decent lawn, a good variety of plants, some floral color and some decorative structures, yet lack the pizzazz that makes you say, "Wow!" What is missing? Often, it needs a theme to tie it all together. The presentation can fall short if the design elements are independent and have no link with each other.

## Quantifying Quality

uests surveyed at Sea World of Ohio, in Aurora, strongly emphasized a desire for a fulfilled, gratifying experience throughout their stay, including main attractions and the surrounding landscape gardens. The surveys, which are conducted by an independent company, have become regularly scheduled elements of the park's emphasis on quality.

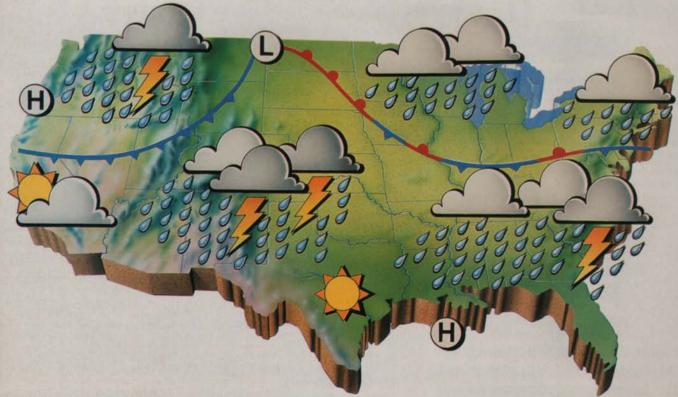
In a series of surveys given to park visitors since then, the landscaping consistently got the highest ratings of "excellent or good." In other words, Sea World's management sees this high rating as proof that the landscaping has moved

from being part of the background to being an actual feature of the park, or a reason that visitors attend. Other elements that achieved consistently high ratings included marine animal displays, employee courtesy, cleanliness, educational value and variety of animal shows.

The first time landscape rated so high, the park's management was "shocked," according to Rob McCartney, manager of horticulture. As subsequent surveys validated earlier ones, management devoted more budget dollars to landscape development and also raised its expectations. The current landscape budget is almost double that from before the time surveys were used, and the staff has grown proportionately.

The new dedication to providing high-quality landscapes has challenged the park's designers

## **FORECAST: RAIN WITH SPRINKLERS.**



to use landscape in new ways to enhance its other attractions and to add more quality.

For instance, they explored the subliminal effects caused by plants through themed designs. Jagged objects, thorny plants and prickly textured plantings reinforced the feeling around the Shark Encounter. At the Hawaiian Show, visitors were treated to beds of hot pink and yellow plants selected to illustrate the tropical theme. Similarly, plants evoking the Pacific Northwest area surround the Shamu exhibit, which is constructed on a Northwest design theme.

McCartney feels that if the management did not believe that Sea World's landscapes were contributing directly to the bottom line, the company would not devote so many resources to it.

Theming a landscape does not need to be complex or difficult. It can be both fun and creative. It can be subtle, but should effectively convey a message, story or feeling. Here are some ideas:

1. Ask about the needs, objectives and concerns of the customer. Hopefully, they may have a theme in mind or be interested in developing one.

2. Do a little homework. If your client has strong ties with a country, you may want to explore recreating the country's look. The location may even have some historical significance. Distinctive elements, artifacts and plants that convey or capture a theme can be incorporated appropriately.

3. Once a theme is identified, use many features in the landscape to support it. For instance, the lemonade stand at Sea World is surrounded by bright vellow French marigolds.

Even the habit and form of plants can convey a theme. Marine life parks are appropriately planted with trees and shrubs with a weeping, cascading shape.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER. Once you have experienced the landscape, ask yourself how does it feel? What is the overall impact? Typically, if the site has a good blast of color, if it stimulates interaction and if it is pulled together by a common theme, it will have impact.

We have an obligation to meet or exceed our customers' expectations. We can rest assured that we have cleared the bar when the word that comes from our customer's mouth is simply. "Wow!"

The author is manager of horticulture at Sea World of Ohio in Aurora.

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## Ready, Aim Hire!!



It's not easy to find and keep good employees, but the lawn or landscape contractor who is prepared will have a jump on the competition.

by Lloyd Merritt Smigel ost people who do the hiring for a company aren't prepared for the task. There's simply no one else to do it, so they are elected by default.

However, there are certain prehiring functions that can help you conduct a professional interview and hire the right person. Let's review 10 of the ways to help you select the right person and be sure you are ready to hire.

1. Are you prepared? When people apply for a job today, not only are you interviewing them — but they are also interviewing you. They are asking themselves: Do I want to work for this person? Can I put up with him or her? Can I advance with this company? Isit a growth job or a dead-end job? What are the benefits here compared to another job? Will this person help me grow?

Imagine going into an office and being handed an illegible old application that has been copied and recopied for years. It's a sign of things to come for the applicant. They are wondering if your equipment is also kept up the same way. Always use fresh new applications.

Also, have job descriptions available so the person has a complete idea of what the job is and what responsibilities go along with it. If you think it might scare them away — good. Better they should be scared off now before you invest \$6,000 in training.

2. Potential. If you were seeking a job wouldn't you be interested in its potential? If you would like to expand and want an employee who can sell, think past that position. Wouldn't you rather have someone interested in growing into a supervisory, sales or manage-

ment position? If that's what you want, interview the person for that potential position. When you grow, you will have the people you need to advance into the new openings.

If you have to keep rehiring good people because there is no place for them to grow, perhaps you should rethink your focus and create new jobs and/or new markets for people to grow into.

3. The Good News — The Bad News. Before you hire you should make a list of the good news and the bad news about the job. Often, we hire people and tell them only the good

things. We don't tell them what spring is going to be like. We don't tell them how intensive the mowing, planting and fertilizing can be when the season opens. We don't tell them about the paperwork, the extra hours or the importance of communication and follow-up with customers.

Too often the employer hires the person and waits to see how they do. Instead, explain how you see a good job, what some of the negatives are and express them as a challenge.

4. Communications. We are all in the service business and communication is the name of the game. Prepare to find out how this potential employee communicates. Perhaps role playing is in order. You could say: "Suppose I am a customer and you have just completed fertilizing my lawn and I feel you missed two areas." How would you handle that?



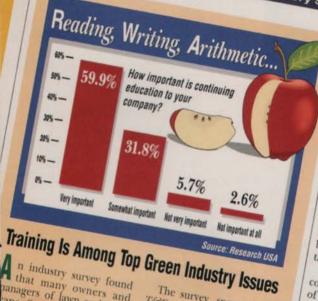




Prehiring tests such as role playing can give you an idea how a potential employee will interact with customers.

## PREMIERE ISSUE 1995 What's Insil

For Lawn/Landscape and Nursery Service Professionals



that many owners and ranagers of lawn and landape firms are concerned out the types and quality of ining available in their area their service technicians. y also noted that training continuing education is of the most serious issues g the industry today.

The survey, sponsored by T&O Service Tech and conducted by the Chicago-based firm Research USA, polled a random sample of lawn and landscape industry owners and managers from across the country. Nearly 60 percent of the respondents said that con-

tinuing education is important (Continued on page 10)

## ers: Use 'Em Right or You'll Lose 'Em

ny points in-between, es fed up with leaf are turning out the least dimming them se of this nearly tool of our trade. omething like this eding to contracwhere bans or recen put into place, person running

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(Continued on page 10)



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Carolina, Texas, Utah, Wisconsin, British Columbia and

## Certification Benefits

n the highly competitive green industry, being a top performer in professionalism is essential. One way to document your expertise is by gaining certification from a professional organization.

To this end, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America are providing the means by which technicians may gain this certification.

PLCAA's program, offered in conjunction with the University of Georgia, is a correspondence course titled, "Principles of Turfgrass Management." This 14-section, self-directed course gives participants up to a year to complete, but many finish in half that time, according to Ann McClure, executive director of PLCAA.

The course includes a midterm and final exam, and those passing the tests receive the title of Certified Turfgrass Professional. PLCAA members receive a discount, and can call 800/458-3466 for information. Non-members can call the University of Georgia at 800/542-8097.

ALCA's certification program for the service technician, the Washington, D.C. North Carolina, South

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## **ISSUE TODAY**

annenance and

Turfseed Facts.

(continued from page 78)

Make up your own scenarios and see how the potential employee would handle each situation.

Some companies have their potential employees read about a situation in which they feel the specs for a job are incorrect and potentially leading to major problems. They explain the situation and then ask the person how they would rectify it.

Other companies will ask the candidate to read a label and then ask 10 questions (open-book test) on that label to see if they can read and comprehend it.

5. Pre-hire Tests. The more testing you can do to see if an applicant is qualified, the better. Make sure, though, that the testing is pertinent to the job.

I know companies that give map reading tests to applicants who will be driving their vehicles. I've seen companies have a potential secretary answer the phone when they call from another room. The applicant is asked to answer the phone as if they worked for you. The company listens for cheerfulness in the applicant's voice. They don't want to hear some

If they say they know how to prune a tree test them. Let them make a mistake on your tree, not on the customer's.

grouch answering the phone.

Some companies have math tests with questions such as, "If you service five accounts for \$27 each and did a new account for \$345, how much total dollar production will you have performed

for the day?" and, "If you were paid 15 percent for the work you performed for that day, what would you have earned?" These are all legitimate questions because they apply directly to the job.

If they say they know how to prune a tree — test them. Let them make a mistake on your tree, not the customer's.

If part of the job is to know how to run a mower or park a trailer, test an applicant on the equipment to make sure that he or she knows what they are doing. It's significantly more expensive to find out

they can run the equipment, but the only way they know how to make it stop is when they run into a car or a house.

It is easier to let someone go quickly and replace him with someone qualified than it is to "settle."

(continued on page 82)

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(continued from page 80)

 Expectations. Before you interview, know what expectations you have of the person you want to hire.

Expect your employees to read the label instead of coming to you to read it for them. Expect them to be able to

handle their jobs after they are trained.

Expect your employees to learn from the past. If they make a mistake — fine. You can accept that. If they make it again, they will be written up for it. If they continue to make the same mistake over and over, you will more than likely If you fish, know what bait to use. If you want to hire a professional person that can help you grow, you too must be professional in the interview.

have to let them go.

 Policy Familiarization. Many good applicants get away because the manager failed the interview due to a lack of knowledge about his own company.

Don't brush off applicants' inquiries about medical coverage or other benefits with something like, "We'll cover that when and if you get the job." Many people are concerned about benefits enough to ask and should get answers.

If you are not familiar with your medical benefits (or other policies), you can have an "overview" sheet made up with specific details to keep in your interview file in case you're asked.

This is an easy way to impress an applicant who asks about benefits by simply handing him or her a copy of the sheet and saying something like, "Read that over and if you have any more specific questions I can give you additional information. I understand medical coverage is important to you — it's important to us all."

8. Review Systems. Before the interview, you should know your policies on performance and salary reviews, or if you even have a formal system. Tie this into the job descriptions and your personal expectations.

Too many companies have no review systems. It causes turnover when people don't know how they are doing. There are many evaluation and review forms available. Many computer programs exist for this purpose.

The point is that an "ongoing" evaluation can be done as well as formal evaluations for both performance and pay. If you don't have such review systems, you should get them.

9. Advancements. During the interview, talk about potential advancement

(continued on page 84)

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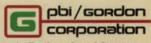


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#### management strategies

(continued from page 82)

and what an applicant would have to do to advance (and by when). Yes, this is an expectation, but you may want to emphasize this one if you expect your company to grow.

For instance, I expect my sales people



Applicants that know the road to advancement in a company and get ongoing evaluations will be more motivated to help its growth.

to do as much preselling as necessary to carry me through the winter. And I expect my people to learn telemarketing to help me through the winter.

Look for people who want to expand your company into new areas that will allow both of you to make more money.

10. Interview Preparations. Many people have never had formal courses on interviewing. Today, applicants are smarter and have many expectations.

Read a few books on interviewing techniques and note sample questions you think are good to ask. "In the summertime it gets quite hectic around here. People want service right away, it's hot and the schedule is heavy. Your income rises but so can your stress level. How would you react under pressure - give me a few examples."

Dead-end questions are those requiring simple ves or no answers like, "Do you think you'll like working here?" But asking a simple "Why?" after them adds a great deal to the interview.

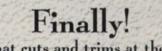
Try not to be disturbed during the interview, and if you are, be careful. I observed a manager interviewing an applicant last year when his phone rang. He angrily picked it up and said, "Dangit, I told you no phone calls!" He slammed the phone down and looked at the applicant like nothing had happened. From where I sat, he lost the interview. The applicant was totally turned off by this lack of control and realized if he took the job, he could someday be on the other side of the manager's wrath.

Remember to prepare before you hire. Be professional in your interviews and know what you are looking for.

If you want to hire a professional person that can help you grow, you too must be professional in the interview. Most important, be honest with the applicant. He or she deserves it.

It could be the start of a long, mutually prosperous relationship.

The author is a consultant, author and speaker specializing in sales, management and strategy training for the service industry. He is based in Oceanside, Calif.



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Five gallon eapacity fuel tank.

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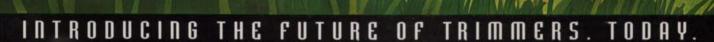
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that our chain saws go through. Finally, we applied The Crown Commitment



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tomorrow's trimmer.



For your nearest dealer call 1-800-HUSKY62.

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\* At participating dealers

DESIGN CHALLENGES: Creating a golf course community that would uniquely blend the natural environment with residential living was the challenge presented to Thornton Gardens when developing the exterior image of the Wetherington Golf and Country Club. Establishing privacy for the 450-acre residential community presented some of the greatest challenges.

"The magnitude of the project was impressive. It took hundreds of drawings to complete the project," stated Larry Henry, CLP, of Thornton Gardens. The landscape contractor was responsible for all landscaped areas: peripheral amenities such as hiking and biking trails, placing of street lights, signs and miles of "horsefarm" fencing; lighting and irrigation for all landscaped common areas - even including such "image" details as stonework and the placement of community emblems.

#### **DESIGN SOLUTION:**

More than 3,000 trees and 50,000 square feet of planting beds; at least 12 miles of irrigation with

1,500 sprinkler heads; and more than 200 various lowvoltage lights were included in the installation. The project had to be produced in various stages, under short deadlines, to meet the scheduled grand openings.

The Wetherington entrance established it as an "estate" community with the use of stone pillars capped with carved Indiana limestone. In fact, the stone from the entrance was used throughout the community to create the desired effect.

PROJECT:

LANDSCAPE COMPANY:

DESIGNER: SIZE OF PROPERTY: MAN-HOURS TO CONSTRUCT: PLANTS INSTALLED:

Wetherington Golf and Country Club, West Chester, Ohio **Thornton Gardens** Maineville, Ohio Larry Henry, CLP 450 acres Thousands of hours over 3 years

More than 10,000

Masses of dense vews, golden glow junipers and dwarf blue spruce enhance the grand entrance. Dwarf fountain grass, daylilies and annuals provide additional texture and color, creating the impressive "welcome" required for the exclusive golf course community.

The placement of the gas lantern at the entrance complements the gas street lights throughout the development.

Specific landscape plants selected for planting beds

> included broadmore junipers and gold flame spirea with annuals and daylilies for color. The streets were lined with 60 6foot London plane trees. Eighteen 8- to 10-foot Marshal seedless ash trees created the impression of a well established boulevard, while the island plantings bordered by miles of horsefarm fencing - created a

dramatic sense of entry. Aristocrat pears shade a begonia bed in the center island of the entrance to the development.

Summit green ash surround the swim and tennis club. A Japanese red maple, enhanced by gold flame spirea and a variety of annuals, provides the focal point of a center island in that area. The contractor was responsible for screen plantings to provide privacy in the pool area, for designing a pergola, landscaping the pool and hardscape area and landscaping the multilevel decks off the upper balcony. Crabapples were used to screen the pool area from the parking area.

A gazebo was the original temporary sales area during the community opening. Now, enhanced with China girl holly and miscanthus grass in its permanent location, it provides a quiet spot for peaceful reflection.

As Rick Doesburg, CLP of Thornton Gardens put it, "The site of the project was a community steeped in pride, a classic blend of nature and neighborhood - a muchdesired place to live. Our role was to create that exш terior image."

The gazebo. originally used as a temporary sales area for the community opening, was later relocated and enhanced with China girl holly and miscanthus to create a peaceful

setting.

Thornton

Gardens

Credit:





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yourself.

#### **NEW PRODUCTS**

The Multi Pro 5500 is the newest addition to Toro's line of work vehicles. A dedicated liquid application vehicle, the 5500 clusters all sprayer and boom controls at the operator's fingertips and has a foot-controlled master on/off switch for optimal sight lines. Hydraulic wheel motors with planetary final drive combine with a 45-hp engine to offer enhanced climbing power and maneuverability.



Riverdale's Tri-Power\* is the first phenoxy-based, postemergent selective broadleaf herbicide that no longer requires users to wear long-sleeved shirts, gloves, protective eyeware and boots when applying and has no reentry interval. Combining MCPA, mecoprop and dicamba, this 2,4-D free liquid can be used on both cool- and warm-season grasses and is said to be extremely effective against dandelions, chickweed, henbit, white clover, black medic and other broadleaf weeds. Tri-Power is available in packaging ranging from one gallon jugs to 220 gallon mini-bulks.

Circle 125 on reader service card

The sprayer carries an elliptical, 300-gallon polyethylene tank with jet agitation to ensure mixing of chemicals. An 18-foot, three-section rigid boom covers large and tight areas, while a Pro Control spray system kit provides automatic calibration control and an even rate of appli-

cation, regardless of vehicle speed. Cargo bed, topdresser and spreader attachments are also available.

#### Circle 126 on reader service card

Little Wonder's new 11-hp commercial blower is said to provide 30 percent more air power with an enlarged fan, fan housing and discharge chute, and can also serve as a vacuum. Three 10-inch pneumatic wheels allow easy mobility and a new, antivibration grip improves balance and feel for the operator. Blower also features 12-

gauge steel housing, a welded steel fan and a movable, variable throttle control. Circle 127 on reader service card

Ciba's new Banner\* Maxx\* microencapsulation concentrate fungicide is a clear, stable liquid that mixes completely with wat-

(continued on page 90)

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## Question What preemergence herbicide costs the most?

<u>Answer</u> The one that quit in tough weather.

Solution
Our preemergence herbicide offers the toughest control for up to 26 weeks.

(continued from page 88)

er. The new formulation eliminates the use of petroleum solvents, resulting in a product with little odor and little chance of clogging filters or settling to the bottom of a tank. Minute particles of active ingredient enhance its



stability. It controls many turf diseases on warmand coolseason

grasses, including dollar spot, summer patch, takeall patch, necrotic ring spot and Fusarium patch.

Circle 128 on reader service card

The Z42 hydrostatic, intermediate riding mower from Encore Manufacturing mows up to 7 mph and has zeroturning radius ability. The unit features a 16-hp Briggs & Stratton Vanguard V-twin engine. Side discharge, mulching deck or grass catcher is available. The 42-inch deck offers anti-scalp rol-lers and large turf tires for a smooth, level cut. Com-fort features include arm rests and ergonomic control levers. and the interlocked parking brake lets the operator leave the seat without killing the engine. Circle 129 on reader service card

An updated line of highpressure spray gun products Rain Bird now offers an updated edition of its design software for Windows. RainCAD 4.0 is said to offer more functionality and easy use, and RainCAD-Lite for Windows allows for quicker design times. Users of the Windows version can import an image from a scanner or fax for easy tracing and the 4.0 version has a more complete preference setting for irrigation and landscape design options.

Circle 130 on reader service card

is available from Green Garde, a division of H.D. Hudson. The model JD9-C spray gun adjusts easily from a fine mist to a longdistance stream for a variety of applications,

offers trigger lock for continuous spraying and fits with various tips for a variety of flow rates. Flooding nozzles provide coverage of .5 to 5 gpm. Circle 131 on reader

service card

The Dingo from Dingo Diggers is a stand-on skid

steer hydraulic power plant on wheels for 13 landscaping attachments. Serving as a trencher, post hole auger, rotary hoe/tiller, backhoe excavator and other tools.

(continued on page 92)





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**USE READER SERVICE #49** 

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LAWN & LANDSCAPE . FEBRUARY 1996

OLDHAM CHEMICALS

COMPANY, INCORPORATED **COMPLETE SUPPLIER OF T & O CHEMICALS** 

## <u>Question</u> What preemergence herbicide costs the most?

Answer
The one that stained
the white picket fence.

<u>Solution</u> Our preemergence herbicide doesn't stain.

#### **NEW PRODUCTS**

(continued from page 90)

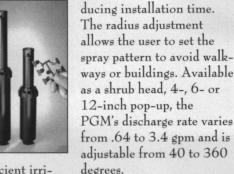
the 2-pump 3,000-psi system allows two hydraulic functions simultaneously. The Dingo fits a variety a difficult spaces, measuring less than four feet high and four feet wide.

Circle 132 on reader service card

Hunter redesigned its PGM rotor for use on 17- to

30-foot sites with a throughthe-topradius adjustment and rack of five reengineered nozzles to

gineered nozzles to provide more efficient irrigation coverage while re-



Circle 134 on reader service card

The new GS series of commercial walk-behind mowers from John Deere comes equipped with a 5-speed gear transmission, three sizes of traction units

and a 12.5-, 14- or 17-hp Kawasaki engine. The engines can attach to a 36-, 48- or 54-inch mower deck, each offering cutting heights ranging from 1- to 5 inches, new discharge chutes and fixed deck design. Available attachments also include a 3.5-bushel side-mounted grass catcher and a 2-wheel fixed or steerable sulky.

Circle 135 on reader service card

The Eagle 45 is a trailer-mounted, articulated aerial lift from AmeriQuip. The lift has a 25-foot side reach and a 45-foot working height with positive bucket leveling, 360-degree continuous rotation and

(continued on page 96)

The TC-120 Ultra from **TruckCraft** is a custom pickup dump insert for 5,000-pound, 2.4-cubic-yard payloads. The unit's body and frame are constructed entirely of aluminum and stainless steel to avoid potential rusting. The lightweight aluminum construction makes the insert about 300 pounds lighter than an all-steel insert to increase payload capacity. A 3-stage hydraulic cylinder lifts 5,000 pounds to a 47-degree angle, and the tailgate opens at the top and bottom for traditional access or use as a spreader.

Circle 133 on reader service card

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The Bale Chopper gives ex-

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## <u>Question</u> What preemergence herbicide costs the most?

Answer
The one that just lost the
Davidson account.

Solution
Our preemergence herbicide satisfies
customers and builds profits.

## The thinking behind their preemergence herbicides.

**l.**You want cheap stuff.

#### The thinking behind ours.

1.

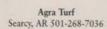
You want to forget about stains.

2.

You want it to last longer and work better.

3.

You want to make so much money you can retire to a thatched hut in Fiji where somebody comes by regularly to weed the roof.



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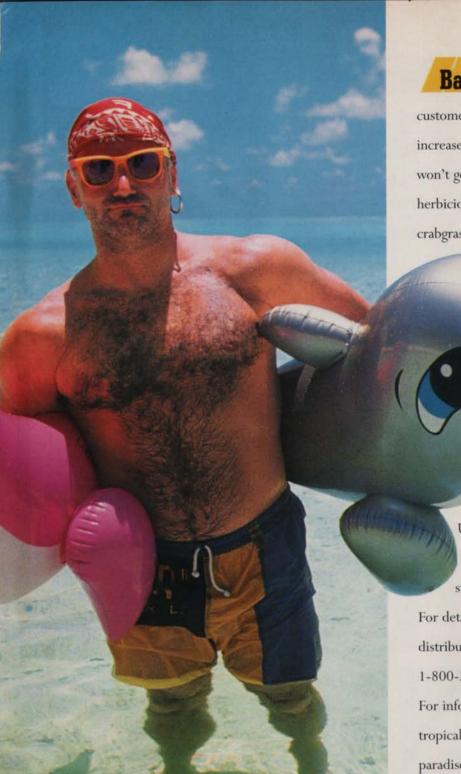
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Vigoro Industries Winter Haven, FL 800-329-4238

Wilbur-Ellis Co. Auburn, WA 206-351-6591

#### **NEW PRODUCTS**

(continued from page 92)

easy portability. It also offers a proportional control valve with neutral position interlock for simultaneous 2-function operation and quick-adjust outriggers. An 8-hp gas engine is standard, with a 24-V electric power option.

Circle 136 on reader service card

Armstrong Tractor's Model 1872 landscape tractor includes a hydrostatic transmission and an 18-hp V-twin engine. It offers 14 inches of ground clearance and a 3-point hitch. Options include furrowers, cultivators, plows, mower decks and snow throwers.

Circle 137 on reader service card

The Power Pruner PP-1250 from Technic Tool is equipped with a splined-aluminum drive shaft and a 24cc gasoline engine. The

12-inch chainsaw cutting head uses 44 drive links and can reach limbs up to 22 feet high with the five-foot extension. The PP1250 can also handle clearing brush.

Circle 138 on reader service card

Architectural Landscape Lighting presents its new Garden Landscape series of commercial and residential

landscape lighting. All 14

A 24.5-cc gas engine powers the new Model RBE250 edger from Makita. Featuring a large, solid rubber wheel, 7.68-inch blade, debris deflector and depth-adjustment knob, the RBE250 weighs less than 11 pounds. A diaphragm-type carburetor is designed to run in any position, and a cushioned handle is said to provide operating comfort.

Circle 139 on reader service card

models of the in-ground lighting and one wallmounted model are controlled through remotely placed electronic transformers.

Circle 140 on reader service card

Bush Hog's new 4845QT loader fits 2-wheel drive vehicles from 90- to 150-hp and 4-wheel drive tractors from 90- to 135-hp. The unit features mechanical

self leveling for raising and lowering pallets, stack boxes and round bales. The quick attach system uses a 2-spool valve with a pressure rating of 3,000 psi and a flow rate of 25 gph with open and closed center capability, and offers a power beyond port.

Attachments include buckets, a grapple and a bale spear.

Circle 141 on reader service card

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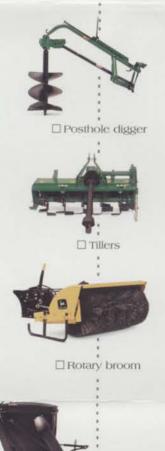
Just reading the instructions for attaching some brands of tractors to their implements is enough to make your palms sweat.

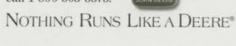
But hooking up to an 18- to 38-hp John Deere won't test your wits...or your patience. That's because these compact tractors have the quickest connecting times in the business.

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CONTRACTOR or SERVICES:  Landscape Contractor (maintenance & installation) Chemical Lawn Care Company (excluding mowing maintenance service)	OTHERS ALLIED TO THE FIELD:  □ Extension Agent, (Federal, State, County, City, Regulatory Agency)  □ School, College, University  □ Trade Association, Library

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- ☐ Trade Association, Library Others (please describe):
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 Based on overall dollar volume. estimate what percentage of your business is derived from:

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5. How many people does your business employ (including vourself)?

Year-round Seasonal

6. What is your annual purchasing budget for:

Pesticides Equipment

7. In peak season, how many crews do you operate in the field for:

4.110	Installation
	Maintenance
	Pesticide Application

8. What is your approximate annual sales volume?

IMPORTANT: All information must be provided for processing.



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## **Lawn&Landscape**

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#### **NEW PRODUCTS**

Slice High Performance System from Thornton Computer Management Systems includes a new Windowsbased client/server interface and enhanced functions. It handles centrally connected tasks such as proposals, in-

proposals, inventory control, sales tracking, budgeting and compensation.

#### Circle 142 on reader service card

Turf Runner from SCAY can convert from a rear bagger to a side-discharge mid-size mower with a flip of a lever. The operator doesn't have to stop to remove the bag. It features a 5-gallon gas tank and has 7.5-mph ground speed. Clippings can be cleared from the deck with a blower.

Circle 143 on reader service card

A new backpack hydraulic pruner from Jonsered Power Products cuts branches up to 1 5/8 inches. The HP36 comes with a choice of a 6 1/2- or 13-foot telescoping wand and either a guillotine-style or scissor-shear cutting head. The 36-cc power pack is said to produce more than one ton of shearing force, and the engine swivels freely for ease of operation. The backpack unit weighs 17 pounds. Circle 144 on reader service card



Ground level loading trailer from **Premco Products** eliminates simple loading problems typical of ramps or tilt trailers. The Triple L trailer attaches to a tow vehicle to provide a deck that can be lowered flat to the ground. Slide equipment into position and use a self-locking winch to raise the load into travel position. Features include independent suspension,

steel frame, capacity to 2,000 pounds and a worm-gear winch.

Circle 145 on reader service card

RAM Mobile Data has developed the Strategic Network

for 2-way wireless data communications. New networks handle circuitswitched cellular, paging and dial-up systems. Users can access 100 percent of their mobile organizations and transfer data files.

Circle 146 on reader service card

Tradesman Industries redesigned the rear suspension and axle of vehicles so the cargo bed may be lowered





flush to the ground for easy loading of goods. The keyoperated system electronically lowers the entire cargo bed to the ground and raises it to the driving position once loading is finished.

Circle 147 on reader service card

Tuflex Mfg. introduces a spreader and aerator caddy. This unit can accommodate any spreader or aerator with or without



power drive. Handy ramp extends to the ground for fast loading and unloading. The caddy fits into any 2-inch hitch receiver

and includes reflectors for highway travel.

Circle 148 on reader service card

The Jacobsen Turfcat line of out-front rotary mowers feature a Kubota 23- or 28-hp diesel engine or a 45-hp Ford gas engine, and either 2- or 4-wheel drive. All models have hydrostatic transmission with dualrange transaxle for tough mowing conditions and a hydraulic deck drive. A

RND Signs creates custom refrigerator magnets featuring a lawn or landscape company's logo, slogan and phone number. Added to a promotional program, the magnets provide a reminder to customers and prospects about their service provider and how to reach them efficiently.

Circle 149 on reader service card

new, larger radiator and high-flow water pump increase engine cooling. Circle 150 on reader service card

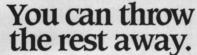
Landa makes a portable, gasoline-driven, hot water pressure washer. The PGDC comes in three models with power ranging from 4 to 5 gpm and 2,000 to 3,000 psi of pressure. One model has an electric start 11-hp Honda engine, while others are

driven by 16-hp Vanguard engines. All are skidmounted and offer a trigger gun with variable pressure wands for remote control. Circle 151 on reader service card

The 200B Series of electric globe/angle valves for light commercial applications is new from James Hardie Irrigation. Models offer manual internal and external bleed, flow range from 5 to 120 gpm and pressure









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range to 150 psi. Available in 1-, 1 1/2- and 2-inch plastic models, the series uses a slow-closing design to reduce water hammer while a captive plunger eliminates loose parts in the solenoid. Precise flow adjustment and manual shutoff are provided. Circle 152 on reader service card

New from Kubota Tractor are the GF1800 front mower with 4-wheel drive and the T-series of lawn tractors.

The GF-1800 has a 4wheel drive and independent hydraulic PTO with an 18-hp engine. Operators can quickly switch from 2- to 4-wheel drive for increased mobility. Models include a 48-inch mulching rear-discharge and side discharge in 54and 60-inches. Tractors have hydrostatic transmission, OHV engines and a suspended mowing deck. Circle 153 on reader service card

The Palmor commercial size Trac Vac 288 leaf trailer provides a 288-bushel capacity for removing leaves and grass from large landscape areas. With an air turbine Briggs & Stratton engine offering

electric start and 6-bladed impeller, the 11-hp, 3,800 rpm drive pulls leaves through the 8-inch diameter intake hose, which is 12 1/2

feet long. Its self-contained battery-operated hydraulics provide a 45 degree dump with an unlatching tailgate. Circle 155 on reader service card

A new chainsaw running at 14,000 no-load rpm with a 46cc, 3.3-hp power head is available from Husqvarna. Model 246 weighs 10.5 pounds and uses new starting decompression technology said to greatly reduce pulling force required for the starter cord. The 246 also separates the engine from both handles and support components with rubber dampers and has an inertia-activated chain brake designed to release in all working positions in case of kickback.

Circle 154 on reader service card

Four new formulas of Feast liquid fertilizers are available from Conklin Agronomic Products for turf and landscape. Feast-XL 26-0-0 contains new triazone, a slow-release, organic form of nitrogen to stimulate plant growth at critical stages. Feast-XL

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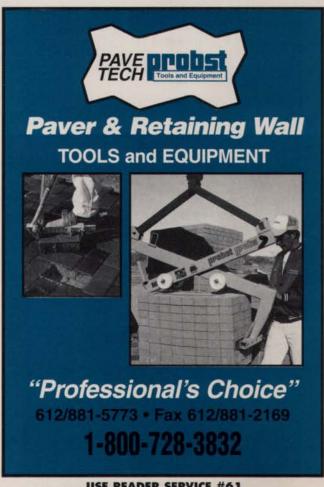


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handles foliar feeding due to its low burn potential. All formulations come in containers from 1 to 55 dallons.

Circle 156 on reader service card

The Groundskeeper AG-18 from Highway Equipment is a pickup- or trailer-mounted leaf vacuum system that is completely self-contained. It has a slide-in vacuum topper with an electricover-hydraulic dump

system to maximize its versatility. The flexible, 18-foot long intake hose provides greater access to leaves where they fall. Circle 158 on reader service card

Earthgreen Products presents organic, humic acid-based products for turf, horticulture and related landscape uses. The Menafee Humate™ products in the line include custom blended materials. Menefee

624S+Iron organic based fertilizer, a soil enhancer and a soil conditioner. Circle 159 on reader service card

A new automated bore control is now available for selected Iet Trac directional boring systems from Ditch Witch. It is designed to increase productivity by minimizing the need for manual speed adjustments during drilling and pullback operations. A nearly

> constant drill string rotation speed is maintained in all soils as the system detects changes.

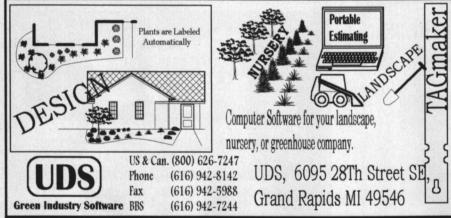
Circle 160 on reader service card

A 16-inch minitiller from V&B Manufacturing, suits contractors seeking something between a 1-hand cultivator and a 2-hand landscaping tool. It has a mattock blade on one side of the head and three 4 1/2-inch tines on the other. The head is made of corrosionresistant ductile iron and the handle is of hickory. Circle 161 on reader service card

JRM Chemical's Soil Moist polymer is used for indoor and outdoor applications to reduce plant waterings by as much as 50 percent. The polymer product comes in 3-pound packages and is said to be effective for several seasons.

Circle 162 on reader service card [1]

Spin Out root growth regulator products from Griffin is available to landscape contractors who need to install trees with an established look. Plants are said to adapt to their new environments more quickly and grow healthy in less time. It is available as a coating, treated containers, treated fabric, propagation inserts and trays. Circle 157 on reader service card



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#### landscape management

(continued from page 69)

ever, was a snowstorm in September that hit while the leaves were still on the trees. "There were so many dead and damaged limbs in trees and shrubs, we'll have increased numbers of certain insects getting in those areas now, like borers and beetles," said Cranshaw.

"I think 1996 will be an active year for those insects," he continued, "and in 1997 we may see increased damage from populations building in the broken areas of the plants."

WET AND DRY. In California, weather usually falls into one of two categories wet or dry. In 1995, wet was the word, and it had a profound affect on business.

Last year was one of the wettest on record at 481/2 inches in the northern part of the state, nearly double the average rainfall range of 26 to 27 inches. In southern California, the 24 to 28 inch range that fell last year dwarfed the average 12 inches. Most of this occurred in two major storms in January and March, but a late fall blast in the north with hurricane force winds and several more inches of rain added an exclamation point to a strange weather year on the Pacific Coast.

The biggest problem most contractors had was a shortened spring, which reduced the amount of time available to get jobs under way. Many projects were lost and never recovered, according to Lebo Newman, president of Redwood Landscaping in Santa Rosa. "I plan on adding more irrigation techs," he said. "If the season gets crunched again, I want to have the manpower to respond to a narrower window of opportunity."

"The heavy rains pointed out a lot of shoddy landscape work here," noted Rich Jark, president of South Coast Landscape in Los Alamitos. "Grading and drainage problems were revealed by the weather dramatically."

The wet weather and a mild summer caused greater incidences of fungal diseases in ornamentals and turf, and a proliferation of sucking insects such as aphids, according to Newman.

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**USE READER SERVICE #68** 

(continued from page 44)

to 25 people on site every day at their facility. They're not likely to ask another contractor to come in and bid on a course renovation."

But Mark Heinz, president and owner of Heinz Landscape and Construction, Glenview, Ill., said that over his company's four generations of golf course landscape work he's found that "we are still bidding."

He said that golf courses account for 15 to 20 percent of the company's business, with the rest commercial. The work varies with the courses' budgets.

Heinz said he knows of no courses who subcontract for maintenance work in his area, all of them doing it on their own with their crews.

Golf course work differs from other commercial work in that "a lot of superintendents are real picky about who is on their course," Heinz noted. "Superintendents care a lot about what is getting done on their courses because the course is a reflection of them."

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

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Rockville, MD (301) 881-9063 FAX (301) 881-8550 MD, VA, DE Feb 27, Rockville, MD

Lanphear Supply Division

Cleveland, OH (216) 381-5309 FAX (216) 381-1704 (800) 332-TREE (8733) Cent. OH, W. PA, WV Feb 28, Columbus, OH Feb 29, Toledo, OH Mar 1, Cleveland, OH Liqui-Green Lawn & Tree Care Peoria, IL

(309) 243-5247 FAX (309) 673-1179 (800) 747-5211 IL, E. IA Feb 27, Westmont, IL (Chicago Area)

Midwest Arborists Supplies

Grand Rapids, MI (616) 364-7616 FAX (800) 423-3789 Michigan Feb 22, Livonia, MI

Northeastern Associates

Fairfield, NJ (201) 227-0359 (201) 227-0865 New Jersey Mar 14, Totowa, NJ

Maitland FL

Prof. Tree Care & Injection

(407) 629-2467 FAX (407) 647-3335 Cent. & S. FL Feb 14, Fort Pierce, FL Feb 15, West Palm Beach, FL Feb 16, North Miami, FL

Feb 19, Fort Myers, FL

Feb 20, Sarasota, FL Feb 21, Clearwater, FL

Feb 22, Orlando, FL

**Pro-Green Supply** 

Jerome, ID (208) 324-6671 FAX (208) 324-1246 (800) 869-7741 ID, UT

Feb 2, Boise, ID Feb 8, Salt Lake City, UT Pruett Inc. Equipment & Supply Division

Lake Oswego, OR (503) 635-1524 FAX (603) 635-3916 (800) 635-4294 OR, WA Mar 15, Portland, OR

Releaf Tree Consultants

Indianapolis, IN (317) 891-8414 FAX (317) 891-8411 Indiana Feb 6, Indianapolis, IN

Scientific Tree Care

Panama City, FL (904) 763-5049 N. FL, S. GA, S. AL Feb 26, Tallahassee, FL Feb 27, Jacksonville, FL

Tree Clinic

Austin, TX (512) 385-6612 FAX (512) 385-6604 South & SE TX Feb 28, Houston, TX Feb 29, Waco, TX Mar 5, Austin, TX

Tree Injection Products Co.

Knoxville, TN (615) 521-6055 FAX (615) 522-0533 (800) 827-0532 KY, TN, N. AL, N. GA, MS, AR Feb 23, Atlanta, GA Mar 1, Gatlinburg, TN Jun 7, Gulf Shores, AL

Warne Chemical & Equipment Co.

Rapid City, SD (605) 342-6990 FAX (605) 342-7644 (800) 658-5457 W. SD, Wyoming Feb 6, Casper, WY Feb 24, Rapid City, SD



J. J. Mauget Company 2810 N. Figueroa Street Los Angeles, CA 90065

## The Andersons Leads The Nation In Providing DowElanco Products For Professional Turf Care Markets

The Andersons, manufacturers of TeeTime® turf care products for golf course superintendents and Andersons Professional Turf® products for lawn care operators and other groundskeepers, is now a leading provider of high-quality/ high-performance DowElanco product formulations.

Having forged their business relationship over a time span in excess of 20 years, The Andersons has incorporated a broad range of DowElanco products to prevent or solve specific turf care problems. High-quality products have also been developed for use on ornaThe following chart provides a basic product offering guide but The Andersons is quick to point out that their technical capabilities for custom blending other formulations are virtually limitless in their state-of-the-art turf care products plant. Fully detailed product information is available.

#### Fertilizers & DowElanco

Fertilizer with 0.47% Dursban
Fertilizer with 0.52% Dursban
Fertilizer with 0.65% Dursban
Fertilizer with 0.71% Dursban
Fertilizer with 0.92% Dursban
Fertilizer with 0.75% Surflan
Fertilizer with 1.00% Surflan

Fertilizer with 0.57% Team & 0.57% Dursban Fertilizer with 0.87% Team & 0.58% Dursban Fertilizer with 1.15% Team & 0.57% Dursban

Fertilizer with 0.57% Team Fertilizer with 0.87% Team Fertilizer with 0.92% Team Fertilizer with 1.00% Team Fertilizer with 1.15% Team Fertilizer with 1.25% Team Fertilizer with 1.50% Team Fertilizer with 1.54% Team Fertilizer with 0.92% Balan Fertilizer with 1.02% Balan Fertilizer with 1.04% Balan

Fertilizer with 1.15% Balan Fertilizer with 1.28% Balan Fertilizer with 0.46% Balan & 0.92% Dursban

Fertilizer with 0.86% Balan & 0.86% Surflan Fertilizer with 0.57% Balan & 0.57% Surflan Fertilizer with 0.38% Gallery

#### Fungicide -

Rubigan AS\*

2x0.5 gal.

#### **Growth Regulator**

Cutless 50W\* 4x8 oz.

#### Herbicides

Treflan Granular	5.00%
Team Granular	2.00%
Balan Granular	0.58%
Balan Granular	0.92%
Balan Granular	1.72%
Balan Granular	2.50%
Confront	4x1 gal.
Confront	30 gal.
Gallery 75DF	4x1 gal.
Snapshot TG	50 lb. bag
Surflan	12x1 qt.
Surflan	5x1 gal.
Surflan	2x2.5 gal.
Turflon II Amine	2x2.5 gal.
Turflon D*	2x2.5 gal.
Turflon Ester*	2x2.5 gal.
XL2G*	50 lb. bag

#### Insecticides

Dursban Granular	0.50%
Dursban Granular	0.97%
Dursban Granular	1.00%
Dursban Granular	1.16%
Dursban Granular	1.20%
Dursban Granular	2.32%
Dursban Granular	2.50%
Dursban Turf	2x2.5 ga
Dursban Turf	4x1 gal.
Dursban Turf	55 gal.
Dursban 50 WSP	6x2 lb.
Pageant*	6x5 lb.

\* Limited quantities available



#### Call for a complete product selection guide.

The Andersons welcomes inquiries regarding any of its turf care formulations including those incorporating DowElanco products. Call us toll-free and ask for a free copy of our product selection guide for TeeTime golf course products or for Andersons Professional Turf products.

Call Toll-Free 1-800-225-ANDY

#### the professional's partner®



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