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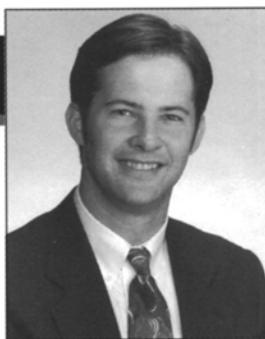
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*traces pesticide product development through from discovery to distribution. **P1***





Bob West
Editor

It will never go away, in all likelihood. Instead, it's a fact of doing business in this industry.

The 'it' in question here? The fact that portions of the general populous will forever decry the industry's use of pesticide products to deliver a healthier, more attractive landscape.

The following information appeared in an article entitled, "Greener Grass vs. Cleaner Water; Effort to Cure Bay Does Little About Doctoring Lawns," in *The Washington Post*.

"Ehrlich Green Team is in the business of providing a fragrant piece of the suburban American dream: thick, emerald-green grass. The Pennsylvania-based chain of lawn care franchises makes liberal use of fertilizer and applies chemicals that show weeds and bugs no pity."

The article goes on to discuss how such "liberal" use of these products threatens the health of the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland, at least in the eyes of environmentalists and state conservation experts.

"For those who worry about the Chesapeake, therein lies a predicament: how to persuade suburbanites to moderate their visions of the ideal lawn so as to limit reliance on the fertilizers that wash into the water, fueling environmental ills such as oxygen-choking algae blooms and the toxic microbe *Pfiesteria piscicida*," said the article.

Currently, the agricultural community is receiving the lion's share of the criticism in Maryland, and a state law passed there this year imposed controversial limits on the amount of fertilizer farmers could apply. Lawn care operators must abide by the same guidelines, but only on properties of three acres or larger.

Toward the end of the article, a green industry voice is finally heard. Kirk Hurto, vice president of technical services for TruGreen-ChemLawn, shared a widely held view that turfgrass in fact demands more fertilizer requirements than the maximum three applications recommended by the University of Maryland's Cooperative Extension Service.

But the article offers no direct quotes from Hurto and limits his contribution to just one paragraph before returning to conservationists' views that "thorough environmental protection demands a cultural breakthrough ... a refashioning of lawn aesthetics that ditches the notion that the perfect turf is uniform and utterly free of weeds."

Such an article illustrates how committed contractors must be to making sure that a complete picture of the facts is presented at all times. Obviously, such efforts may not always yield positive results, particularly when other individuals control the flow of information.

But articles such as this one have the potential to sway public opinion, and allowing this to happen without telling the industry's story as well leaves the industry no one to blame but itself. **LL**

Bob West

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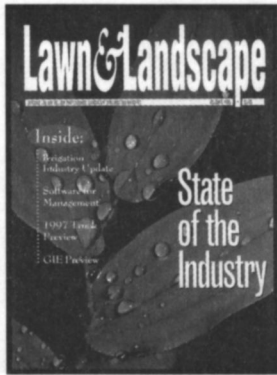
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'Tru' Shock



On February, they were the first ones out of the gate with a plan born out of a futuristic vision of the green industry.

LandCare USA, Houston, Texas, was developed with a clear goal of developing a national commercial landscape company that could grow aggressively by selling stock, raising a tremendous amount of capital and offering contractors an opportunity unlike any other in the industry.

As it turned out, however, LandCare USA was followed out of those gates by TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn., which spent the 1990s turning under-achieving lawn care companies into a cash producing behemoth. And TruGreen-ChemLawn made it clear from the start that it was serious about having the same type of success in the landscape maintenance industry.

As Dave Slott, TruGreen-ChemLawn president and chief operating officer, said when his company acquired both Orkin Lawn Care and Orkin Plantscaping, its first aggressive move into interior plant care, in the second quarter of 1997, "We don't feel we're number two in anything. We're in this business to compete, and you can read into that what you want."

Indeed, the same philosophy is clearly true for landscape maintenance as TruGreen-ChemLawn's acquisition of LandCare USA put it on a path to be the clear market leader before long, while at the same time leaving many folks wondering what happened to LandCare USA's master plan.

THE DEAL. In the agreement between the two companies, TruGreen-ChemLawn's parent company, ServiceMaster, Downers Grove, Ill., will acquire LandCare USA in a stock for stock swap. This will create a landscape maintenance and installation company with reported annualized revenues in excess of \$400 million that services 2,500 customers through more than 100 locations nationwide.

LandCare USA shareholders will receive a fraction of a share of ServiceMaster stock – approximately 0.55 shares, which would be valued at \$11 – for each share of

Just nine months after announcing its formation and aggressive long-term growth plan, LandCare USA sells to TruGreen-ChemLawn.

Breaking NEWS

LandCare USA stock they own. In essence, LandCare USA shareholders would trade two shares of their stock, which closed at \$8 per share on Oct. 30, for one share of ServiceMaster stock, which closed that same day at \$21.125. The deal is still subject to approval by the Federal Securities and Exchange Commission and at least 51 percent of the LandCare USA shareholders, and it is expected to close early in the second quarter of 1999.

"Following the merger, TruGreen-ChemLawn will command the number one position in the \$20-billion commercial landscape market," noted Carlos Cantu, chief executive officer of ServiceMaster in a press release announcing the deal and confirming that the company is far from done with its plan. "We launched our landscape operations early in 1998 and believe we are off to a tremendous start in a market that is ripe for internal growth and future consolidation."

Although not all of the structural details will be worked out for some time, Bill Murdy, LandCare USA chairman, chief executive officer and president, will

be named president of the newly formed division of TruGreen-ChemLawn. Murdy will report directly to Dave Slott, and Paul Anderegg, who has been senior vice president of operations for TruGreen-ChemLawn, will become chief operating officer of the new operation. One individual whose role is suddenly unclear in this organization is Craig Ruppert, founder of Ruppert Landscape Company, Ashton, Md. Upon sale of his \$45 million company to TruGreen-ChemLawn in September, Ruppert was named senior vice

president of the landscape management division of TruGreen-ChemLawn with responsibilities for the day-to-day operations of the new organization.

"Suffice to say, Craig Ruppert is a very important part of our organization and he will certainly be an important part of this group's upper management," Slott asserted.

THE PLAYERS. At the time it announced its formation and public stock offering plans, LandCare USA consisted of seven founding member companies totaling approximately \$118 million in revenues, although \$50 million of those revenues came from a line clearing company, Trees Inc., Houston, Texas, that many industry observers felt didn't fit the mold of a landscape maintenance company.

After a briefly delayed and somewhat disappointing stock offering that saw LandCare USA go public at \$8 a share (members of the organization had been expecting an opening price between \$10 and \$14 a share) in June, LandCare USA began making good on its promise to grow rapidly through acquisition. As of press time for this article, the company had acquired a total of 20 additional companies and \$237.4 million in revenues to add to those first seven companies' \$118 million.

Meanwhile, TruGreen-ChemLawn's foray into landscape maintenance was equally eye-catching, but more because of the indi-

viduals it was acquiring along with its companies to run its new division - Rich Akerman, Northwest Landscape Industries, Tigard, Ore.; David Minor, Minor's Landscape Services, Fort Worth, Texas; Joe Skelton and Bill Killmer, Lifescapes, Atlanta, Ga.; and the aforementioned Craig Ruppert are among the most respected names in the industry.

Competition to attract and acquire such successful companies drove acquisition prices skyward with offers commonly between six and 10 times a company's

EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization), according to one contractor who has had conversations about selling his company to LandCare USA and TruGreen-ChemLawn.

A logical question to ask in the aftermath of this deal is what happens now to the market of landscape companies looking to sell. "I would guess the value of my company in a sale went down somewhat with TruGreen-ChemLawn's acquisition of LandCare USA," noted the contractor who had selling conversations with these two organizations. "Also, I have to question how this fits with what TruGreen-ChemLawn has been saying all along is its strategy of creating a national footprint of top-notch leaders in the industry and then a rollup strategy to fill in key areas. This deal was done so quickly that you know they couldn't have done due diligence on each LandCare USA company, so it had to be driven just by numbers."

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING. "We saw this as an opportune time for the benefit of both companies' shareholders," noted Slott. "We felt there was a market opportunity for us and both boards agreed that we are stronger together than apart."

"Ultimately, we're still married to synergies between TruGreen-ChemLawn's infrastructure and our landscape division to benefit our employees and our customers as a single source provider nationwide of services encompassing interior and exterior landscape services," Slott continued.

"Making it work now will be a challenge," said Minor, who is now the vice president for the Southern Division of TruGreen-ChemLawn. "We've had some experience with integration already but it's always a challenge. This deal takes it to a whole different level, and some entrepreneurs will have to learn to work well in a corporate environment."

Some of the challenges of establishing structure may include the departure of some individuals from the organization.

"In all of the markets we both serve we



"We don't feel we're number two in anything. We're in this business to compete, and you can read into that what you want." — Dave Slott

be named president of the newly formed division of TruGreen-ChemLawn. Murdy will report directly to Dave Slott, and Paul Anderegg, who has been senior vice president of operations for TruGreen-ChemLawn, will become chief operating officer of the new operation. One individual whose role is suddenly unclear in this organization is Craig Ruppert, founder of Ruppert Landscape Company, Ashton, Md. Upon sale of his \$45 million company to TruGreen-ChemLawn in September, Ruppert was named senior vice

Where They're At

With the most recent acquisition of LandCare USA, the following is a current listing of the companies that have been acquired by TruGreen-ChemLawn.



LandCare USA

1. Arteka Corp., Eden Prairie, MN
2. Arteka Southeast, Atlanta, GA
3. Church Landscape Co., Lombard, IL
4. Clean Cut, Austin, TX
5. Continental Landscape Management, Phoenix, AZ
6. Desert Care Landscaping, Phoenix, AZ
7. Four Seasons Landscape & Maintenance, Foster City, CA
8. Gator & Gator Landscape, Longwood, FL
9. Green Tree, Atlanta, GA
10. Ground Control Landscaping, Orlando, FL
11. Horticultural Industries, Sarasota, FL
12. Landscape Resources, Dallas, TX
13. Landscape West, Anaheim, CA
14. Landtrends, San Diego, CA
15. Lighthouse Landscape, Hilton Head, SC
16. Pacific Environmental Landscape, Los Angeles, CA
17. Redwood Landscape, Santa Rosa, CA
18. Schumacher Landscaping, Boston, MA
19. Southern Tree & Landscape Co., Charlotte, NC
20. Trees Inc., Houston, TX

TruGreen-ChemLawn

1. California Landscape Co., Anaheim, CA
2. Cook's Landscaping, Austin, TX
3. Earth Management, Boston, MA
4. Environmental Design Group, Atlanta, GA
5. Environmental Landscape Services, Houston, TX
6. Evergreen Landscape, Austin, TX
7. Landscape Concepts, Houston, TX
8. Lifescapes, Atlanta, GA
9. Minor's Landscape Services, Fort Worth, TX
10. Northwest Landscape Services, Portland, OR
11. Otey Brothers, Westboro, MA
12. The Ruppert Landscape Co., Ashton, MD

AS OF NOVEMBER 3, 1998

Total annualized revenue of TruGreen-ChemLawn: \$140 million

Total annualized revenue of LandCare USA: \$237.4 million

Breaking NEWS

will need to bring people together and consolidate in some cases," Akerman noted.

Just as the announcement of TruGreen-ChemLawn's formation of a landscape division in February was accelerated by the development of LandCare USA, this deal puts TruGreen-ChemLawn on a quicker timetable than it had planned.

While no specific details were offered, Slott expects to continue on this acquisition path.

"We have identified ourselves as a key player that wants to be a national player in the maintenance industry, and we will continue to make acquisitions as they make sense for us strategically," Slott added.

In fact, both companies are expected to continue with acquisitions while working to close this deal. An internal memo from Murdy to all LandCare USA employees that was obtained by *Lawn & Landscape* said, "The combined landscape operations should have annualized revenues of approximately \$500 million at the completion of the merger early next year."

Later in the letter, Murdy wrote, "By the end of 1998 LandCare on its own expects to exceed \$300 million in annualized revenues... Given the size of the industry this is just the beginning."

Murdy commented that little will change for his organization in terms of what it is accomplishing.

"We are now simply building a substan-

the acquisition possibility.

Akerman, who is now vice president of the Western Division for TruGreen-ChemLawn, said any potential concerns that TruGreen will dominate the industry should be dismissed.

"We're not a Microsoft," Akerman commented. "Yes, we're nearly \$500 million in sales, and yes, we'll continue to grow. But we're not a monopoly in an industry this large."

Minor agreed with Akerman. "ServiceMaster is obviously showing tremendous confidence in this industry and I don't see where this hurts smaller companies," he commented. "People can look at it as an opportunity or the end of their business. It all depends on if they have an optimistic or pessimistic attitude."

Much of the initial reaction by those in the industry contacted and informed of the deal by *Lawn & Landscape* centered around questions regarding LandCare USA's ability to continue financing acquisitions and satisfy its founding members with a lagging stock price. (After opening at \$8 a share and soon climbing above \$10 a share, the stock fell as low as \$5 a share and remained in the \$6 range until climbing to \$8 in late October.) Murdy was steadfast in his denial that LandCare USA was having difficulty financing the closing of acquisitions, but he didn't hide his disappointment with the stock's performance.

"This deal was not directly tied to stock performance," he said. "Yes, we had hoped to be awarded a higher multiple but we recognized that we had to produce results. Thus far, we've only reported one quarter's results and our second

quarter's results will be in line with analysts' estimates.

Both Slott and Murdy expressed a hope that the industry at large will view this development as a positive for contractors in general.

THE BIG PICTURE. What this deal means for the industry is obviously yet to be determined. TruGreen-ChemLawn estimates the revenues for its new landscape division is approximately \$430 million with the acquisition of LandCare USA. This would put the company on ground comparably to Environmental Industries, Calabasas, Calif., the parent company for Environmental Care, Valley Crest, Valley Crest Tree, Valley Crest Golf, and U.S. Lawns. According to Burt Sperber, chief executive officer of Environmental Industries, that company's 1998 revenues should be \$425 million from its more than 70 operating centers.

Sperber said that the only affects the development of LandCare USA and TruGreen-ChemLawn's landscape division have had on his organization so far have been positive.

"It has really eliminated some competition for us," Sperber noted. "Take the Atlanta market for example. A number of the biggest companies in that market have been acquired now by TruGreen-ChemLawn, but only one of them will be able to bid on a project at one time or else it would be collusion." Sperber added that while he has had various conversations about different consolidation possibilities involving Environmental Industries with representatives from LandCare USA and TruGreen-ChemLawn, he is satisfied to keep the company operating independently for now.

The other organization people are wondering about at this time is the Brickman Group, Long Grove, Ill. After securing venture capital early in 1998 for the purpose of financing acquisition growth the company has been relatively quiet aside from a few acquisitions in the first half of the year.

Scott Brickman, president of the company, could not be reached for comment for this article. —Cindy Code and Bob West

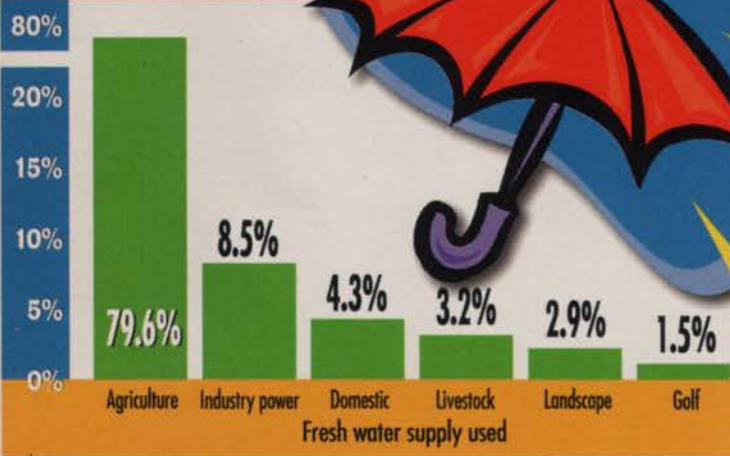
The authors are Group Publisher and Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine, respectively.



"By the end of 1998 LandCare on its own expects to exceed \$300 million in annualized revenues ... Given the size of the industry this is just the beginning." — Bill Murdy

tial entity inside of another substantial entity, instead of building a substantial entity as a stand alone organization," he explained, adding that LandCare USA was surprised when it was first approached by representatives of ServiceMaster regarding

DRIP, DRIP, DRIP...



(Source: Irrigation Association)

COUNTING EVERY DROP

As water continues to become a more valuable commodity, particularly in rapidly growing areas with less rainfall, landscape irrigation comes under more stringent attacks. A study by the Irrigation Association, however, indicates how minor a role in water use landscape irrigation actually plays.

Of the 25 percent of the United States' fresh water supply that is withdrawn from streams, lakes and aquifers, just 2.9 percent of that amount goes to irrigating landscapes.

Meanwhile, the agricultural industry uses nearly 80 percent of that 25 percent.

RISE-ing TO THE OCCASION

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Allen James, executive director of Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment, is as close to the regulatory situations surrounding pesticide products as anyone. He offered his thoughts about the

reality of activists opposed to the development, registration, marketing and use of pesticides," James pointed out. "What's happening now, however, is that activists have found a new venue and a new instrument of attack on our industry. No longer are we confronted on a regular basis at the federal level. For the most part, activists have found that their objectives are more easily achieved at the local level, and to some degree, at the state level."

In particular, contractors in Oregon, Washington and Texas may soon find themselves faced with new pesticide use reporting laws, and legislators in North

Carolina are considering a pesticide phase-out ordinance modeled after the controversial law passed in San Francisco.

"It's obvious the goal [of Oregon activists' plan] is to produce a website showing where pesticides are applied, especially in proximity to schools, encouraging public activism against pesticide use," noted Fred Langley, manager, state government relations for RISE.

James noted that although interest in national and international environmental organizations seems to be diminishing, the development of the Internet enables various individuals and groups to communicate easily regardless of their location.

"A factoid created in New York today becomes factual testimony in California at some local level tomorrow," James said. "Ideas, plans, anecdotes

and action schemes are simply transmitted from one location to another, and calls for action occur almost instantaneously now."

At the same time, single issue activists are as formidable a force as ever.

"Now, the true activists will fight almost any battle, once a cause has been identified, but they will withdraw if

the battle heats up, that is, if industry fights back with real facts," James explained. "However, our problems at the local level today come from the 'true believer.' A true believer never gives up, never gives ground, regardless of fact or opposition effort. The only truth is their truth. They have one issue, and they will push



Allen James

For the most part, activists have found that their objectives are more easily achieved at the local level, and to some degree, at the state level.

status of the movements that threaten contractors' way of doing business.

"We have always faced the

MARKET TRENDS

that issue, and they will push that agenda forever."

This is where it is crucial that members of the industry become active communicating the truth about products under attack, such as pesticides and gasoline-powered blowers.

"Unfortunately, when 'true believers' present themselves to the local municipality or to the local school board, they seem to have more knowledge about the topic than anyone else locally," James noted.

MONSANTO, AHP CALL OFF \$34 BILLION DEAL

NEW YORK – One of the largest deals ever simply turned

(continued on page 10)

PEOPLE

Robert Dolibois, executive vice president of the American Nursery and Landscape Association, joined the American Society of Association Executives as chairman of the board of directors.

Hunter Industries appointed **Jim McGovern** and **George Jimenez** to East Coast District sales managers and **Michael Cucchiara** as Eastern Division sales director.

The Garick Corp. promoted **Cassandra Kellogg** from a representative in the customer service/accounts receivable department to the regional sales representative servicing northern Ohio.

EPIC of Wisconsin announced the following promotions: **Tom Wellnitz** from vice president to chief financial officer, **Sandy Schmieder** from executive producer/account manager to vice president and **Gina Stoffel** from graphic designer to graphic designer/print coordinator.

Joseph Berg and **Darcy Turner** joined Biohabitats as senior ecologist and stream restoration specialist, respectively.

Briggs & Stratton named **Pete Hotz** vice president of engineering in the Utility Engine Division.

Bill Barnhart became national sales manager for Sea Gull Lighting.

Landscape Maintenance Group named **Michael Gaffney** general manager.

Teresa Howe joined PanAmerican Seed Co. as product representative.

Ray Hubler was named vice president of operations for NationsCredit's Outdoor Power Equipment Industry Portfolio.



Robert Dolibois



George Jimenez

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"**CLIP** has given me more time to spend with my family." Mark Bailey, Sonshine Lawn Service

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Four Feet to the Yard

"We love **CLIP**; it has improved efficiency and PROFIT!" Deresa and Jim Helems, Oak Hill Landscaping

"**CLIP** saves me two days, minimum, of office paperwork." Martin Allen, Environmental Expressions

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Mark Perschel, Perschel Brothers Services

"It has let me organize the company and run jobs without the owner being in the shop every morning." Pam, Neill Enterprises

"Have anyone call me for a testimonial!" Mark Erbesfield, GreenMark

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(continued from page 8)

out to be the largest deal to ever fall apart when Monsanto and American Home Products, the parent company for American Cyanamid, announced the termination of their merger plans due to governance issues.

Under the initial merger plans, the companies' CEOs intended to share control over the new company, but acceptable details could not be worked out that would allow it to happen.

EQUIPMENT FORECAST SHOWS GROWTH

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CALENDAR

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

NOV. 18 Mid-America Green Industry Council's Recertification and Technician Training for Turf and Ornamentals, Kansas City. Contact: 816/561-5323.

DEC. 1 Vermont Greenscape Association's Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, White River Junction, Vt. Contact: 802/773-7833.

DEC. 7-10 Ohio Turfgrass Conference, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 614/760-5442.

DEC. 8-10 Georgia Turfgrass Show, Atlanta. Contact: 770/975-4123.

DEC. 9 Southern California Turfgrass Council, Buena Park, Calif. Contact: 800/500-7282.

DEC. 9-10 Tree Chemistry with Just a Little Fear, Portsmouth, N.H. Contact: 603/436-4804.

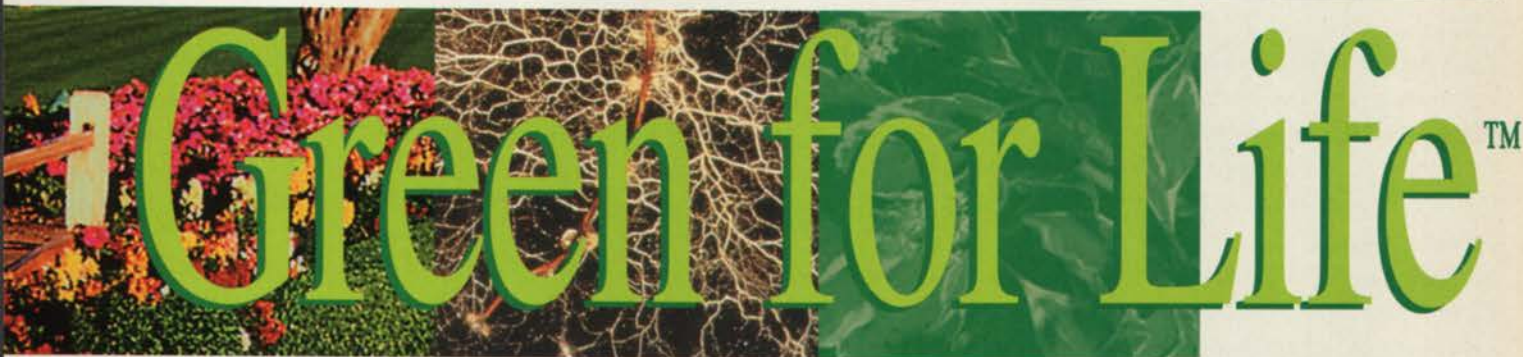
DEC. 9-11 Rocky Mountain Regional Turfgrass Association Turf Conference and Trade Show, Denver. Contact: 303/770-2220.

JAN. 3-5 The Western Nursery and Landscape Association Annual Meeting and Trade Show, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/233-1481.

JAN. 4-FEB. 19 University of Massachusetts Winter School for Turf Managers, Amherst, Mass. Contact: 413/545-2484.

JAN. 5-7 Eastern Pennsylvania Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show, King of Prussia, Penn. Contact: 814/863-3475.

JAN. 11-15 Advanced Landscape IPM Short Course, College Park, Md. Contact: 301/405-3913.



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ASSOCIATION NEWS

The Orange County/Long Beach Chapter of the **California Landscape Contractors Association** recognized 57 landscapers during its Annual Beautification Awards. Wade Roberts, Sherman Gardens, received the Meriden Award for lifetime contribution to beautification of the environment; Greg Grisamore, Richard Taylor and Associates, received the Sweepstakes Award for best overall entry; and Ruben Flores, Visionscape, won the President's Award for best entry in any landscape installation category.

The **Professional Grounds Management Society** will debut its updated Estimating Guidelines publication at the Green Industry Exposition, Nov. 14-17, Nashville, Tenn. The book includes updated figures on estimating landscape maintenance costs.

Deadline for entry into the **National Landscape Association's** 1998 American Garden Awards is Dec. 1. Landscape professionals are eligible to enter residential and commercial properties. Membership in NLA or the American Nursery & Landscape Association is not required to enter. For more information, call ANLA at 202/789-2900.

The **Professional Lawn Care Association of America** is offering Richard Gerson's "Great Customer Service for Your Small Business" and "Beyond Customer Service." For more information, call PLCAA at 800/458-3466.

Alvaro Somoza, American Farms, was elected 47th president of the **Florida Nurserymen & Growers Association**.

Institute sees a positive trend continuing for manufacturers of commercial mowing machines. OPEI estimated that the future of commercial turf care equipment looks promising through 1999, according to their annual forecast.

The September 1998 report indicated that all types of commercial riding rotary turf mowers will increase in United States shipments by 10.8 percent for the 1998 model year (Sept. 1, 1997 to Aug. 31, 1998) and 6.6 percent in 1999, pushing shipments to 61,891 units.

Intermediate size walk-behind rotary mowers are showing an increase of 9.7 percent for model year 1998 to 52,985 units and 1.3 percent for 1999 to 53,674 units. **LL**

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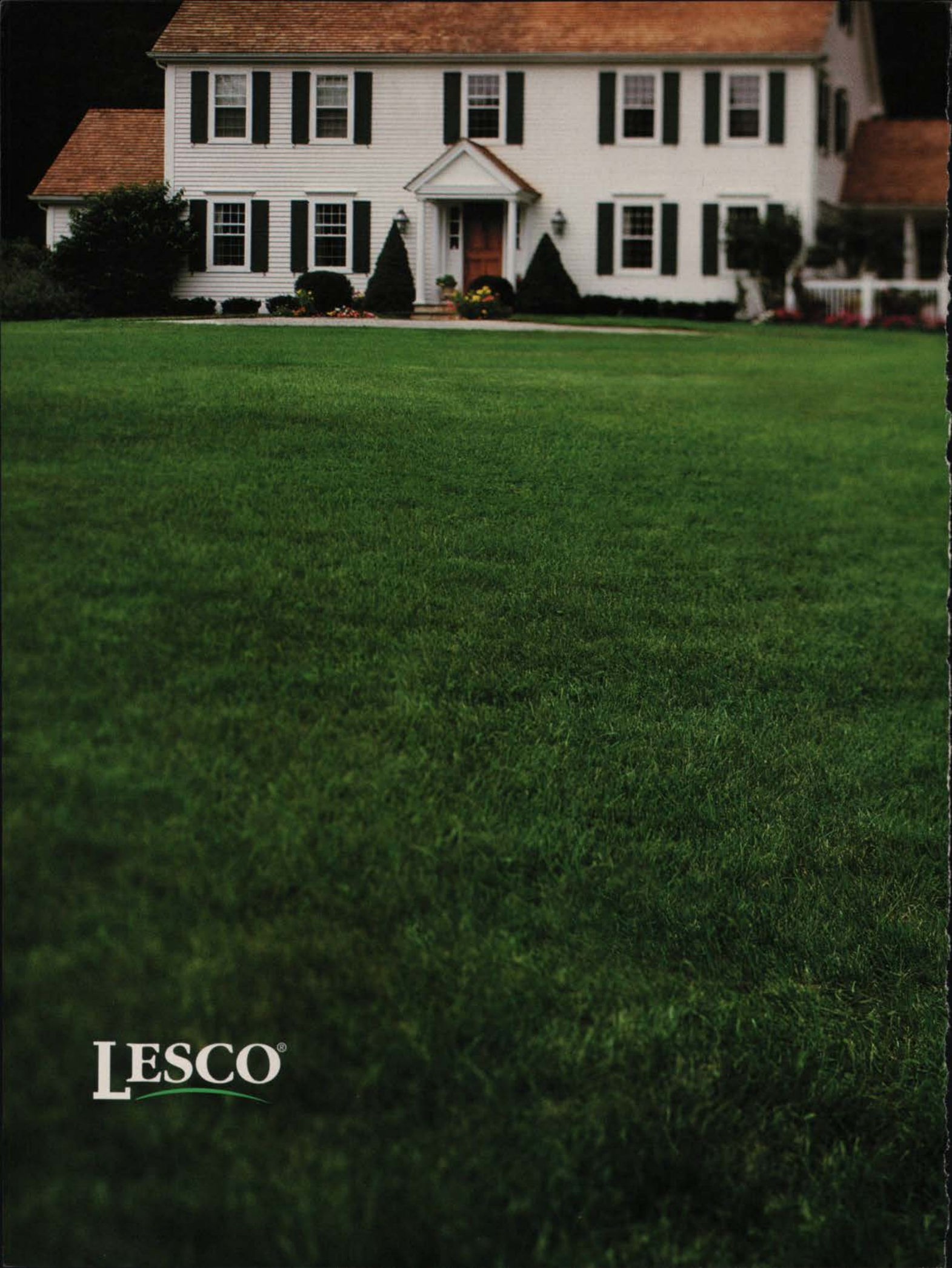
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USE READER SERVICE #14



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

It is my experience that the financial and personal risks associated with franchising are seriously understated in the June article, "Lawn & Landscape Takes a Look at Franchising." As someone who operated a lawn care franchise for 4½ year and now operates an independent lawn care firm, I caution any independent lawn care operator about franchising.

Franchising creates long-term, far reaching legal obligations on the part of the franchisee. Although there is protective legislation in 38 states, this relationship is enforced through complex documents called franchise agreements that often result in lawsuits when disputes arise during the contract.

If you are seriously considering a franchise, contractors should get specialized, unbiased, franchising-specific, legal advice. I have found the American Franchise Association, which has monitored the franchise industry for 30 years, to be of great practical assistance (312/431-0545).

How common are the problems? One indication is the level of litigation in all industries that offer franchises. The Ontario government recently stated that 5,000 lawsuits were started in 1997 that involved franchising. With only 40,000 franchisees in operations, that means more than 12 percent of all Ontario franchises are involved in new litigation.

Legal problems in franchising are well documented. Contractors interested in franchising should protect themselves and their families by: taking their time; talking to many existing and former system franchisees and getting advice from associations that monitor franchising from a franchisee/investor viewpoint. Like most things in life, if it seems too good to be true it normally is.

*LES STEWART, FOUNDER
CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF
FRANCHISE OPERATORS*

To the Editor:

Success in franchising is built on a cooperative relationship between a franchisee and a franchisor. Mr. Stewart is correct that those considering this form of livelihood should get expert advice, take the time needed to investigate the system they want to join and apply the concept of caveat emptor.

However, his assertion that franchising is a predatory practice fraught with lawsuits is not just a jaundiced view of the concept, but one that tarnishes the reputations of the hundreds of thousands of honest business owners – franchisees and franchisors – who successfully employ this strategy as partners.

Mr. Stewart's claims that more than 5,000 lawsuits involving franchises were started in Ontario in 1997 alone is unsubstantiated.

Attorneys of leading Canadian franchise lawn firms expressed doubts. Frank Zaid, senior partner of Osler Hoskin & Harcourt of Toronto, said, "Based on our experience, I can't see how there would be that number of lawsuits." Alex Konigsberg, partner at the Montreal firm Lapointe Rosenstein said the claim "bears no relationship to reality."

In the U.S., at least, all one needs to do is read the Uniform Franchise Offering Circular to determine if a particular company is lawsuit-prone.

I urge those eager to enter franchising to do due diligence in their choice of associations as well. If one seeks unbiased, balanced and comprehensive information about franchising, avoid any organization specifically representing one side or the other.

The "franchisee-only" association Mr. Stewart recommended represents only one side of the franchise partnership and promotes increased government intervention in franchising, which inevitably leads to more red tape and taxes for owners.

Perhaps it was the International Franchise Association (202/628-8000) that Mr. Stewart had in mind when he suggested an organization that has a long history of advocating fairness in franchising. IFA is nearly 40 years old, but more importantly, represents both franchisees and franchisors. Plus, IFA's members abide by its stringent Code of Principles and Standards of Conduct, a set of guidelines promoting third-party mediation instead of lawsuits.

Buyer beware, Mr. Stewart? Yes, and seller beware as well. That's why the contract they sign is called an agreement.

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USE READER SERVICE #17



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STIHL®

THE NEW EDGE of Africa wild animal attraction, Busch Gardens, Tampa, Fla., is 15 acres of dramatic African grassland theming. It is made up of nine distinct habitats and houses more than 16 species of African animals.

While the demolition of the 14-month project began in May 1996, locating and growing the unusual plant material began in 1995. To ensure potability for the animals, the water source for the project was upgraded from pond water to well water.

Also in May 1996, a 1.5-acre test site was developed to evaluate how well the fever acacias, ear trees, palo verdes, ocotillos, mesquites, and other plant species would adapt to harsh Florida heat and humidity and intense animal activity.

Specimens were hand-selected from southern California, Florida and Arizona and were quarantined before the in-

DESIGN NOTES

PROJECT:	Edge of Africa
LOCATION:	Busch Gardens, Tampa, Fla.
SIZE:	15 Acres
OWNER:	Anheuser-Busch Entertainment
ARCHITECT:	Peckham, Guyton, Albers & Viets, Inc.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE:	Foster Conant
PROJECT VALUE:	\$1,250,000
LANDSCAPE CONSTRUCTION:	Virgil Matthews, ISS operations manager; Bruce Belcher, ISS project manager; Jeff Cole, Irrigation; Talmadge Griffin, ISS supervisor; Hector Almauger, ISS supervisor

stallation occurred.

Irrigation is controlled by five, 16-station Scorpio Units that are operated by a computer-controlled irrigator unit. A mile of 4-, 6- and 8-inch mainline feeds to seven zone lines, numerous turf rotors, shrub sprays, rockwork planter drip tubes and even some animal cooling misters.

Irrigation heads in the baboon, hyena and lion exhibits

are recessed in heavy PVC and concrete collars for protection against the powerful jaws and claws of these animals.

The actual installation of the 35,000 shrubs and grasses, 300 trees, 300 tons of inorganic mulches and acres of turf began in February 1997. This allowed plant material enough time to acclimate and establish before the introduction of the animals to their new home.

The installation began with a 10-person crew, but soon increased to a 40-person team working two shifts, 15 to 18 hours per day. At the project's peak, the team coordinated daily activities with 25 other contractors. Thirteen inches of rain fell during two days in the month prior to the opening, causing huge washouts, erosion and loss of seeded areas. ISS responded by moving yards of soil and adding acres of sod.

Beyond the entrance of the display, the shrub and grassland reveals a gently sloping marshland, home to two hippopotamuses, Nile

crocodiles, numerous fish and aquatic vegetation.

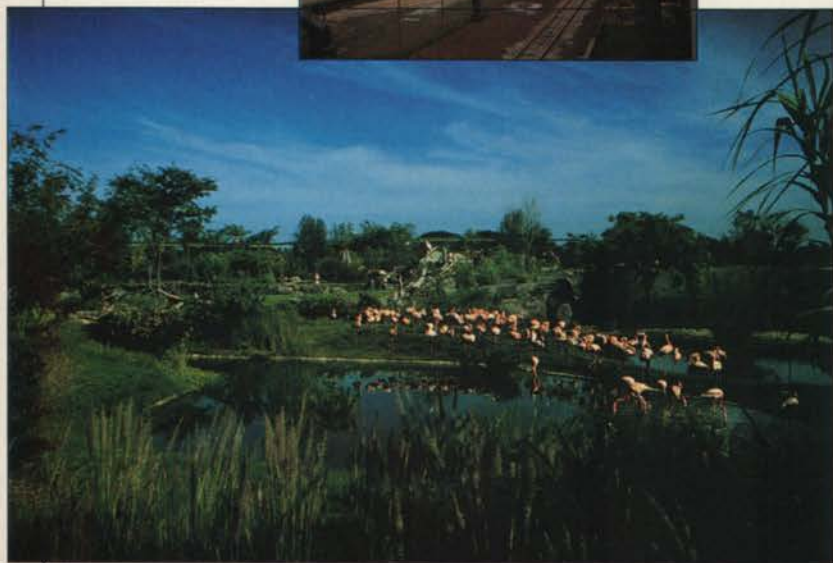
The plant selection process included research for non-toxicity to assure safe, animal grazing. Meerkat display tree rootballs were wrapped in hardware cloth to protect them from these vigorous tunneling mammals.

Immediately upon release into the display, a 350-pound lioness began using the display's new Live Oaks as scratching posts. ISS quickly responded by armoring the trunks with banded three-inch pole fencing. Meanwhile, the baboons removed 85 percent of their vegetation during the first 30 days after opening, so baboon-resistant species, including Cordgrass, Wedelia and Colocasias, were installed.

Decomposed Arizona granite was brought in to create the illusion of mud pathways and dry streambeds. Raked daily, the gritty product packs tightly and stays clean when wet. Larger grades of pea gravel, egg rock, river sludge and boulders complete the effect. — Joe Parr

The author is the ISS project manager at Busch Gardens, Tampa, Fla.

Busch Gardens' new Edge of Africa wild animal attraction has 15 acres of African grassland theming. Photo: ISS



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Available Phosphorus (P ₂ O ₅)	2.0%
Soluble Potash (K ₂ O)	2.0%

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Rhizopogon - four species
VAM - seven species
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- **Organic Fertilizer**
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opportunities for additional income.

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Grasshopper's front-mounted deck where you trim and mow without changing your visual focus point. Or how easy it is to maneuver without foot pedals using only one or both hands with Grasshopper's *foam-touch steering levers*. And by all means keep mum about *the industry's most comfortable seat* — ventilated,

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USE READER SERVICE #19

Contractors nationwide report having to reject work because of the labor shortage. Illustration: Bob Novak



*Land-
scape con-
tractors are
coming up
with new
ways to
beat the
labor
shortage.*

*By Nicole
Wisniewski*

At the end of last year, Dan Foley looked at his budget numbers. The typical \$2,500 budgeted for recruiting employees was well surpassed at a grand total of \$14,000, most of it going toward 'Help Wanted' ads. And his company, D. Foley Landscape, Walpole, Mass., still didn't get the necessary employees.

"This is the first time in 10 years that we had a problem," Foley observed. "Obviously, our system was broke and we needed to fix it."

According to *Lawn & Landscape* magazine's 1998 State of the Industry report, 56.4 percent of contractors cited the labor shortage as their No. 1 growth limitation. And it's a problem showing no signs of improving.

While the civilian labor force increased by 8.1 million people between 1990 and 1996, the national unemployment rate dropped .2 percent (from 5.6 to 5.4 percent), according to the U.S. Census Bureau. So, despite having a larger pool to draw from, the country's recent economic good times mean there are fewer people looking for work.

So instead of spending extra money on newspaper ads searching for help this isn't like to show up, contractors are initiating innovative programs to find additional workers and save money.

BE CREATIVE. After realizing he had a problem finding labor, the first thing Foley did was change his recruiting habits. Instead of starting his spring/summer employment search in February, he now looks for good help year-round.

"We try to recruit 365 days a year just like we try to sell our services 365 days a year," Foley noted. "This may not be the most



The Missing Piece



innovative program; it may not work right away or it may not work at all, but it doesn't hurt to try. The biggest issue employers should be dealing with is how creative they can be to get employees."

Foley also said he invites all employees to a meeting every Monday morning to discuss how the company is doing and how the employees have a stake in the company's financial outcome.

"I want them to understand that they are really contributing here," he enthused. "They impact the success of this company."

Next, the company tried to improve its hiring practices overall.

"We used to do a first interview and, if they passed, a second interview," Foley said. "Then came a reference check and, if everything checked out, a job offer. Now, we try and do the first and second interview in one day so we can eliminate that seven-day turnaround time. Then we dedicated one primary person to do our reference checks. The minimum five-to-seven day process is now a two or three day process, so we don't lose people to other job offers."

Foley added that despite his excitement for his new programs, it's a lot of work.

"We're improvising out of desperation," he said.

Under Seige

Lamar Smith (R-Texas), chairman of the Immigration Subcommittee in the U.S. House of Representatives, may further threaten the landscape industry's labor pool, according to Bryce Quick, director of legislative affairs for the American Nursery and Landscape Association, Washington, D.C. "His end game is anti-immigration," Quick said.

The landscape industry will feel the blow soon if Smith makes any progress cutting the Department of Immigration and Naturalization Services' H2-B program, which provides seasonal immigrant workers. As of 1991, the program has admitted a maximum of 66,000 workers a year into the U.S., according to INS.

Although the demand has never exceeded the supply (in 1996, only 14,300 temporary visas were issued through the H2-B program), Smith hopes to freeze that number at 17,000 visas, Quick said. Since the H2-B program supplies all industries with temporary immigrant employees, the green industry could suffer a reduction in extra workers as the need for them increases.

According to Allen Kay, Smith's spokesman, landscape contractors are misinterpreting Smith's goal, which is not to eliminate the number of visas, but to offset them. He also said the current numbers indicate that landscape contractors shouldn't have a problem obtaining unskilled workers in the United States.

"Legal immigration in the U.S. is at an unprecedented 1 million people annually," Kay explained. "More unskilled workers come into the United States than we have jobs for."

Kay does admit, however, that there are spot shortages of legal, unskilled immigrant workers across the United States, but looking at the whole picture "the numbers tell the story," he said.

ANLA and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America are forming a coalition to fight the reduction of seasonal immigrant employees. Quick is urging anyone interested to call ALCA (800/395-2522) and get involved.

"It's a battle of attrition," Quick pointed out. "If enough of us aren't paying attention, we may let one of Smith's clauses slip by."

— Nicole Wisniewski

GETTING OUTSIDE HELP. In order to expand their businesses, landscape contractors are learning quickly that Hispanic labor will likely play a role in their work force.

"In 1996, our revenue was \$3.5 million," remarked Mike Rorie, president of Groundmasters, Cincinnati, Ohio. "To grow our business beyond \$5 million, we knew we'd have to integrate immigrant labor into the mix in order to get enough workers to get 100,000 man hours of work in each year, which is approximately what you need to bring in \$5 million. There just aren't enough American workers interested in the landscape industry to bring in that kind of revenue."

By the year 2000, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's "Projections 2000," the Hispanic labor force is expected to grow by about 6 million, or more than 74 percent, from 1986, while the white labor force is expected to increase by less than 15 percent.

However, contractors who supplement their peak-season labor force with Hispanic workers have new problems to deal with. The U.S. Department of Immigration and Naturalization Service fines for employing illegal immigrants aren't light. An employer can pay anywhere from \$100 to \$2,500 per illegal worker depending on the offense by the employer, said Tim Ward, supervisory special agent, the INS Investigation Division, Cleveland district office.

"There are employers out there who hire illegal workers because it means less wages and longer hours," Ward said.

And unknowingly hiring illegal immigrants isn't hard to do in the United States. There were 5 million illegal immigrants living in the U.S. last year, according to Allen Kay, spokesman for Lamar Smith (R-Texas), chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives' Immigration Subcommittee, and that number increases by 300,000 annually.

Maintaining employee I-9 forms is what saves employers who don't know they are hiring illegal immigrant workers. The form has been an employer paperwork requirement for every worker hired in the U.S.

(continued on page 38)

Labor Solution

Can't think of an inexpensive way to cope with the lack of labor at your company? Maybe you can borrow an idea from one of these solution plans already in place.

By Nicole Wisniewski

Plan #1:

BACK TO SCHOOL. Four years ago, while walking around local job sites, Frank Torre, chairman and CEO of Torre and Bruglio, Pontiac, Mich., noticed a lack of communication between his American and Hispanic workers.

"I would listen to them communicate and react to each other," Torre explained. "I realized that the communication level there just wasn't right. So, I decided to hire a teacher to educate them on how to communicate with each other."

Since Torre already had a 110-seat classroom within his complex for worker training, education and industry-related seminars, all he had to do was find the perfect language professor for the job.

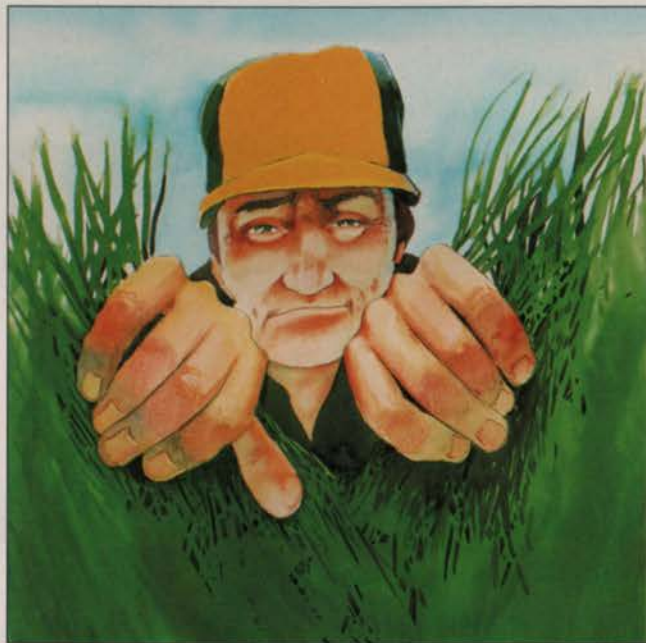
"I knew her from my recruiting efforts," Torre said. "She speaks four languages and has an understanding of the different cultures and ethnic backgrounds and how American and Latino facial expressions and attitudes differ and how other cultures tend to perceive them."

Out of Torre's 600 employees, 60 percent of them are now participating in the weekly, 45-minute-long voluntary language classes. The course is just as hard as a regular college or high school language course, with written and oral tests once each month. When the intensity of the landscaping workload increases, classes are cut short, but in the winter they are extended to two times a week.

"All of my Latino workers are learning English and some of my American workers are speaking fluent Spanish," Torre enthused. "They love it. For them it's like learning a new language for free."

Although the cost of hiring a teacher wasn't cheap, Torre looks at battling the language barrier at his com-

(continued on page 31)



More than 56 percent of contractors surveyed listed a lack of labor as their company's chief growth limitation.

FrontRunner Technologies

Computer Technology Transforms Lawn Care Businesses

The lawn care industry is changing rapidly, and part of that change is driven by constantly improving computer technology.

New technology is changing the way lawn care companies do business. The lawn care industry is increasingly receiving pressure for better recordkeeping, reporting, notifications and scheduling. Consequently, many computer programs have appeared over the years to address these basic recordkeeping needs.

The industry has had significant exposure to computer programs, and, in fact, more than 75 percent of the industry is using some type of computer program. Most companies, however, only take advantage of a small portion of what computers can do for their business. Managing who is due for service, printing



FrontRunner Technologies

service tickets and handling accounting functions only scratch the surface of what computers can do for a lawn care company. The industry is now hungry for better technology and guidance in how technology can improve its business results.

FrontRunner Technologies is committed to elevating the computer tools available to the industry, as well as the industry ability to use and understand those tools. FrontRunner's vision of being able to use computers and software to correlate and manage every phase of a company's business is now a reality with the introduction of PowerRoute 2000.

This powerful software tool is the first Windows 95/98/NT tool available in this industry. It is sophisticated and comprehensive, yet extremely easy to use and implement. Following the technology models that have recently been implemented in other industries, FrontRunner has developed a tool far superior to anything that has previously been available to this industry. As a result, FrontRunner has seen its revenues and market share skyrocket as major companies throughout the industry have selected FrontRunner as their technology partner.

"Our business success is a result of having the right combination of leading-edge technology and quality support on the back end," stated Matt Robinson, president of FrontRunner Technologies. "Because of that combination, we've been able to grow from two employees to more than 50 employees with an anticipated \$20 million in revenues in less than three years. None of our competitors have come close to achieving these results in this industry."

FrontRunner has combined successful

business models from other industries and brought these tools to the lawn care industry. Take the automobile industry, for example. Anyone who has purchased a vehicle recently has seen this technology at work. Successful car dealers now employ sophisticated software that tracks a customer throughout his or her life as a customer and beyond.

They not only sell a car and continue to sell cars to a customer, but these dealers also get other automobile business from these customers. As businesses identify customer tendencies, measure customer satisfaction and provide turnkey solutions, they produce results.

In the car dealer example, the purchase of a new vehicle triggers a steady stream of events at specific time frames to the client. Often, just visiting a showroom produces a stream of follow-up events.

Customer satisfaction/quality control calls and surveys, promotion offers on new cars, tune-ups, oil changes, brake repairs and other services, calls from the salesperson on key dates, referral programs, gifts and thank you letters are all orchestrated and timed to be in sequence with likely customer needs and concerns.

Each of these events is done with the clear intent of maximizing a relationship with a

customer. The key is identifying events and timing and managing them without increasing staffing and costs.

With software such as FrontRunner's PowerRoute 2000, lawn care companies can now employ this type of technology in their businesses. Imagine improving customer re-

attention by 50 percent, doubling or tripling internal sales and cross service penetration, and implementing sales, telemarketing or direct mail programs for customers and/or prospects. Or create in-house collection programs to generate appropriate phone calls and letters to collect past-due monies.

Every business scenario can trigger an event or series of events or activities to occur that can be automated and managed by a computer. Most importantly, FrontRunner can teach companies how to use technology tools to achieve these results.

"In my 12 years of developing lawn care software products like RouteRite and Base1+, the most common complaint I heard from customers was that they only used a small portion of the software's capabilities," pointed out Brett Harward, chief executive officer for FrontRunner. "We can develop the best software tool in the industry, but if customers don't use it for one reason or another, then it doesn't do them any good. That is why we have focused so much attention on management models and systems."

Business Management Models.

A management model clearly defines a company's goals and values. It is more than words – it determines how decisions are made from the bottom all the way to the top of the company. It aligns the expectations of management, employees and customers. FrontRunner breaks companies into three primary business models.

In order to be successful, a company must do well in product, service and operational excellence, but one of those areas should define the company. As a company aligns itself with a specific model, then it will truly identify its market and be able to excel in and dominate it.

This is a paradigm shift for most lawn care companies. By identifying a management model, business issues become more clear. Selecting a business model allows companies to clearly distinguish between themselves and their competitors. Here are some

The industry is now hungry for better technology and guidance in how technology can improve its business results.



Optimum Business Results

outlines of different management models and what selecting that model might mean to a company.

Operational Model

This is the McDonald's approach. Systems are in place for everything and management is the primary decision maker. Employees are rewarded for adhering to guidelines, not for being creative. (McDonald's doesn't want employees getting creative making Big Macs.) Higher customer turnover and employee turnover will occur in this model.

For the lawn care company following this model, results and profits are based on volume. Prices are generally competitive and definitely not the most expensive. Sales growth is high to account for higher customer losses. Production is stressed with strong emphasis on hitting number objectives and appointment completion ratios.

Customers are scheduled primarily based on where they fit in best on a route rather than the time that might be best for the customer. A high level of automation in this model produces great bottom line results. Key indicators that will be monitored include accounts receivable aging numbers, production dollars per day, production hours per day and missed stops.

Customer Service Model

This is the Lexus approach. Anyone who has ever been to a Lexus showroom understands this analogy. If you don't, it's worth the experience to go to one. This model emphasizes what a company will do to provide a high quality service and outstanding follow-up to that service. Front-line employees are given more latitude to resolve customer issues. (We'll turn a truck around from 10 miles away and have someone at your house in one hour if you have a problem.)

Emphasis is placed on training and retaining quality employees. Losing a cus-

Customer
Expectations

Management
Expectations

Employee
Expectations

tomers is a big deal and is followed up on and managed. Employees are compensated and rewarded not only for production but also for satisfied customers. Prices are higher than competitors and companies are proud of that because of the increased service value they provide. Everyone in the company is clear that customer satisfaction is of the highest importance. Key indicators that are important are customer terminations, complaints, retreats and average rate per production hour.

Product Excellence Model

This is the model that Nike uses. All of its promotions are based on having a unique and superior product over its competitors. Pricing is of little importance (within reason). Companies that use unique products or technologies may have this model. This is the least common model in the lawn care industry. However, there are several companies that have successfully employed it.

"Initially, almost every company we talk to thinks it is a customer service model since it is in a service industry," noted Harward.

"However, as we get into deeper discussions, we discover that either it's really a different model or it's not aligned in its business practices. If technicians are told the most important thing is to crank out production and customers are told that the company will provide ultimate service regardless of when or where, then there is an alignment of values conflict.

"By the same token, if a technician is paid 100 percent on production, the customer service incentives sometimes aren't present. True company values are embedded in the reporting, compensation and management structure—they aren't just words," Harward stressed.

As companies align their internal and customer expectations, the results they produce will improve dramatically. The high growth, high profit companies bear this out. Some companies, even very large ones, struggle when they don't have a clear focus on which model best describes them. Often, it comes down to companies not having information readily available to effectively implement their selected management model. That's where technology comes in.

Improving Customer Service.

Technology, such as the PowerRoute 2000 software, can be used to improve customer service in three distinct areas.

Identify—Often a company has a general idea of the areas that should be improved, but it lacks specific information to give it ideas for a solution. Technology will assist a company in both collecting and analyzing information about why customers do what they do.

Technology can provide more effective and efficient solutions to correct negative trends in customer relationships, whether

FrontRunner

Technologies

that means retreats, cancelled stops, complaints or terminated services. Solutions to customer issues are made more clear by having meaningful information to review and analyze. Why are customers terminating services or why are they moving or canceling stops? As problem areas are identified, the right computer software can also establish benchmarks so that progress can be measured as changes are made.

Administer Solutions – Once areas have been identified that need to be worked on, thorough technology-specific programs can be put together to address those needs. For example, a company may determine that an unusually high number of residential customers stop service around five months into their program. Data collected indicates that the primary reason for stopping service is that they no longer have any problems. One solution might be to send out a letter four months into a service explaining the results a customer might be able to expect at this point in the service and the importance of continuing with an on-going service program.

This type of event or customer contact can be administered and tracked through integrated software technology. One company discovered that less than 10 percent of its lawn care customers used them for tree and shrub service. By applying technology and some cross-selling techniques, this company was able to double that number in less than one year. So technology can also improve the ability to administer and establish cross-selling and sales pro-

grams between services.

Feedback on results – Once problems have been identified and possible solutions are established, software can again be used to track the progress and performance of the changes that are implemented. In the examples offered above, reports might be generated to indicate the current number of customers who still cancel service even after receiving the educational letter. In the second example, a company could monitor the percentage of customers who have multiple services.

Client Communications.

In addition to being able to systematically plan communications with the client through letters, quality control calls, sales and telemarketing calls, many issues arise with client relationships that cannot be planned. Often, those events require immediate resolution or management intervention.

In addition, it is important to have that information stored and available for others to access in subsequent customer communications. Tracking complaints, retreats, collection calls, billing inquiries and just having answers to questions in general creates an image of competence and reliability. Being able to answer questions quickly and knowledgeably is important to establish rapport and trust with the customer. Having technology where everything is easy to read and understand at the click of a button goes a long way to establishing credibility and confidence with the customer.

Improving Sales Results.

Computer programs can also improve sales activities in several different ways. Some packages, such as Gold-Mine, ACT or Telemagic, allow companies to track sales prospects and contact information.

PowerRoute 2000 integrates a contact management system with its regular lawn care software, which provides a seamless bridge between prospects and customers.

Activities and contacts recorded during the sales process will be retained as part of the customer record. Sales management software has several functions:

Manage Referral Sources – Where do customers come from – Yellow Pages? Billboards? Customer referrals? Keep track of expenditures vs. revenues by referral source.

Closing Ratios – Track closing ratios of salespeople. Manage the flow of prospects from the time of the first contact through the sales process.

Sales Follow-up – Establish parameters to re-contact prospects or inactive customers on a regular basis through sales calls, sales visits, telemarketing and letters.

Cross-Selling – Oftentimes, selling

Poor Business Results

Customer Expectations

Management Expectations

Employee Expectations

Key Indicators

(Top 50 percent of the industry in profitability)

additional services to existing or previous clients is one of the most productive sales methods. Cross-selling can be approached very aggressively or with passive information on materials that are already going out to existing clients. Notices of other services or specials can be put on service tickets, statements, renewal notices and letters. In addition, customers who have been terminated or who purchased one-time services can be sold additional services.

Commissions – PowerRoute 2000 doesn't track just basic commissions but will also allow companies to target specific business areas for sales growth. By targeting specific market segments or geographic areas, a company can compensate employees for sales efforts that meet company goals such as specific customer mixes and resolving route density issues.

Business Economics.

Lawn care contractors can manage their companies by monitoring several key indicators on a regular basis. Some of the indicators that a company can monitor include:

Average Hourly Production – What is the average amount charged on a route or by client for time actually spent on-site doing lawn care work? This does not include travel time or time spent on non-production events. This is the bottom line rate that a company charges for each hour of actual production. This number can be calculated as both an average for a route or by customer. This rate can also be used to target price increases for specific customers that have an average hourly rate below a certain level.

Average Production Hours Per Day – This is the amount of time that a technician actually spends on production during the day. It does not include travel time, prep time or meetings. Low production hours indicate problems with route density or employee productivity.

Retreats – Being able to track retreats, pinpoint problem accounts and take appropriate action to resolve problems with the customer is important.

	1996	1997	1998
Customer Retention	70.0%	71.0%	75.0%
Employee Retention	55.0%	50.0%	21.0%
Sales Growth – Lawn Care	20.0%	19.0%	21.0%
Sales Growth – Maintenance	12.0%	10.0%	7.0%
Overall Revenue Growth	7.0%	8.9%	12.0%
Average Annual Lawn Care Route Value	\$110,500	\$116,000	\$125,000
Average Annual Maintenance Route Value	\$132,500	\$142,000	\$155,000
Average Hourly Production Rate	\$92	\$97	\$104
Average Rate Increase	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
Average Labor Rate as Percent of Billed Revenue	16.0%	16.5%	17.0%
Average Sales Commission	9.5%	9.5%	10.0%
Average Route Completion Percent	92.0%	92.0%	94.0%
Customers with More than One Type of Service	10.0%	11.0%	14.0%

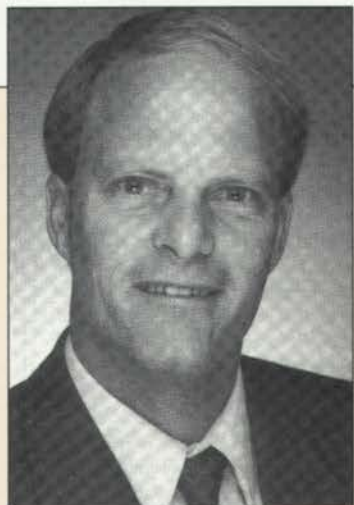
Source: FrontRunner Technologies, Lawn & Landscape survey

Route Values – Target specific values for routes and manage them accordingly. By managing annual route values, companies can manage each route as an individual profit center. Annual route values can be broken into several areas, which include total value of all stops, cancellations, allowances, skips and actual completed work. Monitoring these numbers on a monthly basis provides a great “big picture” approach to managing a lawn care business.

Price Increases – One of the most important aspects of internal management of a lawn care company is regular price increases.

Many of the companies surveyed had not had price increases for several years, and some had never increased price from initial contracts sold. Conditioning clients for annual increases will provide instant internal growth that goes straight to the bottom line.

Some companies do across the board increases. However, FrontRunner Technologies recommends increasing prices based on the average hourly production rates for clients. Clients who have a low hourly production rate can be raised, while a high-dollar client is not put at risk of canceling the service because its rates were raised.



Scott Nolen

A CASE STUDY

A Truly Improved

Truly Nolen

One lawn care company's willingness to embrace new technology has spurred its growth to a leadership position in the industry.

“Customer satisfaction” and “customer service” are among the most commonly used phrases in business these days. But no matter how serious a company may be about defining and meeting its customers’ requirements, putting a customer-satisfaction plan into action is often a challenge. How does a company go about translating its customer service philosophy into a way of doing business?

For Truly Nolen, Orlando, Fla., one of the nation’s largest family-owned lawn care companies, one key to that transition has been using technology.

“I’m fascinated by the technology available to us,” said Scott Nolen, president. “What I see happening is the ability to track customers through the duration of their relationship with us – it’s an integrated software system where a customer can go in and out of active status, having all kinds of support in one single system.”

The system reflects the company’s unique philosophy, according to Nolen.

“From our point of view, everyone who talks to us becomes a customer,” he explained. “Even if we do not immediately begin providing them service, we simply consider them future customers, regardless of whether they’re paying us money. That means we track them over the years and keep up contact.”

For example, if a prospect mentions a weed problem, Truly Nolen will note that in the prospect’s record so that logical follow-up calls can be initiated, regardless of whether the prospect actually hires the company to address the problem.

The technology to carry out such long-term prospect tracking is readily available, Nolen said. But what was missing was the ability to merge that information seamlessly into other company databases.

“We could buy lead tracking software, but it didn’t automatically integrate to our other customer software,” he noted. “Once a contract became a customer, you would drop it off the lead tracking system and put it into the customer system, and the two systems never really communicated.”

That all changed when his company began using the new PowerRoute 97 software, developed and marketed by FrontRunner Technologies.

CASE

PowerRoute 97 is a powerful management system that provides seamless integration of virtually all of the tasks involved in managing a lawn care business. The software eliminates the need for separate accounting, contact management, routing and scheduling software, and instead incorporates all of the required modules into a single package.

"This system will follow customers throughout all of the phases of the relationship," Nolen explained. "It helps us proactively manage the customer relationship. It can pull all of the information that occurred during the selling and courting of this customer and keep this information alive, cross reference it and integrate it into the other system. All of the knowledge, experience and insight that was gained into the customer is transferred and retained, rather than lost when the contact becomes a customer."

Thus, if a customer expresses a mild interest in another of Truly Nolen's services, that information is automatically retained for customer service personnel to use later, opening up opportunities for additional sales.

"PowerRoute software is an overall management system rather than just a package of programs," noted Brett Harward, CEO of FrontRunner Technologies. "We incorporated a comprehensive management method that we introduce to companies, including key indicators to monitor and specific steps to take based on those indicators."

It is the coordination and integration of these various functions that most appeals to Nolen.

"The software tracks potential customers, regular customers, complaint customers, collection customers and puts it all onto one schedule," he explained. "It alerts our people so that a customer who has complained several times is scheduled onto a manager's route so he or she can be alerted that this account needs extra supervision. The same applies to administrative personnel who can also be alerted that they need to be involved with this account."

"PowerRoute 97 also integrates every-

body into the electronic system so we all stay more customer focused," Nolen continued. "It pulls us back in and reminds us that this customer has special needs - they can be sales needs, complaint needs, economic needs or service needs - and it integrates them all."

That integration directly supports the customer-service philosophy of his company, Nolen commented.

"This software was written to reflect the concept that once someone becomes a customer, they get a package of services," he said. "They don't just get a lawn care service. They also get administrative services with that package, along with quality control services and sales interest services from us."

"In essence, the software is constantly re-searching and looking at the customer from different points of view so we can manage the entire relationship," he said.

Such advances in administrative and management technology are consistent with the dramatic advances that have been made in lawn care technology, Nolen added.

"We are now approaching our 60th anniversary, and throughout our company's history we have always taken pride in being at the leading edge of lawn care technology," he said. "This software lets us apply the same leadership in the administrative, sales and management sides of the business. But this system is a significant breakthrough because it integrates with all of the other new Windows-based software from word processing to mailing."

Harward added that many companies in the lawn care industry have been slow to

take advantage of the full capabilities technology offers - a situation his company aims to change.

"Our goal is to educate and elevate the whole industry," he shared. "PowerRoute 97 is designed to take clients far beyond just the time saving advantages of computers and bring them the full benefits of sound business practices."

About PowerRoute 2000

- Windows 95/98/NT compatible
- PowerRoute modules include sales and prospect management, routing and scheduling, vehicle tracking and locating, service and payment tracking, renewal scheduling and complete accounting functions.
- Takes advantage of 32-bit architecture and is fully Year 2000 compliant.
- Only lawn care software written in powerful fourth-generation Delphi programming language and is fully compatible with local networks, wide-area networks and Internet/Intranet services.
- Fully supported through FrontRunner Technologies' on-line support.

For his part, Nolen regards the PowerRoute software as an important tool to help manage the company's continued growth.

"As a company our size grows, size can be obsolete," he explained. "With more than 70 branches in the United States and 25 outside of the U.S., we have a lot to manage to maintain the integrity of our name, so that's a real challenge. Not only does this new system help the people in the office take better care of their customers, but we can also do a better job of electronic auditing so that we can see how they're doing and so that we're alerted to those areas where we need to provide them more support."

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60 Day Evaluation

To Install:
Run Autorun.exe

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(continued from page 22)

pany as an investment.

"Everything is a risk," Torre explained. "You've got to try it to find out if it works and then you continue to improve upon it. Part of managing a corporation is investing in the people. In the long run, having the professor around will pay off. And, hopefully, I'll see less turnover because we're giving people an opportunity, especially Latino workers.

We not only provide them with the type of work they enjoy, but we are also helping them expand their horizons."

Plan #2:

RECRUITING RIGHT. Looking for an exciting career in the Green Industry? Then Dan Foley, president of D.



Some contractors have opened the company's books in an attempt to get employees more involved and committed to long-term employment. Photo: Shindaiwa

Foley Landscape, Walpole, Mass. wants you ... and he's telling everybody about it, including car rental agencies, bus drivers, his vendors and subcontractors, all his current employees and anyone he hands a business card to.

Every time Foley hands out one of his business cards, he also hands out something he calls a recruiting card. The card,

which is the size of a standard business card, reads, "Looking for an exciting career in the Green Industry?" on the front. It opens up to reveal some of the benefits D. Foley Landscape offers employees, including safe working conditions, overtime and vacation availability, insurance options, 401(k) retirement plan, education/training reimbursement and day care savings program. It also lists the address, phone number and e-mail to contact the company. Foley put a positive message on the back cover of the card: "Join a nationally recognized, award-winning, full-service landscape firm since 1987."

The best part about the recruiting cards, besides the fact that they get the company name out there, Foley said, is the fact that they are so inexpensive.

"We typed the text into our computer and had it printed black and white," Foley noted. "A five-year supply cost us \$50 or the same as one Help Wanted ad."

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USE READER SERVICE #20

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31

USE READER SERVICE #30

Foley started this program in August and it has already resulted in one interview. Everyone at D. Foley Landscape carries these cards around with them, Foley said.

During the company's peak hiring season, Foley also provides an incentive, a referral bonus of \$100, to his vendors, sub-

contractors and employees if they make a reference resulting in a hire. Foley tried this program out from August through October when he was in need of five employees because the college help that he hired for the summer returned to school.

"We ran the program until all of the core positions were filled," Foley said.

"Out of the five employees we hired, one was a relocation, three were hired using the standard recruiting methods and one resulted from this program as a reference from another employee."

The reason Foley initiated a monetary reward for referrals from his vendors, subcontractors and employees is because he was also giving away a \$250 signing bonus to new hires.

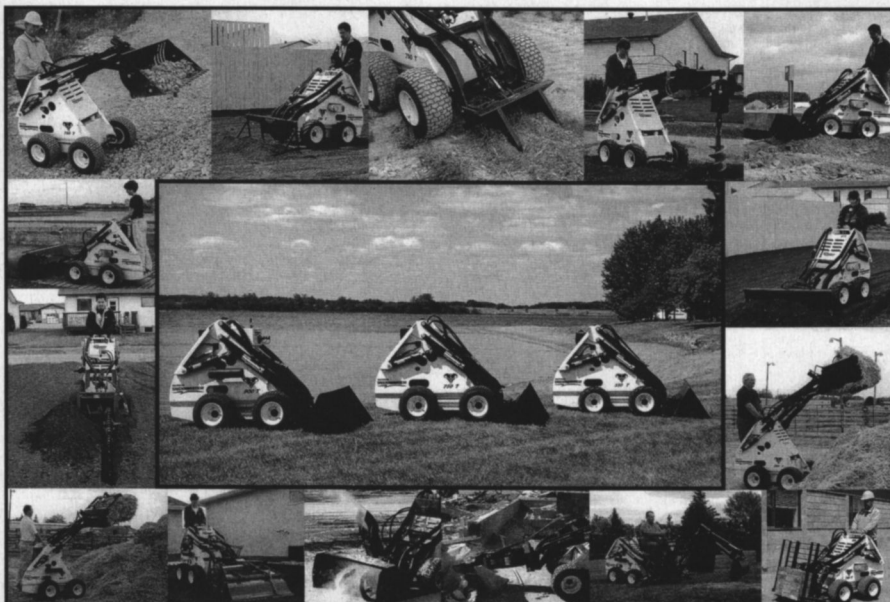
The \$250 reward is given to the new employee in two parts: \$150 60 days after his or her first day of work and \$100 after four months. The \$100 referral bonus is paid to the person who referred the new hire soon after that person joins the staff, Foley said.

"I wanted my employees, vendors and

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'They say employers should exercise good faith in judgment when looking at an immigrant's green card. We thought we did.'

subcontractors to know that they impact the success of this company," Foley stressed. "If I was offering a new hire a monetary reward, I thought the person who made that referral deserved one as well for bringing the new employee into the company."

Plan #3:

UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE. For employers trying to come up with a better way to justify any benefit or bonus they give to their employees, Mike Rorie, president of Groundmasters, Cincinnati, Ohio, has a suggestion: Do some math.

"Sometimes an employee benefit, even though it's costing you a good chunk of money up front or per month, is only costing you 50 cents or \$1 per employee per hour," Rorie explained. "When you look at it that way, it doesn't seem nearly so bad, and it justifies paying employees \$7.50 instead of \$8 an hour."

An example, Rorie said, is housing. Rorie bought two four-bedroom, three-bathroom homes for his Hispanic and American employees. Eight people can stay in one house, two sharing a bedroom.

The way Rorie justifies the expense is by doing the math. As long as mortgage is below \$1,200 each month for one house, then it's costing him \$1 per each of his eight employees per hour.

"If an employee works 40 hours each week times four weeks in one month that equals 160 man hours," Rorie explained. "Multiply that by eight workers and you have 1,280 man hours. Say I'm subsidizing \$640 per month on a house. Then that divided by the 1,280 man hours equals 50 cents per hour per man. By doing the math I can decide where I want to be on a level of participation. And I'm only factoring in the man hours these employees are putting in for me. They are also bringing in revenue for the company."

When an employee approaches Rorie with questions about his or her salary and they are participating in programs such as the housing program, Rorie will explain the math to the employee and give that person a feeling of how they fit in at the company.

"Everything is, essentially, just a cost," Rorie said. "I don't give employees things because they pressure me. I try and know beforehand what I can afford to give them."

"I let my workers pick the benefits that best suit them," Rorie continued. "I'll pay them the \$1,000 per year in benefits or I'll let them keep the \$1,000. But I don't want them to lose track of the contribution they are making to this company. So I make sure they understand it mathematically."

Plan #4:

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.

In 1996, Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, Ill. lost 68 of its 140 employees in just one day, two of which were foremen.

"We were raided by Immigration and Naturalization Services," explained Joe Aurilio, human resource manager for the company. "We didn't sustain any fines or penalties because we had our I-9 forms filled out, but we suffered greatly from the loss of employees."

As human resource manager for the

company, Aurilio started doing a lot of research and attending informational seminars conducted by the Chicago district of INS, one of the three largest INS offices in the United States. The people at Mariani Landscape did not want to have to face a problem like the one in 1996 again, Aurilio said.

"The more I got involved, the more I realized that there are no guarantees," Aurilio remarked. "I was on a first name basis with the people at the Chicago INS. We were saving any newspaper articles or other types of information on immigration we could find to stay on top of the

(continued on page 36)



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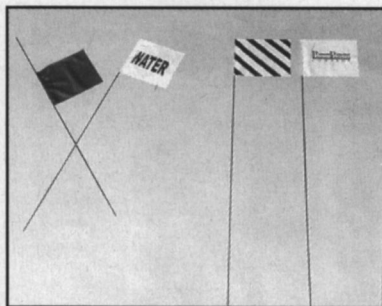
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USE READER SERVICE #27

labor solutions

(continued from page 33)

issue while copying all of it to the Illinois Landscape Contractor Association. They say employers should exercise good faith in judgment when looking at an immigrant's green card. We thought we did."

While doing research and staying in close contact with the Chicago district of INS, Aurilio learned about J.E.V.P., the Joint Employment Verification Pilot Program, a cooperative venture between Social Security and INS as mandated by a 1996 Reaffirmation Act.

The program, which is only operating in Los Angeles and Chicago currently, puts employers online directly with INS via computer, Aurilio said.

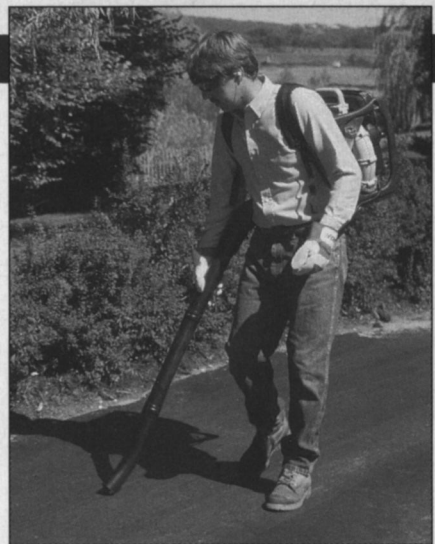
The program is completely voluntary, Aurilio explained, but the owner of the company interested in participating must sign a memorandum of understanding authorizing the federal government to come onto their premises to verify eligibility for employment, even though it's in the form of computer software.

What the program authorizes Aurilio and two other company employees to do is check the legality of an immigrant worker over the phone with Social Security and/or through the computer with INS.

Mariani Landscape has been using the program for two years, Aurilio said, and the only tough part is getting through Social Security.

"The primary goal of the Social Security part of the program was to give instant verification over the phone as to whether the social security number matches the name and birth date of the immigrant worker, giving that immigrant worker eligibility," Aurilio said, comparing Social Security's phone authorization system to a college registration phone system, only slower. "Only one in 10 times does it happen like that, but you have to go through that step first. They've been promising to move the Social Security system from the phone to the computer, but I don't know how soon that change is coming."

If Social Security says that the immigrant's name and social security number don't match properly, then there's a form Aurilio has to give to the employee telling him or her that there is a problem with Social Security and that employee has 30 days to fix it. Otherwise, on day 31,



Contractors claim that young American adults aren't interested in green industry careers, in part due to the strenuous work involved. Photo: Echo

Aurilio can terminate the immigrant's employment from the company.

If the employee doesn't get instant authorization from Social Security, but passes, then Aurilio enters the employee's name, Social Security number, alien number and birth date into the INS system. The employee is either instantly authorized, his or her information sent for review or denied. If denied, the employee receives a form similar to the Social Security form, informing him or her of the problem with the INS' information.

"If that employee is illegal, you won't see him after the letter," Aurilio said.

Out of Mariani Landscape's 210 employees, 150 of them are Hispanic, Aurilio said. The J.E.V.P. Program benefits Aurilio because he can say confidently today that there isn't one illegal immigrant employee at the company.

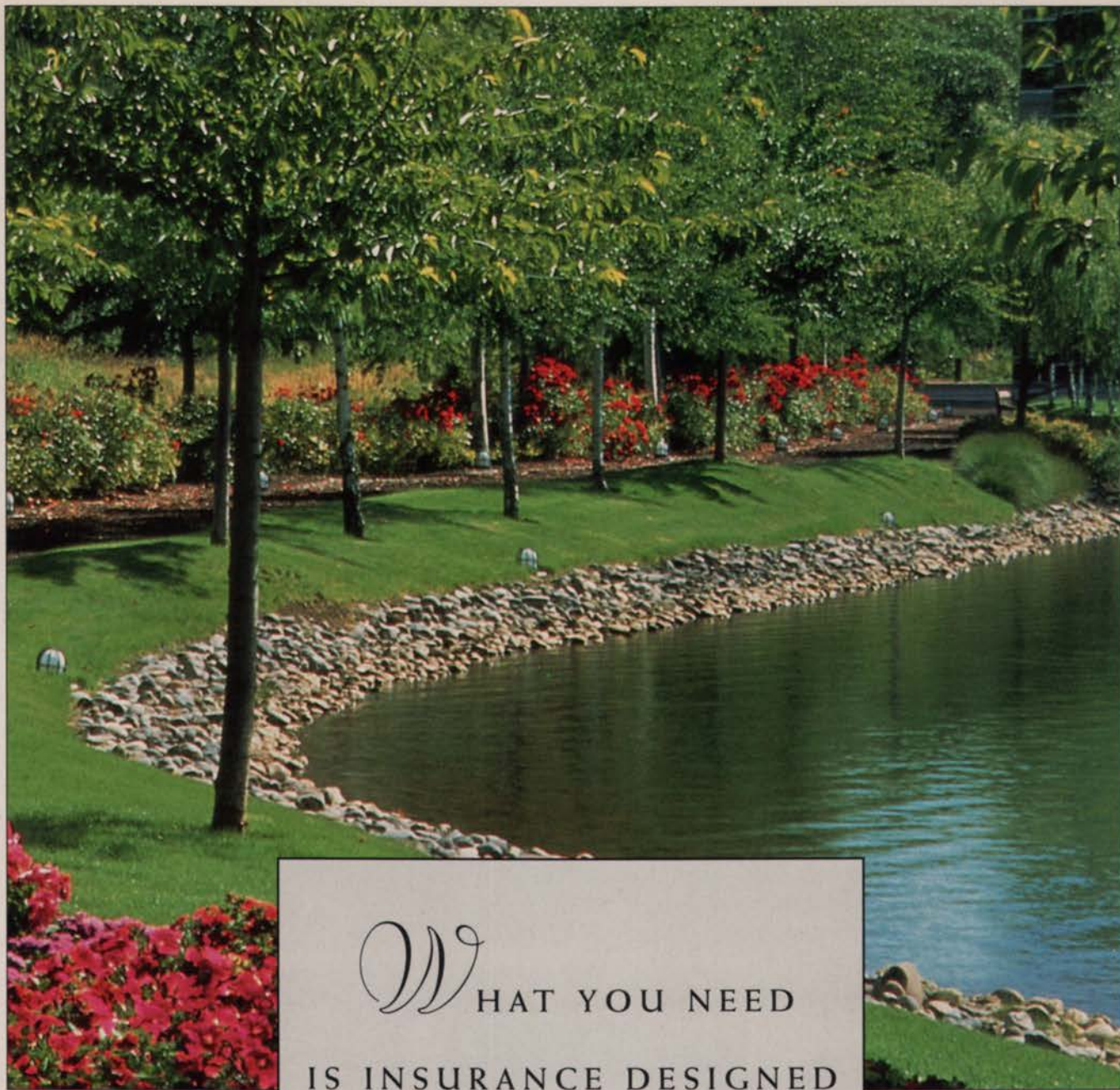
"I ran at least 200 people through the system last year," Aurilio said. "After three years, the pilot data from the program will be reviewed and the best method will be put into place permanently." **LL**

The author is Assistant Editor of *Lawn & Landscape* magazine.

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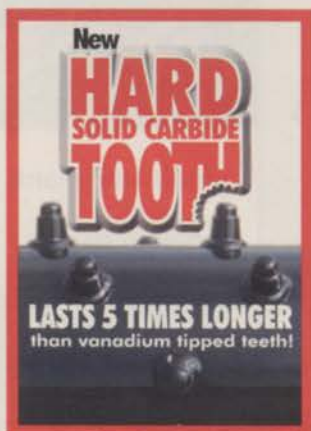


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USE READER SERVICE #28

cover story

(continued from page 22)

since Nov. 6, 1986, according to Ward.

"The first day the employee comes in to work have them fill out the top of the form and check one of the three boxes: U.S. citizen, national with a green card or alien with other work authorization," Ward explained. "Within three business days from the date of hire, the employer must check the identity and employment eligibility of the worker. This is most commonly done for immigrant workers with temporary work visas or green cards. Then the employer signs the I-9 verifying that he or she saw the documents. And there are a lot of fake green cards out there, so if immigration comes and arrests some of your workers, having those I-9 forms covers the employer from any civil liability or fines."

Finding and hiring legal immigrant full-time workers, or seasonal immigrant workers through INS' H2-B program, can be a problem for contractors, especially if they don't have a separate staff whose job it is to deal with hiring immigrant employees.

Companies, such as Amigos, Dallas, Texas, can help, according to Ed LaFlamme, president of LaFlamme Services, Bridgeport, Conn., who has been working with Amigos for 10 of its 11 years of business.

"We have about 50 employees we've obtained through Amigos," LaFlamme said.

Amigos has placed 8,000 workers in 47 states and Guam, 65 percent of them for the landscape industry, according to Bob Wingfield, president of Amigos, proving that the Hispanic labor force is more than just a regional solution to this problem.

Since the legal, green card-holding, immigrant employees are getting harder to find, Wingfield began last year to help companies employ seasonal help through INS' H2-B program.

The H2-B program is a coordinated effort between three government agencies: The employer's local Department of Labor, the regional Federal Department of Labor and INS. After proving through both labor departments that the American workers are not available by placing one three-day advertisement in one metropolitan newspaper near their area and generating zero responses, the next step is to fill out the I-129 form requesting temporary immigrant labor and sending it to the appropriate

(continued on page 40)



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USE READER SERVICE #22

(continued from page 38)

regional INS office, Wingfield explained. "Sometimes it takes one week for them to process the paperwork, sometimes it takes 40 to 70 days," Wingfield pointed out. "For H2-Bs, the whole process is supposed to take approximately 120 days. If landscape contractors get to me by October or November, then I can possibly get them help

by March or April and they keep those employees until December.

"It's a lengthy process," Wingfield continued. "Even if an employer knew all of the paperwork tricks, they would still have to go to Mexico to recruit the workers and know how to get the right documents and get them done at the right time so the workers

can cross the border at the right time."

"I used to place 1,000 green card employees each year," Wingfield pointed out. "Now, I'm lucky to place 400 to 500 each year because they are so hard to find. The pool keeps diminishing."

Qualifying for the H2-B program takes a lot of employer time and energy. Companies such as Winfield's take that burden on for the contractor since he already has the Mexican contacts and can get through the process quicker.

In order to expand their businesses, landscape contractors are learning fast that Hispanic labor may have to play a role in supplementing their workforce as it grows to accommodate the increased business.

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES. Problems can arise when dealing with companies like Amigos, Ward warned. The number one problem being that such companies don't guarantee employers that the workers they deliver are legal. Amigos and the employers are protected by the I-9 forms, but if an employer is raided and his or her workers are arrested, Amigos isn't responsible.

"There's a lot to learn when getting employees through these firms," LaFlamme agreed. "These workers need a place to stay, and the burden is on the employer to get it for them. They aren't going to be able to get or afford their own place. They don't have transportation. They don't have references. They don't have anything. Employers also have to make sure they are sending the immigrant employees somewhere to learn English so they can communicate with the American workers."

When contractors use these companies to supplement their workforce with Hispanic labor, they also have to be able to afford it, LaFlamme said.

"It doesn't save you money, but it gets you excellent workers with a good attitude about working," he advised. "If a Hispanic can make \$50 a week working in Mexico

(continued on page 154)

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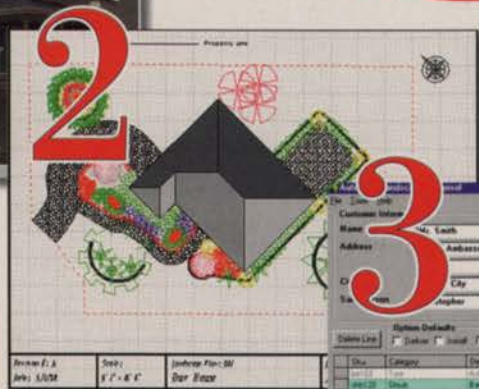
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From one man who was inspired by a carpet cutter to more than two dozen commercial manufacturers today, the lawn mower has come a long way.

By Nicole Wisniewski



In the early 1800s, when homeowners in England were preparing for weekend visitors, they didn't rely on their local landscape contractors to keep their yards looking trimmed and green. After monitoring the sheep grazing on their backyard turf for days – and cleaning up after them – the homeowners would then get out a long pair of shears or a sickle and diligently trim up their landscapes.

"It was a very labor-intensive process," said Keith Wootton, president of The Old Lawnmower Club, Milton Keynes, England. "Sheep worked better than cows because they ate more grass and didn't leave as much mess. If the sheep didn't do the trick, the homeowner would then have to wait for the grass to grow long and get it slightly wet so that it would be easier to cut with the scythe. In the winter, homeowners wouldn't bother to have visitors because it was too much work."

Homeowners would have to continue this grueling process until 1830, the year that marked the creation of what is today a comfortable, profitable, environmentally safe commercial machine for landscape contractor use.

A BLAST FROM THE PAST. Working in a cloth mill in 1830, Edward Beard Budding, an engineer from Stroud, Gloucestershire, England, was inspired by the machine that trimmed rough carpet tufts after weaving and sheared the nap on velvet to make it smooth.

(continued on page 44)



(Above) An example of a side-wheel gang mower. Photo: Textron Turfcare & Specialty Products
(Lower left) Hustler's 1964 zero-turn riding unit with a belt drive and lever steering. Photo: Excel Industries



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history of mowers

(continued from page 42)

"As he watched the workings of the machine, which was essentially a cutting cylinder or bladed reel mounted on a bench, he thought it could cut grass if he could make it self propelling and turn it upside down," Wootton noted.

Mounted on a cast iron wheeled frame and featuring a large rear roller with a cutting cylinder that rotated very close to the lawn's surface, Budding's gear-driven machine was produced at Phoenix Foundry, Thrupp Mill, Stroud, with the help of owner John Ferrabee.

"The cast iron gear wheels on these machines transmitted power from the rear roller to the cutting cylinder," Wootton said. "Overall, these machines were remarkably similar to modern mowers, just a great deal heavier because they were made of cast iron. The handles were the only wooden features. Quite often it took two men to move the mower across the lawn, one to push and the other to pull, which is why they were nick-

named 'man-and-boy machines.'"

By 1832, J.R. & A. Ransome of Ipswich, England, obtained a license to manufacture Budding's machine. For the next 20 years, according to "A Bicentennial Celebration," a published history of The Ransomes Co., the company produced between 70 and 80 machines annually.

MORE TO CUT. The Victorian era encompassed the second half of the last century and leisure time became a part of daily life, Wootton pointed out. Many of the towns in England developed more open spaces, including parks and lawns, so people could enjoy their time outdoors.

"Sports became much more popular at this time, and they needed good turf for play," Wootton said. "And these grounds were becoming better quality because lawnmowers were becoming cheaper and easier to purchase. Since those who played sports and leisured outdoors didn't like the idea of

being gardeners and doing the work, they started to hire somebody else to do it."

By 1841, when Alexander Shanks of Arbroath built a 27-inch pony-drawn reel lawnmower, horses were doing the work. Shanks' larger model, a 42-inch horse-drawn mower, appeared in 1842.

Sidewheel machines were invented in the 1870s with cast iron wheels at each side, which drove the cutting cylinder directly by means of ratchets inside the castings. They didn't have a metal rear roller and were light and inexpensive to make, Wootton said.

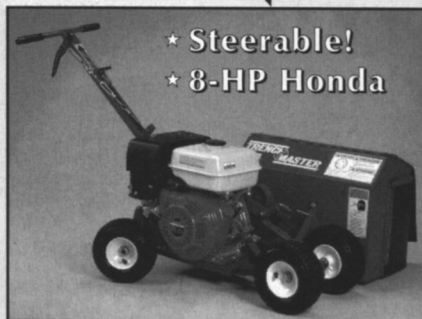
"They weren't used in English gardens much, but were popular in America where the grass was coarser than in Europe," he explained. "They were used in places that didn't need as good of a quality of cut."

According to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, Alexandria, Va., America was building 50,000 lawnmowers annually by 1885.

(continued on page 46)

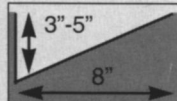
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USE READER SERVICE #96

history of mowers

(continued from page 44)

A two-ton, 40-inch steam-powered lawnmower became the first experimentation with motorization when built by James Sumner of Leyden, Lancaster, England.

"By this time, horses were pulling mowers at 6 mph," Wootton said. "Even the smaller steam engines placed on top of mowers in 1895 and 1896 proved too heavy for horses to pull so the idea didn't last."

The first petrol engine mower was developed by J.E. Ransome, the youngest grandson of Ransomes' founder Robert Ransome, and designed by W. J. Stephenson-Peach in 1896. Commercial manufacture of the product commenced in 1902 and petrol engine mowers led the market until World War I, Wootton said.

During the 1920s, gang units, usually three, five or seven sidewheel mowers hooked together in a V-shape and towed behind a horse, tractor or car, became popular for mowing horseracing tracks and large areas,

(continued on page 71)

A Better Mousetrap

It was the mid-1980s, when a light bulb went in over Joseph Berrios' head.

The owner of JEBERRIOS Landscaping, Coral Springs, Fla., had had enough of the large, belt-driven walk-behind mowers.

"I was pushing this mower toward a hill," Berrios recalled. "As I went to climb it, I became so frustrated that I stopped and told myself there had to be something better out there. This machine was hard on the operator. It had no reverse, and climbing hills was a nightmare."

Berrios' search for a more user-friendly machine was fruitless.

"I visualized the machine in my head and knew I'd be happy if I could find it," he said, "but I couldn't. So I decided to make it."

Berrios' first attempt at his dream machine was a mechanical version that worked well,

but was unmarketable, according to the Bunton Co.

So Berrios focused on using hydraulics. One year later, Berrios met a representative from an Indiana-based company called White Hydraulics.

"He told me that because my motor distributes 10 gallons per minute I needed two of this type of pump," Berrios said. "I said, 'I'll take them.'"

After some more fidgeting, and almost three years from that hot day behind the mower, Berrios finished the first dual-hydraulic, zero-turn radius walk-behind mower in 1989.

By that time, Berrios said, Herb Bunton was ill and no one from the company would come see his creation. That's when he heard the name Dane Scag, then president of Scag Power Equipment.

"Dane agreed to meet me," Berrios explained. "I brought out the machine and within two minutes, Dane said, 'This thing is going to sell like hotcakes.'"

Scag Power Equipment began manufacturing the product in 1990.

"I just wanted to create something that would make my job easier," Berrios said. "I didn't invent the lawnmower, but I think I invented a better mousetrap." — Nicole Wisniewski

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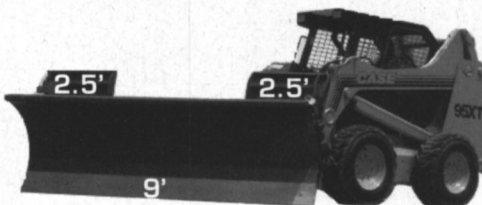
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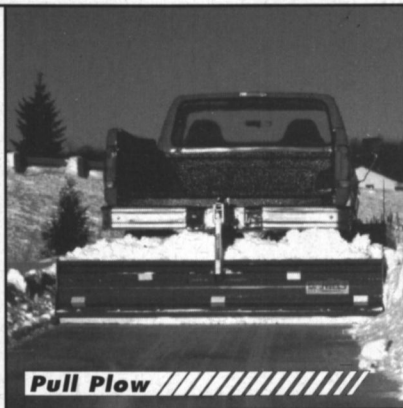
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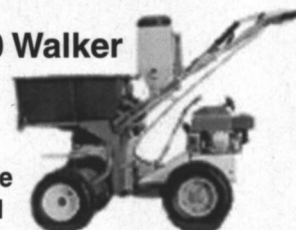
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Turf and Ornamental
Insect Control

Nature can be one tough Mother.[™]

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Consolidation and regulation is yielding a new series of relationships among pesticide suppliers.

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LESCO

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THE Discovery PROCESS

Discovering and developing new chemistries that yield effective pesticide products is an expensive, time consuming process requiring extensive research and tough decision making.



Imagine being the manufacturer of a product line that is so difficult to develop and so closely scrutinized by the government that bringing just one new product to market requires examining 15,000 to 40,000 potential new products a year and can cost upwards of \$40 to \$100 million. On top of that, add in the fact that this process

can take 10 years to actually bring a product to market from the point when your company first started examining its potential. And it's entirely possible that you'll invest tens of millions of dollars, countless hours of research and testing over a decade developing a product, only to be told you're not allowed to sell it to your customers.

Of course, competition in your industry is intense, and despite the success the actual users of your products have enjoyed of late, they remain a demanding and, oftentimes, price/value sensitive group when it comes to product purchasing.

Sound like a business you'd be interested in getting into? If so, then you too can try your hand at pesticide manufacturing.



AT A GLANCE...

Dow AgroSciences

FOUNDED: 1897

LOCATED: Indianapolis, Ind.

PRESIDENT: John Hagan

COMPANY HISTORY: Dow

AgroSciences, with 3,100 employees

worldwide, is a wholly owned subsidiary of

Dow Chemical Co., with a 7 percent share of the \$25 billion agrichemical market.

KEY PRODUCTS: In the turf and ornamental markets, Dursban™, Surflan™, Confront™, Gallery™, Snapshot™, Team™ & Team Pro™, Rubigan™ and Conserve™.

Where Turf is *a Priority*

THE DISCOVERY. Every pesticide product in the market started out as one molecule being studied by a researcher looking for unique and safe behavioral characteristics. In fact, Scott Eicher, Senior Product Manager, for Dow AgroSciences, Indianapolis, Ind., noted that pesticide manufacturers will generally examine between 15,000 and 40,000 different molecules a year in the search for something that has potential to be a marketable product. This results in a research and development budget alone for Dow AgroSciences that represents between 9.5 and 11 percent of gross sales annually.

Sometimes this involves laboratory research, but it's becoming more common for this preliminary analysis to take place with the use of computer-aided graphics that construct and observe molecular structures, according to Mike Tolley, Product Characterization Leader for Global Urban Pest Management, Dow AgroSciences.

While manufacturers are constantly gathering information from their customers as to what types of products or improvements to current products the industry would like to see, it's development approach has to be driven by product supply – what molecules can it uncover that have developmental potential? Here, researchers focus on characterizing how a particular molecule will behave in a variety of conditions.

Tolley explained that manufacturers encounter a host of questions that have to be answered about the product at this point: Does it pose any health risk to the people who would work with it or be exposed to it? What effects will it have on the environment? Is there sufficient demand and room in the market for such a product? Can the product be brought to market profitably?

If a product appears to have market potential in a

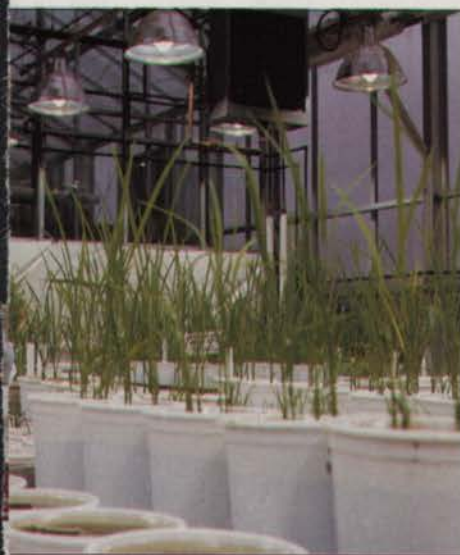
It's no secret that the professional turf industry isn't often a pesticide manufacturer's number one priority market when it comes time for new product development. And with the on-going consolidation of major pesticide manufacturers that means even fewer dollars may be allocated to turf product research.

Dow AgroSciences, Indianapolis, Ind., sees this trend as an opportunity, although some basic truths about pesticide development aren't going to change.

"The most common way for us to deliver products is as an offshoot of the agricultural industry," noted Scott Eicher, Senior Product Manager, Dow AgroSciences, "and that will still be the way most products are discovered.

"The primary way the turf industry will get new technology or chemistries is through discovery research and development efforts," continued Eicher. "Dow AgroSciences is unique in that because of its size and the importance of the turf and ornamental markets, we can still get dedicated discovery and research done for the professional turf and ornamental markets. When we see an opportunity that appears to be significant enough to justify pursuing, we can go to our R&D folks and tell them we see a need for a solution to a problem and they can apply resources to discover or develop a new product or technology that will address that need."

"We want to be the market leader, and there are a number of ways to categorize yourself as a leader," added Bruce Miehle, a general manager at Dow AgroSciences. "To the end-users, we want to be the credible, reliable source of good current products, new technology, information and resources that they need to run their businesses better. We are a leader now. I don't know that there is one clear leader. But we know we have some product brands that are some of the best known brands in the trade."



An R&D budget of 9 to 11 percent of annual gross sales keeps new products coming to the industry. Photo: Dow AgroSciences

particular formulation, then the company applies for a patent on it, which protects their rights to the formulation for 17 years. For a company like Dow AgroSciences, this process costs approximately \$200 million annually, at a price of as much as \$500,000 per product at times, according to Eicher.

PREDEVELOPMENT. This is where some of the real fact finding begins to take place to understand a new product, and this part of the process generally takes between three and five years and includes more than 120 different tests on a potential product and the active ingredients.

The manufacturer will also begin gathering toxicological data relating to the product's interaction with people, animals and the environment at this point. "If any negative results are encountered, the devel-

opment process for that particular product is immediately shut down," Tolley noted.

As the predevelopment phase comes to a close, the manufacturer is faced with a crucial decision: Is the product worth pur-

suage? Oftentimes, any number of discouraging factors can be enough to convince a manufacturer to discontinue developing a product, despite the years of work and hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars already invested in the product.

Minding the *Fs, Qs, Ps and As*

Much has been made about the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's passage of the Food Quality Protection Act in 1996, which set the guidelines for pesticide development for the next decade. Steve McMaster, Regulatory Manager, Dow AgroSciences, Indianapolis, Ind., said pesticide manufacturers, along with the EPA, are still grappling to understand the legislation and what it really means for the green industry.

"When things like the passage of FQPA happen, they really raise a lot of questions as to how the Agency will ultimately deal with the different issues," McMaster noted. "Now, it's been two years since FQPA passed, and I would estimate that the Agency and the manufacturers are still spending a majority of their time figuring out how to deal with it. Many of the EPA's policies as they relate to FQPA are still evolving, and it's not real clear where they will end up."

McMaster pointed out that one positive offshoot of this legislation has been the way it has brought the manufacturers and the government together to work out a number of issues. "We're all engaged with the EPA to help shape the implementation plan for the future," he said. "For those of us in the discovery and development business, that's our bread and butter. We invest our resources in discovery and development and try to turn the crank as fast as we can, so to slow down because of a regulatory unknown is a foreign concept to us."

In addition to searching for a better understanding of the legislation, pesticide manufacturers are also looking to get the registration process back to the pace it was previously at. "When you're looking at a discovery and development process of 10 years and the Agency averages about three years to review and grant registrations, that means there's a significant investment in those products before the manufacturer can ever generate any cash flow," McMaster explained.

As a result of this slowdown, the EPA has implemented a prioritizing policy, whereby manufacturers prioritize five of their registration actions that have been submitted as their greatest priority. The EPA then focuses its review efforts on those actions first.

"The only problem is that the first time the EPA asked us for five priorities, we had more than 20 actions at the Agency that needed work," McMaster lamented. "I'm sure it was the same for the other manufacturers."

Of particular importance to contractors may be the EPA's new concept of a "risk cup" that will be used in the evaluation of pesticides. "This is the result of the EPA's decision to now evaluate the aggregate risks of a pesticide not just from dietary exposure in foods, but also by the potential exposure in drinking water, on home lawns, through indoor uses and so on," related McMaster. "It's conceivable that pesticide manufacturers will be forced to make some very difficult decisions on some products.

"For example, say we have an herbicide that is registered for use on corn and turf, but the Agency determines that its aggregate risks are unacceptable," McMaster continued. "The manufacturer may be forced to mitigate that risk by dropping some of the use patterns from the label or reduce the application rate on a certain application."

DEVELOPMENT. If the manufacturer determines at the end of the predevelopment stage that the product has marketable potential, then it moves forward into the development phase.

Tolley noted that it's worth remembering that while predevelopment and development are going on, the manufacturer's patent protection of 17 years is passing by, and the development process - a more intense examination of the product - alone often requires five to seven years.

"The tests conducted at this point involve dosages of the product that are much higher than anyone or any animal would ever actually encounter if the product was available," Tolley explained. "But these high dosage tests are important to identify the 'maximum tolerated dose' of the product, or the maximum amount an animal could receive daily and still live long enough to complete the test. And, again, such levels are generally hundreds of times greater than the exposure that will occur based on the product's expected label rate."

In addition, research takes place to identify the 'no observable effect level,' or highest exposure that doesn't result in any effects in sensitive

(continued on page P8)



Hey, Wild Violet.

You can't hide during the cool season anymore.

And your other broadleaf pals won't be seeing warmer days, either.

Cool Power™ is a completely new post-emergent herbicide for superior broadleaf weed control during cool weather applications.

During colder temperatures, weeds are less actively growing and resist uptake of herbicides. Cool Power is a scientifically proven ester formulation that breaks through the waxy cuticle layer on the weed and permeates the plant for increased uptake.

Combining the awesome performance of Triclopyr chemistry with the fast action and effectiveness of MCPA and Dicamba, Cool Power is excellent for winter weed control, treatments in dormant warm season turf and early season applications in transition zones and cool season climates.

For cool weather, broad spectrum control of hard-to-kill weeds such as wild violet, spurge, wild onion, oxalis, clover, dandelions, and others, it doesn't get any cooler than Cool Power.



Riverdale

The Formulation Innovators

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USE READER SERVICE #15

(continued from page P6)

test animals, Tolley added.

These tests are then used by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in order to settle on the 'reference dose' level, which is the maximum amount of residue from a compound allowed in relation to its daily exposure, he said. "Typically, this number is 100 to a thousand times lower than the no observable effect level, despite being based on tests that used the pure form of the product's active ingredient, which the end users won't be exposed to."

The research process soon moves outside so that a manufacturer can study the product in field plots in order to determine its efficacy against the desired weed or insect problem. "Tests are conducted at a wide range of application rates and under a variety of conditions in order to determine the product's most effective application rate," Tolley explained.

The final stage of product development is gaining EPA registration and marketing the product. This process generally requires two to four years. The registration application - generally containing thousands of pages of data collected over seven to 10 years - goes to the EPA for intense scrutiny, which can lead to a rejected application and send the manufacturer back to its research.

And this process continues to grow more stringent as technological advances

Registration

on the Fast Track

In an attempt to encourage pesticide manufacturers to place greater emphasis on developing products that present less potential risk to the environment, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency developed its "Fast Track" registration program.

Through this program, pesticides that are identified as reduced risk by the EPA undergo an expedited review process that takes about 17 months, compared to the 36-month standard review timeline.

Being able to bring a product to market 19 months sooner means a great deal to a manufacturer that has already spent 10 to 12 years of that product's 17-year patent life in discovery, development and registration.

Dow AgroSciences, Indianapolis, Ind., enjoyed the benefits of a fast track registration for Conserve, an insecticide labeled for use against sod webworms, cutworms and related pests.

"What makes fast track so interesting is that the EPA hasn't set forth quantifiable characteristics where if the acute toxicity of a product is X, the mobility is Y and the half life is Z, then it's reduced risk," noted Steve McMaster, Regulatory Manager for Dow AgroSciences. "But what the EPA has done is set forward a process that encourages pesticide manufacturers to develop products with improved environmental characteristics and enables the Agency to compare submitted products to existing products already in the market. So the bar is continually getting raised."

Such an environmental focus on the part of the EPA can add to the manufacturers' challenges, however.

"The EPA doesn't concern itself with product efficacy," pointed out McMaster. "But for the manufacturer and the contractor, product performance is what ultimately matters, and therein lies the dilemma."

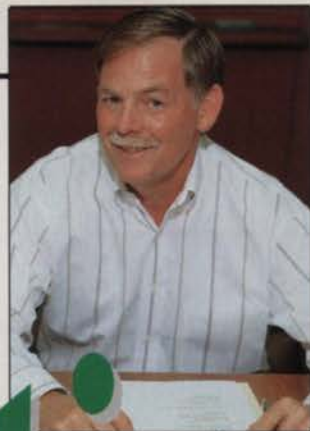
add to the EPA's analytical capabilities. Today, for example, the Agency's researchers can examine a product on a parts-per-billion basis, compared to the parts-per-million approach used just a few years ago.

Pesticide manufacturers will generally examine between 15,000 and 40,000 different molecules a year in the search for something that has the potential to be a marketable product.

"I think the thing that is least understood by the marketplace about this process is the amount of risk involved for basic

manufacturers and the uncertainty associated with each patent and label application," noted Steve McMaster, Regulatory Manager for Dow AgroSciences. "As a manufacturer, we start down this 10-year path and we're not sure if we're going to get to the end or not. It's possible that we'll discover something about the product that isn't acceptable to us or the EPA. That's why a lot of manufacturers focus their efforts on the crop industry, because the total global market size and potential profits are so much higher than in the turf industry."

If the EPA grants the registration, the manufacturer then has a few years left on its patent to sell the product before the patent expires and the chemistry is to be shared with the entire industry.



Jim
Champion,
president of
Riverdale.

THE Formulation PROCESS

Formulators have a multitude of roles in the pesticide development process, with none more critical than their ability to bring multiple manufacturers' products together.

Lawn care contractors know all about pesticide manufacturers. They are, after all, billion-dollar companies that develop the products that drive contractors' businesses.

And lawn care contractors know all about dealers or distributors. Ultimately, it's these companies that bring these products to the contractor.

But how familiar are contractors with formulators? In fact, how many contractors even know what a formulator does? And how many contractors realize that without formulators many of the products on the market today may never have been available to be applied to a single lawn?

MIXING & MATCHING. "As a general rule, formulators don't invent molecules," stated Sean Casey, Formulator Business Manager for Riverdale, Glenwood, Ill., "but we are not just a middleman either. We function as a matchmaker, a regulatory extension and a finisher of raw technical active ingredients. Simplistically put, we bring

actives from competing basic manufacturers together into a single combination product. By targeting a specific characteristic in a basic manufacturer's molecule and utilizing that characteristic to strengthen the combination product, we can develop solutions specific to meet

(continued on page P12)

AT A GLANCE...

Riverdale

FOUNDED: 1941

LOCATED: Glenwood, Ill.

PRESIDENT: James K. Champion

COMPANY HISTORY: After being licensed under the first 2,4-D patents, Riverdale became a national formulator of proprietary and private label broadleaf herbicides.

KEY PRODUCTS (Turf and ornamental market):

Millennium Ultra, Tru-Power, Cool Power, Horsepower, Dissolve, Tri-Power and Triplet.

ACTIVE PATENTS OWNED:

Production of dry crystalline water-soluble products.




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It takes two fierce herbicides acting side by side to keep crabgrass, goosegrass, spurge, oxalis and other weeds from breaking into your customers' property. Team[®] Pro preemergence herbicide combines Balan[®] and Treflan[®] herbicides into the most consistent, fast-acting, long-lasting crabgrass preventer available. Team Pro protects lawns better than pendimethalin without severe staining of spreaders, shoes or landscaping.



out of a yard, unleash the Power of Two.

And Team Pro won't harm established ornamentals, turfgrass or your reputation for a good value. For information on fertilizers formulated with Team Pro, talk to your supplier. Or call us at 1-800-255-3726 or visit our web site, www.dowagro.com. Then stand back, and unleash the Power of Two. Always read and follow label directions.

 Dow AgroSciences

Team* Pro

*Trademark of Dow AgroSciences LLC

(continued from page P9)

users' needs. Then we register the product, source the active ingredients and produce and ship them off to our customers for distribution to the marketplace."

"While the basic manufacturers invent molecules and then determine what those

molecules can do, formulators actually work the reverse process," explained Curtis Clark, Marketing Manager for Riverdale. "We see a specific problem in the market and then go get the molecule that solves that problem. It's a much more efficient process in that there are relatively few false starts or

unknowns to deal with."

"The most difficult part of the process is finding a combination of products that work well together," explained Jim Champion, President, Riverdale. "Each compound that's out there has its own pluses and

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Let's Get Together

Like most other industries touching the green industry, the pesticide manufacturer industry is consolidating.

But as opposed to the development of new organizations resulting from the combination of two companies, some manufacturers have looked to form strategic partnerships by building an improved relationship with other companies critical to the process of creating and delivering top-notch pesticide products.

That is exactly the case with the mutually beneficial relationship that has developed over the last six years between Dow AgroSciences, Indianapolis, Ind., and Riverdale, Glenwood, Ill.

Through this relationship, Dow AgroSciences provides Riverdale access to some of its proprietary chemistries that Riverdale can then use to develop and test new combination products.

As Jim Champion, President of Riverdale pointed out, formulators generally only get to work with their own chemistries after a product's patent has expired and it becomes a nonproprietary product available to the entire industry. Not having access to as many potential products can limit a formulator's ability to innovatively explore new product development options.

Now, however, Riverdale has the opportunity to work with chemistries being studied by Dow AgroSciences well before they ever come to the market, and Champion is confident the entire industry will benefit from this combination of resources and talents.

"I believe we've found the best combination products that I've ever seen in this industry," he noted, naming Momentum and Millennium Ultra as examples. "That benefits everyone as we provide the market with products that are unique and provide better control at lower rates than anything out there while we are meeting the Environmental Protection Agency's requirements of using less active ingredient."

From the manufacturer's perspective, such a new relationship offers expanded research opportunities. "We approached the two formulators who we felt were the major players in the turf herbicide market, and Riverdale saw the benefits of our chemistries alone and in combination with other products," recalled Scott Eicher, Senior Product Manager, Dow AgroSciences. "Riverdale was willing to invest in the future with its own dollars to do the research and toxicology work to apply for and receive its own federal registrations.

"Because of the amount of research and overhead a company like Dow AgroSciences has, a single product registration needs to have a large volume potential to make sense financially for us to develop," Eicher continued. "Riverdale, however, can test and develop products that a larger company like us can't afford to pursue."

This type of arrangement is one Champion believes must continue for the industry to remain innovative. "The future has to feature more relationship and partnership development," he asserted. "There are fewer players in the industry today than five years ago and fewer molecules being developed, which makes it more difficult to find effective combinations of products. Meanwhile, expenses to go up every year as the EPA adds requirements to the products' performance."

Mike Tolley, Product Characterization Leader for Global Urban Pest Management, Dow AgroSciences, agreed with Champion. "The better we understand other people's businesses and their needs, the better we will be at using those needs as goals in order to develop the products of the future," he said. "If it's good business for all parties involved — from manufacturers to the contractors — then those will be discovery goals worthy of pursuit."

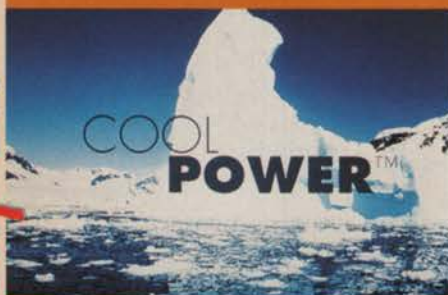
"This type of relationship is where the products of the future will be developed," Champion pronounced.

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THE SCIENCE OF controlling broadleaf weeds in turfgrass just took a giant leap into the future. Introducing Millennium Ultra™, Cool Power® and Horsepower™ from RIVERDALE®.

By combining the premium, broad spectrum performance of Dow Agrosience's triclopyr and clopyralid chemistry with the fast action of phenoxies and effectiveness of dicamba, Riverdale has created truly unique, premium broadleaf weed control products.

Choose Your Weapon



COOL POWER®

An ester formulation of MCPA, triclopyr and dicamba for maximum control of weeds under cool weather conditions.



MILLENNIUM ULTRA™

An amine formulation containing 2,4-D, clopyralid and dicamba offers high performance weed control of hard to control weeds.



HORSEPOWER™

An amine formulation of MCPA, triclopyr and dicamba for effective control of weeds in 2,4-D free applications.

The Future of Weed Control Has Arrived

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www.riverdalecc.com

USE READER SERVICE #34

Focus on PESTICIDES

(continued from page P12)

minuses. Some control a variety of weeds, some control specialty weeds or some might only work in certain types of turfgrass. But

'By targeting a specific characteristic in a basic manufacturer's molecule and utilizing that characteristic to strengthen the combination product, we develop solutions specific to users' needs.'

what we're looking for is a combination that provides a broad spectrum of control on as many types of turfgrass as possible while being as safe as possible to work with."

In order to examine such a broad range

of products, Riverdale funds research efforts at universities across the country in different turfgrass types and in different climatic conditions. "This year alone, we're screening 24 different products at nine different locations," Champion noted, adding that there's no guarantee any of those products will prove successful enough to continue study-

ing. "If we end up bringing one of those 24 products to market, we'll be very happy."

And the process only gets more complicated once such a product is deemed worthy of continued examination. "When we

find a product that has real potential, we continue to test it for three to five years at rates above and below what we think will be its labeled rate to see where we realize the best combination of efficacy and safety," Champion continued.

"The dream is to find a product to control the greatest number of weeds on all types of turf and in all climates," he added. "But that's not a reality in most cases. However, I think because of the newer chemistries and our ability to provide increased efficacy with lower amounts of active ingredient, we're as close to realizing that dream as ever."

The newer chemistries Champion referred to were invented and commercialized in the turf market by Dow AgroSciences in its proprietary product line. In an effort to maximize the potential of its molecules, capitalize on the strengths of its chemistry and reach more of the market, Dow AgroSciences contracted with Riverdale to combine two of its active ingredients, clopyralid and triclopyr, into combination products for the turf broadleaf weed control market.

TAKING THEIR OWN GAMBLE.

While pesticide manufacturers are the ones investing upwards of \$200 million annually in new product discovery, formulators are faced with their own share of financial decisions to make.

In particular, after a combination product has completed its three to five years of additional analysis, the formulator has to decide whether or not to pursue a federal registration for the product and take it to the market.

"We get a lot of toxicological data about a product from the manufacturer of that product, but we also have to provide



Some operating efficiencies compared to basic manufacturers, such as lower overhead costs, keep Riverdale's high speed packaging line working with manufacturer's chemistries. Photo: Riverdale

It's All

about Value

toxicological data on the specific formulation we're studying," Champion pointed out.

And providing acceptable data to the EPA isn't necessarily a simple or cheap process, because all of the tests must be conducted in a laboratory that has been certified as meeting EPA standards for good laboratory practices, Champion added.

"But this is where we have to decide if we're going to take the gamble and produce the data, because if the product doesn't meet the EPA's standards we have to start all over," he shared, adding that such a process can, in fact, be more challenging at times for a formulator than a manufacturer. "When you're mixing compounds together, there's always the possibility that something may happen of toxicological significance that you didn't expect. When you're just working with one product, there are going to be certain characteristics that you are already familiar with because of the family it belongs to.

"The entire process is one that is much more difficult and expensive than most people realize," Champion concluded, "but dealing with that process as efficiently as we do is what separates Riverdale from other players in the market."

"We are virtually getting brand new registrations and within that process we are able to develop products and formulations that allow us to segment and niche market," added Marvin Moore, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Riverdale. "Our registration division and manufacturing capability provide us with flexibility in meeting customer needs that we believe is

Regardless of who you are or what you're shopping for, price matters. It just makes sense that we're all interested in spending as little money as possible when it comes time to make a purchase. The trick, however, is making sure that in controlling what we spend we don't sacrifice actual value in what we receive.

Today's market for pesticide products is becoming increasingly crowded and, at times, complicated with so many different types of products available. Some basic chemistries have been around long enough that the developing company's patent has expired and numerous generic varieties of the original product compete for market share, thereby driving product price down.

Many of the newer products, however, such as Millennium™, Cool Power™ and Horsepower™ from Riverdale, Glenwood, Ill., feature new chemistries in combination with other products in order to improve or expand performance.

It's important to note here that these combination products may at times be more expensive on a per-gallon basis to purchase, but that doesn't mean that they actually end up costing the contractor more. "By providing superior weed control, which results in more satisfied customers, our combination products are actually more cost effective," observed Jim Champion, President, Riverdale.

"If we can reduce the amount of callbacks that a contractor receives from customers, make these pesticides more compatible with different fertilizer products and offer him or her better control in adverse weather conditions, then we have done some things to make that company more efficient, more profitable and more environmentally sound," Champion commented. "That's why it's so important that the end users of these products look not just at the price of a product but at the overall value that product has to their businesses."

"Customer callbacks can kill a contractor's business," noted Scott Eicher, Senior Product Manager for Dow AgroSciences. "Industry research shows they cost the contractor anywhere from \$45 to \$75 each, which means that the contractor has lost the profit for that yard for the entire year."

Eicher recognized that it can be easy to focus too much just on product pricing, but that short sightedness can ultimately cost the contractor in the long run. "I believe every good business person is able to get beyond the initial cost of a product and examines what actual value does he or she need to get from that product," he noted. "And price and value aren't necessarily the same."

unparalleled, and also gives us the ability to respond instantaneously to individual customer needs."

LOOKING AHEAD. The other key factor Champion believes will lead to the development of improved products in the future is the shared common goal between pesticide manufacturers, formulators, distributors, users and even the federal government.

"The entire development process is being driven to create safer products that require lower amounts of active ingredient

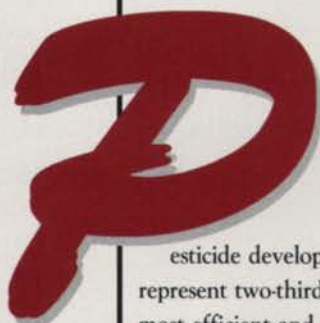
to be applied per acre with greater efficacy," Champion shared. "Whether that means synthetic organic compounds or biological options, we are all striving to make sure the end user has the best chemistries and formulations available.

"This process is a partnership, and we all have to be there to help each other and make sure the flow of information takes place up and down the chain from the contractor to the manufacturer and back. Our company is based on that partnership belief, and that's the key to the future for all of us."



THE Distribution PROCESS

One distributor's unique degree of market penetration makes it an important part of the pesticide development process.



esticide development and production obviously only represent two-thirds of the product supply chain, as the most efficient and cost effective product in the world is useless if it's never actually delivered into the hands of the intended end-user, in this case, the lawn care operator.

From a manufacturer's or formulator's standpoint, that means a distributor's market penetration is crucial in

that it offers greater opportunity for delivering product to the customers. That makes Rocky River, Ohio-based LESCO a pivotal figure in the product supply chain with its 235 service centers in 38 states.

"LESCO's thorough market coverage and its ability to focus and introduce premium products to the marketplace makes it an integral player in this industry," stated Jim Chapman, Riverdale, Glenwood, Ill.

AT A GLANCE...

Lesco

FOUNDED: 1962

LOCATED: Rocky River, Ohio

PRESIDENT: Bill Foley

COMPANY HISTORY: Since its founding as an equipment supplier to the Northeast Ohio market, the company has

grown to include 235 service centers in 38 states with more than 100,000 customers.

KEY PRODUCTS: Poly Plus fertilizer, Momentum broadleaf postemergence herbicide, Pre-M preemergence herbicide, Manicure fungicide and Eagle seed.

BACK UP THE CHAIN. Any product supplier in any industry is doomed to fail if it doesn't deliver the products that its customers need and demand. Keeping in tune with the needs of a nation full of lawn care operators - particularly with the variations created by such varying regional conditions - can be a challenge for a company with one location. This isn't a problem for LESCO, however.

"What makes LESCO unique is its reach into the marketplace through our extensive network of service centers," explained Ken Sekley, Vice President of Marketing, LESCO. "This enables us to provide lawn care professionals with a convenient, one-stop resource."

Products need to offer value, which isn't necessarily the same as lowest price, to lawn care professionals to be carried as part of LESCO's line.

Clearly, LESCO's accessibility and the extensive product line it offers to much of the country make it attractive to many contractors. What many lawn care professionals may not realize, however, is how the LESCO Service Center they visit offers them an opportunity to speak to the suppliers of that extensive product line.

"Our exposure to so many lawn care professionals nationwide means that we are very close to them in terms of understanding their needs and their unfulfilled needs as business people," Sekley noted. "Our salespeople actually work in a consultative fashion with lawn care operators on a day-to-day basis.

"On the other side, we meet very frequently with our suppliers in order to provide information about where the market is going so that we can help them with product development to arrive at products that best fit the market's needs," he continued.

"That means we have the ability to work with companies like Dow AgroSciences and Riverdale to get the necessary products developed and then distributed to our customers. In this way, the information flow actually goes back up the chain of product development from the contractor to the basic supplier."

The result of this process is that LESCO has the opportunity to expand an already diverse product line.

"We're not just interested in offering the most products to our customers, though," Sekley pointed out. "We don't want to confuse the market. The number one factor for us to consider is the performance of the product and

LESCO's extensive network of Service Centers allows the company to stay in tune with the needs of lawn care professionals and assume a valuable role in the product development process.



Proper Application

The producers of pesticide products have made tremendous strides improving the safety and convenience of these products for the lawn care professionals who work with them. For instance, Dow AgroSciences brought Conserve to the market via the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's 'fast track' program for pesticides that pose a reduced risk to the environment. Following basic safety practices when working with pesticide products, such as those listed below, are still important for lawn care professionals.

- Avoid working directly in drift, spray or runoff, and always wear protective clothing.
- Protective clothing should cover as much skin as possible and include gloves, a hat, boots or shoes and goggles.
- Do not wipe gloves on your clothing.
- Never eat, drink, smoke or chew when handling or applying pesticides.
- If you feel ill, seek help right away.
- Do not apply pesticides during or just before expected high winds or heavy rains.
- Check all equipment for leaking hoses, pumps or connections, as well as plugged, worn or dripping nozzles, to prevent spillage.
- Never let children, pets or unauthorized persons touch application equipment or enter storage area.
- Use any leftover pesticide for labeled uses.
- Before applying, clear the area of all unprotected persons.

the need that it fills in the marketplace. How well does it perform compared to other competitive products?"

Another key factor for LESCO to consider is the

business practices of the suppliers it purchases product from. "We want to work with those companies that will supply products to us on time and with a high quality," Sekley asserted.

DISTRIBUTORS & DEVELOPMENT. While the bulk of the development work for a new pesticide product is handled by the manufacturer and the formulator, distributors will get involved in the process

and shoulder some of the burden.

"We do have our own research and development staff, but it is pretty lean compared to a basic manufacturer's staff. It's once a product has been developed and

Bill Foley's

Thoughts on...

Q In the summer of 1997, Lawn & Landscape Group Publisher Cindy Code had the chance to sit down in an exclusive interview with Bill Foley about his thoughts on the industry. Here is some of what he had to say:

2. LESCO has a slogan, "Customers for Life." Do your customers know and understand what you're driving at?

A. I think they're beginning to know. What does that mean? Attitudinally, we want to make sure that everyone understands that customers come first. It's part of our training, how we spend money for the future and, for us, it's about getting a little bit better everyday. It's two years plus since we began the concept of "Customers for Life" and we're still not satisfied. We

want our customers to get whatever they want from us whenever they need it. We want to be easy to buy, easy to handle and easy to use. If we can do that we think that there's a value for the customer.

2. More than half the LESCO business is devoted to the professional lawn care market. How do you answer claims that lawn care operators just buy product on price?

A. I don't think that's the case at all. Our customers are in business for themselves so they are as concerned about how they invest their money as we are.

I also think it's incumbent upon us to make sure that price isn't the only issue. Of course there's price, but there's also product performance. In some cases, it's best to buy the best product you can buy and solve one problem so you don't have to pay for callbacks, which are very expensive. And so a cheap product price is not necessarily the best value.

That's part of what we try to think about when we develop new products. We take the technical aspects and package them with the product mix so that our



Bill Foley. Photo: Roger Mastroianni

customers can look at the products we have and say they're working. It's easy to stick agricultural grade materials in a bag and sell them inexpensively. But at the end of the day you want to give your customers real performance and real service, and you don't want to pay the high cost of trying to get a new customer.

2. Do you agree it's incumbent upon suppliers to help raise professionalism in the lawn and landscape industry?

A. Absolutely. Not only help raise professionalism, but help improve performance, set performance standards, make sure people know how to use products properly, make sure they know how to dispose of packaging properly and that they're in compliance with local, state and federal laws — those things are really critical parts of our job. And we take those things seriously.

Soon, our Internet site will allow us to issue MSDS sheets and product specification sheets on a real time basis. They can be printed as an invoice occurs. Those kinds of things have to happen to keep everybody under the right kind of approach and to manage their obligations.

is ready for testing that we become very involved in the development process," Sekley noted. "We're often involved as a subregistrant, and we will often be the holder of the state registrations, which means there's a lot of technical and administrative support needs."

"As the regulations become more stringent, a lot of the compliance burden falls to the distributor," he continued. "We're the people who need to transport the product, so we have to make sure we find a cost-effective way to do this that adheres to the regulations."

One specific example of LESCO assuming a greater role in a product's development would be the introduction of Momentum to the market this year by Dow AgroSciences, Riverdale and LESCO. "We have quite a degree of exclusivity in our ability to offer this product because of our involvement in its development," Sekley pointed out. "That goes back to creating a supplier relationship based on the quality of products and reliability of delivery they can offer us."

"It's also a recognition on the manufacturer's and formulator's part that LESCO is in a unique position in the industry in terms of delivering product to the market and providing excellent communication and information flow from the end-user to the product's developers," he added.

OFFERING ANSWERS. The role of a distributor such as LESCO in delivering product to market clearly goes beyond stocking shelves and taking orders. The distributor's sales location and sales personnel are often the providers of information and answers to contractors about products, their intended use, how they compare with other products on the market and anything else a contractor might ask.

"Our closeness to operators allows us to educate them about new product introductions and help get them up and running with this product in their businesses," Sekley

noted. "This is especially important for new pesticide products where the application instructions are critical to the product's success and user safety is so important. The pesticide manufacturers and formulators are obviously also committed to this type of education, but they don't usually have the same access and proximity to the contractors as we do."

As a result, contractors come to rely heavily on distributors for technical resources and solutions to their problems. "It's a part of our technical service function to provide this support to our customers," according to Sekley.

As part of its technical support services, LESCO employs a Technical Services Group with a director of technical services and seven additional technical support specialists that fields hundreds of inquiries each day that come in from contractors as well as presenting educational seminars to customers. "This group also trains our own sales associates so that we have technically competent people in the field working with the contractors," Sekley explained.

"We have technical support specialists focused on agronomics, equipment and structural pest control," added Steve Jedrzejek, director, technical services for LESCO. "Our responsibility as a technical service team is to provide support to all of

From a manufacturer's or formulator's standpoint, that means a distributor's market penetration is crucial in that it offers greater opportunity for delivering product to the customers.

our customers and sales associates for all of the products we carry."

Jedrzejek noted that herbicide-related issues lead to many of the questions coming into the company. "We get a lot of questions relating to reading the label, rates of application, tank mix compatibility, dealing

with turf tolerance, the physical properties of a product and so on," he commented.

It should come as no surprise then, that LESCO was so involved in bringing the product Momentum to market.

"Momentum addresses a number of the most common customer concerns," Jedrzejek pointed out. "And that's at least in part due to our ability to stay close to the industry and look for situations where a product's performance needs to be improved."

LESCO's service commitment goes beyond its technical service center, though. "We have a requirement that if you're going to work in a service center, then you have to come from the industry," added Bill Foley, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Office for LESCO. "You have to have product knowledge; you have to be able to answer your customers' questions."

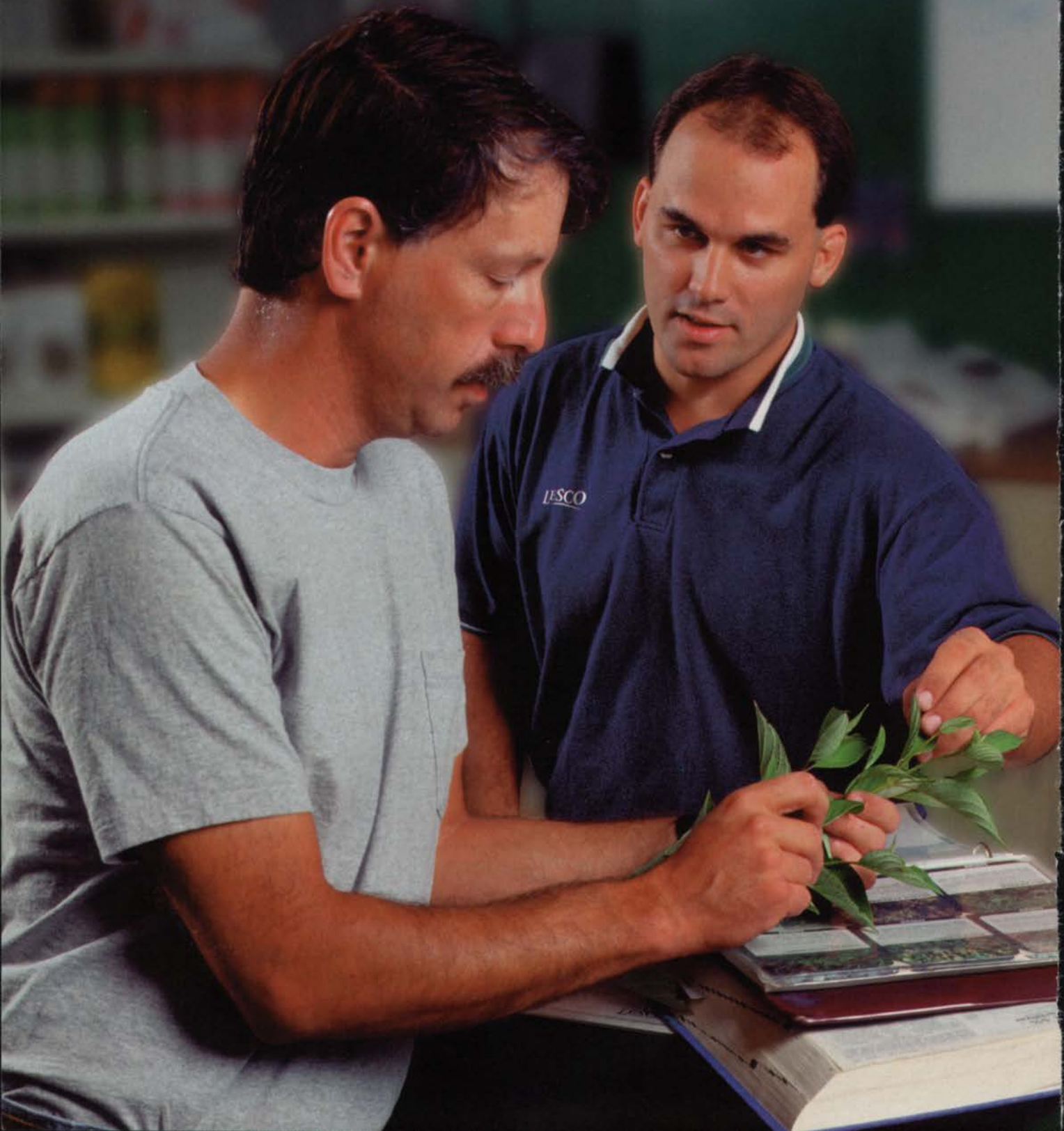
"In addition, we're building an Internet site that will have a whole series of training and certification classes going on," Foley continued. "We're really serious about making certain that our customers are given answers to their questions. That's part of the value of our service. If a customer can bring a weed in and one of our guys says it's spurge and this is how you control it...we're identifying the problem and finding a solution. We then show them a control product and tell them what rates to use. That's a real service."

Part of this training and education means reaching and educating contractors who may be mis-using products.

"For the contractor's benefit, the benefit of

the environment and for the professional industry, we're committed to this industry," Foley asserted. "It's all we do. So we're concerned about it's image, about how successful it is, about how it grows and about the products people use. That really drives our behavior."

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sional products to the landscape management industry.

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A recent survey of green industry contractors confirms that the market for professional lawn care services is booming.



The green industry as a whole has enjoyed a healthy run over the last five years, so it's a logical assumption then that the lawn care portion of the industry would also show strong growth.

Well, not only are application services among the most popular offered by green industry professionals, but they are also a more profitable service than ever before.

According to a *Lawn & Landscape* survey of 1,000 lawn care and landscape contractors nationwide, 62.1 percent of the companies offering pesticide application

services reported higher application revenues in 1997 than in 1996 - an average increase of 13.9 percent.

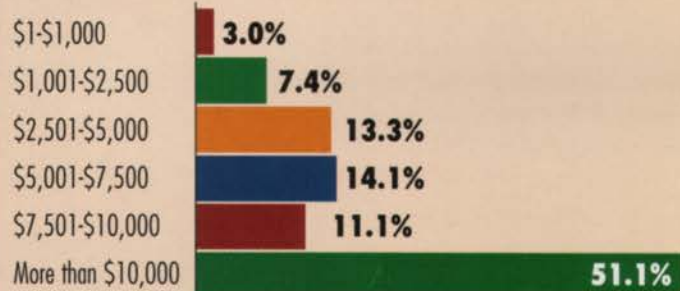
Meanwhile, just 3.6 percent of the respondents expected application revenues to drop off in 1997, although their decrease was a bit more dramatic at 17.6 percent.

Clearly, however, demand for turf and ornamental care services is on the rise.

This trend is certainly due, in part, to the well documented aging baby boomer population that is part of a double income household, has discretionary cash available thanks to the surging economy and doesn't want to spend what little free time it does have maintaining its lawn. At the same time, credit has to go to the contractors that continue to increase their professionalism and run their businesses more effectively.

WHO ARE THEY? Companies offering pesticide services projected an average overall sales volume of \$603,358 for 1997. More than 27 percent of these companies had sales in excess of \$1 million for 1997, and they are primarily focused on the residential market. In fact, better than 81 percent of respondents earn more than 70 percent of application revenues from residential accounts. Just 6.1 percent earn the same amount from commercial clients.

What are your approximate annual pesticide expenditures?



Source: *Lawn & Landscape* magazine

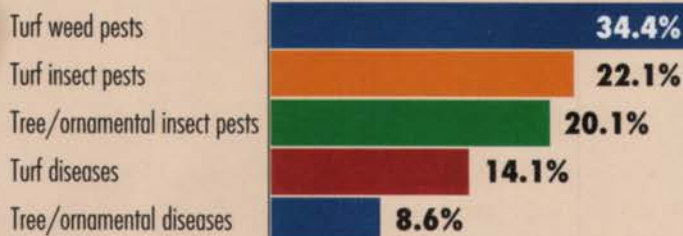
Which three factors most influence — your pesticide purchasing decisions?

Turf applications remain the bread and butter service — 71.4 percent of the respondents earn at least 70 percent of their pesticide application revenues from turf applications. However, tree care and ornamental services showed considerable interest from contractors with 13.4 percent of contractors earning more than 30 percent of their pesticide revenues from tree care and 9.9 percent earning better than 30 percent in ornamental treatments.

As expected, turf weeds are the most commonly encountered problem, singled out by better than 34 percent of the respondents as 1997's biggest problem. Turf insect problems were the second most common at 22.1 percent, followed closely by tree/ornamental pests (20.1 percent) and turf diseases (14.1 percent).

In particular, grubs (46.9 percent), chinch bugs (24.7 percent) and sod webworms (11.1 percent) were listed as the most problematic turf insects. Brown patch (51.6 percent) led to the lion's share of turf disease battles, followed by red thread (17.7 percent) and dollar spot (16.1 percent). Dandelion (34.7 percent) showed up more than any other turf weed, although there was plenty of clover (26.5 percent) and crabgrass (20.4 percent). Finally, mites (33.3 percent) were the most common ornamental insect, followed by aphids (25.6 percent).

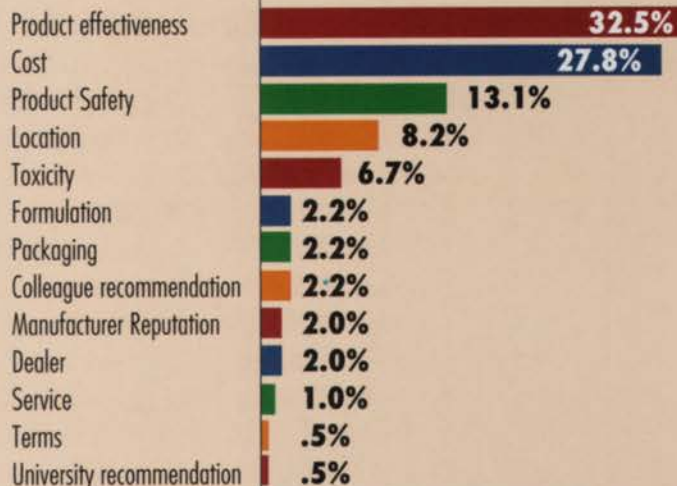
What specific landscape problems — were most prevalent in 1997?



Source: Lawn & Landscape magazine

Regarding product purchases, turf herbicides are the most widely purchased product in terms of the number of companies buying them. Turf herbicides also comprise a considerable amount of the overall product purchased, representing about 40 percent of total product purchases for companies using them. Turf insecticides, meanwhile, are the second most commonly purchased product, although they don't represent as much of the purchasing companies' total product purchase (about 19 percent).

WHAT ARE THEY BUYING? Collectively, *Lawn & Landscape* readers anticipate spending a minimum of \$220,094,256 on pesticides in 1997, or an average of



Source: Lawn & Landscape magazine

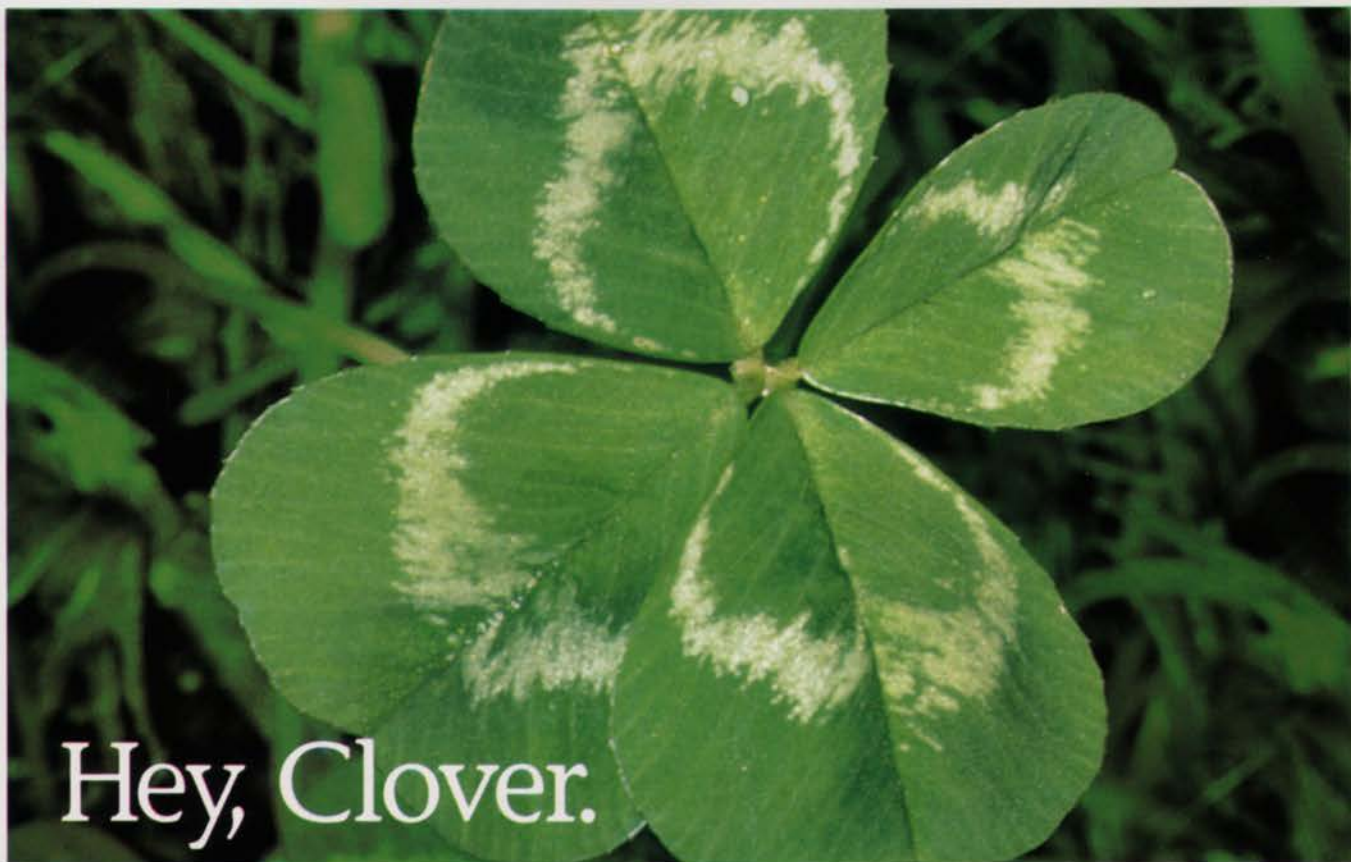
\$7,178 per company. Based on the revenues from turf applications, it's no surprise that turf herbicides are the most commonly purchased products, bought by more than 80 percent of respondents. Turf herbicides were followed in popularity by turf insecticides (75.3 percent) and ornamental insecticides (58.2 percent). Among tree care products, insecticides were most popular (purchased by 44.3 percent), followed by fungicides (32.3 percent) and combination fertilizer plus insecticides/herbicides (15.2 percent).

Distributors were the most common source of pesticides, outdistancing dealers by 25 percent. However, the lawn care professionals purchasing products from dealers tend to purchase slightly more from dealers (68.4 percent) than those who favor distributors purchase from distributors (67.5 percent).

LESCO is clearly the most popular product provider, cited by nearly 27 percent of respondents as accounting for the majority of their product purchases.

Product effectiveness (32.5 percent), cost (27.8 percent) and safety were the three most influential factors in product purchasing decisions for this market, however, none of these products were listed by more than one-third of the respondents.

Another factor that must be important to contractors, although it did not appear among these responses, is product availability. More than 84 percent of the industry purchases turf and ornamental care products on an as-needed basis, with purchases occurring fairly evenly over the course of the calendar year (between 17.3 percent and 29.2 percent in each of the four quarters).



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(continued from page 46)

Wootton said. Toro's 1924 version for the golf market was a 12-foot-wide cutting machine, with five 30-inch mowers mounted behind a tractor, and it mowed three times faster than the horse-drawn method, said Rick Cairns, product manager for Toro, Bloomington, Minn.

In 1937, Toro reduced that machine for the landscape contractor market and came out with the 76-inch Professional, which was a cross between the small, maneuverable walk-behind machines and the larger gang units. The machine was still being produced through the 1970s, Cairns said.

The post-World War II boom era blessed the lawnmower market with a flurry of unprecedented growth as companies needed to find new markets for peacetime products.

"Lawnmowers were a big thing after the war," Wootton explained. "These people built bombs, airplanes and tanks. When they came back they had all of this engineering skill and were looking for new things to

make. Suburbs were starting to form and that meant wider yards, bigger gardens and greenhouses."

THE BIRTH OF THE ROTARY. In 1935, Leonard Goodall and his wife had problems with the buckhorn plants outside their coffee shop in Warrensburg, Mo., according to said Stan Byers, a Bunton Distributing Co. employee from 1974 to 1993 and president of Byers' Gold, Louisville, Ky., from 1993 until 1997.

"Since the Buckhorn plants would grow faster than the grass, Goodall couldn't cut them with the reel-type mower he had," Byers explained. "So he attached an electric motor to the top of a deck and affixed sharpened steel blades to the motor shaft. Not only did the machine cut the Buckhorn plants, but it did a pretty good job of cutting grass."

To give the machine more power, Goodall helped himself to the 7/8-horsepower, two-cycle gas engine that operated his wife's Maytag washing machine, and

created the first direct drive rotary mower, Byers continued.

"This machine was perfect for cutting Kentucky bluegrass because, unlike the reel mowers that cut it too low, it left the 3-inches of turf necessary to keep bluegrass growing," Byers enthused.

Thirteen years later, the Bunton Distributing Co., was formed in Louisville, Ky. to distribute Goodall rotary mowers.

"The rotary mower became a success because it was easier to maintain than the reel-type mower," Byers said. "The reel is a very specialty-type item. It cuts golf greens down to 1 inch. But you have to constantly sharpen the reels and blade knives. To sharpen the rotary, you take the blade off and sharpen it. Maintenance time was cut in half with the Goodall mower."

The rotary mower inspired Bunton's 1954 claim to fame: the wide-area, self-propelled, walk-behind mower.

(continued on page 74)

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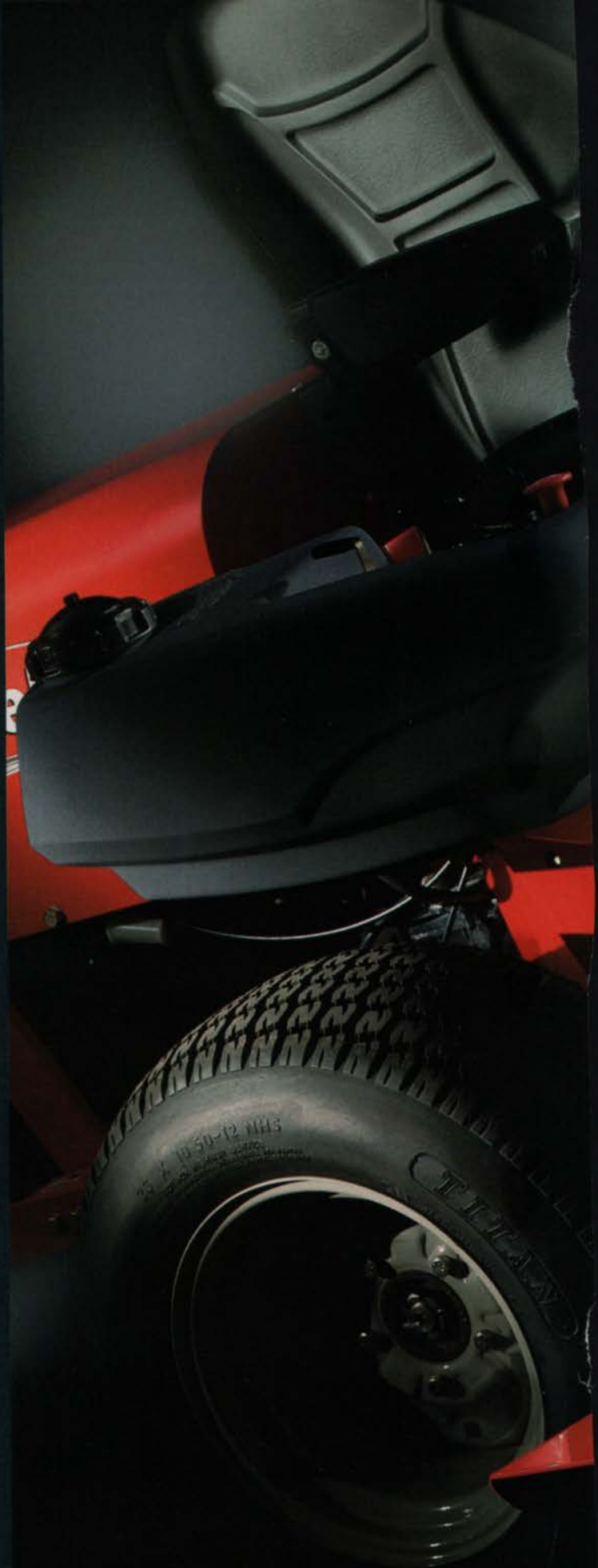


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USE READER SERVICE #38

history of mowers

(continued from page 71)

According to OPEL's "Brief History of Lawnmowing," between 1953 and 1959, the power rotary mower was outselling the reel mower by a 9-to-1 ratio.

"Reel-type machines had completely faded in popularity," noted Dane Scag, president of Great Dane Power Equipment, Elm Grove, Wis. "They were on a horizontal axis. As the blade went around, it cut like scissors. It was probably a very fussy machine. If the grass was too tall, it wouldn't cut well and if there were too many sticks and stones, the blade was easily ruined."

ON THE BANDWAGON. If a lawnmower can turn completely around within its own length without veering out of its dimensional box, it is called a true zero-turn mower, as defined by Ken Raney, advertising manager, Excel Industries, a manufacturer of Hustler Turf Equipment, Hesston, Kansas.

"We produced the first zero-turn radius riding mower with independent drive-wheel



A representation of Budding's 1830 gear-driven mower equipped with a cutting cylinder that rotated very close to the lawn's surface. Photo: Textron Turfcare & Specialty Products

steering and a belt drive," Raney remarked of their 1964 Hustler product.

Today, most manufacturers credit the zero-turn radius mower capability as the most significant invention in lawnmower history.

"Zero-turn radius is a superior way to mow grass," Raney said.

From The Grasshopper Co.'s birth in 1969, it has concentrated solely on producing zero-turn mowers, said Patsy Penner, marketing coordinator for the Moundridge, Kan.-based company. "Zero-turn mowers

are so efficient," Penner explained. "You're never wasting any motion on that machine. You can maneuver into any area. Before when you would have to shift gears or turn the steering wheel, you spent a lot of time positioning the mower. The zero-turn mower changed that."

Another key invention during the 1970s that works hand-in-hand with the zero-turn capability today is the hydraulic drive.

"Ever since HydroGear created a good, inexpensive hydraulic transmission to put

(continued on page 76)

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history of mowers

(continued from page 74)

on mowers everybody wanted it," remarked Howard Price, president of Howard Price Turf Equipment, Chesterfield, Mo. "It eliminated the belts and the clutches."

Ferris Industries came out with the single hydrostatic walk-behind mower in 1987, heavily promoting the "No More Belts" approach to mowing, said Bill Shea, vice

president of sales and new product development at Ferris Industries, Munnsville, N.Y.

The first dual hydraulic, zero-turn radius walk-behind mower did not appear until 1990 when Joseph Berrios, a retired Florida landscape contractor, came up with the invention, giving Scag Power Equipment non-exclusive rights to his patent,

Dane Scag explained.

After the birth of the zero-turn mower and hydraulics, the landscape contractor market became fiercely competitive. Many new lawnmower manufacturers joined the game, including Dixie Chopper, Coatesville, Ind., in 1981; Exmark Manufacturing, Beatrice, Neb., in 1982; Ferris Industries, Munnsville, N.Y., went from producing milking machines for cows to lawnmowers in 1986; and Encore Manufacturing Co., Beatrice, Neb., in 1988.

"There's only so many landscape contractors out there," said Rick Curlett, director of marketing for Exmark Manufacturing, "and we are all out there screaming, 'Look at us.' Within one or two years of a new product introduction, everybody's got a version. At least it forces everybody to do what they do a little bit better."

The lack of patents in the commercial market provide an example of how many manufacturers are working on similar ideas at similar times, said Dick Tegtmeier, president and CEO of Encore Mfg. Co.

"When you drive a blade with a belt and pulley or hydraulics and an engine there's not much you can do," he pointed out. "Sometimes it's just how you get there that matters."

RULING THE MARKET. Today, the zero-turn radius mower is continually being improved upon as different lawnmower manufacturer inventions attempt to redefine the "true" zero-turn capability.

"The future is the zero-turn radius mower," said Arthur Warren Evans, sales manager at Dixie Chopper. "It takes about 30 years for any change in design to really take a hold, so zero turn definitely has another 10 or 20 years of growth. In what form transmission or engine it will come in, I don't know."

Another current trend is to offer supreme cutting capabilities in a more compact package, said Bob Walker, president of Walker Mfg. Co., Ft. Collins, Colo.

"To fully utilize the zero-turn radius technology, we went to a compact version of the machines," Walker explained. "Concept-wise, it has proven to be significant in our area of the market. Face it, if the machine is too big, zero-turn radius is not great

(continued on page 156)

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USE READER SERVICE #42

Smart Pesticide Purchasing

Warehouse limitations for pesticide products is a significant consideration for many contractors when deciding how much product to order and when to order it. Photo: L&L Staff



It's a seemingly simple process: buy what you need. But some fine-tuning of the process can save money and simplify operations.

By Bob West



W

hen a contractor needs a new mower or hand-held trimmer, solving that problem is relatively simple. The contractor goes to the dealer, purchases the product and puts it to use that day.

The process is not quite as simple when it comes to purchasing pesticide or fertilizer products, however. Instead of buying one mower, contractors are purchasing these products by the pallet, truckload or ton.

And just because an order may be for an entire season's worth of pesticides, that doesn't mean all of the product is delivered to the contractor at the same time.

Obviously, these options translate into a number of decisions for contractors, but those decisions can only be made after careful consideration of a number of variables.

ORDERING EARLY. The first decision contractors need to make is when to purchase pesticides, and there really isn't one standard answer for all companies to subscribe to.

"We outline our program in the beginning of the growing season and project how much product we'll need," explained Ray Iacabucci, director of horticultural services, Environmental Design Group, Atlanta, Ga. "Then we call four or five different vendors or visit them at trade shows to see what products they would be able to formulate for us and what the costs would be."

This wasn't always the case for Environmental Design Group, however.

"We used to buy product for two- or four-week blocks of time,"

(continued on page 82)

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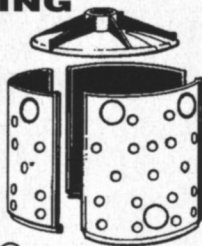
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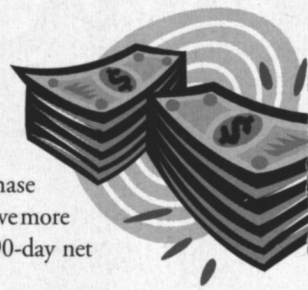
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USE READER SERVICE #45

buying pesticides

(continued from page 78)

Iacobucci recalled. "But we wanted to reduce the paperwork associated with the invoices and purchase orders, and we now have more resources for 60- to 90-day net pricing options."



Weather conditions can certainly influence timing pesticide purchases as well.

"We put down a preemergent-coated fertilizer in the spring that is very weather-related, but we never know for sure when we're going to be making first applications because of the weather," noted Dave Sandford, special projects manager, Showcase Landscape, Minneapolis, Minn. "As a result, we buy our pesticides in bulk over the winter and we have enough storage facility to hold as much as two truckloads.

"If you buy product on an as-needed basis, that can make it difficult to order custom blends or you might run short on something popular, like preemergent-coated fertilizer when it's in high demand in the spring," Sandford continued.

Grass Roots Inc., Lenexa, Kan., makes two preemergent applications each spring.

"We make the final decision on what to buy in November or December of each year and place our order in January," noted Lance Schelhammer, president of the company. "Then we'll start receiving deliveries of the product in the first part of March."

"We assess our agronomic program at the end of each season and examine the success of the products we used," added John Carson, division manager of the Ehrlich Green Team, J.C. Ehrlich Co., Reading, Pa. "Then we'll request proposals from a number of vendors who we've worked with in the past or who were highly recommended to us."

Other contractors are hesitant to commit to one product for a season. "Some vendors offer to warehouse our product if we order the entire allotment at one time, but I've been leery of getting locked in to one product or one vendor like that," Iacobucci related. "The vendor might start expecting all of our business from that point on and I don't want to be locked in to the product in case some extra product comes on the market at a reduced price from somewhere else."

Iacobucci also pointed out one other potential problem with ordering large quan-

tivities of a product, particularly if it's a new product. "If we're planning to use a different nitrogen carrier than normal, we may have to order an entire truckload of the product," he explained. "Then, we're pretty much strapped into using it no matter how good or bad it is."

Some contractors alter their purchasing for different products, however. "We order the entire season's worth of turf products in the winter, but we'll limit our ornamental purchases to what we need for one round or some particular period of time, such as a month, because of storage constraints," noted Iacabucci.

One obvious key is to keep an eye on controlling any purchases that must be made later in the season.

"We really try to minimize our inventory on hand as we get to the end of the year," Iacabucci noted. "We just don't want to go into the winter months with cash tied up in products that aren't being used."

For most of these contractors purchasing any significant quantity of product, the most popular approach is to have the vendor warehouse the order and deliver it in the smallest increments possible.

Making an accurate estimate of how much product to buy can be another challenge for contractors.

"We always try to make conservative projections of quantities and build in clauses

Minding the Store

Purchasing larger quantities of pesticides before a season starts equates to saving dollars on purchase prices and guaranteeing a regular supply of product is available. But it also equates to an important task for those contractors who choose to store inventory themselves.

"All of our control products — especially anything in liquid form — are stored in a ventilated area apart from other inventory," noted Ray Iacabucci, director of horticultural services, Environmental Design Group, Atlanta, Ga. "All of the granular products go into a separate, but secured, storage barn that forklifts can drive right into."

Iacabucci emphasized the importance of having appropriate facilities in order to protect your investment. "Some people try to just use a tarp to protect the inventory, but moisture can be a real problem," he said. "Plus, over time, the sunlight can decay the bags and make the top layer of bags brittle."

Although it's rare, some contractors have experienced minor performance problems with product that sits in inventory for too long. "We're careful not to let liquid products sit around because they can break down," commented Dave Sandford, special projects manager, Showcase Landscape, Minneapolis, Minn. "And we always get fertilizer delivered as late as possible in the year because it can become too dusty to provide a good application if it sits for too long." — **Bob West**

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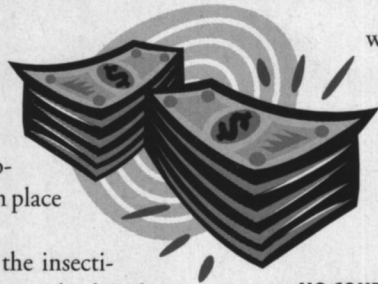
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in our purchase agreement that allow us to buy more product if need be," Carson remarked. "And sometimes that means substituting standard blends in place of our own blends."

"We're always buying the insecticides, fungicides and some herbicides throughout the year as complements to our bulk order in the winter," noted Schelhammer. "There's just no way of accurately predicting some of the insect, fungus or weed outbreaks that will occur."

For most of these contractors purchasing any significant quantity of product, the most popular approach is to have the vendor warehouse the order and deliver it in smaller increments as need be.

"We leave the vendor with as much product as possible," asserted Carson. "Warehouse space costs us \$6 to \$8 a square foot, so we learned how to make do with smaller



warehouses and more frequent deliveries."

"It's crazy to pay for warehouse space," agreed Schelhammer. "Of course, it's a different story if your supplier is 30 miles away."

NO COUPONS NECESSARY. The business term for it is "economy of scale," and it can apply to any organization managing its business properly, big or small. But discounts for large orders aren't all that's available to contractors.

Ordering an entire season's worth of product early like this can offer a couple of different benefits to contractors, and Carson pointed out that there are advantages for companies of all sizes to enjoy.

"Making purchasing decisions round-by-round leaves the contractor at the mercy of the market and buying retail," related Carson. "But the vendors are making their

projections for next year in the fall and buying their bulk product before they talk to any contractors.

"Any contractor that has good record keeping and knows what his or her needs will be, based on the company's growth projections, can take advantage of early order discounting," Carson continued. "In addition, contractors with good cash flow can take advantage of early pay discounts because suppliers are eager to lock business in and boost their own cash flow."

"Buying in bulk probably saves us between \$1 and \$1.50 per bag of product," agreed Sandford.

Observant companies may find dollar saving opportunities throughout the season as well.

"If a company is looking to lower its product expenses, it needs to be on the lookout for equivalent products that perform well but are offered under a different

(continued from page 86)

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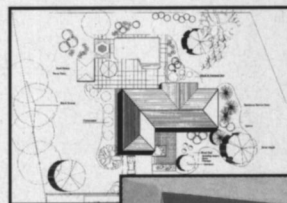
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(continued from page 84)

Making the Calculation

Purchasing pesticides starts off with knowing how much product to apply to a job. Here are some sample formulas for determining application amounts, according to Dow AgroSciences:

GRANULAR MATERIALS

$$\text{lbs. ai/A} \times \frac{\text{sq.ft. to be treated}}{43,560 \text{ sq. ft./acre}} \times \frac{100}{\% \text{ granular}} = \text{lbs. required to treat one acre}$$

WETTABLE POWDER

$$\text{lbs. ai/A} \times \frac{\text{sq.ft. to be treated}}{43,560 \text{ sq. ft./acre}} \times \frac{100}{\text{wetable powder}} = \text{lbs. required to treat one acre}$$

LIQUID CONCENTRATE

$$\text{lbs. ai/A} \times \frac{\text{sq.ft. to be treated}}{43,560 \text{ sq. ft./acre}} \times \frac{1}{\text{lbs. active ingredient/gallon}} = \text{gallons required to treat one acre}$$

or more limited label," added Carson.

It's not unheard of for a number of companies in the same geographic area to form a buying club in order to increase the amount of product they purchase to gain greater cost savings.

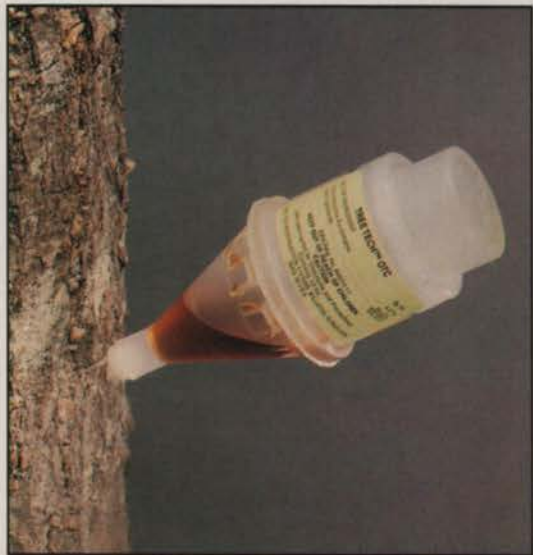
THE VENDOR CHOICE. At times, it can be a more important decision than what product to buy, and it's what vendor to buy that product from.

"The vendor needs to be available when you need them," insisted Sandford. "We're in a service industry, and that's what we want from the vendors, too."

Jeff Ponder, owner, Forever Green, Loves Park, Ill., also noted that he purchases 95 percent of his pesticide products from the same supplier. "I don't want to store product over the winter and this vendor will buy unused product back from me at the end of each season," he said.

(continued on page 88)

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Don Ulrich-Cincinnati Zoo



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USE READER SERVICE #47

buying pesticides

(continued from page 86)

For Iacabucci, switching vendors constitutes ongoing research, and it's something he prefers to do. "We don't have a test plot for examining product performance, so our jobs have to serve that role," he explained. "A lot of times we'll purchase similar products from different vendors to track results."

"We want a supplier that can meet our needs," added Schelhammer. "Not everyone offers the preemergent-coated fertilizer we use, so that is obviously important."

Schelhammer also noted that there are varying degrees of being a vendor. "Is it essentially just a warehouse location for product or has the company been around long enough to give good advice on specific problems?" he asked. "We have an agrono-

mist and a pathologist, but we like to deal with an experienced vendor because the vendor is exposed to so many contractors



The first decision contractors need to make is when during the year to purchase pesticides, and there really isn't one standard answer for all companies to subscribe to.



and products that he or she can tell us when we're making a mistake."

"It's not always the best price that matters," agreed Sandford, "but if someone carries the product we need and can get it to us efficiently when we want it."

"The supplier market is so competitive

that there's not much price difference," Carson pointed out. "But it's not the fertilizer price that really matters—it's a question of freight, so you usually end up dealing with vendors with the best distribution system or closest manufacturing plant to control costs and ensure on-time delivery."

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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USE READER SERVICE #55

Installing retaining walls is a hot service right now, but it is not a challenge to be taken lightly.

By Bob West

A

popular movie of a few years back carried the signature line, "If you build it, they will come."

To most people, turning a cornfield into a baseball field would be an insurmountable chore, much the same way constructing a retaining wall on a residential or commercial landscape would be.

But landscape contractors have put their own twist on that line from "Field of Dreams," and they have come to build it – the retaining wall – and more and more of them are offering this increasingly popular service.

FUNCTION FIRST. Seeing that building a retaining wall is no easy or cheap chore, contractors are understandably hesitant to construct an unnecessary wall.

"I would say 75 percent of the walls we install are because of a grade change that is too steep to be made up in a slope," noted Alan Strohbehn, landscape designer, Prescription Landscape, St. Paul, Minn., adding that a 3 percent grade change is the maximum for safe mowing. "Any greater slopes are tough to deal with using grass and landscape mulches because the wind and water movement moves the materials as well."

Paul Barton, president and chief landscape architect, Landshapes, Bloomington, Minn., went even further than Strohbehn's 75 percent estimate. "We

(continued on page 94)



Installing retaining walls of all shapes and sizes requires careful consideration of the type of soil held back by the wall for long-term stability. Photo: Keystone

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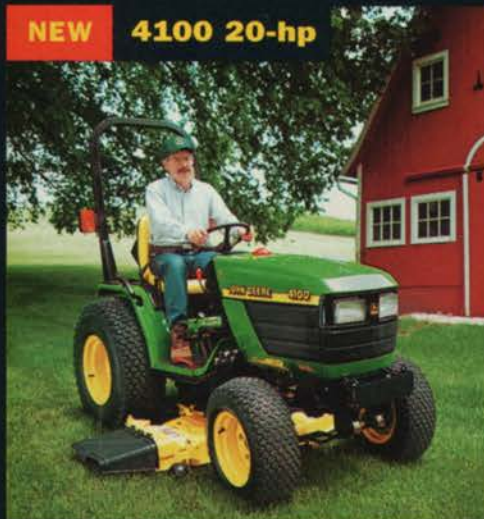
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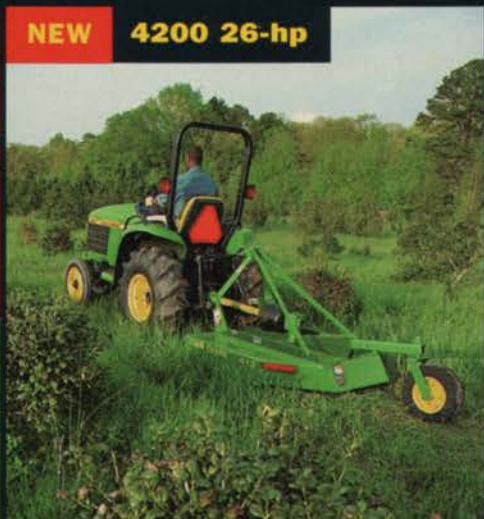
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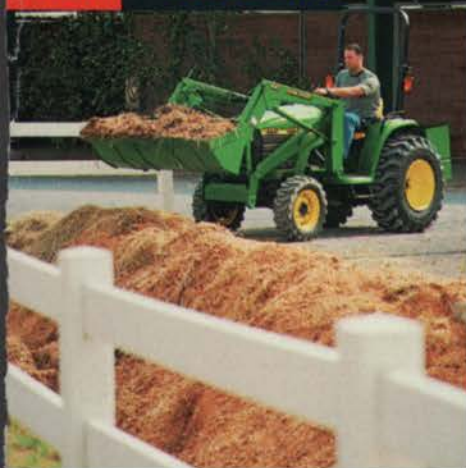
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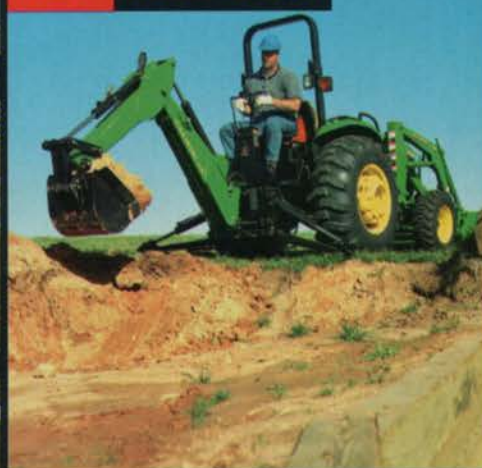
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USE READER SERVICE #59

retaining walls

(continued from page 90)

only install retaining walls when there's a functional need – period," he stated.

"In my opinion, a wall in the landscape is often a sign of failure to site a building properly or take care of grading naturally," related Bill Weiss, landscape architect, Greenland Landscape Co., Paramus, N.J. "There are not too many walls in nature, so from a landscape point of view, I don't think

walls should be considered for decorative purposes."

Retaining walls will also enter into play for an installation where the neighboring property is at a different height from the client's property. "Or, sometimes we'll build a wall to preserve an existing tree if the job requires changing the ground level and we have to keep the tree at the old ground level," commented Rick Kier, president, Pro Scapes Inc., Syracuse, N.Y.

Although many people will initially think of walls as sepa-

rating or dividing devices, retaining walls can actually create more useable space of value in a landscape.

"We'll often suggest a wall that is 3 feet high or 42 inches high for areas that can't be maintained easily," added Barton. "That way we can create a planting area or garden that's actually at waist height for the client and we can put a taller wall above that one to correct the water flow or hold the water back from the structure."

"A lot of people like walls of 18 or 24 inches high for backyard borders or they like using walls to raise planting beds," related Strohbehn. "That way we can put good soil on top of bad soil and improve the planting that way."



Contractors generally favor prefabricated modular concrete retaining walls for their appearance and long-term stability. Photo: Versa-Lok

MATERIALS MATTER. When it comes to constructing a wall, contractors have options as to what materials to use.

"The most popular style of wall for us

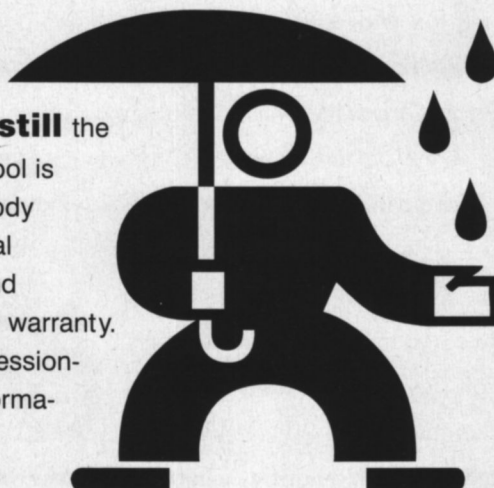
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USE READER SERVICE #60

retaining walls

(continued from page 94)

has been the pre-cast concrete type," noted Kier. "Pressure-treated timber walls are favored by some people, but a lot of times the timbers are purchased from a railroad and they're being sold because they've expended most of their useful life.

"The concrete walls go up pretty quickly once you have the base course put in," Kier continued. "Along with setting the base, the real challenge is making sure the wall has the proper batter or pitch backwards for structural and drainage purposes."

"We always encourage customers to use what looks best, and while the commercial areas almost always go with modular block systems, residential customers also like using natural stone walls," commented Barton. "The modular block walls are also the most time consuming to install and are more costly because they have to be engineered."

But Barton has seen a real increase in the popularity of natural stone or boulder walls over the last two years, despite the chal-



Smaller, modular concrete walls (left) can easily create more usable space as part of the landscape. Photo: Keystone

lenges usually associated with acquiring sufficient quantities of quality stones to produce an installation.

"We have some suppliers hauling materials from a couple hundred miles away, and there are times in the summer where we can't get a 25-ton load for three to five days," Barton noted. "So sometimes a supplier who has a quality supply of stone can name the price, which means \$40 to \$50 a ton isn't unreasonable."

Because the company has had projects delayed due to a lack of available stone, it has become resourceful in unearthing new supply options. "We'll often go up to con-

struction jobs and find a crew digging up piles of 2-foot to 3-foot diameter stones it doesn't want, so we'll buy them and haul them away," Barton continued. "This hauling is an expense a lot of companies don't want to deal with because the stone is pretty hard on the equipment."

Weiss also prefers the natural stone walls with the intent of minimizing their impact on the landscape's aesthetics, using them as borders for an area to be filled with geofilter mats. "Then we plant a ground cover that will grow into the fibers to create a wall of green," he explained. "After two seasons,

(continued on page 98)

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USE READER SERVICE #63

retaining walls

(continued from page 96)

the ground cover should have grown in enough to be effective and provide all of the technical properties of a wall."

And the price of the different materials used to create the wall will most likely factor into the decision.

"Timber is by far the least expensive material, but it won't last as long after it's installed," according to Barton, who said his company pays \$10 to \$12 per square foot of timber. "Boulders or natural rock usually cost us \$13 to \$15 per square foot, and the modular concrete blocks go from \$18 to \$23 per square foot."

"In most cases, walls are expensive to install," agreed Kier, "but they can be profitable if they are bid properly. The most important thing is having enough experience to know what to look for in terms of soil problems or structural challenges with the landscape and estimating accordingly."

Barton has seen a real increase in the popularity of natural stone or boulder walls over the last two years, despite the challenges associated with acquiring sufficient quantities of quality stones to produce an installation.

WORRISOME WATER. Although it would be easy to assume otherwise based on the number of contractors new to wall construction, installing such a feature is no easy task. In fact, walls greater than 4 feet tall generally require the design expertise of an engineer, and any flawed design or installation will only lead to maintenance chores, particularly if the wall is subjected to much contact with water.

"The biggest issue in our area with any retaining wall is having proper drainage," Kier remarked. "If we don't have proper drainage and water gets behind the wall, it will freeze and heave the wall out."

To avoid this problem, Kier installs drain

tile and fills with No. 2 stone behind the wall during the installation so any water behind the wall can drain out of the area.

"If you backfill the area behind the wall with a clay soil, water that gets back there won't have anywhere to go and the wall will tip over in four or five years," Kier pointed out.

"Sandy loam or black dirt soils tend to settle in better than heavy clay soils, so we'll bring in backfill soil about 90 percent of the time," Strohbahn added. "We also backfill with a lot of 3/4-inch stone that doesn't allow for a lot of pockets for water to get into."

"The most important thing that is overlooked by contractors is what type of soil the wall is holding back," pointed out Blaine French, sales manager, Keystone Retaining Wall Systems, Minneapolis, Minn. "Granular soils are generally more favorable to work with because they don't hold moisture and

(continued on page 100)



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retaining walls

(continued from page 98)

they allow for better drainage than heavy clay soils that hold moisture and have changing properties."

While contractors regularly term modular-style retaining walls "maintenance free," the same is not true of natural stone walls.

"People really like the look of natural stone walls, so we stack them up with a fabric behind them and hope for the best with shifting and settling over time," admitted Strohhenn.

Contractors do have options available to them for projects that they know will be exposed to heavy water conditions.

"Manufacturers can beef up the concrete composition and material strength for use in some wet environments," French commented. "But these are materials that are more expensive and can't just be bought off the shelf." **LL**

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

Cap It All Off

Building a retaining wall of concrete modular blocks yields a decision for contractors once they reach the top of the wall — how to cover the holes in the top layer of these hollow blocks?

The answer is generally pretty simple, as contractors use a flat, solid stone, called a capstone, to sit across the space left in the modular blocks. But contractors should be sure to consider the long-term life of the wall and how the climate conditions it will be exposed to will affect the capstone.

"If we're using larger stones, such as 8-inch units, we may finish the wall with 4-inch capstones," noted Alan Strohhenn, landscape designer, Prescription Landscape, St. Paul, Minn. "With shorter walls less than 2 feet high or so, we'll usually use a 4- to 6-

inch stone to cap off the blocks."

An issue with the capstones is whether or not to secure them to the wall. There are strong points for both sides of the decision.

"A lot of people use the weight of the capstones to hold them in place, but kids or vandals could easily move them as they walk by a wall," noted Steve Jones, president, PaveTech, Bloomington, Minn. "Using an adhesive to secure the capstone to the wall is a precautionary method preventing liability suits or maintenance calls."

Jones added that there are different adhesives available to contractors based on how much water the wall will be exposed to.

Strohhenn isn't sold on the benefit of using such adhesives. "We don't always use the capstones because most of them need to be glued on," he pointed out. "I'm leery of that permanent attachment because of repair considerations. If a wall settles and has to be raised, glued-on capstones can be a real problem." — **Bob West**



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By Nicole
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(continued on page 104)

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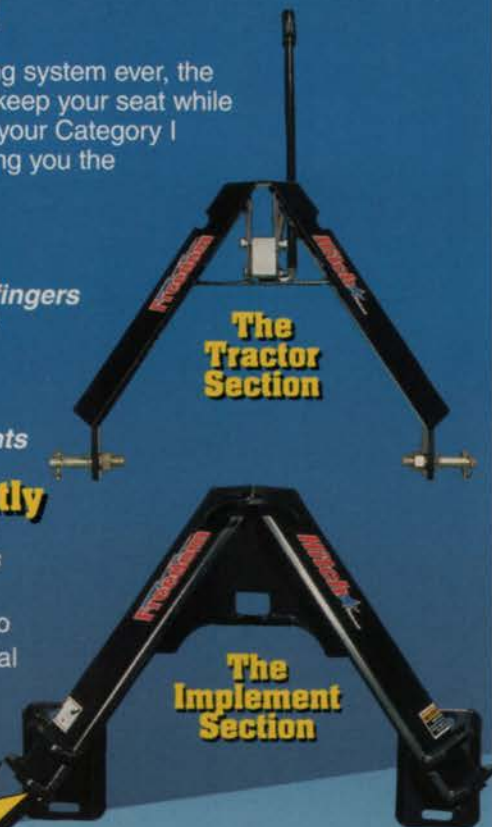
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(continued from page 104)

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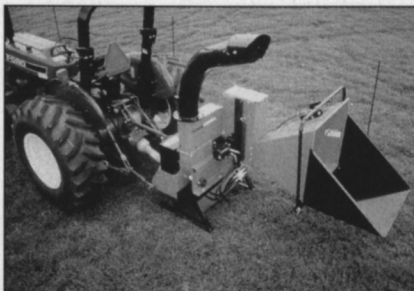
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- Circle 217 on reader service card**

Husqvarna Trimmers

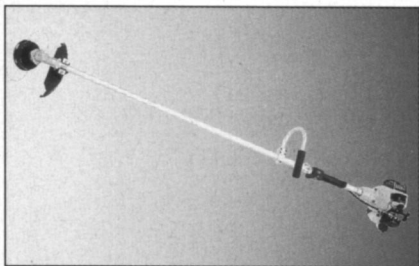
- Hollow steel drive shafts on straight shaft trimmers give it low weight starting at 8.4 pounds
- Includes three models: 322C, 322L and 325LX
- Feature LowVib™ anti-vibration system
- Incorporate a three-piece forged crankshaft
- Flywheels located on front of trimmer to keep heat away from operator



• Come with E-tech™ engine system, PowerCat™ catalytic muffler and Clean Sweep™ crankshaft design
Circle 218 on reader service card

McCulloch®ProMac®Trimmer

• Model PM2635J features a 25.6 cc Mitsubishi industrial engine
 • Five bushings support the 60-inch solid



steel drive shaft

• Aluminum shaft and "J" handle
 • Glass-lined muffler with serviceable spark arrestor screen
 • Reusable foam air cleaner is also equipped with a silencer
Circle 219 on reader service card

Ryobi Trimmer

• Weighs just 12.9 pounds and features a TrimmerPlus® split boom aluminum shaft with extra length

• .095-inch dual line cuts a 18-inch path and the automatic line feed dispenses pre-measured line with a single tap
 • Equipped with pro-level 26 cc, 7,500-rpm, 4-cycle engine with out-board starter, maintenance-free fixed-jet carbure-



tor, low-noise large-capacity muffler and a forged full crankshaft

• Engine produces up to 70 percent fewer combined hydrocarbons and oxides of nitrogen exhaust emissions than traditional 2-cycle engines

Circle 220 on reader service card

SOFTWARE / GUIDES

Applied Biochemists Guide to Water Management

• Updated and expanded version of international guide, "How to Identify and Control Water Weeds and Algae"
 • Addresses water quality issues that affect lakes, ponds, parks, golf courses, resorts, sanitary districts, water utilities, irrigation and drainage districts and fish farms
 • Section on plant identification includes drawings, descriptions and distribution maps of the most troublesome species of aquatic vegetation

Circle 221 on reader service card

Autodesk Pro Landscape 5.0 Software

• Suite of integrated 32-bit applications for imaging, 2D site planning and bidding
 • Consists of three modules: Pro Landscape Image Editor, Pro Landscape Proposal and Pro Landscape Planner
 • Helps to guide customers through the design process visually
 • Uses landscape specific tools and symbols

Circle 222 on reader service card

SNOW REMOVAL

John Deere Snow Blowers

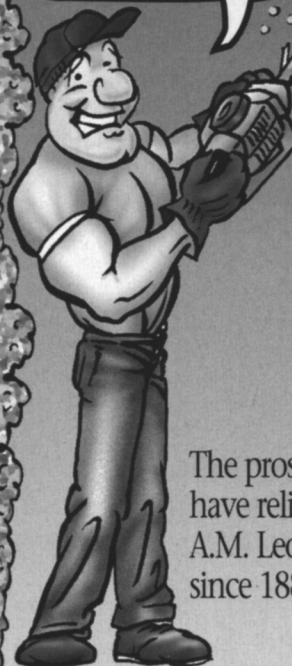
• Models include the 724D and TRS22
 • Offers a mid-size frame and 24-inch clearing width
 • 7-hp Tecumseh "Snow King" engine
 • Other engine features include overhead valve design, cast-iron cylinder liner for long life and an automatic compression for cold weather starts

• Replaces the 524D model
Circle 223 on reader service card

Snowman Snowplow Receiver Hitch

• Mounts to a Putnam receiver hitch on 1/2-, 3/4- and 1-ton vehicles

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- Designed with wide-set mounting arms that allow enough clearance for the plow to operate behind most "slide-in" and "tail-gate" salt or sand spreaders
- 1,450 pounds pump pressure up and down
- Constructed of 10-gauge steel in 7- or 8-foot widths
- Adjustable arms to fit high bed or lift-kit pickup trucks

Circle 224 on reader service card

Grasshopper Snow Removal Attachments

- PTO-driven, 48-inch or 60-inch fixed angle or 60-inch bi-directional model rotary brooms can clear up to 8 inches of snow
- Available in both 48-inch and 60-inch widths, dozer blades and 60-inch V-plows
- Discharge spout rotates a full 180 degrees to deliver snow 20 to 30 feet away
- Options include a 16,000 BTU/hour, 2-speed heater and electric windshield wiper

Circle 225 on reader service card

NEBS Winter Work Wear

- Available for men and women
- Comes in a range of protective clothing for contractors who must work outdoors during colder weather
- Includes a variety of fleece-lined, heavy weight parkas, 3-season jackets and heavy-duty denim outerwear
- Features an expanded line of clothing for small businesses seeking a distinctive and professional image through work wear

Circle 226 on reader service card

Boss Spreader

- Powder-Shield powder-paint finish
- 12-gauge steel sides and ends with 1³/₁₆-inch double-crimped top edge
- Comes with a standard electric start, electric clutch and electric throttle control
- Hydraulic power
- 11 hp Honda I/C 4-cycle engine

Circle 227 on reader service card

VEHICLES/ACCESSORIES

McMillen Trenchers

- Include models 1525, 2030 and 2540
- Designed to fit popular skid steer loaders
- Equipped with side-shift that is available as either a manual or hydraulic option
- Additional features include an angle indicator and a built-in skid shoe

Circle 228 on reader service card

Volvo Wheel Loaders

- Feature panoramic cab with curved windshield and large windows
- Have climate control system, adjustable steering column and operator seat with hydraulically operated single-lever control
- Volvo L30 has an operating weight of 9,500 pounds, bucket capacity of .8 to 1.4 cubic yards, a tipping load of 8,158 pounds and an engine rating of 58 net hp
- Volvo L35 is rated at 70 net hp, has an

(continued on page 112)

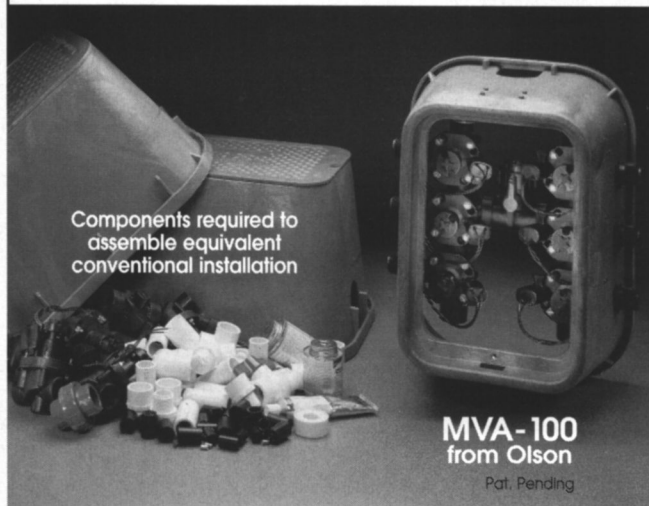
- AT LAST! -

A professional valve installation with the Multi-Valve Assembly from Olson

The MVA provides economy and convenience by eliminating the need to purchase and assemble the many components formerly required to install multiple automatic 1" control valves. Available with 3, 4, 5 or 6 valves, the MVA is factory built and factory tested, ready to connect to the power and water sources.



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Components required to assemble equivalent conventional installation

MVA-100
from Olson

Pat. Pending

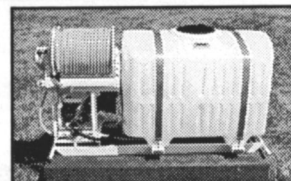
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new products

operating weight of 11,400 pounds, a bucket capacity of 1 to 1.6 cubic yards and a tipping load of 9,548 pounds.

Circle 229 on reader service card

Gehl Skid Loaders

- Available in 2-speed drive option on 5635 and 6635 models



- Model 5635 is available with either a 60-hp or 80-hp turbo-charged oil-cooled diesel engine

- Model 6635 features the 80-hp turbo engine
- Circle 230 on reader service card**

Giant-Vac Truck Loaders

- Comes in 11-, 16-, 20- or 25-hp models
- Available with spring loaded boom, hose transport holder and heavy-duty draw bar
- All models include fenders, safety chains, 5-foot length of metal discharge hose and stop and taillights

Circle 231 on reader service card

Kubota M5400 DT-N

- An orchard/vineyard tractor
- 48-inch width (from outer rim of one rear tire to the other) for maneuverability within close quarters
- Front axle bevel gear design

Circle 232 on reader service card

Case Telescopic Handlers

- Features three models ranging in horsepower from 80 to 110

- The 686G, 686G XR and 686G feature maximum lift reach of 36 feet, 42 feet and 40 feet respectively
- Toggle switch in the cab allows the operator to switch into 2-wheel drive steering

- Attachments include truss booms, buckets, forks, grapples and a variety of carriers in different widths

Circle 233 on reader service card

Caterpillar Compact Wheel Loaders

- The 902 and 906 compact wheel loaders are available with .8- and 1- cubic-yard bucket capacities
- Both models equipped with general pur-



It's a cold,
dark day when
a Shindaiwa
finally quits.



pose buckets in widths of 70 to 74 inches

- Additional items include stone sieve buckets and a right side dump bucket for the 906
- Can be outfitted with 51-inch wide Class II rated pallet forks with 44-inch long tines
- The fork capacity of the 902 is 3,600



pounds and the fork capacity of the 906 is 4,150 pounds

Circle 234 on reader service card

Daewoo 1760XL Skid Steer Loader

- Powered by a Perkins 704.30 direct injec-



tion diesel engine

- Features a 1,700 pound operating capacity, a wide stance and low center of gravity
- Has a hydrostatic transmission and universal attachment system

Circle 235 on reader service card

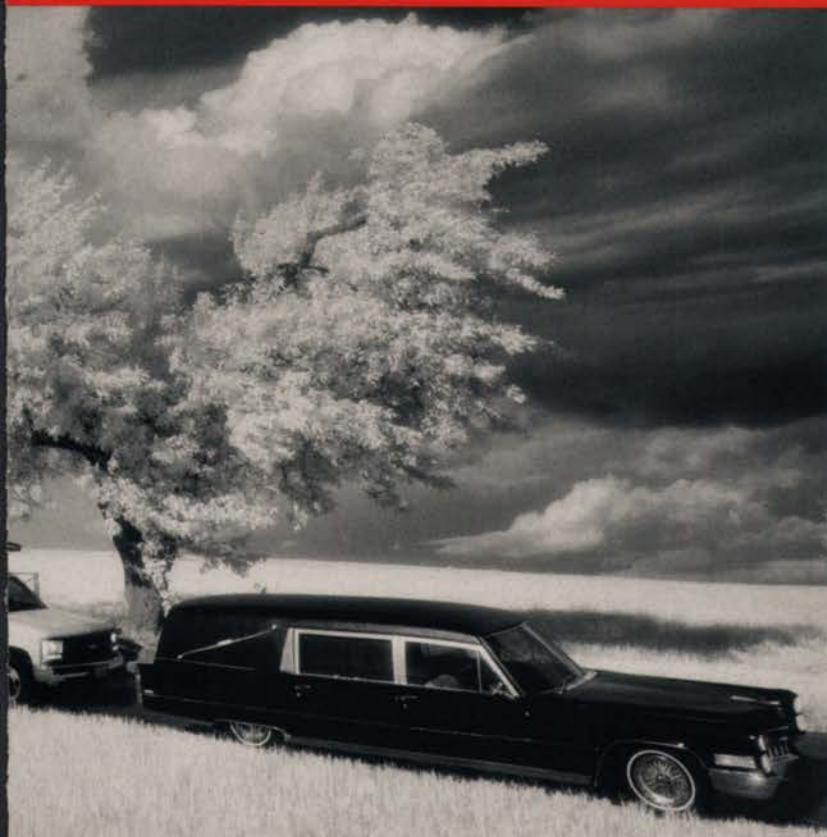
Kanga Loaders

- Available in 20-hp diesel or petrol engine models
- Wider frame allows easier access to the engine for maintenance
- Drive chains are fully enclosed with au-

tomatic tensioners, while all linkage pins are fitted with greasable, hardened bushes

- Increased lift capacity to 550 pounds with safety overload protection
- Equipped with self-leveling bucket linkages
- Available with a wide variety of attachments, including an angle backfill blade and a purpose-built stump grinder
- Increased fuel capacity by 25 percent to 12 gallons

Circle 236 on reader service card



The sun grows dim. Grown men openly weep. And a beloved Shindaiwa is laid to rest after a long, fruitful life. So are we implying that guys like you develop abnormal feelings for your landscape equipment? Nope. Unless, of course, it's equipment stamped with the shimmering Shindaiwa nameplate.

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Holt Trailhoist

- GNT-144 Gooseneck model
- A roll-off system where the container or deck rolls/slides off the trailer and can be left at any location
- Units do not require a CDL driver's license to operate

- Standard equipped with a 15-cubic-yard open top container
- Circle 237 on reader service card**

Kasco Hitching System

- "Uni-Hitch" Hitching System
- Original attaching plates stay in place

while system used so that the original attachments can still be used



- Universal hitch attachments can be used on older Case, Gehl, John Deere, Mustang and New Holland skid steers
- Circle 238 on reader service card**

E-Z Ground Slotter

- Attachment is designed to dig a slot trench from 1.5- to 6-inches wide and up to 18 inches deep
 - Minimizes spoils, turf disturbance, restoration work and expense on work in established lawns
 - Hydraulically driven
 - Can be adapted for mounting and operated on any tractor or skid steer loader that will provide a hydraulic power supply of at least 7 gpm at 2,500 psi
- Circle 239 on reader service card**

Ramrod Taskmaster

- Choices of diesel, gas or propane engines
 - 4-wheel hydrostatic drive
 - Dump and rollback features
 - Sound levels meet EC and NA standards
 - Safe-load self-leveling arms
 - Tropical air flow and rubberized shields
 - Safety louvered front panel
 - Auxiliary hydraulic outlets
 - Single-handed steering control system
- Circle 240 on reader service card**

Freedom Hitch

- Attach points built to keep the implement secured during use and while transporting between jobs
 - Features a positive latch and lock system
 - Comes in a black metallic powder coat paint.
- Circle 241 on reader service card**

Avalanche Loader

- 50-inch high moldboard made of 10 gauge high-tensile corrosion resistant steel

(continued on page 123)

Take Fall

One-On-One

Make a fast break on leaves this season with the all-new Hi-Way G-750 Gold Leaf Vacuum.

20 hp engine with v-belt driven impeller

- The G-750 may be axle mounted (shown above) or mounted on an existing trailer.
- All-new design includes a v-belt driven impeller for easy installation of virtually any engine.
- V-belt design extends the engine life by eliminating direct impact of in-coming materials to the engine.
- Enclosed engine keeps out moisture and debris.

Other products by Hi-Way:

<p>TGV-11 or TGV-16 Tailgate Vacuums</p>	<p>Model P Deicing Spreader</p>	<p>AG-18 Leaf Vacuum with Dump "E"</p>	<p>AM-25 Leaf Vacuum</p>
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10 Good Reasons Why You Should Attend The School of Management

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School of Management



You Can't Beat The Price! The School of Management is one of the most affordable multi-day business management conference in the lawn and landscape contractor industry. Registration is only \$195 per person or \$160 per person for three or more people from the same company. Your registration fee includes *all* educational sessions, conference materials, continental breakfasts, refreshment breaks, lunch on Monday and Tuesday, Monday's Networking Cocktail Party and Sunday's Welcome Reception. A great deal for a great conference!



Great Session Choices. Your full registration to the School of Management provides you with a choice of 20 + educational breakout sessions. These information-packed sessions cover a wide range of business management topics from how to attract and keep good employees to financial management to winning customer service strategies. Good choices, good speakers, good deal!



Affordable Hotel Rates. The Marriott Gwinnett Place Hotel is offering a special conference room rate of \$99 (plus tax) per night. That makes attending the School of Management *very* affordable.



Dynamic General Sessions. The School of Management will feature two dynamic general session presentations that are guaranteed to "charge" up attendees. In Monday's general session hear the leaders of the largest landscape contracting and lawn care companies in the country share their views on the current state of the industry and what they think the future holds. And on Tuesday learn how to analyze your company's business financial systems and see where you can improve your bottom line.



Top-Notch Speaker Faculty. The School of Management faculty of speakers provides attendees with years of experience in managing and consulting with landscape and lawn care companies. These are people who have been there and who are there now when it comes to cutting edge business management. Names such as David Minor, Roger Braswell, Bill Hoopes, Gary Clayton, Dick Bare, Jim Paluch, Ed Wandtke and Frank Ross. That's experience and that's a benefit to you.



Networking Opportunities. The School of Management offers green industry professionals numerous opportunities to network with speakers, sponsors and fellow green industry professionals. Build long-term, beneficial relationships that will expand your network of business and personal contacts.



Sponsor Product Showcase. Hear from the sponsors of the School of Management as they introduce to you their latest product, equipment and service offerings.



School of Management Golf Outing. Bring your clubs and test your golf skills at the first-ever *Lawn & Landscape* Tournament of Champions Golf Outing. Make plans to join us for this exciting event on Sunday, February 14, which welcomes golfers of all skill levels in a team scramble format.



A Great Destination: Atlanta. The city of Atlanta is known around the world for the fun and excitement it offers visitors. Explore the "Capitol of the South" and its numerous shopping, dining and entertainment venues. Atlanta is also easy to get to from anywhere in the country and *Lawn & Landscape* has arranged for special discount rates on air travel to make your trip to Atlanta more affordable.



Good Time Of Year. The School of Management was scheduled in February before the busy season so you or your managers can attend without missing valuable time out of the office. Two and a half days is all you need to attend this outstanding educational conference.

School of Management Schedule

Sunday, February 14

9:00 a.m.	Tournament of Champions Golf Outing
5:00 – 6:30 p.m.	Opening Session "Leaving A Legacy: Developing Your Company's Entrepreneurial Spirit" <i>Jim Paluch, JP Horizons, Painesville, Ohio</i>
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.	Welcome Reception

Monday, February 15, 1999

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast Workshop "Structuring Your Company For Success" <i>Jack Mattingly</i>
9:00 – 10:30 a.m.	General Session "The Green Industry and The New Millenium" <i>Moderator: Cindy Code</i> <i>Speakers: Bruce Wilson, Environmental Care, Inc.</i> <i>Chris Davitt TruGreen-ChemLawn</i> <i>Bill Murdy, LandCare USA</i> <i>Scott Brickman, The Brickman Group</i>
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Refreshment Break
10:45 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	M1 Hiring, Firing and Everything In Between: A Legal Perspective M2 10 Ways To Be Successful In The Landscape Industry M3 Tax & Succession Planning
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	Sponsor Product Showcase Lunch
1:45 – 2:45 p.m.	M4 Attracting and Keeping Good Employees M5 Identifying New Profit Opportunities M6 Financial Management For Your Company M7 Talking To Your Customer About Chemicals
2:45 – 3:00 p.m.	Refreshment Break
3:00 – 4:00 p.m.	M8 Marketing Strategies That Make The Phone Ring M9 Training Is The Name Of The Game M10 10 Ways To Be Successful In The Landscape Industry (R)
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.	M11 How Regulations Impact Your Business M12 Managing Growth Effectively M13 Successful Sales Strategies: Turning "No" Into "Yes"
5:15 – 6:30 p.m.	Networking Cocktail Reception

Tuesday, February 16, 1999

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.	Breakfast Workshop "State of the Industry Report" <i>Moderators: Cindy Code and Bob West, Lawn & Landscape magazine</i>
9:15 – 10:30 a.m.	T1 Expanding Your Service Offerings To Customers T2 Winning Customer Service Strategies T3 Identifying New Profit Opportunities (R)
10:30 – 10:45 a.m.	Refreshment Break
10:45 – 12:00 p.m.	T4 Defeating The Obstacles Between You and \$1 Million T5 Protecting Your Investment: Risk Management Strategies T6 Building A Budget
12:00 – 1:30 p.m.	School of Management Lunch Series "Solving The Labor Crisis: A Panel Discussion" <i>Moderator: Bob West, Lawn & Landscape magazine</i>
1:45 – 2:45 p.m.	T7 Emerging Technologies T8 Creating A Corporate Image T9 Maximizing Your Margins in Design/Build
2:45 – 3:00 p.m.	Refreshment Break
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.	General Session "Financially Speaking: Strategies for Staying Ahead of the Competition" <i>Frank Ross, Ross-Payne Associates, Barrington, Illinois</i>

(R) = Repeat Session

Opening Session Sunday, February 14 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Leaving A Legacy: Developing Your Company's Entrepreneurial Spirit

Ever wonder where your zest for selling yourself and your company has gone? Do you shy away from business opportunities that you would have been leading the pack to a couple of years ago? If you want to rediscover the entrepreneurial spirit that you and your company fed off when you first started, then you owe it to yourself to be at the School of Management Opening Session.



Jim Paluch

Bring along the "idea-kindling" and we'll provide the matches for you in this high-energy session that could be the most important hour and half you spend for your company. You'll be part of a firecracker popping presentation by management expert and noted author Jim Paluch that is guaranteed to spark the entrepreneurial fire within your company and generate employee interest in your goals. Discover how to analyze your current business operations and turn them from the ordinary into the extraordinary with a system that stresses employee empowerment, creative thinking and above all, action!

You'll learn how to raise the bar for yourself and for your employees when it comes to goal setting and how to design systems that measure achievement. When you leave this session you'll be able to:

- Inject positive energy into your decision making process.
- Draw a blueprint of how to turn ideas and concepts into reality.
- Motivate your employees to achieve more.
- Accurately measure your personal and company goals.
- Create a "can do" team attitude within your company.
- Regain the fire that made you a winner.

Speaker: Jim Paluch, JP Horizons, Painesville, Ohio

Sponsored by Kawasaki

Monday, February 15, 1999



Schedule Highlights

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast Workshop

"Service Systems That Make Your Company More Profitable"

Learn strategies to make sure your company's operational systems are up-to-speed and ready to meet the challenges of a growing business. Take home valuable information on:

- How to identify and correct weak areas in your operations chain.
- How to properly train employees to follow existing systems.
- How to implement new systems.
- How to improve your balance sheet through better organization.

Speaker: Jack Mattingly, Woodstock, Georgia

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

Sponsor Product Showcase Lunch

Attendees can take a walk through a "live" exhibit hall without leaving your chair as you take in a preview of the latest product, equipment and service offerings available to the lawn and landscape contracting industry from the official sponsor partners of the 1999 Lawn & Landscape School of Management.

1:45 - 2:45 p.m.

Educational Sessions

M4

Attracting and Keeping Good Employees

Discover where to look for quality people and how to "sell" your company to potential employees and learn how to develop compensation packages, job descriptions and career opportunities that make potential hires want to join your team and existing employees tear up their resumes.

Speaker: Jean Seawright, Seawright & Associates, Winter Park, Florida

General Session

9:00 - 10:30 a.m.

General Session

"The Green Industry and The New Millenium"

Take a look at the future of your business in this dynamic School of Management General Session while you listen to the leaders of the United States' four largest lawn and landscape contracting firms discuss where the industry is headed as we approach the millenium. Find out what drives these multi-million dollar operations, how they went about getting to the top and, more importantly, how they plan on staying there.



Scott Brickman



Bill Murdy



Chris Davitt



Bruce Wilson

*Moderator: Cindy Code
Panelists:*

Bill Murdy, LandCare USA

*Chris Davitt,
TruGreen-ChemLawn*

*Bruce Wilson,
Environmental Care, Inc.*

*Scott Brickman,
The Brickman Group*

Sponsored by Toro Sitework Systems

10:45 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Educational Sessions

M1

Hiring, Firing and Everything In Between: A Legal Perspective

The legal challenges that come with the hiring and dismissal processes, and the multitude of related issues such as sexual harassment, drug testing and discrimination, have small business owners looking for answers.

Speaker: Jean Seawright, Seawright & Associates, Winter Park, Florida

M2

10 Ways To Be Successful In The Landscape Industry

Take home a laundry list of tips and strategies designed to help you deliver higher quality work, great customer service, set and measure goals, learn to be versatile and how to enhance your communication skills.

Speaker: David Minor, Minor's Landscape Services, A TruGreen-ChemLawn Co., Ft. Worth, Texas

M3

Tax & Succession Planning

Discover year-end tax planning strategies that will help you keep more of the money you earn for investment in your company's future and learn tips for making sure your family and your employees are on solid financial ground after you retire.

Speaker: Robert West, Sr., West & Co., Cleveland, Ohio

M5

Identifying New Profit Opportunities

This valuable session will show you creative, innovative methods to unearth new business opportunities and turn previously unknown accounts in profitable, long-term customers for your company.

Speaker: Roger Braswell, Southern Tree & Landscape Companies, A LandCare USA Co., Charlotte, N.C.

M6

Financial Management For Your Company

Learn the keys to successful financial statement and cash flow analysis, financial projections, forecasting and budgeting, investment portfolio performance analysis and obtaining financial backing for growth.

Speaker: Robert West, West & Co., Cleveland, Ohio

M7 Talking To Your Customers About Chemicals

In this must-attend session hear tips on how to discuss chemical usage with customers and how to present scientific information in a fashion that is understandable and reduces their apprehension.

Speaker: Dr. Mark Coffelt, AgrEvo, Kansas City, Missouri

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Educational Sessions

M8 Marketing Strategies That Make The Phone Ring

This information-packed session will review proven marketing strategies on how to "target" market your service offerings to meet specific customer groups and receive a bigger bang for your marketing dollar.

Speaker: Bud Brewer, Massey's Green Up, Maitland, Florida

M9 Effective Leadership: What's Your Style?

Every company needs an effective leader to guide it on the road to success. In this informative session you'll learn the different styles of leadership and discover what style is best suited for you and your company.

Speaker: Bill Hoopes, Scotts LawnService, Marysville, Ohio

M10 10 Ways To Be Successful In The Landscape Industry

For session description, see Session M2
Speaker: David Minor, Minor's Landscape Services, A TruGreen-ChemLawn Co., Ft. Worth, Texas

4:00 - 5:00 p.m. Educational Sessions

M11 How Regulations Impact Your Business

Get caught up on the latest regulatory issues impacting the green industry and find out how you should prepare your company, your employees and your customers to respond.

Speaker: Gary Clayton, All Green Corporation, Marietta, Georgia

M12 Keeping Your Eye On The Ball: Managing Business Growth

Every landscape contractor or lawn care professional has been faced with the question of whether or not to expand their operation in hopes of capturing additional market share. Discover how to judge if your market and your company are ready to support such a move, and what systems are needed to make it happen.

Speaker: Jack Mattingly, Woodstock, Georgia

M13 Successful Sales Strategies: Turning A "No" Into A "Yes"

Learn the steps to creating an effective sales plan and how to refine existing plans to meet the demands of today's consumers. Discover how to focus on the key issues that generate positive sales leads and how to get your sales staff to be creative and successful in getting the customer to sign on the dotted line.

Speaker: Ed Wandtke, Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio

Reception

5:15 - 6:30 p.m. Networking Cocktail Reception

Join with your fellow School of Management attendees for some power networking as you enjoy your favorite beverages and snacks. Renew old acquaintances and make valuable new contacts as you share experiences with lawn and landscape contractors from across the country.

Sponsored by RedMax

Tuesday, February 16, 1999

Schedule Highlights

8:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Breakfast Workshop "State of the Industry Report"

Looking for the latest information on the where the lawn and landscape industry is headed? If so, then spend an hour getting the latest data on what's happening in the areas of labor, wages, prices, competition, profitability and consolidation. You'll also review the annual *Lawn & Landscape Top 100 List* of the highest revenue producing lawn and landscape companies in North America, the green industry's most comprehensive rankings.

Speakers: Cindy Code and Bob West, Lawn & Landscape magazine

9:15 - 10:30 a.m. Concurrent Educational Sessions

T1 Expanding Your Service Offerings To Customers

Looking for ways to expand the market for your services is a goal every lawn and landscape contractor shares. In this informative session, discover proven strategies on how to effectively market your add-on services to customers, how to strengthen the customer/company bond and how to increase your market share in the process.

Speaker: Phil Fogarty, Scotts LawnService, Euclid, Ohio

T2 Winning Customer Service Strategies

Review practical customer service strategies that you can take back and immediately implement in your company. Discover systems that will allow you to measure your customer service efforts and make you a star with customers, energize your employees and increase revenue.

Speaker: June Van Klaveren, Compelling Communications, Manchester, Missouri

T3 Identifying New Profit Opportunities

For session description, see Session M5

Tuesday Educational Sessions Continued On Page 6



10:45 - 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Educational Sessions

T4 Defeating The Obstacles Between You and \$1 Million

It's the magical number every business owner shoots for when first starting out - reaching \$1 million in revenue. Take home useful tips on how to plan effectively, how to budget your time and resources so that you can place your company in position to crack the seven figure mark and then some.

Speaker: Richard Bare, Arbor-Nomics, Atlanta, Georgia

T5 Protecting Your Investment: Risk Management Strategies

One slip is all it takes to put your company in the hot seat with an unwanted lawsuit or workman's compensation claim. Learn tips on how to avoid common service mistakes that trigger lawsuits and how you can protect your company, employees and customers.

Speaker: Ed Van Istendal, B. & D.A. Weisburger Insurance, White Plains, N.Y.

T6 Building A Budget That Works

One of the most important aspects of operating a successful landscape contracting or lawn care business is setting and following accurate budgets. In this session, you'll walk through the budgeting process from start to finish and learn how to develop a budget that allows your company to be responsive to opportunities and responsible to the bottom line.

Speaker: Ed Wandtke, Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio

1:45 - 2:45 p.m.
Concurrent Educational Sessions

T7 Emerging Technologies

In this information-packed session, hear how these new technologies will impact the way you conduct your operations, as well as how they will impact your employees and customers. Learn how to maximize new technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of your service and how to make that reflect positively on your profit statement.

Speaker: Barry Troutman, Environmental Care, Inc., Orlando, Florida

12:00 - 1:30 p.m.

School of Management Lunch Session

"Surviving The Labor Crisis"

Join us for this special Lawn & Landscape School of Management session where you'll hear from a panel of owners and managers who have dealt with the ups and downs of the labor crisis in their businesses. Hear what strategies they've taken to make the recruitment process more effective, how they've handled the strong influx of Hispanic workers into the industry and how they've gone about improving employee retention numbers and expanding career opportunities. Come ready to hear what is being done to solve the current labor crisis and to ask your important questions on a topic that has a far-reaching impact on the industry.

Moderator: Bob West, Lawn & Landscape magazine

T8 Creating A Corporate Image

Image is everything. Discover useful tips on how to "brand" your services and shape your company's image with customers and employees alike, and present an image that says, "Yes, I am a professional. How can I help you?"
Speaker: Bud Brewer, Massey's Green Up, Maitland, Florida

T9 Maximizing Margins In Design/Build

Without a good fix on what it will cost in labor, materials and time, a contractor will struggle to make a profit on their work. Learn proven formulas for maximizing your margins in design/build and how to properly analyze a job's costs before placing a bid.

Speaker: Joe Skelton, Lifescapes, A TruGreen-ChemLawn Co., Atlanta, Ga.

Closing Session

3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

"Financially Speaking: Strategies for Staying Ahead of the Competition"

In this powerful session, discover how to analyze your current business financial systems and identify problem areas that restrict your ability to make decisions and seize opportunities. Learn how to implement financial systems that turn the average into the

above average and how to unearth strategies for improving your return-on-investment. Discover how to analyze your competition financially and see how you stack up against them and, more importantly, how to stay ahead of them.

Speaker: Frank Ross, Ross-Payne Associates, Barrington, Illinois



Come Early To Save and Have Fun!



Make plans to come to Atlanta on Saturday, February 13, and save on your travel expenses while you enjoy the many exciting attractions this world-class city has to offer. By coming a day early you'll save money on your airfare and you'll be able to participate in the School

of Management Tournament of Champions Golf Outing or spend the day exploring Atlanta. To take advantage of the special airfares to Atlanta on Continental and Delta Airlines, contact the School of Management's Travel Coordinator Robin Stancik at 440/845-4922.

Registration Info

Full Conference Registration

\$195

Includes choice of breakout sessions, general sessions, Monday and Tuesday lunches, Monday and Tuesday continental breakfasts, refreshment breaks, Sunday Welcome Reception and all conference materials.

Group Discount Registration

\$160

For companies registering three or more attendees; includes full conference registration package.

One-Day Registration

\$110

Includes choice of breakout sessions, general session, continental breakfast, lunch, refreshment breaks and conference materials.

Lawn & Landscape Tournament of Champions Golf Outing

\$75

Sunday, February 14, 1999

Includes greens fees, cart, lunch, prizes and transportation

Cancellation/Substitution/Refund Policy


All cancellations must be made in writing. A full refund will be accepted if postmarked by February 1, 1999. Those received after February 1, 1999 are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee. No refund less than seven days before conference. For the golf tournament advance payment is **required** and no cancellations after February 10, 1999. *No on-site refunds.* Attendees can notify Lawn & Landscape at any time that another individual will attend the conference or social events in their place.

Confirmations

All registrations postmarked by February 1, 1999 will be acknowledged by mail. Registrations received after that date should be picked up at the Lawn & Landscape School of Management Registration Desk at the Marriott Gwinnett Place Hotel starting Sunday, February 14, 1999 at 1 p.m.

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Hotel Information

A block of rooms has been reserved for Lawn & Landscape School of Management attendees at the Marriott Gwinnett Place Hotel.

Conveniently located in Atlanta's rapidly growing perimeter area, the Marriott Gwinnett Place is an ideal host for the Lawn & Landscape School of Management. The hotel is easily accessible from all major interstates serving the Atlanta area and a short shuttle ride from Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport.

Attendees should make their reservations directly with the hotel on or before **January 24, 1999**, to receive the special conference room rate of **\$99** per night (single/double, plus tax). Please identify yourself as an attendee of the Lawn & Landscape School of Management to receive the special rate. For reservations, call the Marriott Gwinnett Place at **800/228-9290** or **770/923-1775**.

Discount Travel Information

Lawn & Landscape has arranged for special discount airfare on Continental Airlines, the official airlines of the 1999 Lawn & Landscape School of Management. To take advantage of the discount rates, please contact Lawn & Landscape's Travel Coordinator Robin Stancik at 440/845-4922 and mention the Lawn & Landscape School of Management conference. To qualify for the discount airfare rates, reservations **must** be made through Robin Stancik.

Airport Transportation

The Marriott Gwinnett Place is located approximately 25 miles from Atlanta's Hartsfield International Airport. It is advised that attendees take the airport shuttle to the hotel to avoid costly taxi fare. For shuttle reservations, contact AAA Express at 404/767-2000. Round trip fare is \$32. The shuttle service leaves from outside the baggage claim area of the terminal.


Registration Information

By Mail or FAX:

Complete this form and mail or fax it to Lawn & Landscape School of Management, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113, 216/961-0364(fax). A check payable to Lawn & Landscape School of Management or credit card authorization (VISA, MasterCard and American Express) must accompany the registration form. Check must be drawn in U.S. dollars and drawn on a U.S. Bank. There will be a \$25 fee for returned checks or rejected credit cards.

By Phone:

Call Lawn & Landscape School of Management at 800/456-0707 between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. EST through February 12, 1999. You can charge your registration to VISA, MasterCard or American Express.

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Registration Form

(Please print or type. Form may be photocopied for additional registrants)

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Choice Of Payment (Payment must accompany this form or registration will not be processed)

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Full Conference Registration	\$195		
Group Discount Registration	\$160 <small>(3 or more)</small>		
One Day Registration	\$110		
Golf Outing	\$75		
Extra Ticket To Sunday Welcome Reception	\$20		
Extra Ticket To Monday or Tuesday Lunch	\$20		

Total

School of Management Educational Session Selection (Please circle session selections)

M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8
M9	M10	M11	M12	M13			
T1	T2	T3	T4	T5			
T6	T7	T8	T9				

School of Management Attendee Check List

- Completed Registration Form
- Included Method Of Payment
- Circled Breakout Sessions You Plan On Attending
- Made Hotel Reservations At Marriott Gwinnett Place
- Registered For Golf Outing
- Called For Discount Travel Information



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(continued from page 114)

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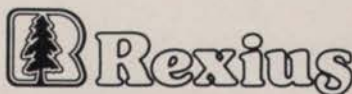
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Preparing

for the

Sale



• Making the decision to sell your business can be a painful process, but the reality is that deciding to sell is just the start.

• By Dennis Spitler

A

ll things have a life cycle. Not only animate things, but inanimate things such as businesses. When we start a business we expect it to go on forever. Focusing on how we will end business ownership should not occupy our daily concerns, but anyone planning a successful transition to another endeavor or retirement should have some clear goals set.

You created a business or purchased one that someone else started in order to provide a service that was in demand. Somewhere along the way you built an organization with dedicated employees and loyal customers. As you reflect on your long-term accomplishments, what is the value of these accomplishments. The short answer is what someone else thinks they are worth. The purpose of this article is to help you maximize that net worth by looking

at the significant steps leading up to that important decision to sell the business.

Whether or not you plan ahead for the time to sell your business, it will still be sold. If you simply quit performing the service, competitors will fill the demand void left by you. You will not enjoy any going out of business rewards in this case. In the event a family member would like to take over the business, there should be a clear plan of how that will work out. In all cases, a written plan is best.

Should the decision to sell the business to a stranger be your choice, it is best to engage a professional to assist in the process. A business broker, who has developed the skill to advise you how to go about the sale and then accomplish the objective for you, is a valued resource.

The most important factor is knowing the answer to the question, what am I going to do after I sell my business?

OBJECTIVES OF THE SALE. Once you know what you are going to do after the sale, you will
(continued on page 126)

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**Give Your Company
The Winning Edge!**

(continued from page 124)

have a guide toward how much time a transition out of the business will take and how much cash is required to obtain your short- and long-term objectives.

Typically, financials drive this aspect of the sale decision. Whether you want to pass the business on to family members, someone in management or to an outside buyer,

it is best to have the business valued. This will enable you to plan marketing and tax strategies to maximize what you will keep after the sale.

VALUES OF THE BUSINESS. Most business owners do not know what their businesses are worth unless they have been actively

acquiring add-on operations. It is recommended that you talk with your accountant or business broker for valuation purposes. Beyond the theoretical value, the person should have vast marketing resources at his or her disposal to accurately advise proper valuation for your business. They should also have the capacity to prepare a valuation report examining the various elements of your business.

LEVERAGE OF ASSETS. The valuation eliminates uncertainties about what you should ask for the business. This eliminates some arbitrary, 'Let's set a figure and see if anybody will pay it,' approach that could alter your selling timetable.

Typically, a valuation expert uses three to five years of financial history to derive a value. Evaluating a business also involves looking at and analyzing a balance sheet of assets and liabilities. The quality of the assets determines, in part, the real market value of the hard assets. The collectability of accounts receivable will impact cash flow to the seller in an asset sale. The physical count of all inventories should be accurately reported and real estate carried on the books needs to be evaluated against current market comparables. An opinion about the fair market value for all the machinery and equipment is helpful, and liabilities will have to be settled and paid off prior to or at closing, unless otherwise negotiated in the sale contract. Occasionally, some buyers assume existing debts and leases.

Several analytical methods applied to the income statement figures will derive multiple valuation amounts. Taken together with the balance sheet analysis, the valuation expert will offer an opinion about the worth of your business. Upon deciding what the business is worth, the decision to proceed with exposing the business for sale or working it for a couple more years needs to be made.

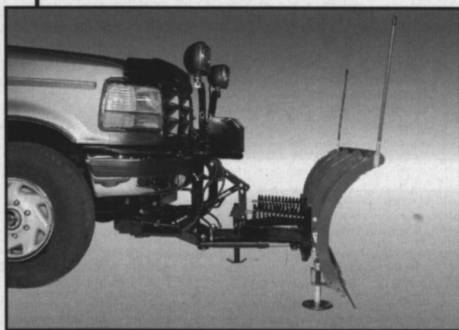
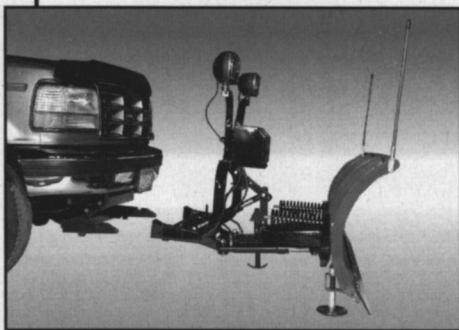
Often after the valuation is complete, owners decide they cannot maintain their lifestyle with the proceeds after capital gains and personal taxes and choose to work the business a few more years.

FORMAL HELP. Should the valuation process confirm that now is the time to sell, hire a

(continued on page 128)

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selling your business

(continued from page 126)

professional specializing in selling businesses. (If you cannot find any business brokers in your immediate area, contact the International Business Brokers Association at 703/437-7476.) This broker will assemble a marketing package displaying your business in the best light and will screen curious from

companies do not understand the overall objective of the buyer and how to structure a balanced transaction that is a win-win situation, whereas the business broker understands both parties' goals.

PREPARE A MARKETING PACKAGE. Everyone knows that the presentation of what you are interested in purchasing is important in order to get serious attention. Selling all of the assets and goodwill of business is no different in that regard.

Most buyers' first impression occurs when reviewing a business opportunity presentation package, including background information about the company, future growth plans, marketing data and financial history. The operations and key management will be profiled, demonstrating the stability of the business. Major equipment lists and real estate descriptions identify

what hard assets are being purchased. In addition, it is customary to present a one-page financial summary highlighting sales, profits and seller's discretionary cash flow from the last three to five years.

The information package should profile the anticipated buyer's downpayment requirements, as well as whether the seller will carry back any financing. Pictures of the facilities and equipment are helpful. If you have snapshots of complete landscape projects, include those to demonstrate the talents of your staff, adding to the perceived goodwill value.

INTRODUCE THE BUYER. Buyers fall into a certain pattern by how they make the approach and how they respond to when asked certain qualification questions. A broker knows how to handle the confidentiality of exposing your business in a manner that will not jeopardize customers, employees and

(continued on page 130)

Most business owners do not know what their businesses are worth unless they have actively been acquiring add-on operations to their existing business.

serious buyers for introduction and a tour of the business operation.

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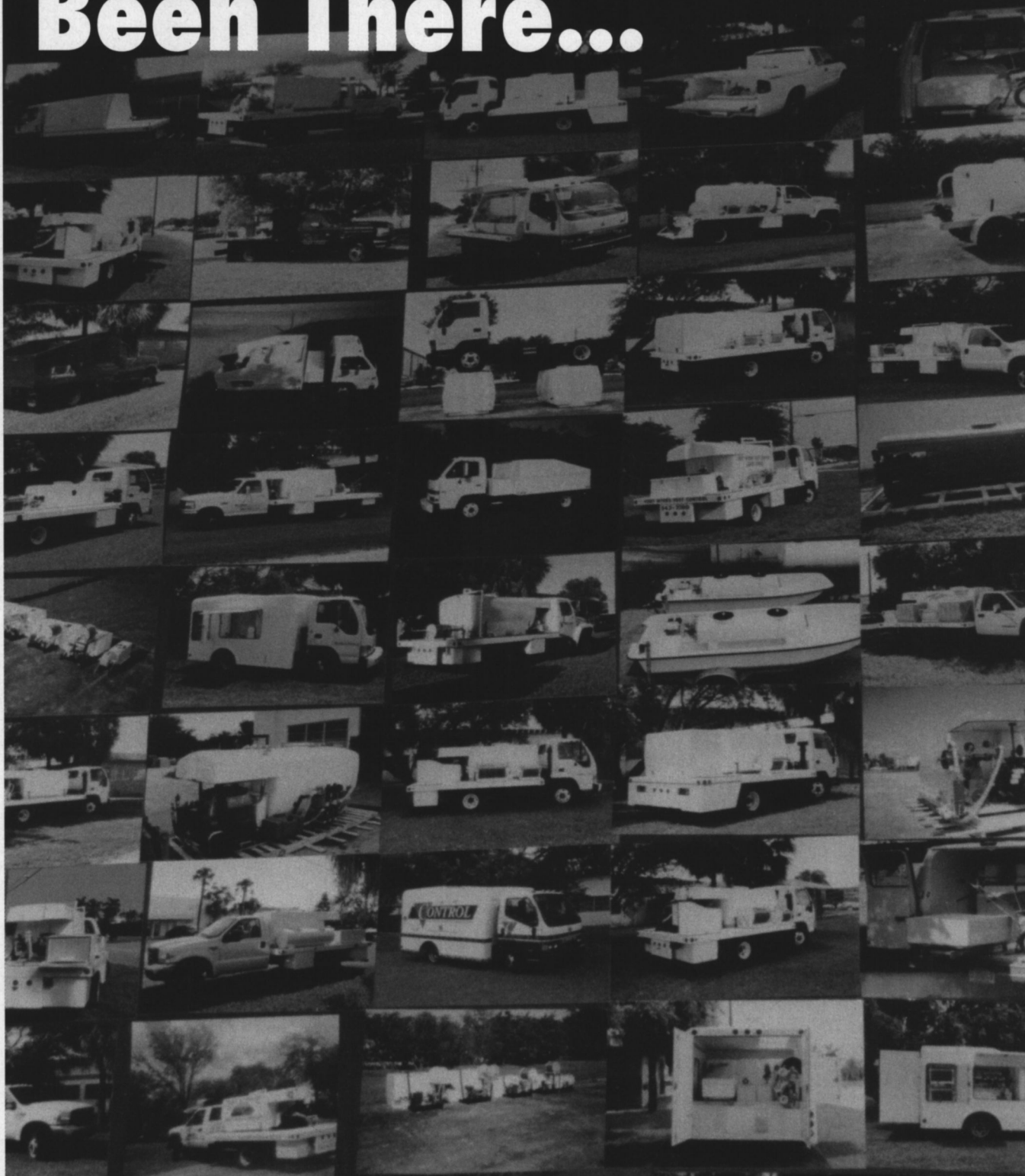
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selling your business

(continued from page 128)

competitors becoming aware that the business is for sale. Some of the sensitive questions that need to be asked about the financial qualifications often screen those who can actually accomplish the acquisition.

A buyer knows what their acquisition limitations are and has good business advisors. The first thing a seller should want to know is what basic business knowledge along with lawn and landscape experience the buyer has. Some people come from a different industry and succeed without any initial technical knowledge, but they have a good business background. You need to know if they have sufficient cash funds to handle the transaction, with or without a bank.

NEGOTIATIONS. Once it is obvious that a buyer and seller have hit it off during a tour of the business and the buyer wants to prepare an offer, the negotiations begin. This is the most critical phase, putting a

transaction proposal together and seeing that it stays together all the way to closing.

As you know, there is no perfect business. Your company may have some warts. A buyer may hurt the seller's feelings by pointing out those warts in his or her approach to position for negotiations. A business broker can deflect these comments, shining a bright light on the positive attributes of the business and maintaining an objective view, putting all positives and negatives in their proper context.

This is where brokers earn their fee — with the knowledge of valuing businesses, any comments or issues that the buyer uses to devalue the business can be buffered with countering factors justifying the original asking price. A business owner trying to

negotiate his or her own deal cannot remain objective about critical analysis of the operation they have lived with for many years.

CLOSING THE DEAL. This is the easiest phase, assuming everyone has concluded his or her work. We prefer that all due diligence work be fully reviewed and approved by those responsible one week prior to the scheduled closing. The closing event should be a joyous activity where the buyer brings the funds for the purchase and the seller brings the keys for the operation. **LL**

The author is director of mergers and acquisitions with Anthony Wayne Business Exchange, Fort Wayne, Ind. He can be reached at 219/485-1990.

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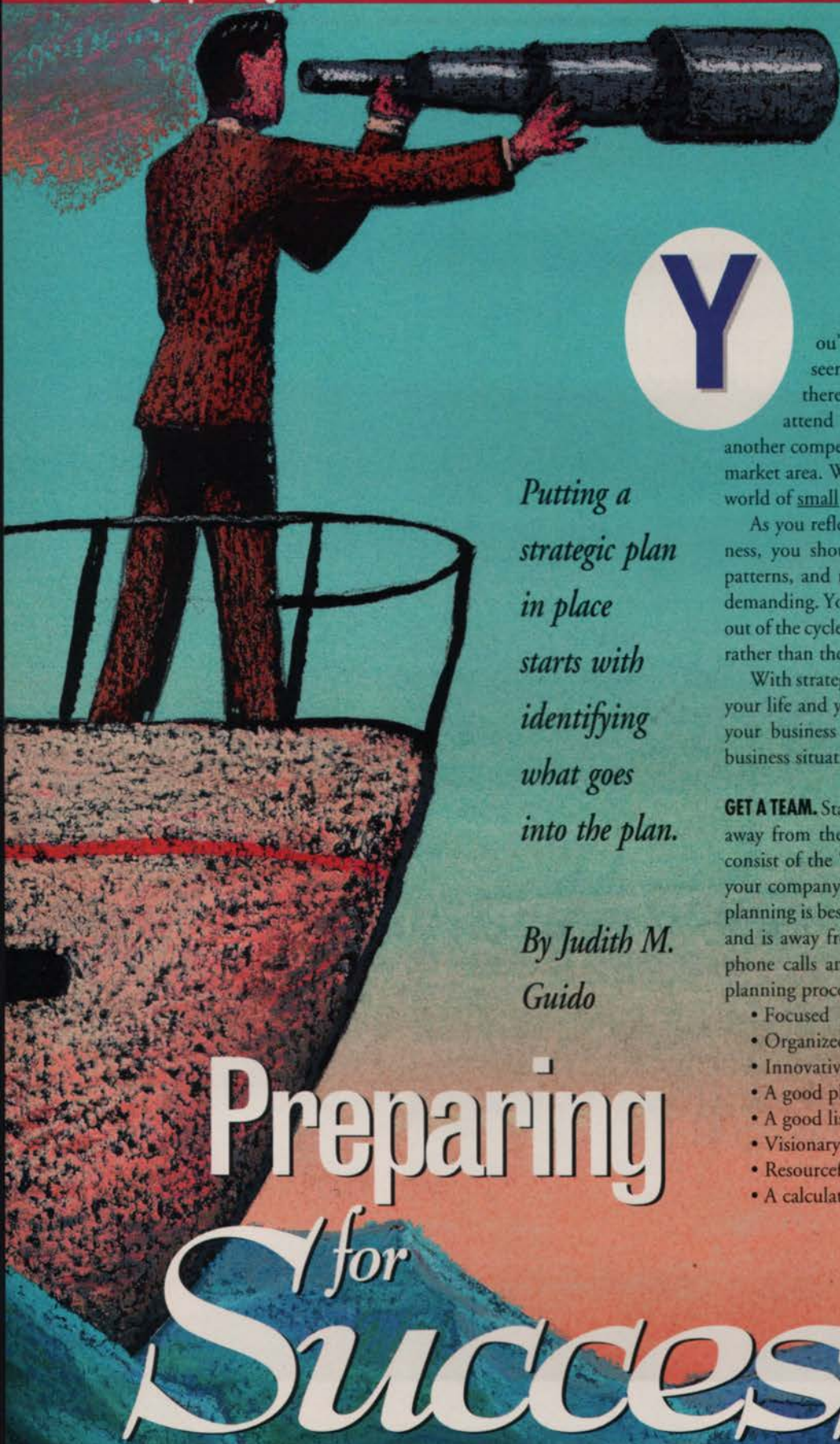
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USE READER SERVICE #85



Putting a strategic plan in place starts with identifying what goes into the plan.

By Judith M. Guido

Preparing for Success

Y

ou've just survived another hectic week. It seems that every time you turned around, there was another question to answer, crisis to attend to, emergency task to be dealt with or another competitor driving his or her mower into your market area. Welcome to planet Business; not just the world of small business but of all business.

As you reflect on your past week and years in business, you should begin to see some similarities and patterns, and recognize that many weeks were just as demanding. You ask yourself if there is any way to break out of the cycle? How can I gain control of my business, rather than the business controlling me?

With strategic planning you can take back control of your life and your business. Become *proactive* in all of your business practices, instead of being *reactive* to business situations and problems.

GET A TEAM. Start by taking your strategic planning team away from the office. By the way, your team should consist of the "thinkers and doers" in each division of your company, not just upper management. Strategic planning is best done in a place that promotes thinking and is away from all of the day-to-day distractions of phone calls and office visitors. To start the strategic planning process you need to become:

- Focused
- Organized
- Innovative
- A good planner
- A good listener
- Visionary in your thinking
- Resourceful
- A calculated risk taker

(continued on page 134)

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USE READER SERVICE #86

(continued from page 132)

Regardless of size, longevity, or success level, a company should periodically take time to rethink its operations. Only by objectively reviewing your operations can you either reaffirm that your current courses of action are correct to get the company to its goal or identify areas or issues that require fine tuning or corrective action.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PLANNING? A strategic plan is a written document describing the direction you want your company to take – your vision of its future position and value. It is a means for planning future growth and profitability. It is key to the overall management process. Some people believe that strategic planning is a tool for big business

only. On the contrary, strategic planning is especially important for the little companies that as small businesses are extremely vulnerable to the smallest changes in the marketplace. Changes in customers, new moves by

.....
How can I gain control of my business, rather than the business controlling me?

competitors or changes in the overall business environment can directly impact your company and cash flow instantaneously. Negative impacts on your company, if not anticipated and adjusted for, can force you to close your doors. That's exactly why you need to plan for your future. You need to anticipate what the future holds and adjust your thinking and actions to compensate for any potential negative impacts.

The goal of strategic planning is to help you get more and better customers. Through an increased customer base, composed of more profitable customers, you will be able to grow your business.

A strategic plan is:

- A specific and written document of your vision for the company. The plan should address:
 - customers
 - competitors
 - suppliers
 - investors
 - employees
 - succession issues
 - operations
 - mergers & acquisitions
 - ancillary services
 - strategic alliances/partnerships
- A means for developing commitment among leadership and coworkers, and other individuals and firms associated with your business.
- A success mechanism via a framework of strategic thinking and vision that guides all other decisions in the firm.

(continued on page 136)

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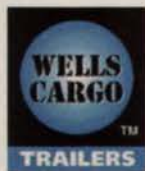
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The Strategic Management Model

Here's a strategic planning model that will help guide your company toward its vision:

1. Do an environmental analysis
 - A. Internal (strengths and weaknesses)
 - B. External (opportunities and threats)
2. Determine the mission, values and vision
3. Identify the organization's problems
4. Clarify the responsibilities for each individual & develop an appropriate organizational structure.
5. Prioritize
 - A. Problems for the organization
 - B. Projects for each unit
 - C. Responsibilities for each individual
6. Determine the long-run goals for the organization, each unit and each individual.
7. Develop plans to achieve the long-run goals.
8. Determine the short-run objectives for the organization, each unit and each individual.
9. Determine the policies for the organization and each unit to achieve the short-run objectives.
 - A. One policy for the organization is to develop an appropriate menu of services.
 - B. Policies should also be developed for marketing, finance, production, purchasing, information management & human resources.
10. Grant each individual specific, clear-cut authority to achieve their goals and objectives.
11. Determine the controls for:
 - A. A management information system
 - B. A performance appraisal system.

12. Develop each individual to gradually handle increasingly complex responsibilities
13. Develop Teamwork
 - A. Require managers to hold regular meetings with their people:
 1. To develop goals, plans and policies;
 2. To monitor progress toward goals and objectives;
 3. To identify and solve problems
 4. Transfer ideas and technology
14. Participate with both individuals and teams before making decisions ("actively listen")
15. Provide training on a regular basis (technical, managerial and supervisory).
16. Support your people with the proper tools, equipment & staff.
17. Select capable individuals and teams to handle the various responsibilities.
18. Reward and discipline based on performance
 - A. Monetary rewards;
 - B. Non-monetary rewards.

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strategic planning

(continued from page 136)

A strategic plan should not be:

- Wishful thinking
- Done only by the owner and top manager
- Secretive

A strategic plan requires:

- Commitment by the business owner/management team

- Communication to all
- Buy-in from all coworkers
- Honest evaluation of the current position & history of the business

Strategic planning will take commitment. The motivation to dedicate the time and effort must come from the very top of

the company. If you want your company to be all it can be, strategic planning will help you accomplish that.

It is not a one-time event. It is an ongoing process. Therefore, you will make choices at

a point in time based on the best information available. That doesn't mean that alternate options are rejected *ad infinitum*. If you find that conditions change or new information becomes available, you reevaluate and move forward again.

The strategic planning process is about progress and changes. Progress sometimes involves two steps forward and one step back. There is nothing wrong with that. Remember, strategic planning builds a vision of the future—a vision of what you want your company to be. If you believe you are too small for strategic planning and approach business in that manner, in all likelihood, you will remain small.

All business activities involve risk. Strategic planning is no exception. The risk, though, is a calculated one, and, as such, is minimized. Your decisions are based on knowledge, not assumptions or intuition. If you can afford to stay where you are, do so. If not, start the strategic planning today... hopefully it's not too late. **LL**

The author is director of marketing and sales for LandCare USA, Houston, Texas.

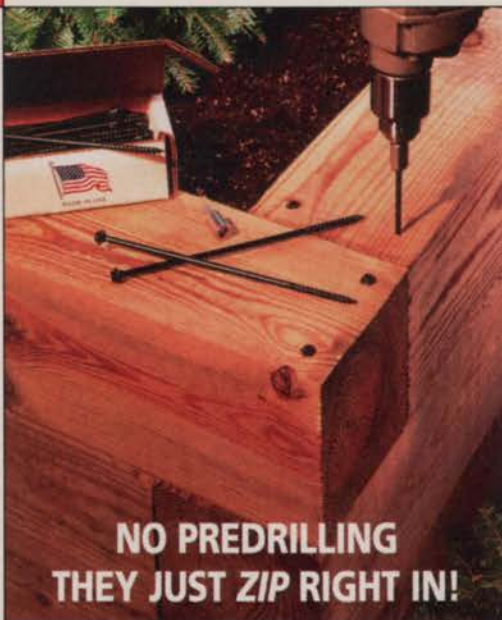
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QUESTION?**

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USE READER SERVICE #97

Budgeting Basics

By Frank Ross

T

here are several ways people have tried to budget with differing measures of success. One popular way is what I call the "Ego Method." This is where ownership reviews the income statement for the year just completed. They look at the earned revenue figure for that year, see it was \$450,000, and, for no reason other than to placate their own ego, set a goal of \$600,000 for the next year. Why \$600,000? It just seems like the thing to do.

Another way to budget, which has a strong following, is the "Growth Method." In this case, ownership looks at the company's trend over the past few years, sees it has grown an average of 25 percent per year, declares, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," and sets a 25 percent growth target for next year. How much sense does that make?

Yet another method is the "Inflation Method." Here, ownership looks at local statistics measuring inflation and the record says inflation was 5 percent last year. Because they can think of no reason why, they increase all of their figures by the inflationary 5 percent. "Hey, inflation was 5 percent last year, so let's increase all of last year's numbers by 5 percent and that will be our budget for next year." Now, is that good thinking?

Last is the "Percentage Method." Here, ownership picks a sales figure with which they feel comfortable (typically driven by the ego emotions) and then figures all of next year's expenses based on the same percentages to sales as they were last year. We won't kill any brain cells with this one, either.

All of these methods are what I call "Budgeting Faux Pas." They all focus on the top line, and if they seem a bit baseless to you, it's probably because they are. Budgeting is not hard, but it's not this easy either. A legitimate working budget is a series of decisions, overt decisions by top management, which describe in numeric terms how the coming year will progress. It is a logical process, which begins with the basics.

And, the most basic of all questions is 'Why are you in business? Is it because of sales?' Of course not. I submit that you are in business for two reasons: profit and fun.

If you are making a profit, you are probably having some fun. However, if the profit is not there, business can be a real bummer.

Now's the time to be thinking of next year's budget, so here's some simple tips to help.

Let's think about this – if profit is one of the two primary reasons you are in business, doesn't it make sense that profit is the first item you forecast? Of course it does.

If I wanted to prepare a budget based upon why I am in business, I would start with profit – at the bottom of the income statement – and work up. Or, if I wanted to, I could spin the income statement upside down, start with profit and work down.

STEP BY STEP. The budgeting process is actually a five-step procedure that begins

with how much profit we need to make.

Step two forecasts the spending habits of the company's overhead structure. The combination of the first two steps tells us how much gross margin we need to generate.

Step three establishes how much of the gross margin is already sold.

Step four describes the revenue goals we will need to achieve to generate the remaining gross margin requirement.

Finally, Step five takes our annual budget and spreads it over each of the twelve months of the year so that we can periodically compare how we are actually performing against our goals.

It's important to note the choice of words used back at the beginning of the process – 'How much profit we need to make.' This is not about how much profit we need to make, but how much we need in order to operate our business.

To establish profit needs, you must remind yourself what profit is used for. Primarily, it is used to provide the cash for the company's needs in five areas: the retirement of debt, the purchase of capital assets, the support of growth, the payment of bonuses or dividends and the payment of taxes. If the business doesn't generate the cash through the profits of the business, it risks not being able to pay for these items – and that is not good.

FIGURE IT OUT. Taken in order, you will first want to make a list of the debt you must retire in the coming year. Add up the principal portion only, as interest will be budgeted as an expense item when we develop the overhead budget.

Second, make a list of the fixed assets you wish to purchase. Then itemize how much you will pay in principal against each item over the next 12 months.

A legitimate working budget is a series of decisions, overt decisions by top management, which describe in numeric terms how the coming year will progress.

Third, anticipate how much growth you expect for your company in the coming year. This may be an educated guess, since we have not determined earned revenue as yet. Nevertheless, make an estimate of dol-



The Five-Step Budgeting Process

1. Determine the minimum amount of return on investment
 - a. Profit necessary to retire debt
 - b. Profit necessary to replace equipment
 - c. Profit necessary for growth
 - d. Profit necessary to warrant the risk of business
 - e. Profit necessary to pay a fair share of taxes
2. Budget Overhead using the zero-based concept
 - a. Document planned expenditures
 - b. Involve employees
 - c. Establish a 'watchdog' over each account
3. Determine your backlog by type of business
 - a. Establish the backlog by revenue and cost categories
 - b. Determine the gross margin in your backlog
4. Determine new sales goals and convert those to earned revenue goals
 - a. Establish the amount of required work to be sold and installed to cover planned overhead and profit requirements
 - b. Test these goals against your capacity to perform
5. Prepare a monthly income statement
 - a. Seasonalize your budget by month such that you can track your activity month to month



Spending the necessary time preparing the company's financial information for the coming season can be as simple as following five steps and adhering to the budget over the ensuing 12 months.

lar volume growth for the coming year. Divide that volume increase by 10.

The number 10 is a banking rule of thumb for the green industry that determines the amount of cash needed to support earned revenue in a healthy company. Typically, I am not much on rules of thumb, but in this instance, 10 cents of cash to support \$1 of revenue is fairly realistic for most of us.

Here's an example: If I perform \$450,000 in revenue this year and expect that next year's performance will probably be around \$500,000, I take the difference between the two revenue figures. Fifty thousand dollars is how much I expect to grow. Divide the \$50,000 by a factor of 10 to determine how much cash I will need to support that growth. In this example, my cash need is \$5,000.

Fourth, estimate what you would like to pay in employee bonuses or shareholder dividends given that you achieve your definition of success. This would be money paid after year-end profit is achieved and would not be anticipated in the overhead budget.

Lastly, add up the profit requirements established in the first

four steps and estimate the state and federal income taxes that would normally be payable for this level of profit performance.

Add the five values together.

Now, subtract next year's anticipated depreciation, as this is a non-cash expense item. You have just calculated the profit, or capital requirement, you must make next year to support your organization – not

"want to make" or "should make," but must make if you are to meet all of your obligations for the next 12 months.

To illustrate, I am going to fill in the profit needs for our example company's budget. In your company, you will want to tabulate each of these profit requirements as they relate to you.

Therefore, \$50,680 is the minimum profit requirement for next year. Certainly I can, and want to, make more, but \$50,680 is what I must make if I expect to meet my obligations. **LL**

The author is a green industry consultant with Ross-Payne Associates, Barrington, Ill. He can be reached at 847/381-8939.

Profit Determinations

1. Principal payments on outstanding debt (banks and other creditors)	\$12,600
2. Principal payments on fixed asset acquisitions	\$22,500
3. Cash required to support anticipated growth	\$5,000
4. Estimated excess compensation for employees and owners	\$7,000
5. Income tax liability – city, county, state and federal	\$10,234
Total Capital Requirement	\$57,334
less: Estimated Depreciation	(\$6,654)
equals: Profit requirement for next year	\$50,680

Steering one of the industry's largest pesticide producers is a complex task that continues to grow more challenging.

By Cindy Code

As part of Lawn & Landscape magazine's exclusive conversation series, Cindy Code, group publisher of the Lawn & Landscape Media Group, spent some time with Bruce Miehle, a Dow AgroSciences general manager, at its corporate headquarters in Indianapolis. These interviews are not designed to provide the history or background of a company, rather to examine how the people at the helm of uniquely successful companies have steered their firms into leadership roles in the professional lawn and landscape industry.

B

ruce Miehle, general manager of the turf and ornamental and technical products division of Dow AgroSciences is a career company man.

In a career spanning 25 years, Miehle started in a field sales assignment in 1973 in Dow's Charlotte sales office selling everything from animal health to farm chemicals to right-of-way products to pest control to mosquito control.

Miehle, who has his bachelor's and master's degrees from The Penn State University in agronomy and soils, and plant pathology and physiology, respectively, has experienced all aspects of Dow's corporate and field offices as he moved through a variety of positions in field sales, research and development, product development, product marketing and district sales management.

He was named business manager for specialty products when DowElanco formed in 1988 and oversaw financial planning, business strategies and molecule planning.

Over the years, Miehle provided integral insight to both the crops and non-crops businesses before tackling a more global role as part of the company's recent Business Effectiveness Initiative. This BEI turned Dow AgroSciences into a global business management organiza-

(continued on page 144)

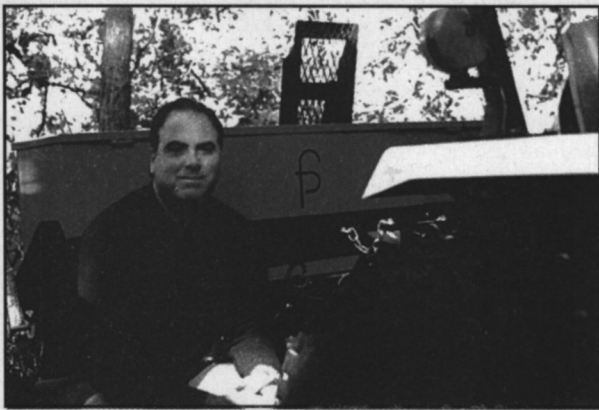


• Bruce Miehle, pictured above in front of Dow AgroSciences' headquarters in Indianapolis, is confident the company will be able to continue selling Dursban.
• Photo: L&L Staff

A Conversation with

Bruce Miehle

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conversation

(continued from page 142)

tional hierarchy for the purpose of molecule and asset management.

Today, Dow AgroSciences sells several hundred millions of dollars of urban pest control products globally, and Miehle serves as its general manager of turf ornamental and tech products business.

cial and general control on Dow's part and created internal streamlining and operational efficiency. We can do things a little more quickly. I don't think it necessarily preordains a better agriculture business, with one small caveat. I do think there's a more highly integrated venture into biotech as a result.

Dow had its own interests in terms of technology and financial commitment in the output side of biotech, and DowElanco was focused on the input side of biotech. Now, there is a much more coordinated and consolidated

thrust in biotech.

What does that mean for the turf and ornamental business? In the short term, very little. Long term, perhaps quite a bit. Obviously, we're faced with a lot of problems based on the perennial nature of turf and many ornamental, nursery-type crops.

I don't think this business is on the front page of any biotechnology company's strategic plan. They're more interested in Roundup tolerance in major row crops and corn root worm resistance. But down the road, when a lot of these cutting edge technologies become more commonplace, it's logical to think biotechnology is going to be a factor in the professional turf industry.

Q. How is Dow AgroSciences dealing with the regulatory environment specific to the Food Quality Protection Act and the threat to organophosphates?

A. I would be naïve if I said everything was just fine. It's a big challenge. You don't have to read very much to accept that. I know we have made and continue to make a huge commitment of resources in terms of people and expertise in dealing not only with the science and technology of the issue, but also its politics. This is at least as political as it is technical and regulatory.

(continued on page 146)

'We see the people that have a position in fertilizer as gaining in market strength.'

Q. Your specialty business has gone through a number of changes in the 1990s. First, the strategic alliance between Dow and Elanco and now the buyout of Eli Lilly's share of DowElanco. How will the new structure work into the next millennium?

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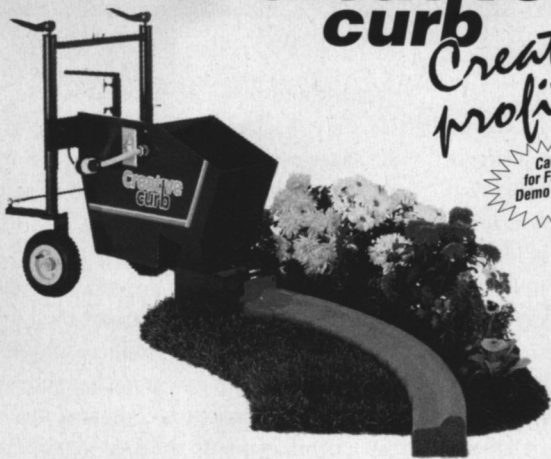
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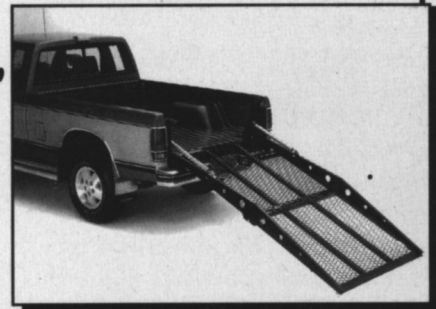
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USE READER SERVICE #102

(continued from page 144)

We've had good experience this past year with a few technical victories as well as some response from grassroots efforts through a network of affiliated trade organizations.

We think we have a reasonably good track record dealing with other issues that perhaps haven't looked very positive at one point in time. The best reference I can cite is the experience we had with 2,4-D in turf. If we were to wind a clock back six to eight years, take a look at the battle we were confronting with 2,4-D use in turf and ask people to project our probability of success in sustaining the use of 2,4-D, a lot of people might have said 2,4-D is history. Yet, we've been able to sustain 2,4-D.

What I suspect, and I'm a little bit hopeful on this, is that there will be some minor changes in organophosphate registrations and some of that will include Dursban. Thankfully, we have very exhaustive science behind us; the technology is sound. We believe, ultimately, that good

science will at least partially prevail. Will it be a slam dunk? No. But we're going to be selling Dursban for a long time, I'm sure of that. Will we come out of it with modifications on protective clothing or repeat applications? Or will there be some other kinds of mitigating stipulations? Probably.

Q. Is there a number one leader in turf and ornamental control products?

A. I don't think there is a clear leader. There are several market leaders that are all pretty close, and we're in the mix. Depending on how you characterize the participation in the global market, you could argue that certain suppliers are the biggest because they sell their brand direct to consumers.

If you go to Europe or parts of Latin America, a couple of our basic manufacturer competitors sell their own brands to end users. We have chosen not to. We've chosen to market our own brands to the professional trade. In the consumer trade, we use the brand marketers and formulators that

supply those channels. It works well for us.

It's a balancing act. We think we've struck a good balance of engaging formulators where they can add value and do things more effectively than we can do with some of our active ingredients.

This is particularly important in most segments of the turf and ornamental business because granular products are pretty popular. The lawn care trade has gone to a lot of dry applications as compared to when the ChemLawn tank trucks were popular.

We see the people that have a position in fertilizer as gaining in market strength. They add value both for us as a supplier in creating a delivery system for some of our active ingredients and in providing value for the end user because the convenience of applying both fertilizer and pesticide at the same time is undeniable.

Q. Do you sell direct to the largest end-user companies in the industry?

(continued on page 148)

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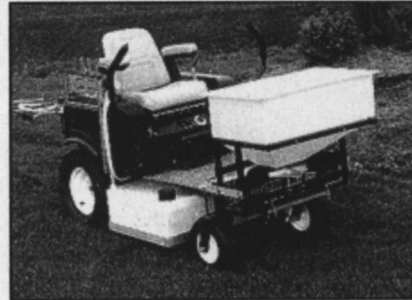


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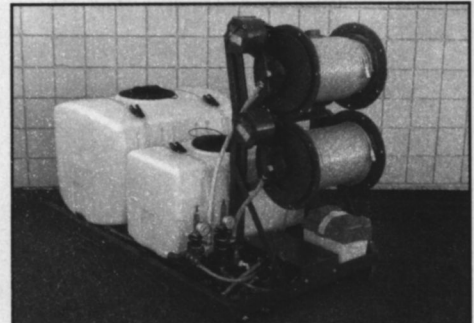
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USE READER SERVICE #106

(continued from page 146)

A. Not really. Basically, we sell through distribution and the formulation trade to this segment of the business. We used to sell direct to a number of companies, but for a number of reasons we got away from that. Not the least of which is this trend toward dry formulations.

A few years ago we went through one of these painful channel rationalizations and decided to consolidate. We established a new benchmark for a direct buying relationship and designated some master distributors and master formulators to supply some of the small regional independents.

Q. Distribution can be fragmented in the turf and ornamental industry. Does LESCO have the right idea of selling through it's more than 200 service centers?

A. If you believe the response from the trade and their sales growth, you have to say it looks like they're headed in the right direction. The key question, I think, is how much is the trade willing to pay for that

convenience? Everybody wants to minimize inventory. They want to be able to get and use products and equipment as close to its actual time of use as possible to manage their working capital.

Q. You were responsible for establishing Dow AgroSciences' global urban pest structure and authoring the first global urban pest strategy, completed in the spring of 1998. What were the two main goals and priorities that came out of the strategic plan?

A. We had two main themes. The major theme and strategy I was responsible for was adaptation and change management and preparing people for that. That was significant. The other theme that we still wrestle with is how to optimize our business (for our shareholders) given the number of products that we have while doing the best job of servicing customers.

The natural tendency is to try to be all things to all people, therefore we have had a broad portfolio of products. Some of them

are strong brands. Some of the others we decided to divest because they have more value to somebody else than to us.

Gaining acceptance for the need to optimize our portfolio was a major challenge. That work is not done, and it involves not only in-depth analysis of numbers and technology, but also what I call weighing in organizational dynamics. It's hard to go to somebody who's been product manager of product X and say we're not going to sell this product anymore, but give it to somebody else who's going to do a better job with it. Those are hard internal things to do.

My guess is when I leave this job, we'll still be debating whether we've got it right or not. What is the right number of products for a basic supplier to have in a portfolio? How big do they need to be to be value adding? How big or how good do they need to be to be attractive to customers? What can we manage effectively? How many products can a field salesperson or marketing

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person really effectively manage? How many can we afford to promote?

Q. Dow AgroSciences has agreed to give Riverdale Chemical exclusive rights to some of its active materials to formulate products for broadleaf herbicide control. Is your relationship with Riverdale an example of the outsourcing of your products?

A. Yes, and it's a unique partnership. We think it is a tremendous development for ourselves and for Riverdale. It's a good example because a couple of the actives they are incorporating into their portfolio would be difficult for us to handle effectively. However, they have the expertise and formulating capability and, for that matter, access to other molecules that they can mix with our molecules. Plus, they can adapt the amounts of various components of the mixtures they make to regional preferences and regional needs. That's working very well.

Q. How do you see the role of a basic manufacturer in the next five to 10 years?

A. One of the major roles that a research-based, multinational company will play in this business is being the conduit or window to some of the advanced technologies being developed for agriculture, including biotech and instrumentation.

There's a lot of instrumentation being developed right now, first and foremost for row crop production to instantaneously detect soil fertility, pest infestation, soil moisture, temperature, humidity, crop maturation, etc. This is fed into a computer database that allows users to adapt their cultural scheme to produce more corn.

That will be one role a basic supplier will play. That is a little bit more than the role one might expect of a formulator and fertilizer supplier, but I really believe that the research-based, multinational companies

will be the interpreter and brainstormer of applications of new technology in the turf and ornamental trade. Of course, some of this will happen long after I'm gone.

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Q. As a basic manufacturer, you not only spend hundreds of millions of dollars bringing product to market but in defending the continued right to use pesticides. Are the prices you're charging for today's pesticides significantly more expensive than 10 years ago?

A. In terms of equalized dollars, prod-

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ucts today are cheaper than they were 10 years ago. End users have access to some innovative technologies that might cost more, but along with that comes value enhancements or some other aspect that makes it worth more such as convenience, environmental profile, dose rate, etc.

Q. With the cost/price issues faced in the lawn and landscape industry, how far off is this global instrumentation?

A. A lot of people work day-to-day in the professional lawn care business that struggle with those competitive dynamics. I don't disagree with the perception that the lawn care trade is a highly cost competitive and price competitive marketplace. I don't know what we'll do to break out of that syndrome.

Occasionally, we see signs that truly unique features get embraced by the leading edge companies. There are some very profound forces at work on what those service providers do. Not just cost or convenience;

it's the environmental and social acceptability of what we do. The weight we place on product safety, both in terms of toxicology and environmental impact, weight heavily in investment and staging through the product development process.

Reality is that it's now possible from a technical standpoint to get good performance without having to tolerate unacceptable toxicology or environmental characteristics. This gets more and more possible every year. As capabilities improve, public expectations come with it.

Q. Will we see more consolidation among basic pesticide manufacturers?

A. What's happening as consolidation takes place is that companies are inheriting an interest in the non-crop market. Before, when there were 15 research-based, multinational companies, a small percentage of them either by luck or by commitment had a major play in either pest control, lawn



care, golf courses or turf and ornamental.

The remainder either had no interest at all and took whatever windfall came their way or, in some cases, outsourced that technology and had someone else do it. Or they took whatever came their way and probably suboptimized their participation.

Now, as companies consolidate, company A, who had mostly no interest in this business, buys company B mostly for crops business, some overseas operation or manufacturing capabilities, and finds that company B has a position in pest control or lawn care. The new mega-company is probably going to maintain a position in that arena.

If you believe the conventional wisdom that after the next five to 10 years there's only going to be a handful of major multinational companies, they'll all be \$4-billion-plus type companies. I think every one of those companies will ultimately have a play in the specialty/turf and ornamental/

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Q. Aside from biotechnology and consolidation, are there other significant trends you see affecting the contractor's business?

A. A big trend is social accountability. The trade is dealing with a lot more of the right to know aspect of doing business with the public. Consumers want more information. They're pursuing the legal and regulatory routes to make sure they get it.

Twenty years ago, the trade didn't want to share information with customers, and customers didn't want to know.

Q. Is it the job of a supplier to train and educate the end user?

A. I think it can be. If you bring new technology to market requiring training, along with it comes an implied responsibility to do that training. For instance, some of the breakthrough technology hitting the market now is not just a better active ingredient plugged into a 4-pound emulsifiable concentrate, but something really novel and

frequently, a new delivery system.

If we introduce a highly integrated system that is not part of the end-user's existing technical base, then we need to train them or provide a mechanism for somebody else to do so. And this really requires a fairly high level of business intimacy and understanding of where your customers are headed.

Q. What is your management style?

A. I delegate a lot. I like to give people a lot of room to make decisions. I don't think I abrogate, I think I delegate. When you're in a role where you have to set vision and overall strategic direction, it helps. People know when I give praise it must be something special, because it's not my style to lavish so much praise that it cheapens it.

For the most part, I think it has made me successful. But I won't argue with anyone who says there was also a lot of luck.

Q. Who are your mentors?

A. Unquestionably, Dick Holzschu is my mentor. Dick retired from Dow

AgroSciences in March. I learned a tremendous amount from Dick.

We have been very fortunate in our business here. We've garnered more than our share of good people. I think there was a gravitational pull that quite honestly was caused by Dursban. As a product, Dursban made us a market leader. I'm not sure what came first, whether we did a good job with Dursban or whether Dursban was a good enough product it made us do a good job and other things came along afterward.

We developed the resources almost as a reaction to the success we were having with the product, not vice versa. Once that level of expertise and commitment to the business gets established, along comes the expectation and the dedication to maintain that level of performance and expertise and commitment. **LL**

The author is Group Publisher of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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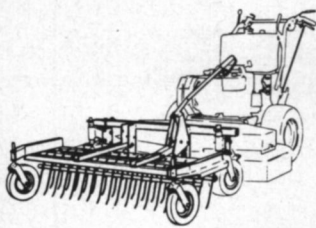
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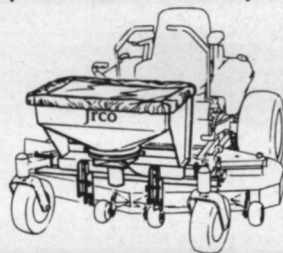
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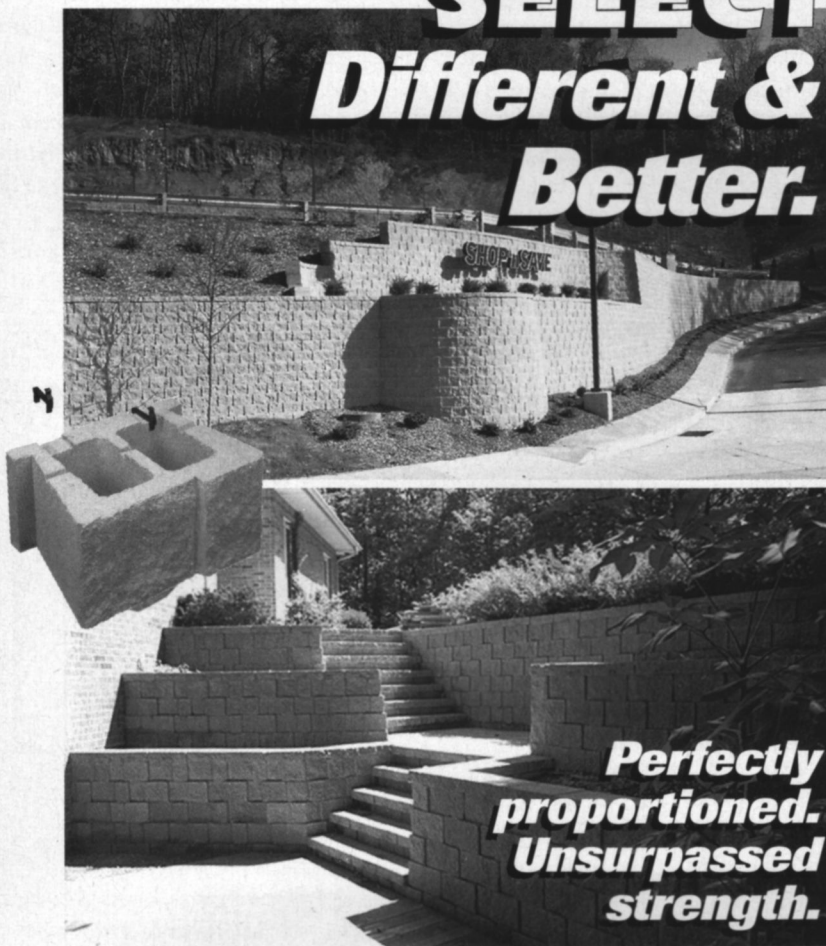
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cover story

(continued from page 40)

while supporting a family, that's a lot of money to him. So, if he can come here and make average American wages, that's like a pot of gold."

Amigos charges \$625 per legal, green card-holding immigrant plus a \$150 bus fare advance and a \$50 food advance, Wingfield said.

According to the H2-B program, employers must pay Hispanic workers comparable wages to what they pay non-Hispanic employees, overtime and make sure taxes are taken out of their employees' paychecks. This puts Hispanic workers on an even playing field with the American workers. Wingfield added that most workers he has placed with green industry contractors have been paid about \$7 per hour to start.

Most contractors are also playing fair when it comes to the starting job level and growth potential within the company for their Hispanic workforce whether they are temporary workers or full-time, legal immigrant workers.

At Mariani Landscape, Lake Bluff, Ill., 90 percent of the maintenance foreman are Hispanic and the company as a whole has a 70 percent Hispanic workforce, explained Joe Aurilio, human resources manager for the company.

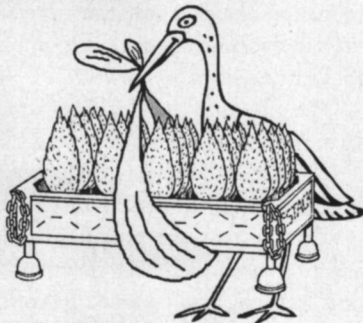
"If anything, we tip the playing field in their favor because we are at a communication disadvantage," Aurilio said. "Just because they don't speak the language doesn't mean they don't have the IQ for the job."

Every new employee at Mariani Landscape who meets the basic skills criteria starts off at \$6.25 an hour, regardless of where they came from, Aurilio said. "They all work their way up from there the same way," he added. "We have a Hispanic supervisor now who we want to move up to manager. Our only problem is that these guys don't like the paperwork and we can't seem to convince them otherwise. We need Hispanic leadership. We want them to be in our manager's meetings and be a part of the big picture here.

"It's a politics of inclusion," Aurilio pointed out. "It can't be separate but unequal, and it can't be separate but equal. It has to be one total group." **LL**

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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history of mowers

(continued from page 74)

advantage. It's all about size coupled with maneuverability. Before, walk-behinds were used where bigger riders couldn't fit. The compact rider trend has changed that. According to OPEI figures, the sale of walk behind mowers has grown stagnant. They haven't grown like the riders."

Walk-behind mowers will never vanish entirely from the market, however, according to Scag.

"Sure, with a compact mower you can fit more in a trailer, maneuver in tighter places, and they're less costly," Scag explained. "But there are contractors out there that don't want their workers riding all day. They think walkers are less costly and more productive and that's all they buy. Others think riders are more productive because of the fatigue factor walk-behind units cause on their workers. Either way, you have to make them both to survive in this business."

Today, rider comfort continues to be an issue with landscape contractors. This year,

Ferris Industries introduced a rider with independent suspension to smooth out some of the rough terrain for the operator and in 1997, Hustler introduced a motorcycle-style steering system.

LOOKING AHEAD. While some manufacturers think the future will inspire anything from remote control mowing to computerized mowing to solar-powered units to laser-type cutting, others feel that there will be a need to return to the simple basics, mainly for cost reasons.

Sometimes technology gets ahead of practicality, Walker pointed out.

"Landscape terrain is too complicated for computerized control," Scag explained. "The problem with building bigger, more complicated machines is that they become more and more expensive — almost too expensive for a landscape contractor to afford. And laser technology is so expensive that it just won't succeed in this industry."

Scag did, however, give some clout to the production of a chemical growth retardant that is intended to cut down the number of times turf needs to be mowed.

"The ones that chemical companies are playing around with now are working in uneven patches, so contractors still have to mow the grass anyway," he said. "If they can come up with one that will produce a uniform appearing lawn then that may work and lawns won't have to be mowed as often."

Some manufacturers said that the Environmental Protection Agency will have an increased role in the way they make lawnmowers in the future.

"We pretty much make it how they say it now," Tegtmeier said. "I think there will be tighter rules and regulations. We haven't heard the end of the emissions and noise level problems." **LL**

The author is Assistant Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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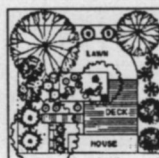


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Award winning, full-service landscape and erosion control firm seeks a motivated individual to build its senior management team. Located in fast-growing Chester County, PA, our expansion has created the need for a division manager in erosion control. Our top candidate will be a good communicator, organized, customer-focused with a good knowledge of E&S products and installation methods. An AA or BA degree is preferred with 5 years experience in the commercial landscaping field. We offer generous salaries, profit distribution, health/dental/life insurance, and IRA with company match. Also seeking to fill openings for forepersons and laborers. For immediate confidential consideration mail, fax or E-mail resume to Ram-T Corporation, P.O. Box 265, Thorndale, PA 19372, Fax: 610/873-9173, E-mail: dwk4ram@aol.com

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Full-service design-build firm located in Northeast New Jersey seeks dynamic self-starter to oversee landscape department and sell and manage construction projects. Require a growth-oriented, team player with three to five years landscape sales/management/production experience. Excellent leadership, organizational and communications skills a must. A degree in Horticulture or Landscape/Grounds Management desired. Responsibilities include estimating; sales; scheduling and supervising crews; purchasing and inventory; and budget and profit control. Excellent career opportunity with growing, progressive company with outstanding 20-year service record. Competitive salary and benefits. Send or fax resume to: Jacobsen Landscape Design and Construction, 41 Birch Street, Midland Park, NJ 07432. 201/444-4334. Attention: Personnel Department.

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Oasis Irrigation Systems, Inc. of Atlanta, GA, is accepting resumes and inquiries for positions within our organization. We are looking for career minded people to fill immediate positions in the following areas:

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Dover Downs Inc., an 800 acre auto racing facility and entertainment complex is seeking a Landscape Supervisor to manage and coordinate the maintenance of all landscape areas at the complex. This position requires knowledge and experience in irrigation systems, ornamentals and turf management. Individuals should also possess strong communication skills, organizational and problem solving skills. Applicants should have 3-5 years experience or a college degree in ornamental horticulture or related field. Please send resume and salary requirements to Dover Downs Inc., P.O. Box 843, Dover, DE 19903, Attn: Bill Hare, H.R.

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EOE

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The Green Plan, Inc., a full service landscape maintenance and irrigation service company located at the base of the Colorado Rocky Mountains, is expanding its irrigation division. Positions include excellent compensation and full benefits. Immediate openings available. Please fax resume or forward to address below.

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Position includes scheduling, hiring and training of service technicians. Must be experienced in all phases of service of commercial irrigation systems and have excellent troubleshooting skills. 2-4 years of management experience is preferred.

IRRIGATION SERVICE TECHNICIAN

Position includes troubleshooting, repair and service of commercial irrigation systems. Must be experienced in repair of commercial and large open space irrigation systems. 2 years of service experience is preferred.

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*Denotes regional advertising.

CREATING A JAM SESSION

The Master Mind principle: *Two or more people actively engaged in pursuit of a definite purpose with a positive mental attitude, constitute an unbeatable force.* -Napolean Hill

When was the last time you were a part of an unbeatable force? The opportunity is only a decision away. Picture yourself engaged with a group of your peers in the landscape industry, sharing ideas, investigating innovative approaches and setting into action goals that you know will improve every important aspect of your company. . . and you're doing it with a positive mental attitude.

If this sounds too good to be true, read on about one such event that took place in Cleveland, Ohio, in August, then challenge yourself to apply the principles to create your own Jam Session.

As a consultant and speaker to the green industry, I've wanted to bring together some of my key clients in a way that they could share ideas on common processes and systems I've helped them implement and brainstorm ways to enhance them. Present at the event which took place at a golf course resort near Cleveland were owners from, Groundmasters, Cincinnati; Yardmaster, Cleveland; Allin Companies, Erie Pa.; ND Landscaping, Boston; Greenscapes, Columbus, Ohio; Lifestyles Land-

scaping, Cleveland; Hatcher and Associates, Nashville, Tenn. Scott's Lawn Care, Cleveland; Kinnucan Companies, Chicago; and JFD Landscapes, Cleveland.

They mace up a forum was called "Leadership Jam '98."

JAMMING ON YOUR OWN.

- *Pre-meeting planning*
Faxes and updates were continually sent to the participants soliciting ideas for the agenda, and developing the program. Homework assignments were given that would be part of the presentation and discussions at the meetings. With these assignments, specific attendees were given one topic to focus on that they would make an introductory 10- to 15-minute presenta-

From the Front Lines is designed to share specific programs or ideas that have been successfully implemented by lawn care or landscape contractors. If your company has a program that you think would be of interest to your colleagues, send a 650-word explanation of the program to: Bob West, *Lawn & Landscape*, 4012 Bridge Ave., Cleveland, OH 44113, or fax it to 216/961-0364.

tion on that would lead into group discussion. This way, everyone came with a clear concept of what would be discussed and the role they would play in the discussion.

- *Set the appropriate atmosphere*
The golf resort was chosen to allow for an afternoon of golf and to provide the trails for early morning runs. The meeting room was set in a U-shape to allow for better communication within the group. A cook out

on the first evening gave a relaxed atmosphere for conversation and the exchange of ideas.

- *Develop a common agenda.*
Each of the participants were familiar with JP Horizons' business development process called 'organizational excitement,' the agenda evolved around the key elements of: creating a vision, dominating market niches, creating team-work, developing training, implementing systems, controlling costs, rewarding employees, and certification within the landscape industry.

- *Use defined focus questions.*
The topic of creating a vision was discussed in the context of the question, "What are you doing on a day-to-day basis to instill the mission statement into your organization?" A clear and defined focus question will help keep the discussion

on track and produce practical ideas that can be implemented for results. **LL**

The author is president of JP Horizons, a green industry consulting firm based in Painesville, Ohio. He can be reached at 440/254-8211.

Put it Together.

Following is one day of the itinerary from the Jam Session presented by Jim Paluch in Cleveland.

PROGRAM ITINERARY

9:00	The Vision	1:15	Training
10:00	The Market	3:15	Systems
11:00	Teamwork	4:15	Cost Control
12:00	Certification	5:00	Positive Peer Pressure





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