Preemergence Herbicides

Irrigation Programming

Mower Buyers' Guide Lawn & Landscape School of Management

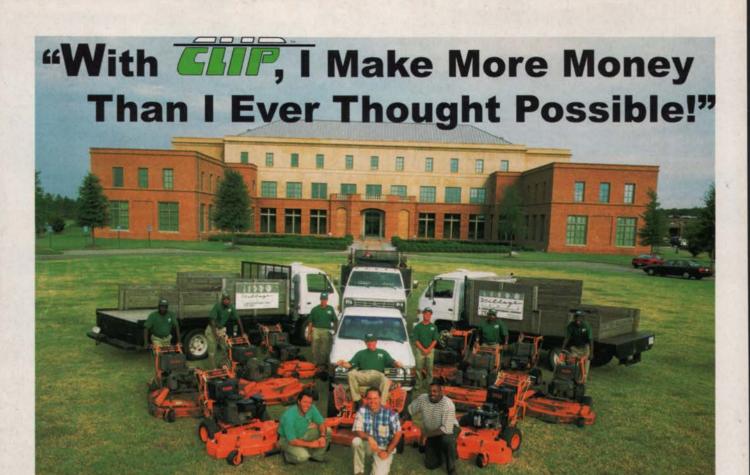
Page 111

# Redefining

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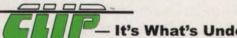
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## Cover Story Redefining Growth

DeSantis Landscapes of Salem, Ore., has found that growth is not measured in dollars alone.

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## Sustainable Landscape Design

## **Getting Ahead of the Weeds**

A number of factors go into maximizing the effectiveness of a preemergence herbicide program. 58

## **Installation Tips & Tricks**

Avoiding the pitfalls of a disastrous installation job takes planning and proper scheduling, good employees and increased communication.

## Programming Irrigation Controllers

Contractors need to consider all of the elements associated with each individual job to make sure every area of the landscape gets the right amount of water for the right amount of time.

## Telemarketing: Friend or Foe?

Despite the negativity associated with telemarketing, some contractors rely heavily on this marketing approach to grow their businesses.

## Wildflowers & Native Grasses

Landscaping with wild flowers and native grasses may not be simple, but the benefits are worth the work.

## Environmental Leaders Honored

land, Ohio 44113.

Lawn & Landscape School of Management, see page 111

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## Lawn & Landscape

## SPECIAL REPORT:

# Commercial Mower Buyers' Guide



## Over Hill, Over Dale

Mowing sloping embankments and hilly terrain can be dangerous and costly to contractors who don't take the right precautions, .... M8

#### **Mowers Defined**

An in-depth list of mower terminology and mower definitions M14

### **Buyers' Guide**

Mower manufacturers, their product specifications and how to M16

www.lawnandlandscape.com

## Editor's Focus

## A New Year's Suggestion Of Value

"The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living differ from the dead." - Aristotle

I can't do it. I just can't bring myself to write one of those columns about the new millennium and the time for change and breaking free from the past. To be honest, we've all been subjected to 12 months worth of those columns, and that was probably 11 months too many.

I am going to make one suggestion for you to consider, however, but this has nothing to do with a new year, a new century or a new millennium. This is a suggestion to help contractors - wherever you are - grow your business and improve your skills.

Join an association.

Getting involved in an association, be it regional or national, is one of the smartest things a contractor can do, and now is the time. Business has slowed down for most of you in these winter months. That makes now perfect for going to trade shows, conferences and association meetings.

I'm sure some of you will read this and dismiss the idea of joining an association because you don't think these groups can help your business. Before doing this, though, look at your market. In particular, focus on the companies who have been in business for awhile, who are running the best operations in your market, who are consistently doing the best work and getting the best customers. How many of them belong to an association? I'll bet they all do, and I don't think that's just a coincidence.

In fact, I would bet there isn't a company in this industry that has been in business for more than 10 years and has been profitable but has never belonged to a local, state or national association. (If such a company is out there, I would love to hear from them.)

The majority of the associations operating today exist because a group of contractors who compete with each other 365 days a year realized

they could all better themselves and raise the level of professionalism within their market by setting aside their differences and sharing ideas with each other every once in awhile.

If you're completely satisfied with the way your business is operating today and you're not interested in boosting profits or growing, then don't worry - associations may not benefit you. But if you'd like to figure out the answer to that business challenge that has frustrated you for the last few months or if you'd like some reassurance that your estimating practices are accurate, there's no better source of this information than other contractors. And the best way to talk to them is to join an association today.

Boh West

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## **Market Trends**

## L&L SURVEY

## Nursery Survey Shows Internet Sales Potential

CLEVELAND, OHIO – The world of e-commerce has clearly altered the nature of retail shopping at a dramatic pace with the growth of web sites like amazon.com and priceline.com. Can the same transformation take place regarding the sale of nursery

material and supplies to landscape contractors?

A Lawn & Landscape survey of nearly 300 contractors found that 53.4 percent of them are either "interested" or

53.4 percent of them are either "interested" or "very interested" in the idea of ordering

plant material over the Internet.

Other points of interest from the survey:

- Almost half of the respondents (47.3 percent) purchase plant supplies from three to six suppliers.
- Slightly more than 63 percent of contractors purchase additional products from
  plant suppliers, with pesticides, hardscape materials, irrigation supplies and
  lighting supplies topping the list.
- Widely reported issues about the lack of plant availability don't seem to be upsetting contractors, as respondents rated the difficulty of purchasing materials a 5.7 (1-10 scale with 10 being the least difficult) this year.

Consolidation and the prospect of Internet selling may significantly change the nature of nursery distribution. Photo: Shemin Nurseries Lawn and landscape contractors obviously like operating their businesses in areas that are growing, as more people equal more customers. Examining the list to the

right of the fast growing counties in 1998 explains why

CTOP	Pourdine
COUNTY	PERCENT GROWTH
1. Nye, Nev.	100 percent
2. Forsyth, Ga.	93 percent
3. Elbert, Colo.	89 percent
4. Dawson, Ga.	88 percent
5. Henry, Ga.	87 percent
6. Douglas, Colo.	87 percent
7. Paulding, Ga.	85 percent
8. Loudoun, Va.	83 percent
9. Williamson, Tex	as 83 percent
10. Collin, Texas	82 percent

Georgia has been such a hotbed of acquisitions, as four of the country's 10 fastest growing counties can be found there. Contractors in certain parts of Texas and Colorado should also be enjoying considerable growth.

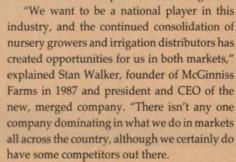
## MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

## McGinnis Merges with Jenco Industries

ALPHARETTA, GA – McGinniss Farms, one of the largest distributors of nursery materials and other horticulture-related products in the Southeast, expanded its market by merging with Jenco Wholesale Nurseries, Carrollton, Texas, one of the largest nursery suppliers in the South and Southwest.

Combining Jenco's 10 locations in Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Mississippi with McGinniss' 19 locations in Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, South Carolina and North Carolina creates a one-stophorticultural shop

for contractors that has plans for continued growth.



(continued on page 20)



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## **Market Trends**

IN THE NEWS

## FFA, Industry Team Up

INDIANAPOLIS, IND. – "I believe there will be more specialized courses of study and more internships." That's how one contractors replied when asked how he expects the recruiting process for lawn and landscape employees to be different in 10 years.

Well, that contractor and others should be pleased to know that the development of the first-ever national green industry curriculum for as many as 450,000 high school students has begun through a partnership between the National FFA Foundation and several prominent green industry firms.

A total of \$282,000 has been raised, largely through donations from The Toro Company Foundation, The Scotts Co., Zeneca Professional Products, the Northwest Turfgrass Association and the United States Golf Association Foundation, to fund the curriculum development.

(continued on page 16)

## Calendar of Events

JAN. 17-20 Michigan Turfgrass Conference, Lansing, Mich. Contact: 517/321-1660.

JAN. 18-20 Midwest Turf Expo, Indianapolis, Ind. Contact: 765/494-8039.

JAN. 18-20 MAGIC 2000 10th Annual Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323

JAN. 18-20 Mid-America Green Industry Council/Mid-America Green Industry Convention, Kansas City, Mo. Contact: 816/561-5323.

JAN. 19-21 Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show, Chicago, Ill. Contact: 847/526-2010.

JAN. 19-21 Idaho Nursery Association Horticultural Trade Show, Boise, Idaho. Contact: 800/462-4769.

JAN. 19-22 ALCA Interior Landscape Conference and Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. Contact: 703/736-9666.

JAN. 20-21 Northern California Turf & Landscape Exposition, Santa Clara, Calif. Contact: 510/505-9600.

JAN. 20-22 WinterGreen 2000, Atlanta. Contact: 706/632-0100.

JAN. 23-25 Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association/Nebraska Arborists Association, Omaha, Neb. Contact: 816/233-1481.

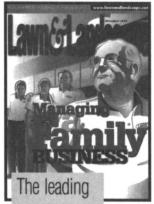
JAN. 24-25 Landscape & Lawn Care Industry Merger & Acquisition Forum, San Francisco. Contact: 800/869-4302.

JAN. 24-26 Ohio Nursery & Landscape Association CENTS Show and Nursery Short Course, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 614/899-1195.

JAN. 24-28 Professional Horticulture Conference of Virginia & Trade Show, Norfolk, Va.



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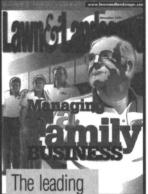
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Contact: 757/523-4734.

**JAN. 26-28** Iowa Nursery and Landscape Convention and Trade Show, Des Moines, Iowa. Contact: 816/233-1481.

JAN. 27 Northeastern Pennsylvania Turf School & Trade Show, University Park, Pa. Contact: 814/863-1368.

JAN. 27 NORCAL Spring Trade Show, San Mateo, Calif. Contact: 530/458-3189.

JAN. 27-29 New England Grows, Boston. Contact: 508/653-

**JAN. 27-29** Oklahoma State Nurserymen's Association Trade Show, Tulsa, Okla. Contact: 405/942-5276.

JAN. 28-29 The Gulf States Horticultural Expo, Mobile, Ala. Contact: 334/502-7777.

FEB. 2-4 ILCA Effective Landscape Selling Seminar, Willowbrook, Ill. Contact: 630/472-2851.

**FEB. 3-5** PLCAA Management Conference, Tampa, Fla. Contact: 800/458-3466.

FEB. 6-9 ALCA Executive Forum, Las Vegas. Contact: 800/395-2522.

FEB. 9-10 New Jersey Trade Show, Somerset, N.J. Contact: 609/291-7070.

FEB. 9-11 Western Pennsylvania Turf Conference & Trade Show, Monroeville. Pa. Contact: 412/848-1674.

FEB. 10-12 Turfgrass Producers International Midwinter Conference, San Antonio, Texas. Contact: 800/405-TURF.

**FEB. 13-15** Lawn & Landscape School of Management, Dallas, Texas. Contact: 800/456-0707.

**FEB. 14-20** Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, New Orleans, La. Contact: 800/472-7878.

FEB. 16-17 California Landscape Contractors Association Landscape Industry Show, Long Beach. Contact: 916/448-2522.

FEB. 21-25 International Erosion Control Association Conference and Trade Show, Palm Springs, Calif. Contact: 800/455-4322.

**FEB. 23** New Jersey Landcape Trade Show and Conference, Secaucus, N.J. Contact: 201/664-6310.

MAR. 6-9 New England Turfgrass Conference & Show, Newport, R.I. Contact: 401/848-0004.

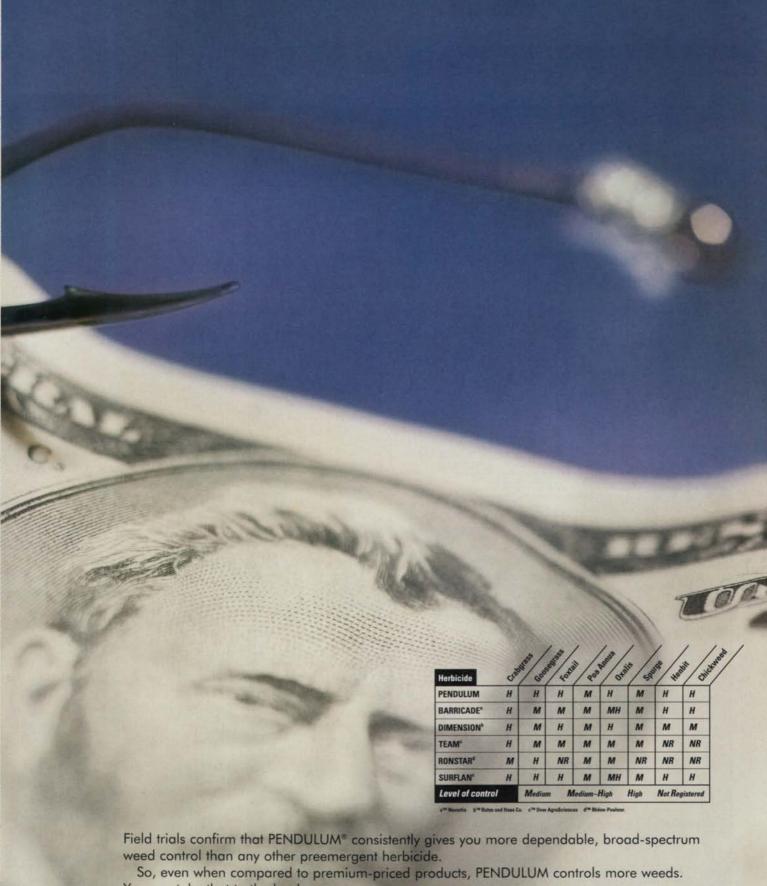
MAR. 9 New York State Turfgrass Association Western Regional Conference, Buffalo, N.Y. Contact: 800/873-8873.

MAR. 9-12 Associated Landscape Contractors of America Student Career Days, Starkville, Miss. Contact: 800/395-2522.



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## **Market Trends**

(continued from page 12)

"We are trying to create increased visibility for the myriad careers in the green industry by developing this curriculum," explained Bill Hoopes, director, training and development, Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, Ohio.

Jana Jaure, regional director for the FFA, explained that the curriculum will be written during the next 12 to 15 months. After that, at least one high school teacher from each of the 50 states will take part in a "Train the Trainer" program so they understand the curriculum and how to best teach it.

Hoopes said the curriculum steering committee hopes to have the

# Association

The International Society of Arboriculture

celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by raising money for arboricultural research. At its annual conference, arborists from across the country and around the world raised approximately \$300,000. Next year's ISA Conference will take place in Baltimore, Md.

Arthur "Buck" Jones, president of Arthur A. "Buck" Jones & Associates, Grayson, Ga., received this year's **Southern Nursery Association** Slater Wight Memorial Award, which is given annually to the individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of the industry in the South and to the association.

The **Pennsylvania Turfgrass Council** announced allocation of \$175,000 to support Penn State University's turfgrass science program. The Council designated its support for the three disciplines within the program: agronomy, entomology and plant pathology. The funds can be used for staff and research support for projects designed to solve problems relating to turfgrass pests and other cultural practices used in the turfgrass industry.

The **Professional Grounds Management So- ciety** elected its new officers who will each serve for a term of one year: Randall Willis as president, Kevin O'Donnell as first vice president, George Van Haasteren as second vice

president and Matt Vehr as treasurer.

The **Ohio Lawn Care Association** is sponsoring an internship program organized to place horticulture and turf management students in member companies, offering them an opportunity to see and experience lawn care and maintenance first hand.

## **Market Trends**

# People

Garick Corporation named **Raif Engelbrecht** as national sales manager.

Eagle Point Software announced three new technical representatives: **Jim Reinbold** as the Mountain representative, **Don Reichle** as the Northwest representative and **H. Scott Griffin** as the Midwest representative.

**Pat Holubetz** was promoted to sales associate at Finn Corp. Barenbrug Northeast announced the following promotions:

Michael Mulder to vice president – general manager, John Carson to sales and marketing manager for the turf market and Robert Macfarlane to territory manager. Gwyneth Mansue joined Barenbrug Northeast as a marketing support representative.

Roberts Supply added **Gerry Sawyer** to the company as a sales representative.

**William Harper** joined Spectrum as region sales manager, Professional Products, for the company's central Florida region.

Rain Bird promoted Janet Reilly to director of operations and Christine

Pappas to marketing communications manager.





(Top) Carson, (Bottom) Harper

curriculum available in high schools for the 2001-2002 school year, with the potential for ultimately offering the classes in more than 7,500 schools nationwide.

"Students will take classes that cover the basic science education they need for the lawn care, landscape or golf industries, and then they'll split off into functional courses for their area of focus," Hoopes added.

"The green industry wanted to find a recruiting avenue to deal with the labor shortage, and this curriculum will promote the industry as a whole," explained Jaure.

IN THE NEWS

## TruGreen Changes Interior Name

MEMPHIS, TENN. – TruGreen-ChemLawn announced it changed the name of its interior division from TruGreen-ChemLawn Plantscaping to TruGreen Interior PlantCare. The change was made to differentiate the

(continued on page 20)

## **Sundance**

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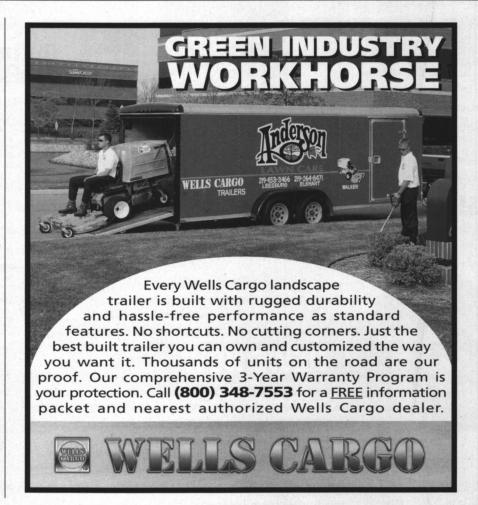
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# Reintrocuring

Lawn & Landscape would like to announce a series of new informational features at www.lawnandlandscape.com.

For more than two years www.lawnandlandscape.com has supplemented our magazine with additional stories and an online archive of back issues. Now we'll be providing weekly information from Novartis Turf & Ornamental Products, Gempler's and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

NOVARTIS TechNotes is a weekly update on pertinent landscape information from around the country, including soil temperatures, turf management tips and updates on conditions like insect infestations.

## GEMPLERS will provide Lawn

& Landscape Online visitors with regular information from its new binder, "How to Avoid an INS Nightmare." This information will be of particular value to those contractors employing an Hispanic workforce.

All A 's weekly "Driver Safety Toolbox Talks" is for contractors looking to improve training programs and weekly tailgate talks.

## Bulletin Boards

Lawn & Landscape
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board is your forum for questions,
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winterization,
computer software
and pricing landscape services. If
you have an
industry-related

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and have an expert or peer in the lawn and landscape industry answer it. If you have an opinion, share it on the discussion board and make your voice heard. The bulletin board is a great way to make contacts and connections across the nation for free.

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USE READER SERVICE #114



## **Market Trends**

(continued from page 17)

interiorscape service from the company's chemical lawn care service. The company has interiorscape operations in more than 50 cities across the country.

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

## Case, New Holland Finalize Merger

CHICAGO, ILL. – Case Corp. and New Holland announced the merger of the companies into CNH Global N.V, Racine, Wisc. The estimated combined 1998 revenues of Case and New Holland are about \$12 billion, said CNH President and CEO Steven Lamb. "We are extremely excited about the opportunity in front of us," Lamb said.

Part of CNH's strategy will include incorporating the global balance and strength of the companies and emphasizing product differentiation between the Case and New Holland products. Case and New Holland equipment will retain the brand names and be known as a product line of CNH, Lamb said. There is geographic recognition of the brand names of Case and New Holland and CNH wants to keep the market strengths those names carry, he added.

Part of that product commonality will include a move toward making parts for similar Case and New Holland product lines interchangeable to give the company more leverage when it comes to purchasing materials and to keep costs down for the buyer.

## McGinnis Merges with Jenco (continued from page 10)

"Now, we feel as though we're the dominant player in two significant geographic markets—the Southeast and the Southwest," Walker noted. "But there are still many other opportunities for us in terms of additional acquisitions or raw start-ups of new locations."

Walker explained that the merger, combined with some outside financing, provides the new organization with additional capital to finance additional growth.

Walker was also quick to point out, however, that he believes this deal will position the combined entity to better serve the landscape contracting industry, which currently represents about 95 percent of its business.

"This deal means that our plant procurement power will get better, which will translate to better prices, and we'll also be able to offer better service and more convenient locations for our customers," he explained. "For example, we've computerized everything in our stores, and time is money to the

landscape contractor. So, if they can get in, place an order and get out of the store quicker, that's better for them.

"We're also in a stronger position with growers to command better quality plants and contract growing," Walker continued.

Walker predicted continued consolidation for the nursery and distribution industries in the not-to-distant future.

"I think the 80/20 rule will apply with 80 percent of nursery product coming from 20 percent of the players," he forecasted. "There aren't too many people in this industry who can afford to write the big checks, so we're becoming dependent on the investment community that hasn't looked at this industry a lot and doesn't understand the issues we deal with, like perishability of plants. Now, we're starting to get some of this attention, however, and outside investors are seeing that this industry includes more than just mom-and-pop garden centers."

IN THE NEWS

## **GIE Show Strong** and Will Expand

BALTIMORE, MD. – The Green Industry Expo continued its growth as almost 6,000 attendees visited the nearly 300 exhibitors and sampled from more than 50 educational events. The GIE Show is produced by the Associated Landscape Contractors of America, the Professional Lawn Care Association of America and the Professional

Grounds Management Society.

Next year's show, to be held Nov. 4-7 in Indianapolis, Ind., will feature a new element as will hold its Interior Landscape Conference in conjuction with the GIE for the first time.

ALCA attributed shifting the show from its current January dates that coincide with the Tropical Plant Industry Exhibition to the increasing diversification the association is seeing in its members' services.

Nearly 30 percent of ALCA members offer interior services, and ALCA expects this number to grow.

"Clearly, members are meeting the client requirements for one-stop shopping," observed Chris Raimondi, chairman of the ALCA Interior Landscape Council and president of Raimondi Horticultural Group, Ridgewood, N.J. "Next year's GIE will provide interior and exterior members valuable information on this growing trend."

Some interior contractors are concerned that moving their show to November creates challenges in the midst of holiday decorating season, and ALCA said the GIE is exploring moving show dates to October following next year's show.

On the 1 = 3

Metro Atlanta Landscape & Turf Association - www.malta-inc.org

Swingle Tree & Lawn Care, Denver, Colo. - www.swingletree.com

Outdoor Power Equipment Institute - www.opei.org

Monsanto - www.monsanto.com

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## **Breaking News**

## AstraZeneca and Novartis Announce Agrochemical Merger

LONDON – The consolidation of the specialty pesticide industry continued today as the boards of AstraZeneca PLC and Novartis AG announced that they have each unanimously agreed to spin off their agricultural chemical businesses and merge them into the world's first dedicated agribusiness company, according to releases by both companies.

The companies announced that Novartis Crop Protection and Seeds businesses and Zeneca Agrochemicals will be merged to create Syngenta AG. The merger brings together companies that had combined sales in 1998 of \$7.9 billion, which will be the world's largest agrichemical companys with combined 1998 sales of \$2.9 billion in NAFTA, \$2.9 billion in Europe, \$1.1 billion in Latin America, \$0.8 billion in Asia/Pacific and \$0.3 billion for the rest of the world.

Ironically, Novartis was formed via the merger of Ciba and Sandoz in early 1996. Now, the company has decided to focus primarily on its growing health care business, hence the spin off of its crop protection and seeds businesses. Coincidentally, AstraZeneca was formed via last year's merger between Astra and Zeneca Professional Products.

Rumors of this deal have been circulating since the third quarter of 1999. The fact that some sort of deal would take place involving Novartis seemed likely when Randy Williams, who was named vice president of the global turf and ornamental business for Novartis last June, commented at an October media event held by Novartis that he didn't know if the company would still be Novartis "12 months from now."

According to statements made by the companies, the development of Syngenta will be based on the combination of the largest global sales and service networks with the broadest and most attractive product portfolio in crop protection and a leading position in seeds. Syngenta will build on the most profitable crop segments to create and capture increased value in the agribusiness food chain through accelerated innovation to meet the needs of growers, processors and consumers.

Meanwhile, Novartis' presence in the turf care industry is represented by products such as its herbi-

cide Barricade, its insecticides Avid and Award, its fungicides Alamo, Banner Maxx, Subdue, Compass and Medallion, and its plant growth regulator Primo Maxx. AstraZeneca's turf presence is represented primarily by its line of chlorothalanil fungicides.

"The launch of Syngenta creates the first global dedicated agribusiness company, a leader in its industry that will be well positioned for profitable growth. We have an outstanding outlook based on our rich and promising pipeline and our strong technology platform," said Novartis Chairman and CEO, Dr.

(continued on page 24)

## MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

## **Omni Facility Joins the Consolidation Game**

SOUTH PLAINFIELD, N.J. – The consolidation of landscape companies continued when one of the leading independent companies was acquired by a company striving to be a complete facility management group.

The Morrell Group, Atlanta, Ga., was acquired by Omni Facility Resources, thereby ending industry speculation about the future of Atlanta's largest remaining independent landscape company. George Morrell, founder of the company, will remain with the organization along with the rest of his management team.

"The Morrell Group is a classic example of the companies we're interested in," explained Betty Browne, president and CEO, Omni. "We're looking for leaders in their market with a great management team, a great customer base and who are looking for an investment in their company in order to fund future growth. That's what we've been doing, and that's what we'll continue to do."

Omni, which entered the landscape industry with its 1998 acquisition of Heyser Landscaping, Norristown, Pa., also announced the acquisition of Smith Fox Associates, which is one of the largest interior plant maintenance companies in the Philadelphia/Delaware markets. Smith Fox will operate as Smith Fox Heyser Associates after merging with Heyser Landscaping's interior plant maintenance division.

(continued on page 24)

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## **Breaking News**

AstraZeneca (continued from page 21)

Daniel Vasella, in a statement released by the company.

The merger is conditional on the share-holder approvals of Novartis and AstraZeneca and receipt of relevant regulatory clearances. Completion of the merger is expected to take place in the second half of 2000. Representatives of the turf and ornamental business for both companies said most plans for the future of the organization are still being determined.

Syngenta will have headquarters in Basel, Switzerland, and Michael Pragnell, presently CEO of Zeneca Agrochemicals, will be CEO of Syngenta. Pragnell said, "Zeneca Agrochemicals and Novartis' Agribusiness are an ideal fit with complementary product portfolios and a strong international sales and marketing culture. – Scott Hunsberger

Omni (continued from page 21)

Omni's acquisitions are of particular interest because these acquisitions signify a different approach to the consolidation game than the strategy that has dominated land-scape industry consolidation news to date. Omni's goal is to be a "true one-stop shop" for its customers, according to Browne.

"One-stop shopping is growing based on customer demand, and this is a trend that is only growing in strength," Browne explained. "We saw the outsourcing of services move from an experiment in business management to something that is a given in the corporate environment, and now we're seeing the next phase take place, which is vendor reduction."

Browne said Omni has revenues of about \$150 million and operates in 27 states, with more than \$30 million of that figure coming

from the landscape industry. Other revenues come from services such as mechanical and HVAC maintenance, air filter replacement services and commercial janitorial services.

With future plans including a potential public-stock offering, Browne said she expects Omni to continue its aggressive growth plans.

"When we bought Heyser, it was operating in five states," explained Browne, pointing out that the company wants to offer all of its services to all of its customers. "Now Heyser has offices in 16 states."

Much of this growth has resulted from offering landscape services out of the offices of other Omni companies across the country.

Browne also noted that she expects to see the pace of consolidation in the landscape industry increase during the next 12 months.

"But I don't think we'll ever see the rate of consolidation in the landscape industry that we saw in 1998," she noted. – Bob West

## MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

## **Ferris Goes the Simple Route**

PORT WASHINGTON, WIS. – The rapid consolidation trend in the landscape industry continued with a twist when Simplicity Manufacturing, a consumer lawn mower manufacturer, acquired Ferris Industries, Munnsville, N.Y.

The deal includes the purchase of 100 percent of Ferris Industries by Simplicity Mfg., including access to their distribution, according to Warner Frazier, chairman and CEO, Simplicity Mfg., who pointed to the current rapid growth in the landscape contractor industry as a key reason for Simplicity making the deal.

"The market for commercial mowers is increasing at a faster rate than the market for consumer mowers, so this acquisition is an opportunity for us to increase growth quickly," Frazier explained. "We looked to get into this market about 10 years ago when we acquired a small commercial mower manufacturer that didn't have a real presence in the commercial market, but we learned that you have to have a reputation for quality to grow in this market. In Ferris, we're getting a good line of quality products and a good reputation for product durability, innovation and after-market service. We did a lot of research and were very comfortable with Ferris' product line based on the testing we did with contractors and distributors."

David Ferris, chairman, Ferris Industries, noted the fueled demand for Ferris products and necessary increases in production capacity as the reasons for selling his company.

"A firm such as Simplicity can provide the capital and management necessary to accelerate the product development and manufacturing modernization programs planned for Ferris in the near future," remarked Ferris, who's role in the organization will change into a more consulting one as chairman emeritus.

Another reason for the acquisition, Frazier pointed out, is that many of Simplicity's dealers have been expanding their businesses to include professional mowers as well as residential units.

"We pride ourselves on having a strong network of independently owned retailers, and more of their time lately has been going toward the commercial segment," Frazier said. "So part of this acquisition has to do with matching the needs of our distribution. Also, growth in the big tractors that have always been a mainstay of our lines has been flat as more cutters of large acreage are using the large, riding, commercial-style machines to do the job instead."

Frazier said Simplicity's current branding strategy is to keep the Ferris name on the commercial mowers and continue to market them through independent distribution. Plans for Ferris' Criterion line for homeowners have not yet been determined, according to Frazier.

Ferris Industries employs approximately 120 people and has annual revenues of nearly \$25 million, and the Ferris line includes a wide variety of walk-behind and riding mowers with cutting decks ranging from 36 to 72 inches in width. The company has enjoyed significant growth in the last two years due to patented indepedent suspension technology for riding mowers.

Simplicity Manufacturing employs nearly 500 people and distributes its consumer products, which include riding mowers, lawn and garden tractors, chipper shredders, chipper vacuums, tillers and snow throwers, through a worldwide network of independent dealers and distributors. – *Nicole Wisniewski* 

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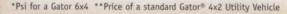


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## <u>In Minor's League</u>

**QUESTION:** There are so many things that a contractor has to focus on when starting a business. What do you think are the key areas for us to focus on?

**ANSWER:** There is no doubt that operating a successful landscape company is a tremendous challenge. Even in today's growing economy there are a number of issues that are difficult to deal with from the labor shortage to low-priced competition.

Having said that, there are still certain general areas for all contractors to concern themselves with if they are interested in making their business stronger and more profitable.

Following are 10 key areas for contractors to focus on mastering in their business. My hope is that these tips I share can be used by everyone regardless of their level in business.

**TIP NO. 1:** Deliver quality and do it quickly. This concept should be followed by everyone including someone new to the business or a seasoned industry professional.

Successful businesses realize that quality is not enough. Quality is meeting or exceeding customer expectations at a competitive price. Anyone, if given enough time and

training, can plant a shrub or mow a lawn well.

The best landscape professionals realize there must be a balance between doing quality work and doing it at a competitive price.

Remember that quality is always defined by the customer. You may think you are doing a great job or doing all of the right things, when in reality the customer thinks something else is important. For example, while you think green grass is important, it may be seasonal color.

**TIP NO. 2:** Be obsessed with providing exceptional customer service.

The good landscape professionals have figured out that it is necessary to have great quality, great prices and great service.

The bottom line is to be obsessed with providing good service. Contractors have to live this commitment everyday and have a passion for it. And everyone around you has to buy into it, too.

If a contractor makes this commitment to service and ties in quality, efficiency and responsiveness, then they will be at the top of the industry. It doesn't even matter which industry it is or what position they are in, they will still be a success.

TIP NO. 3: Set Goals.

If someone goes on a trip to an unfamiliar location, what is the most important item they will need before leaving? A map.

You need a map to get where you want to go.

It's the same with your career and your life.

Everyone needs a road map. You have to have a
game plan for success and identify where you
want to go, when you want to get there and what
it is going to take to achieve it.

**TIP NO. 4:** Become an effective communicator. The bottom line is, if you are a skilled communicator there are simply more opportunities for advancement.

If someone can sit in front of a client and clearly verbalize an issue or a situation, write a letter that successfully explains their position or even put together a clear, concise proposal, then that person's job will be significantly easier when dealing with clients.

Similarly, if someone can communicate a vision to his or her organization, get up and give a pep talk or simply know the best way to praise and reprimand employees, then he or she will go farther as a manager than someone who doesn't have these skills.

(continued on page 28)

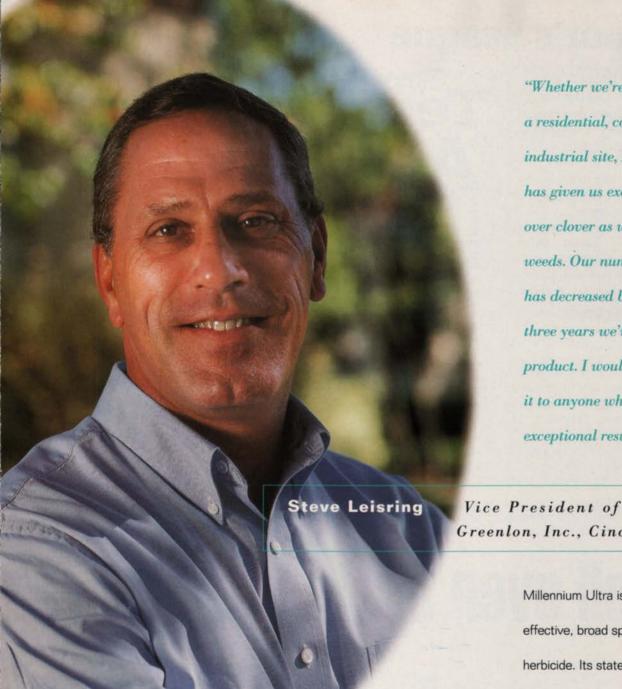


One of the most popular speakers at the 1999 Lawn & Landscape School of Management was David Minor, founder and former president of Minor's Landscape Services, a \$12million company in Fort Worth, Texas, that Minor sold to TruGreen-ChemLawn in 1998. David will share his thoughts and suggestions for managing a lawn and landscape business with readers via this monthly column.

In addition to serving the industry as a consultant and speaker, Minor is professor and director of The Entrepreneurship Center at The M.J. Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University.

Readers with questions they would like to ask David can do so by e-mailing them to bwest@lawnandlandscape.com or faxing them to Lawn & Landscape at 216/961-0364.





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## **In Minor's League**

(continued from page 26)

TIP NO. 5: Develop multiple skills.

It goes without saying that the most valuable employee in any company or industry can do a variety of things and do them well.

For the green industry, developing multiple abilities may include having strong horticultural skills, having good hiring skills or maybe even speaking Spanish.

Learn and master a number of different skills. Whether you are an owner, senior manager or mid-level manager, there will simply be more professional opportunities for you based on the number of skills you are competent at.

**TIP NO. 6**: Learn effective time management techniques.

Good time management means making the time to do the things that are most important. These might not be the tasks that someone wants to do, but they are the tasks they should do.

(continued on page 30)

# Ten List

t the Lawn & Landscape School of Management, David Minor, former owner of Minor's Landscape Services, Fort Worth, Texas, listed his top ten tips on how to be successful in the lawn and landscape industry.

- 1. Deliver quality and do it quickly.
- 2. Be obsessed with providing exceptional customer service.
- 3. Set goals
- 4. Become an effective communicator
- 5. Develop multiple skills.
- 6. Learn effective time management techniques
- 7. Develop your leadership skills.
- 8. Understand that your attitude determines your altitude.
- 9. Learn how to handle adversity.
- 10. Always focus on continuous self-improvement.

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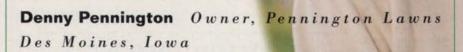
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**In Minor's League** 

(continued from page 28)

The best managers I know of can juggle a number of tasks and do them well. They can do this because they are organized and they know the priorities of the moment.

TIP NO. 7: Develop your leadership skills.

A leader has a few certain traits. First, a leader treats people fairly and decently. Second, a leader is sensitive to his or her staff's needs and wants. The people are at the top of his or her priority list. Third, good leaders let their people know that they are important.

We talk a lot in business about the customer. Good leaders satisfy the internal customer as well. The internal customers will make or break an organization. The internal customer is the company.

Leadership skill can be developed, but it is something that one has to work at.

**TIP NO. 8:** Understand that your attitude determines your altitude

Attitude is more than just being upbeat and positive, although this is a great start. Atti-

tude involves dealing with the issues of the day in the proper perspective and sometimes that is hard to do.

Have you ever consistently interacted

with people who always seem upbeat and positive? If so, what happened? If you are like me, that person rubbed off on you and made you and everyone around them better.

Everyone is in charge of their own attitude. If your attitude is positive and you have your life in perspective, then you are on the right path.

TIP NO. 9: Learn how to handle adversity.

This industry is tough. It is for tough people. The clients can be demanding. The employees can be problematic. The hours are often long. The business can be stressful. If you can handle adversity, you are on the right

path to success because there certainly will be adversity.

TIP NO. 10: Always focus on continuous self-

The good landscape

professionals have

figured out that it

is necessary to have

great quality,

great prices and

great service.

improvement.

The best thing about this journey is that it is a journey that never ends. People can always learn and be better whether they are 22 years old. There are always opportunities to learn and grow.

The path to success is a bumpy one. But I'm convinced that if you choose the right path

and focus on the right things, you can become the one person you dream you can be.

The author is a Contributing Editor to Lawn & Landscape magazine. He can be reached at 817/257-5608.

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power of Horsepower to control

When the weather gets warm,



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problem weeds in the summer.

## DeSANTIS LANDSCAPES

HEADQUARTERS: Salem, Ore.

FOUNDED: 1974

**BUSINESS SERVICES: About 55** 

percent of sales come from residential customers with 40 percent commercial and 5 percent government. Sales are from 47 percent installation work, 42 percent maintenance and 11 percent irrigation services.

1999 REVENUES: \$1.4 million
PROJECTED 2000 REVENUES: \$1.7

million

EMPLOYEES: 32 year-round, 6

seasona

## THE COMPANY

MISSION STATEMENT: Create and maintain an environment of lasting beauty, gain the trust and respect of our community and continually improve ourselves and our company.

FUTURE CHALLENGES: Dealing with the labor shortage, maintaining and improving upon the company's culture and becoming better long-term managers of the business.

## THE OWNER TONY DESANTIS

BACKGROUND: Worked in a variety of capacities and industries before working for a Salem landscape company. Founded his own company four years later. Serves on the board of directors for the Salem Rotary Club, a local civic group called "Today's Choices,"

Tomorrow's Community," the Salem Chamber of Commerce, ALCA and OLCA.



## Cover Story

by Bob West



Tony DeSantis has traveled a route many other contractors know quite well.

After deciding that a college degree wasn't what he was interested in, he worked a variety of jobs in a number of different industries before going to work for a local landscape company. There he found an occupation he loved and work he had a knack for.

After spending four years with the company, DeSantis was convinced he had what it takes to start his own landscape company, and, in 1974, DeSantis Landscapes was born in Salem, Ore.

"I quit my job and started the company in October, which wasn't great timing on my part," he recalled with a laugh. "I had a couple of jobs lined up to start out, but then the first one stiffed me for half the money."

DeSantis didn't waver from his decision, however, in part due to the fact that he had a clear goal in mind.

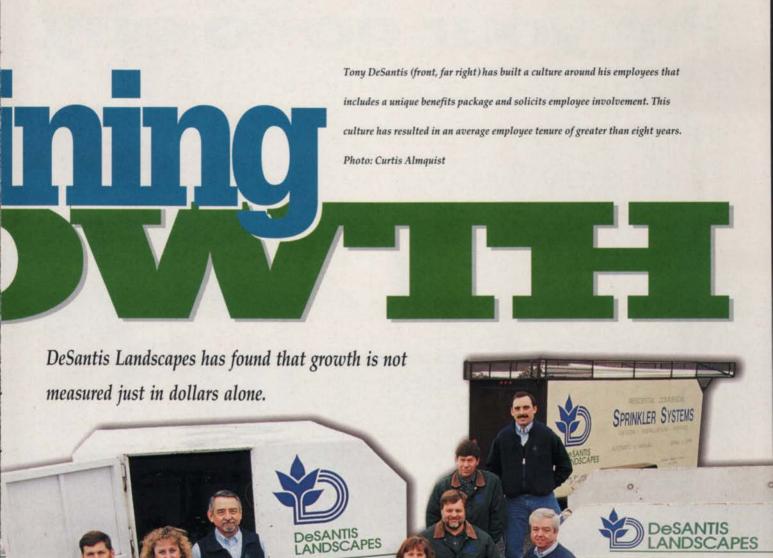
"I never had any dreams of building some big company and making a whole lot of money," he noted. "I was just looking for personal satisfaction, and running this business has helped me achieve that."

**MARKET CAPPED.** Those who have never been to Salem need to know a few things about the capital of Oregon in order to appreciate the business climate there. The city is not particularly large – 150,000 to 180,000 people in the entire metropolitan area. In addition to being the state capital, Salem is

also home to a county seat, which means government has a considerable presence in the area. In addition, the corporate world largely has elected to set up operations 40 miles north of the city in (continued on page 36)

**DESANTIS LANDSCAPES** 

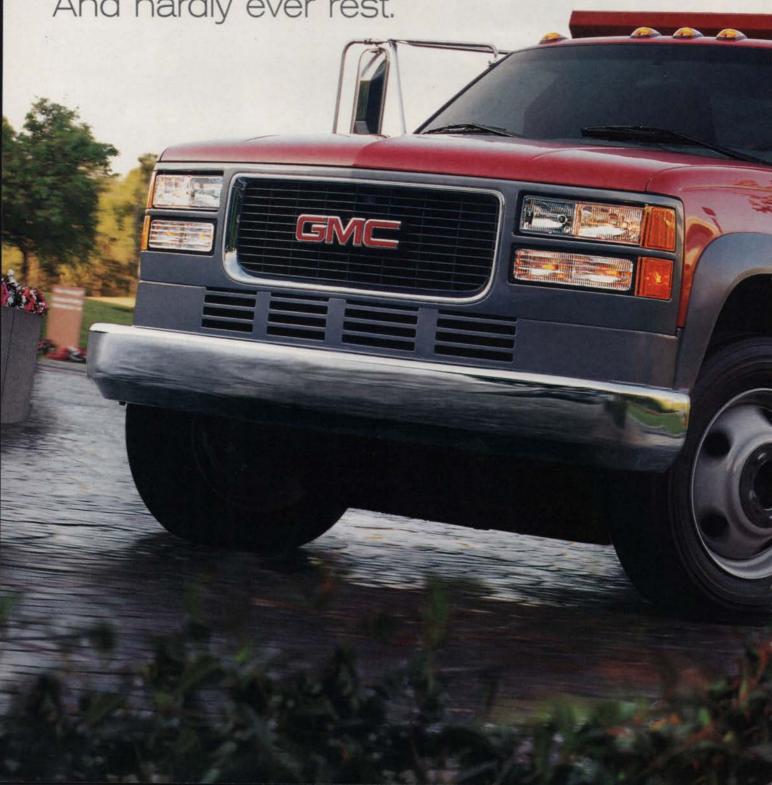
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#### **Cover Story**

(continued from page 33)

Portland, meaning the big-dollar commercial jobs are limited in Salem.

But DeSantis Landscapes has found a niche in the market and a manner of building relationships throughout the community that have helped it grow to \$1.4 million over the last 25 years.

About 58 percent of the company's total sales come from construction revenues, which include irrigation, water features, lighting and hardscapes, with about 42 percent being maintenance dollars.

Construction dollars are split about 70:30 in favor of the residential market, with de-

When commercial contracts

are what DeSantis is look-

ing for, community

involvement has been

a wonderful source of

opportunities (as well as

personal enrichment).

sign/build being the company's preferred type of construction contract. "We generally won't bid on a project unless we're invited to or we have a very strong relationship," DeSantis explained.

Maintenance dollars are divided about 60:40 in favor of the commercial market, and DeSantis said that while he would like to see certain markets grow for the company, the current mix works well.

"At times, we think we'd like to do more high-end residential work, but there isn't a whole lot of that here," he explained. "We would also like to do more commercial work, but that's a challenge without going after bid work or expanding into Portland and fighting the competition there."

Instead, DeSantis focuses on community involvement, word-of-mouth referrals and building relationships with local general contractors to drive the business' growth.

"We want to build relationships with general contractors so they ask for us on jobs they handle," DeSantis related. "The best and easiest way to build these relationships is by working with the contractors so they see who we are and what we do. Then we try to be as helpful as possible for any client.

"Helping the contractor on the job instead of causing headaches goes a long way to building a relationship," he continued. "We won't spend a lot of money doing things we weren't contracted for, but if the electrician needs to dig a trench and we've got a trencher already on the job, what does taking a few minutes to help out really hurt?"

DeSantis said he also tries to build relationships with general contractors he hasn't worked with by visiting their office periodically and identifying a person who represents a key contact at that organization.

"I'll stop in and see them every once in a while so we're comfortable with each other and we'll talk about what work they have (continued on page 38)





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#### **Cover Story**

(continued from page 36)

going on," he pointed out. "I'm not trying to sell to them, but I want to establish communication and let them know who we are."

In fact, DeSantis said the company doesn't do much actual selling at all, which is both good and bad.

"Not doing a lot of selling is good be-

cause then we're doing jobs that come to us through relationships and referrals, and that's the work you want to get," he explained. "Not doing a lot of selling is only bad if you're taking every potential job that comes in the door without qualifying that job to see how well it fits your business.

"Before we take any job, we look at it and ask ourselves three questions," he continued. "Can we perform quality work on that job? Do we have the personnel to do the job? Does the client's schedule fit with our schedule?"

DeSantis said the company also takes a serious look at the potential client to make sure they are getting involved with the right type of person, and this is particularly important with residential clients.

"We're very careful with homeowners," he said. "The challenge is that with homeowners you don't usually know a lot about them before they become clients. But we use a pretty thorough questionnaire to learn about them, find out how they've worked with other contractors in the past and look for any red flags.

"For example, if the potential client has worked with a bunch of other contractors in the past and has never been satisfied with them, is the problem the contractors or the homeowner?" DeSantis pointed out.

When contracts are what DeSantis is looking for, community involvement has been a wonderful source of opportunities (as well as personal enrichment).

"I joined the Rotary Club some years ago, and at the first meeting there was 200 members, most of whom were wearing suits, and I asked myself what in the world I was doing there," he recalled. "But, today, I can't even tell you how many jobs we've gotten out of my involvement in that group."

DeSantis said he can justify making this time commitment to these groups because of the money the company saves using its civic involvement in place of a lot of advertising.

"People like to do business with people they have some connection with and with people they trust," he remarked. "And it's wonderful to be a part of an organization that helps so many people. People in business should be looking at issues other than just their bottom line in order to maintain a healthy balance in their whole life.

**THE RIGHT GROWTH.** While DeSantis Landscape's growth has been fairly consistent over its 25 years in business, the numbers don't tell the entire story of growth.

A large measure of the personal satisfaction that DeSantis noted he was looking for through his work has obviously come to him through (continued on page 40)



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#### **Cover Story**

(continued from page 38)

providing for the people that work for him.

"Without the people we're nothing, and without happy people we're next to nothing," he observed. "People that are healthy, happy and lead balanced lives do a better job, they're more dependable, they're more conscientious and they relate better to cus-

tomers, which is most important because every employee we have out in the field is my personal representative."

The company's commitment to its employees certainly is unique in the industry. In addition to a complete benefits package that includes a 401(k) and profit sharing program, the company makes personal loans available at no interest for employee's personal emergencies or to help pay for their children's education. DeSantis Landscapes also offers flexible work hours for employees involved as mentors in local schools and provides an employee assistance plan that gives employees access to confidential counseling for personal issues.

"Yes, the costs of these programs can be scary sometimes, but I know there is a payoff that I just cannot put down on paper," DeSantis noted. "If one of my employees comes to work and he is having problems with his marriage, then he is not going to be a good employee. I think it behooves me to give him the opportunity to get counseling. Having the appropriate balance is so important in all of our lives."

DeSantis' drive to help people grow within the organization has led to the creation of an environment of openness and empowerment based on the Total Quality Management concept that few companies can rival.

After hearing a presentation on TQM, DeSantis hired the presenter to facilitate a team-building session for the company. This individual interviewed all of the employees to measure their opinions about DeSantis Landscapes and then conducted a two-day retreat to go over the information gathered through the interviews and help chart the company's course for the future.

DeSantis said that a particular benefit of this management strategy has been the environment and culture that has developed in the business, particularly as this environment has made employees feel empowered.

As part of the strategy, the company instituted monthly company-wide meetings that included an outside facilitator. "Hiring that outside facilitator was the most important part of those meetings," DeSantis related. "Otherwise, the meetings would have been me talking at the employees some more, and this fresh voice and outside perspective helped everyone feel like equal participants."

Any issues relating to the business were fair game for discussion at these meetings, and every employee was encouraged to speak his or her mind.

"Maybe the maintenance department was getting behind and couldn't keep up, so we'd discuss that and the construction guys would

(continued on page 42)



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#### **Cover Story**

(continued from page 40)

offer to come in on a Saturday and help," DeSantis recalled. "Those meetings helped everyone realize we're all in this together.

"TQM and empowerment has reinforced the culture that is here as far as valuing people, and it has given us all the tools to try to understand how to value others and why each of us feels valued," DeSantis explained, adding that the company's mission statement was developed through these regular meetings and group involvement.

Over the last few years, the monthly meetings have been scaled back to quarterly meetings, but now the maintenance department and the construction department each meet weekly to discuss developments within their groups. In addition, key managers meet weekly to make they are on the same page.

DeSantis is quick to caution, however, that developing such a culture necessitates constant managing challenges.

"The term 'empowerment' gets twisted around to mean 'total freedom,' and that's

not what it means at all," he countered. "Letting this happen is an easy trap for people in the field and for management to fall into, but empowerment needs to be a result of people having an opportunity to participate, to be involved and to make decisions. But that all has to be done within the parameters that were set out."

DeSantis said the company has learned some hard lessons about the fine line between letting people make their own decisions and still retaining an environment where the employees accept questions about the decisions they make.

"Poor decisions get made if proper guidelines aren't very clear for everyone to follow and people aren't trained in how to make good decisions," he explained, pointing to a recent problem that led to the firing of two foremen because of poor decision making.

"We found out that two individuals were taking advantage of us by abusing the system," DeSantis painfully remarked. "These have been the worst weeks I've had in this business because people were taking advantage of this total freedom that was being called empowerment."

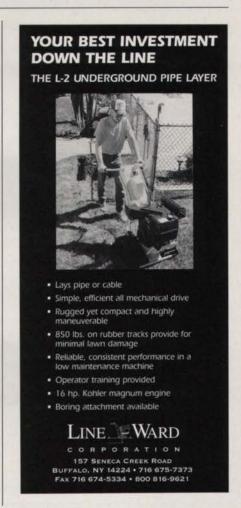
As a result, DeSantis said he and his managers realized they were not providing sufficient guidance and supervision in the field, even though most of his crews were operating fine and not abusing the system.

"Maintenance work is so routine that managers can easily fall into the trap of thinking everything is fine and they don't have to be in the field unless there are problems," he pointed out. "Well, that's not true."

DeSantis remains committed to empowering his employees through this all, and he actually believes the company will come out of this incident a stronger business.

"We've actually seen a boost in morale since we let go of these individuals because of the negativity they had created, and now we can get back to being a strong, teamoriented group," he said. "As managers,





#### Cover Story

we've made sure everyone knows that we still believe in them, and now we all know each other a little bit better than we did."

**LEARNING ABOUT SYSTEMS.** Asking DeSantis to look toward the future for his company presents somewhat of a new challenge for him. He is quick to admit that longterm strategic planning has not been one of the company's strengths thus far.

"We've always been looking at the very short term," he relates with a laugh. "But I'd like to see us continue working on refining our systems, so I'm trying to spend more time on the business instead of in it."

Strategic planning is part of that initiative for the company, and a steering committee of five key managers has been established to devise a plan for the future.

"I want to build an entity where no one misses a beat if I'm not here," DeSantis said.

In the meantime, systems such as the flow of a customer work order through the company will get his attention.

"We defined this process sequentially a few years ago, and the system we use has been working relatively well. But we need to examine the process to make sure we're following all of the steps because bypassing some of the steps is easy to do, and that shows up either in weakened customer service or lost profitability."

Until all of the systems are in place and the strategic plan has been completed, DeSantis will continue to focus on his people and his own personal sense of satisfaction.

"I'm not worried about figuring out how to grow the business because that's not my goal," he related. "Growth is good to pursue and is necessary to keep people challenged, but I talk to companies that grow 50 percent in a year and I wonder how they do it. My goal is to continually make the company better and maintain a healthy bottom line.

"To me, being bigger can mean bigger headaches unless you have the trained staff to handle the work," DeSantis remarked. "And I think too many other contractors think success is only determined by annual sales and growth over the previous year, but that's not necessarily true. Success is whatever you want it to be."

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine



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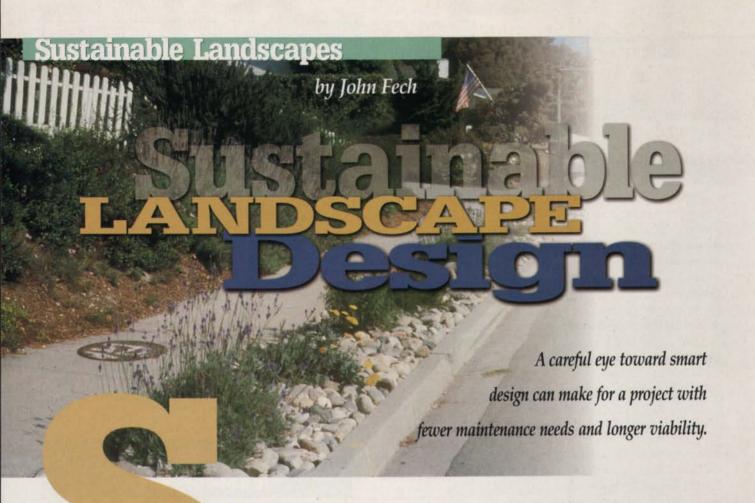
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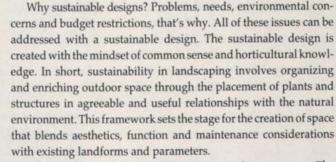
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Sustainable? What do you mean sustainable? There is a certain mystique about that term, no doubt. Today's consumer is more and more likely to request a landscape that is low input, environmentally friendly and, oh yes, looks great as well.

Consumer demand, then, drives what has become a current term for a concept that has been evolving for many years – the sustainable design. It's a way for landscape users to have their cake and eat it, too. The issues addressed in a good sustainable landscape design are enhanced aesthetic appeal, low maintenance costs, less water and pesticide usage, enhanced open space and amenity value, and perhaps enhanced habitat value.



Why emphasize design at all? It's a start, a plan, a purpose. The design provides a logical, organized framework for creating a solution to problems at hand. Sustainable design will aid in the determination of the best use and maximization of site features. When these factors are considered, outdoor space is created and enhanced, which maximizes the usefulness of the site.

(continued on page 48)



The lower photo illustrates a problematic design because of the slope and thin stretch of turf, both of which are maintenance challenges. The top photo shows low-maintenance design options to handle such site problems. Photos: John Fech

# Honda Proudly Announces Some Dramatic Reductions.

No, this isn't a closeout sale. It's a brand new line of string frimmers from Honda. And thanks to some dramatic reductions, now you really can do more with less.

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Maintenance Reduction Honda's trimmers use straight gasoline, eliminating the hassle of mixing gas and oil. And they can run two times longer than comparable 2-stroke engines on the same amount of fuel!

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#### Sustainable Landscapes

(continued from page 45)

**THE DESIGN PROCESS.** So, how does one get started with sustainable design? Many avenues are available, including starting from scratch or retrofitting an existing landscape. Whatever the approach, the key consideration is to choose plants that last. Good design is not about making a list of the

client's favorite plants and installing them all over the site. Rather, sustainable design is a creative, problemsolving process that usually involves seven stages:

1. Accept the situation

#### The sustainable design is created

with the mindset of common sense

and horticulture knowledge.

- 2. Analyze facts and feelings
- 3. Define goals and objectives
- 4. Generate ideas to achieve goals
- 5. Select "best" idea or combination of ideas
- 6. Implement ideas
- 7. Evaluate design

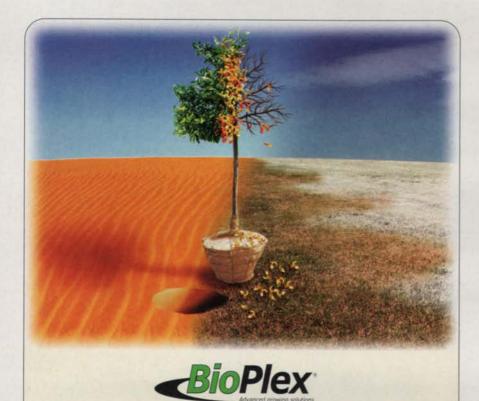
The seven-stage process is circular; it is ongoing and never ending. Feedback from the client, previous owners, growers, neighbors, subcontractors, etc., provides valuable input into the overall process of achieving sustainability. The circular process is extremely useful, ensuring that the design solution is appropriate by providing a basis for a discussion of various possibilities.

The existing parameters and land forms dictate the initial consideration of the process. The best place to start is with an accurate base map. The base map provides all of the necessary information regarding the permanent features of the area, including property lines, easements, building footprints, contours, utility locations, and existing plants. A north arrow and graphic scale must be included to provide reference when communicating the eventual design to customers and to retain accurate space relationships if the finished plan is reduced or enlarged.

The overall design concept of a sustainable design will determined the program. Quite simply, program components are a listing of wants and desires of the stakeholders of a project. Early on in the design process, they tend to be general. A typical program statement for a sustainable design would include things such as minimized turf areas, creation of ornamental beds containing native plants, screening with native trees, etc. Specific plants are chosen at the end of the design process, not the beginning.

The next step is a site inventory / analysis. This is best performed on site, gathering information, taking notes and gaining a "sense of place" in the landscape space. The inventory is first, an identification of problem areas as well as the assets of an area. Use a piece of tracing paper and lay it over the base map. This provides for accurate note taking and documentation of potential concerns or op-

(continued on page 50)



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#### Sustainable Landscapes

(continued from page 48)

portunities for features. You might want to photograph the area for future reference and comparison. If the finished design turns out well, you might want to use the before and after photos to sell a job to another customer. The analysis comes later, an evaluation of the importance of each specific condition. For example, the soils, neighboring views and existing buildings might be only a slight concern, but the slope and prevailing winds could be serious contentions.

A "bubble diagram" should be drawn after the program is in place and the site is analyzed. This will help put the written word into a visual format. Again, working on tracing paper over the base map, diagram the site according to function. Traffic flow, highuse areas, low-use areas, water features and so on are all components that should be drawn in at this point. Exacting detail is not necessary in a bubble diagram. Circles and ovals with a light colored shade will suffice. Concept drawings are then developed, com-

bining the program considerations with the site analysis information and the original design concept for the project.

AESTHETICS, FUNC-

**TION, MAINTENANCE.** The sustainable design should enframe important views, such as lakes, parks, skylines and other vistas. In many cases, this can be accomplished with the creation of wall planes along property lines or between sections of the landscape. As the wall planes materialize, landscape depth should be developed. This is done by incorporating large shrubs and small trees in front of taller ones, smaller shrubs and hedges in front of the small trees, and groundcovers and perennials in front of the small shrubs. If this is implemented, the space takes on a "layered" appearance.

Sustainable designs are much more aesthetically pleasing if space is defined clearly

Sustainability in landscaping involves

organizing and enriching outdoor

space through the placement of plants and

structures in agreeable and useful relation-

**ships** with the natural environment.

and simply. In large landscape spaces, berms and existing landforms, such as rock outcroppings and stream banks, can create space. Of course, space definition can be achieved through plantings and man-made structures as well. When choosing the plants, keep year-round interest in mind. This is especially important for southern and transition zone landscapes, yet northern sites need at least three-season interest. The presence of small fruits, attractive bark, interesting seedheads and dominant textures can be quite attractive to users of the landscape.

The most powerful design element for sustainable landscape design is mass/void.

(continued on page 52)



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#### **USE READER SERVICE #33**

#### Sustainable Landscapes

(continued from page 50)

Because of the dominance of turf in the traditional landscape, when relatively large ornamental beds are installed adjacent to large turf expanses, the ornamentals become the mass, and the turf, the void. Plants should always be massed when practical to avoid a lonely look to a solitary shrub or flower. When smaller masses are implemented, be sure to use odd numbers to avoid distraction to the landscape user. Even numbers of specimens present a natural "puzzle," one that the user of the landscape may attempt to solve by dividing the even number in two.

Repetition of landscape elements can be helpful aesthetically as well as from a maintenance standpoint. Using more of less tends to unify the overall landscape, creating a more pleasing look than using entirely new plants in each section of the landscape. The plants chosen should be repeated, integrated and overlapped with others to create a sense of familiarity, yet maintain the clients' interest as they move through the site.

A sustainable design must be functional as well as attractive. Microclimates identified in the site analysis must be considered, especially when plant selection takes place. Northern and eastern exposures, especially if shaded, create entirely different growing conditions for plant materials than western and southern exposures. Consider the number of hours of direct sunlight received, density of the overhead canopy, prevailing winds and soil drainage of the microclimate.

In general, turf must be separated from ornamental plants. The two plant types have drastically different moisture and fertility requirements. The sustainable design strives to group plants according to similar needs. Plants out of place are subjected to deficiencies or excesses simply because of location. Ornamental plants placed in the middle of turf areas are usually overfertilized and overwatered. Similarly, narrow strips of turf along side ornamental beds are difficult to mow, fertilize and irrigate, and tend to receive less care than they require. Instead, design beds for efficient machine use and place plants within beds whenever possible, minimizing scattered elements.

All plants require adequate drainage. Drainage is a priority in a sustainable design, and should be noted as a problem in the site inventory. Mitigation steps such as soil (continued on page 56)

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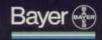
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#### Sustainable Landscapes

(continued from page 52)

amendment and drain tile installation must be implemented to create good rooting conditions. Once the conditions exist for good plant growth, the sustainable design places the right plant in the right place. Placement and plant selection is crucial to the sustainability of the landscape. Healthy plants have fewer insect and disease problems, requiring lower maintenance from the client or the maintenance worker. Properly sized trees and shrubs need minimal pruning, drought tolerant perennials need minimal irrigation, etc.

Plant selection criteria are not only site

related. Consider these criteria to the program statement. If a clean, kept turf is important, avoid plants with large persistent leaves, fruits or seed pods that will create an untidy appearance on the lawn. Genetic resistance to fungi and insects is just as important for ornamental plants as it is for turf cultivars. Plants that are naturally resistant to pests require much less maintenance than susceptible ones in terms of time and cost of control agents.

Sustainable landscape design requires the consideration of many factors in a comprehensive approach in order to reach the goals set forth in the beginning paragraphs. The wise landscape contractor will take the time and effort to inform themselves of the importance of the various facets involved in order to produce a final project that benefits all involved.

The author is an extension educator at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln.



A landscape design that doesn't consider maintenance needs can end up with plants in shaded areas and numerous mowing obstacles, as seen here. Photo: John Fech



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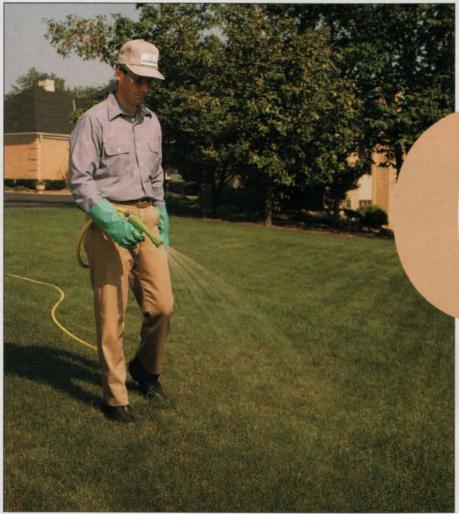
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**USE READER SERVICE #123** 

by Bob West



Some contractors prefer liquid formulations for pesticide applications, but concerns about product freezing during spring applications in cool weather leads to use of granular products. Photo: Monsanto

A number of factors go into maximizing the effectiveness of a preemergence herbicide program.

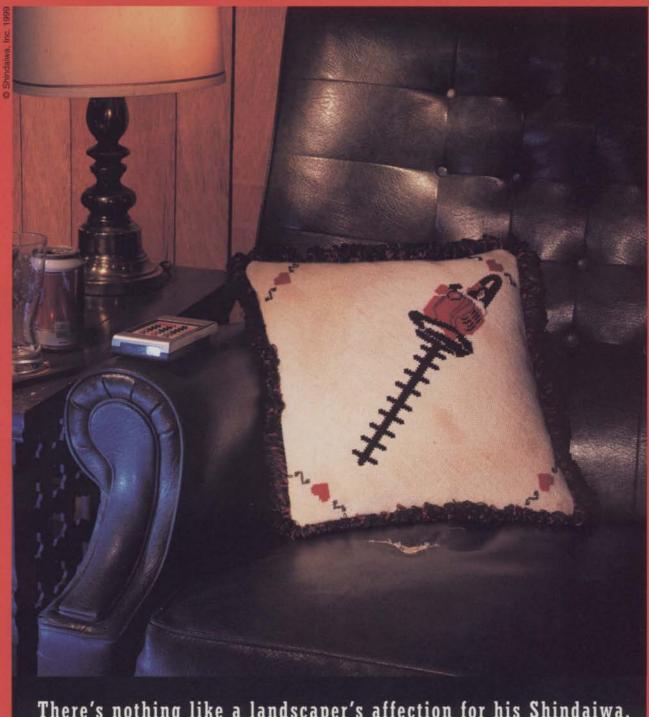
Obviously, lawn care operators, even those in the more northern climates, keep busy month after month taking care of customers' lawns and battling the weeds that want to inhabit those lawns.

Preemergence weed control products represent just one of the weapons available to the lawn care professionals in this war, but the effective use of that one weapon can often mean the difference between victory and defeat.

"I spend thousands of dollars on preemergence herbicides every year, and I wish I didn't have to put them down. But I just can't see a lawn care program without these products," remarked Rick Wolfe, president, Spring Green Lawn & Tree Care, Niles, Mich.

(continued on page 60)

## Getting Ahead (Market Allege Ahead (Market Ahead (



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#### Preemergent Control

(continued from page 58)

"The preemergent application is an important aspect of the lawn care program because the density of the turf hasn't developed early in the spring," agreed Kyle Miller, senior technical specialist, American Cyanamid, Parsippany, N.J.

When a healthy, dense stand of turf is present, lawn care operators have less to worry about in terms of weed establishment because the competition for space and nutrients from the turf minimizes weed development, explained Miller. Early in the spring, however, many lawns lack that complete turf coverage in a yard and even the tiniest gaps in turf present opportunities for weeds and a summer full of headaches.

WHEN THE TIME IS RIGHT. A contractor can buy the right product and make a text-book application, but everything will be wasted if the application isn't timed correctly.

"Timing depends on the weeds the applicator is trying to control," pointed out Dom RELATIONSHIP OF THE ACTIVE PRE-EMERGENT HERBICIDE ZONE, GERMINATING WEEDS AND TURF ROOT SYSTEM

Active pre-emergent herbicide zone

Turfgrass roots below the herbicide layer

This image illustrates how preemergence herbicides should form a barrier to weed germination while not harming the turf.
Image: University of Arizona

Riego, area technical development manager, Monsanto, Indianapolis, Ind. "Most of the weeds that LCOs are trying to control from a preemergence standpoint are crabgrass, which typically germinates when soil temperatures get to around 60 degrees Fahrenheit. Miss that mark and the crabgrass will germinate and the product won't work.

"For other weeds, like goosegrass, the application can be made a little bit later because goosegrass germinates at warmer soil temperatures," Riego added. "Applicators don't want to miss the window by delaying the application, but, fortunately, the preemergence products we have today have longer residuals," explained Dr. Jamie Breuninger, technical leader, Dow AgroSciences turf and ornamental research group, Indianapolis, Ind.

"I think one of the issues we're always encountering with lawn care operators is that sometimes they have to make some preemergence applications a little too early (continued on page 85)



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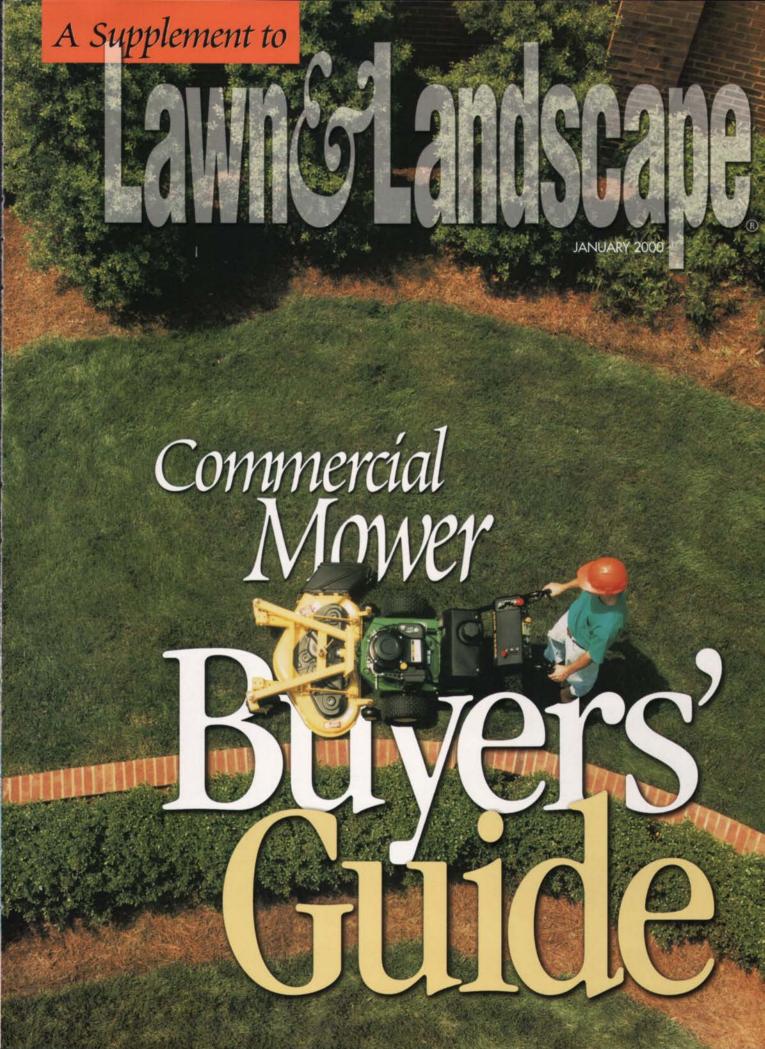
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Cover photo courtesy of Deere & Co.

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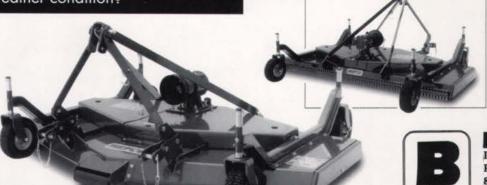
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Even though Sam Burke refers to walk-behind mowers as 'simple, low tech design' machines, he doesn't deny that they dominate his equipment fleet.

"Despite the popularity of compact riding machines, my crew likes walk-behind mowers," explained Burke, president, Landscape One, Hebron, Ky. "They like the feeling of being in control that walk-behind mowers give. Even though I would like to buy more riding mowers because I feel that the purchase would help employee fatigue, my employees tell me that fatigue isn't even a factor – they love their walk-behinds."

Mower manufacturer sales echoed contractors' propensity for walk-behind mowers. Bill Shea, vice president of sales and new product development, Ferris Industries, Munnsville, N.Y., which was recently sold to Simplicity Mfg., Port Washington, Wis. (See Breaking News, page 21), said walk-behind sales at Ferris are up 30 percent this year, while Encore Mfg. and Snapper also reported increased walk-behind sales.

Industry-wide statistics tell a different story, however. According to the Outdoor Power Equipment Institute, shipments of commercial walk-behind units increased only 2.4 percent from fiscal year 1998 to fiscal year 1999, while shipments of commercial riding units increased 35 percent, showing the growth and popularity of compact riders over walk-behind mowers.

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While walk-behind mowers may be simplistic in design when compared to compact riding mowers and the newest in mower technology, they get the job done and are still an asset to contractors' maintenance jobs.

**NEW FEATURES.** When a contractor shops for mowers, the first thing he or she should look at is the durability of the machine, suggested Shea.

"Contractors need to make sure that all of the components of the mower they are going to purchase are quality and will last," Shea said.

While durability and quality are a factor, manufacturers are adding features to enhance mower performance and operator comfort.

On Ferris Industries' hydro walk-behind mowers, an easy height adjuster was added to the floating deck because contractors were looking for an easier way to adjust the height of cut, Shea remarked.

Because of the heightened awareness of environmental sensitivity in the industry, environmentally friendly gas tanks became a new feature on Encore mowers, according to Forrester.

"More friendly fuel systems are larger and mean less refueling out on a job," Forrester explained. "We're manufacturing machines with a better fuel system early on because we feel that the industry bureaucracy will dictate that better fuel systems need to implemented industry wide."

Forrester said 7-gauge reinforced deck plates help make the deck spindles a level structure to support the wheel motors in hydrostatic walkbehind mowers.

"Reinforced top plates on decks are better than welded deck plates because the heat used to weld a piece on top of the deck adds additional stress and encourages cracking," Forrester explained. "And with hollow crash bars on the front of the mower instead of solid pieces, you can hit something and the bar will bend inward. With a solid crash bar, the deck tends to bend with the bar."

Another new feature in walk-behind mowers is a deck with a left cutter section that lifts up to allow the machine to change from a 52-inch deck to a 36inch deck and fit through fence gates.

"Contractors have long complained about using a small mower in areas that are inside fences or tight, hard-to-access properties," said Rick Cuddihe, vice president of sales, Great Dane Power Equipment, Elm Grove, Wis. "The mower helps contractors increase productivity once they get inside the

gate. Plus, it takes up less space on a trailer."

John Gabrielson, owner, John's Custom Care, Keller, Texas, said he noticed that walk-behind mowers have easier access to parts that need extra maintenance and that the gas cap is larger so less gas is wasted from spillage.

**HYDRO VS. BELT DRIVE.** While some manufacturers claim to be selling more hydrostatic mowers than gear drives, Outdoor Power Equipment Institute 1999 figures tell a different story, according to Bob Walker, president, Walker Mfg., Ft. Collins, Colo.

"OPEI 1999 figures show that 32 percent of commercial intermediate walk-behind rotary turf mowers with 36-inch decks and larger sold are hydrostatic and 68 percent are gear driven," Walker pointed out. "Cost could be a contributing factor. Mowers with hydrostatic drives are \$1,500 more than their belt-driven counterparts."

Brian Masterson, senior marketing manager, Toro, Bloomington, Minn., agreed.

"The industry prefers gear-drive over hydrostatic-drive now," Masterson said. "Gear-drive machines are more efficient and less expensive."

Gabrielson pointed to price as the reason he doesn't own hydrostatic mowers.

"For the price, I don't notice an increase in productivity with hydrostatic mowers," Gabrielson said. "If I want to increase productivity, I use a riding mower."

However, Bruce Tucker, president, Tucker Environmental Contractors, Boca Raton, Fla., stopped using gear-driven mowers a few years ago.

"We were always fixing something on our gear drive walk-behinds," Tucker said. "But we have had zero problems with our hydrostatic mowers."

"Gear-drive walk-behind mowers are too sloppy," agreed Burke. "The belts can slip, especially in bad weather, and they don't have the immediate response hydrostatic drives offer."

Low-maintenance, longevity and durability are a few of the words Rick Lemcke, co-owner, R. M. Landscape Industries, Rochester, N.Y., used to describe hydrostatic-drive, walk-behind mowers.

"Our hydrostatic mowers run in all types of weather – they never fail us," Lemcke exclaimed. "Every year, we resell our mowers and we get more money back from our hydrostatic mowers every time. We're averaging about 50 to 60 percent of our purchase price back on hydrostatic mowers. Resell-

ing gear-drive mowers, we'd be lucky if we got 20 cents on the dollar."

**THE FUTURE.** The future, according to manufacturers and contractors, is all about increased productivity. One way manufacturers are improving their mowers for longer lives is by focusing on mower engines.

Offering more complete ranges of different brands and types of engines is important and will be in the future, according to Masterson.

"Contractors want productivity," Masterson stressed. "Anything can go fast, but a machine has to be able to process a certain quality of cut as well – productivity isn't just a speed issue. Contractors also want more choices in other areas, such as the ability to bag, the ability to recycle or the ability to side discharge."

Just as he was turned on to hydrostatic-drive, walk-behind mowers, Tucker said he thinks he'll feel the same way about water-cooled engines.

"Right now, we change the oil on our machines with air-cooled engines every 50 hours," Tucker explained. "I have heard that contractors using water-cooled engines change the oil even less frequently — maybe even up to every 100 hours. Water-cooled engines cost about \$1,500 more than air-cooled engines, but I think with less down time spent maintaining the equipment, that extra cost could be made up quickly."

The future will also mean less noise, according to Peter Whurr, vice president of product management, Textron Turf Care & Specialty Products, Racine, Wis., and water-cooled engines may help contribute to that.

"A lot of contractors have been asking us to reduce the noise level on our new machines," Whurr said. "Water-cooled engines will have some form of noise deadening affect."

Other future improvements contractors would like to see include easier access to the deck and constructing a machine to make blade changing go more smoothly.

"We change our blades every morning," said Lemcke, "This process takes about 20 to 30 minutes per machine. If manufacturers could make blade changing a quicker process for me, that would save me some time in the morning."

The author is Associate Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

M5

## Attachments

ALAMO INDUSTRIAL: rotary, flail-hydraulic and mechanical, boom mowers, shredders, tree and brush cutters

AMERICAN HONDA: 54-inch front sweeper, 2stage, 38-inch snowblower, sulky

BLACK ROCK MFG.: sulky, catchers

COUNTRY CLIPPER: grass bagger - vacuum

wand, deluxe suspension seat, traction kits

DIXIE CHOPPER: snow plow, snow blower, mulching and vacuum attachments

**DIXON INDUSTRIES:** grass catcher, mulching kit

ENCORE MFG.: mulching, grass collection

**EXCEL INDUSTRIES:** Uppercut deck, catchers,

Model 430 Max

Mulching Mower

with MX460

rangewings, stump cutter, snow removal

**EXMARK MFG.:** UltraVac Commercial Collection System, MicroMulch mulching accessory

THE GRASSHOPPER: dozer blodes, rotary brooms, Quik-D-Tatch Vac Collection Systems, snowthrowers, Aera-vator, tine rake dethatcher, ROPS, sunshade canopy

HECK: snow blades, cabs

**JUNGLE JIM'S ACCESSORY** 

PRODUCTS: sulky, Jungle Wheels, Jungle Jack, gear caddy, Blower Mate, Trimmer Mate, Jungle Boot, Jungle Sheath

KUBOTA TRACTOR CORP.: snow blower blade thatcher tire chains, weights

LESCO: stand-up sulky, cloth and steel collection systems

LEVELACQ: seat moving and leveling system

MTD PRO: catchers, mulching kits, standing sulkies

RICH MFG.: Convert-A-Barrow (wheelbarrow), light kit, aerator, delhatcher

SCAG: grass catchers, ROPS, sulkies

**SNAPPER:** ROPS, grass catchers, broom, dozer blade, Dual Fork ZF tail wheel options, Wide Stance ZF tail wheel options, Ninja mulching system, two-stage snow thrower, debris blower.

TORO: mulching kits, baggers (soft and hard), heavy duty air filter, deluxe suspension seat, mulching plates

TRU-CUT: steel catchers, mulching plate, side discharge and bag

WALKER MFG.: snowblower, rotary broom, dozer blade, dethatcher, debris blower, edger, boom sprayer

WOODS EQUIPMENT: grass collection, snow blade, snow blower, broom, ROPS

WRIGHT MFG.: grass gobbler grass catcher, mulching plate

YAZOO/KEES: deluxe seat kit. ROPS



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**USE READER SERVICE #152** 

# Over Hill, Old George Over Hill, Over H



Implementing safety procedures for employees to follow when mowing steep embankments can help reduce machine damage and employee injury. Photo: John Deere

Mowing sloping embankments and hilly
terrain can be
dangerous
and costly for
the contractor
who doesn't
take the right

precautions.

Landscape contractors don't have a choice when it comes to mowing various gradations of terrain – no matter how challenging. As the Nike slogan inspires, they 'Just Do It' to get the job done and to satisfy the customer. But are they doing it safely and productively?

"We almost lost a few machines in a lake because we tried to mow the lawn along an embankment when it was wet and slippery," related Bruce Tucker, principal, Tucker Environmental Contractors, Boca Raton, Fla. "Cutting a lawn is not more important than employee safety. If we wouldn't have implemented procedures to follow when mowing steep embankments, we might have had additional employee injuries and lost some machinery as well."

According to many mower manufacturers and landscape contractors, properly utilizing a mower's safety features and following safe practices while mowing challenging areas, such as steep slopes, riverbanks, narrow spaces or rolling contours, can save a contractor not only valuable time going over terrain that was improperly cut, but a possible injury as well.

**CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON WISELY.** "Hilly terrain and pond areas add depth to a landscape," noted Bill Lowe, marketing product manager, Snapper Mowers, McDonough, Ga. "And landscape architects use them and add or delete them to design a landscape for proper water drainage and flow of traffic, not for ease of mowing."

Since there isn't much control in the development or change in rolling hills and riverbanks, choosing the right mower with the right features to use on these areas can be the most important aspect of completing a job correctly.

"On steep areas, contractors tend to feel more comfortable using a walk-behind mower," Lowe explained.

"Contractors have more control on really steep areas using a walk-behind and the operator isn't in as much jeopardy," added Bob Walker, president, Walker Mfg., Ft. Collins, Colo. "Most walk-behinds have a shut-off feature so if the contractor slips and lets go of the mower handles, the machine and its blades automatically stop."

While walk-behind mowers are a good choice for steep areas, they aren't always the most productive, especially



if the area being mowed is vast, Walker said.

"In a large area, contractors can give up productivity if they don't use a riding mower," he remarked.

In general, zero-turning radius mowers are not able to handle as steep of slopes as tractor-style mowers that have steerable wheels. Walker said.

"On a zero-turning radius mower, total dependency rests on the rear wheel traction controls for stopping, steering and maneuvering the machine," pointed out Bill Shea, vice president of sales and new product development, Ferris Industries, Munnsville, N.Y. "So when the rear wheels slip, the front wheels will go wherever gravity takes them."

"Usually the wheel that begins to slip is the one that has the least weight on it," Walker added.

Mower manufacturers and contractors have been attempting to even out this weight ratio. Contractors will actually add weight to the mower wheels and manufacturers are developing mower features that will even out the weight from one end of the machine to the other. For example, Ferris Industries claims that their riding mower with independent suspension "maintains the same weight ration on all four wheels, keeping all four wheels on the ground on uneven turf," Shea said.

One of the biggest problems a mower can have when dealing with steep hills is a lack of traction, according to Walker.

"The machine should have the ability to be controlled. It needs to contour without scalping and cutting into the ground or skipping and leaving areas uncut," Walker explained.

To avoid scalping or skipping, Walker suggested contractors look for decks that have not only the ability to float up and down but also the ability to twist and rotate side to side.

"Some decks don't have these combined capabilities and are fairly rigid moving side to side," he said. "Without the extra ease of moving side to side or diagonally, a mower will only be able to contour in an up and down motion properly."

A lack of traction means a contractor won't be able to mow side to side on a steep hill – the most visually appealing way, pointed out Jim Forrester, distribution manager, Encore, Beatrice, Neb. Contractors will mow hills crossways, an approach called diamond mowing, to compensate for this lack of traction and still maintain a nice looking cut.

"Also, the smaller the deck size used in contoured areas," Walker continued, "the greater the ability for a closer cut because smaller decks have a better terrain following ability than larger decks."

While deck size is important, so is deck suspension, which will vary on front cut and mid-mount mowers, Walker said.

"A mid-mount mower is not going to have the kind of suspension available in a floating deck

design that a front-mount mower has because the midmount deck hangs beneath the mower in between the wheels so there's not as much opportunity for suspension," he explained. "So, whatever happens to the mower body on a mid-mount usually happens to the deck as well. A frontmount is usually mounted on its own suspension system."

Besides a smaller machine, Tucker suggested that contractors look for machines that are lower to the ground with a balanced structure.

When it comes to mowing on slopes, however, con-

tractors shouldn't be concerned about equipment they purchase as long as they follow the operator's instructions, pointed out Peter Whurr, vice president of product management, Textron Turfcare & Specialty Products, Racine, Wis. Before being sold, commercial machines are tested on a certain degree of slope, Whurr said.

"Our product must go through a slope performance test so that when we stipulate proper mower operating procedures in our manual, we know the product will perform to certain design perimeters," Whurr said.

Whether a contractor uses a walk-behind or riding mower on steep slopes, a demonstration before purchase is essential, especially after a contractor has identified a difficult area to mow, Walker said.

"Contractors should not buy equipment for a certain area until they test it on the property it's going to be used on to ensure it will work," Shea recommended. "Most dealers will come to the site with the machinery for a demonstration."

ROPS. A safety feature developed on mowers for the purpose of protecting operators from injury in case the machine tips over while mowing hills is the Rollover Protection System or ROPS. Some government sites recommend that their grounds managers only use machines with ROPS. Walker said safety experts tend to agree that a similar safety mechanism needs to be implemented industry-wide.

"If a machine is used often on slopes, then an advantageous move from an end user would be to

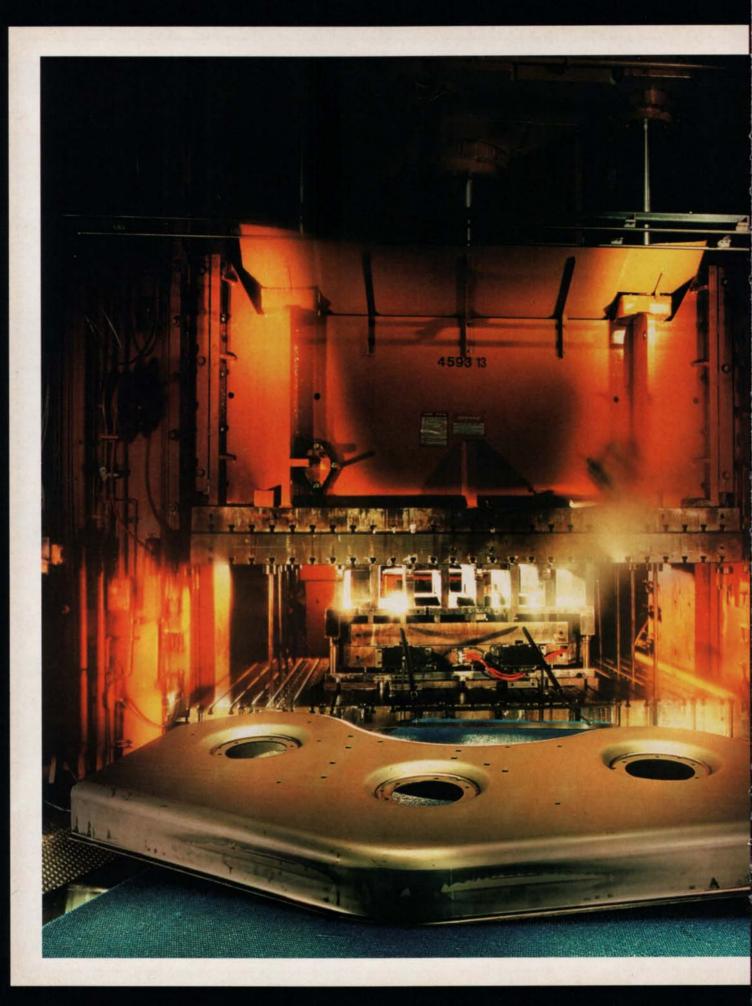
make sure that mower has a certified ROPS structure on it," Whurr agreed.

While there are certain benefits to ROPS as long as it is certified and used correctly, which means the operator needs to wear the seat belt that comes along with it, manufacturers haven't noticed a significant safety improvement because of the additional roll bar. In fact, Walker said a machine with ROPS may not always be the best choice for contractors.

"First of all, if a machine has a roll bar, it has to have a seat belt to be a certified

ROPS," Walker explained. "Most contractors are getting on and off the machine so much all day that they don't take the time to rebuckle their seat belts. The seat belt is a key part to the ROPS 'safety' feature, but for a contractor, who needs to get on

ne of the biggest problems a mower can have when dealing with steep hills is a lack of traction.



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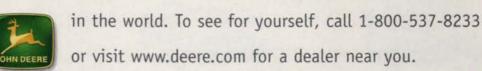
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and off the machine, it's not efficient.

"We can't say that roll bars have never saved anybody," Walker continued, "but there is some controversy. Think about if someone were to roll into a riverbank wearing their seat belt in complete compliance with ROPS and then couldn't unhook their seat belt to get off of the machine and drowned. The issue concerning whether ROPS is actually considered rollover 'protection' is debatable after looking at every aspect of the system and the potential accidents that could happen."

Also, ROPS makes the machine taller, which means it can get hung up on low trees and bushes, Walker added.

However, a safety mechanism like ROPS also goes through the same extensive testing as a machine without ROPS, Whurr explained, so contractors should have no reason to fear adding it onto a machine for safety reasons.

"Just as we test mowers in maneuverability, dynamic and static tests, we test mowers with ROPS in a similar 'worst possible condition on an X-degree of slope' test," Whurr said.

MOWING RIGHT. Mowing an area correctly and cautiously is just as important as choosing the proper machine. Most manufacturers include safe mower practices in their mower manuals, and according to Tucker, contractors should be implementing their own safety guidelines.

The first step is to judge whether the slope is too dangerous to mow, advised Rick Lemcke, co-owner, R.M. Landscape Industries, Rochester, N.Y.

"During our safety training, we show our employees the maximum slope a walk-behind can take," Lemcke explained. "If the area looks steep enough to sled down, we recommend that it shouldn't be mowed. We would rather suggest a client change the gradation of the area with landscaping or add groudcover as a less expensive alternative to maintaining that area by mowing it."

After determining that the slope is a safe

enough degree to mow, a contractor should walk the slope first to look for holes and/or obstacles that might get in the way, said Ken Raney, advertising manager, Excel Industries, Hesston, Kan.

And, before going up a hill, an operator should spend ample time maneuvering the mower on flat ground first to get a feel for how it operates under normal conditions, Walker suggested.

When using zero-turn radius riding mowers, Tucker shared that he never makes a true zerodegree turn, especially on a hill.

"On an embankment, we never turn completely around," Tucker said. "We'll move in a 'pull up and pull back' motion instead."

The best bet for mowing a dangerous area may be using a walk-behind, Lemcke pointed out.

"Even though riding mowers tend to feel more stable than walk-behinds, they can slip and aren't as flexible," Lemcke explained.

If the ground along a slope is wet, heavy equipment should not be used on it, Tucker warned.

"Using heavy equipment on wet ground creates ruts and makes the job look sloppy," Tucker noted. "Instead, we'll take a 24-inch walk-behind mower and a weed eater and mow the embankments by hand to be safe."

"A 36-inch walk-behind can mow most turf even if the turf is too wet," added Sam Burke, president, Landscape One, Hebron, Ky.

When the decision comes down to employee safety vs. getting the job done, Burke said employee safety comes first.

"We educate our customers and explain to them that we have discretion over how and when to mow," Burke said. "If we can't mow an area one day because of employee safety or potential property damage, 99 percent of our customers understand that the area cannot be cut. If the site is a high visibility commercial site and needs to be cut, we'll use a weed eater to do it, but we'll charge an extra 10 percent for having to mow under these conditions, and most of our customers understand the reason for the extra cost."

"If our employees don't feel comfortable mowing a sloping area, we tell them not to mow it and ask them to put the information in their job report," echoed Tucker. "We also ask employees for their thoughts on ways they or other employees might feel safer mowing that area."

The author is Associate Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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# Mowers Defined

AIR-COOLED ENGINE – engines that circulate air through the chamber to carry heat away.

ANTI-SCALP WHEELS – small rollers affixed to the bottom of the mowing deck to prevent deck from gouging the ground. Adjustable gauge wheels offer the same benefit but can be manually adjusted and set within a range of 3 inches.

AUTOMATIC BLADE STOP (ABS) – A safety feature that stops the blade automatically when a handle or foot pedal is released, but the engine keeps running. Required safety equipment available on all mowers.

BAGGING – the ability to take clippings and transport them from the cutting chamber via a chute to an attached bag that sits between the handles (or behind the riding mower). Placing the bag between the handles instead of on the side makes it easier to trim using either side of the mower.

**DECK SIZE** – the deck size refers to the width of the cutting chamber the blade operates in.

DIAMOND MOWING – mowing diagonally up and down a steep hill to compensate for a lack of mower traction and to give the cut lawn a neat appearance.

DISC DRIVE – with disc drive, a friction plate rides against a drive plate allowing the operator to change forward speeds without clutching (as required with gear drives).

electric start and back-up recoil —
with electric start, operator uses key to start the
engine instead of using a starter rope that needs
to be manually pulled then recoils.

ERGONOMICS – study of physical effects of operating power equipment on the body through vibration and forces exerted on areas such as wrists, arms and back.

**FRONT-MOUNT** – riding mowers with the cutting deck in front of the operator's seat.

GAUGE – the measurement of thickness of steel, most commonly used in mower decks; the numeric measurement of the gauge of steel is inversely related to the width of the steel itself. **GEAR-DRIVE** – mowers where the drive wheels are powered by gears; requires shifting of gears by operators.

HEIGHT-OF-CUT ADJUSTMENTS – ability to raise and lower the cutting height of the machine allowing operator to cut grass at optimum length.

HORSEPOWER – a unit for measuring the power of engines. One horsepower is equal to the force required to raise 33,000 pounds at the rate of 1 foot per minute.

**HYDROSTATIC DRIVE** – mowers with drive wheels that are powered by hydrostatic pumps; dual hydrostatic drive offers operators zero-turn radius capabilities.

INDEPENDENT SUSPENSION – a system of control arms and coil springs on the front or rear drive wheels allowing each wheel to move up and down independently, smoothing out rough, uneven turf.

LIQUID-COOLED ENGINE – engines that circulate a liquid, generally water, through the chamber to carry heat away.

MID-MOUNT OR BELLY MOUNT – riding mowers with the cutting deck directly beneath the operator's seat.

**MULCHING** – practice of cutting and recutting grass clippings in one pass over a lawn to minimize the size of the grass clippings and accelerate the rate at which the clippings decompose; this process is also referred to as grasscycling.

OPERATOR PRESENCE CONTROL (OPC, engine-kill system) – on all walk-behind mowers, a handle must be engaged to start the engine and, when the handle is released, automatically stops the engine. The "engine-kill mechanism" on most riding mowers is under the seat.

PISTOL GRIPS – one method of steering walkbehind mowers; operator has right and left handles that apply braking pressure to the corresponding drive tires.

### **PIVOTING FRONT FRAME OR FRONT AXLE**

- this feature allows all four wheels (or front axle wheels) to remain on the ground while the deck conform to the contours of the lawn, giving a smooth, even cut. push and self-propelled – a push walkbehind mower requires the operator to manually push the machine without the benefit of a drive system. This type of mower is usually for flat lawns less than ½ acre. A self-propelled walk mower comes with an additional handle that, when engaged, operates a belt that makes transmission pull the machine along by driving the rear wheels. Self-propelled models are better for lawns more than ½ acre or lawns with hills.

REAR DISCHARGE BAGGING — with a true rear discharge model, the clippings exit the cutting chamber via the rear of the deck directly into the bag that sits between the handles. Rear discharge bagging is excellent for bagging grass in geographic areas where the grass is often wet.

SIDE DISCHARGE – cuts and transports grass clippings to side discharge chute attached on the right-hand side of mower. Chute evenly disperses clippings back into lawn.

# SLOPE ANGLE/DEGREES -

1:1 = 100 percent = 45 degrees

2:1 = 50 percent = 26.6 degrees

2.2:1 = 40 percent = 21/8 degrees

3:1 = 33.3 percent = 18/4 degrees

((read: one to one (run vs. rise) equals a 100 percent slope and 45 degree angle))

SMOOTH TURN DIFFERENTIAL — on selfpropelled walk mowers, it's a gear mechanism that allows for smooth, tight turns without damaging the lawn. Essentially, when turning, one rear wheel remains stationary while the other wheels turn until turn/pivot is completed.

**STRIPING** – the process of creating patterns in the turf while mowing.

**THATCH** – long grass clippings thatr are not bagged or properly mulched and form a layer on the soil that may stunt new grass growth. Thatch can also result over time due to the natural defoliation of the lawn.

3-IN-1 CONVERTIBILITY – mower is designed to be used in any of three operations: mulching, bagging and side discharge. Additional accessory kits may be required depending on model.

**WINROWING** – the process of leaving a line of grass clippings after they are discharged from the mower deck.

**ZERO-TURN RADIUS** – the capability of some mowers to turn 180 degrees within their own radius; to be a true zero-turn machine, a mower must have dual hydrostatic pumps controlling the drive wheels independently; can be a walkbehind or riding mower.

This list was compiled with the help of Snapper, Ferris Industries and Excel Industries.

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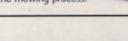
No numbness. No cramping. No more blisters.

Hustler's patented H-Bar" steering means no cramped forearms, no more numbed fingers. No speed levers to frustrate productivity. Just twist the H-Bar, and go. True zero-degree, counter-rotational turning.



EASY TO LEARN: training time measured in minutes. EASY TO OPERATE: beats pistol grips hands down. MORE PRODUCTIVE: effortless control for easy trimming.

SAFER: fully intuitive, firm grasp of controls throughout the mowing process.



1-800-395-4757

EXCEL INDUSTRIES, INC. | HESSTON, KS 67062 | www.excelhustler.com

Out Hustle all the rest"

As part of the second annual Commercial Mower Buyers' Guide, Lawn & Landscape is providing an overview of the products many mower manufacturers are currently offering professional contractors.

Included in this guide is a listing of companies that participated, along with each organization's contact information. Also, following is a compilation of each manufacturer's walk-behind mowers, riding mowers, attachments and accessories.

# Company Listings

# ALAMO INDUSTRIAL

1502 E. Walnut Seguin, Texas 78155 800/882-5762 www.alamo-industrial.com

# AMERICAN HONDA MOTOR CO.

4900 Marconi Drive Alpharetto, Ga. 30005-8847 800/426-7701 www.hondo.com

# BLACK ROCK MFG.

1153 Industrial Blvd. Louisville, Ky. 40219 800/314-8984 www.blackrockmfg.com

# COUNTRY CLIPPER

613 W. English Corydon, Iowa 50049 800/344-8237

# DIXIE CHOPPER

6302 E. County Road 100 North Coatesville, Ind. 46121 800/233-7596 www.dixiechopper.com

# **DIXON INDUSTRIES**

Airport Industrial Park, P.O. Box 1569 Coffeyville, Kan. 67337 800/264-6075 www.dixon-ztr.com

# **EASTMAN INDUSTRIES**

Hover Mower 87 Bell St. Portland, Maine 04103 800/760-1680 www.hovermower.com

# ENCORE MFG. CO.

P.O. Box 888 2415 Ashfand Ave. Beatrice, Neb. 68310 800/267-4255 www.encoreequipment.com

# **EXCEL INDUSTRIES**

P.O. Box 7000 Hesston, Kan. 67062 800/395-4757 www.excelhustler.com

# EXMARK MFG. CO.

2101 Ashland Ave.
Beatrice, Neb. 68310-0808
402/223-6300
www.exmark.com

### FERRIS INDUSTRIES

23 Milford St. Hamilton, N.Y. 13346 800/933-6175 ext. 267 www.independentsuspension.com

### GIANT-VAC MFG.

P.O. Box 195 South Windham, Conn. 06266 860/423-7741 www.giont-voc.com

# THE GRASSHOPPER CO.

P.O. Box 637 Moundridge, Kan. 67107 316/345-8621 www.grasshoppermower.com

### GREAT DANE POWER EQUIPMENT

305 S. New Albany St. Sellersburg, Ind. 47172-0104 704/846-6617 www.greatdanemowers.com

### HECK

122 W. Second, Box 134 Peobody, Kan. 66866 800/835-7805

### HOWARD PRICE TURF EQUIPMENT

18155 Edison Ave. Chesterfield, Mo. 63005 314/532-7000

### HUSQVARNA

9006 Perimeter Woods Drive Charlotte, N.C. 28216 800/GET-SAWS www.husqvarna.com

# JOHN DEERE COMMERCIAL & CONSUMER EQUIPMENT DIVISION

4401 Bland Rd. Raleigh, N.C. 27609 800/537-8233 www.deere.com

# JUNGLE JIM'S ACCESSORY PRODUCTS

12300 Aiken Road Louisville, Ky. 40223 502/244-7934 www.junglejimsop.com

# KUBOTA TRACTOR CORP.

3401 Del Amo Blvd. Torrance, Calif. 90509 888/458-2682 www.kubota.com

### LESCO

20005 Loke Rd. Rocky River, Ohio 44116 800/321-5325 www.lesco.com

### LEVELACO, LLC

23 F. Clarke Circle, Unit 1A Bethel, Conn. 06801 888/538-7437

# MTD PRODUCTS

P.O. Box 361131 Cleveland, Ohio 44136 888/420-3693 www.mtdpro.com

## RICH MFG.

P.O. Box 145 Thorntown, Ind. 46071 765/436-2744

# SCAG POWER EQUIPMENT

1000 Metalcraft Dr. Mayville, Wis. 53050 920/387-0100 www.scog.com

# SNAPPER

535 Macon Road McDonough, Ga. 30253 888/762-7737 www.snapper.com

# STEINER TURF

289 N. Kurzen Rd. P.O. Box 504 Dolton, Ohio 44618 330/828-0200 www.steinerturf.com

# TEXTRON TURF CARE & SPECIALTY PRODUCTS

1721 Packard Ave. Racine, Wis. 53403-2564 888/922-TURF www.ttcsp.textron.com

### TORO CO.

8100 Lyndale Ave. Bloomington, Minn. 55420 800/348-2424 www.toro.com

### TRU-CUT

3221 San Fernando Road Los Angeles, Calif. 90065 323/258-4135

### WALKER MFG. CO.

5925 E. Harmony Rd. Fort Collins, Colo. 80528 970/221-5614 www.walkermowers.com

### WOODS EQUIPMENT CO.

6944 Newburg Road Rockford, Ill. 61108 815/732-2141 www.woodsonline.com

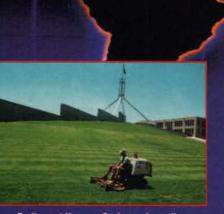
# WRIGHT MFG.

18761 N. Frederick Ave. Gaithersborg, Md. 20879 301/330-0086 www.wrightmfg.com

# YAZOO/KEES POWER

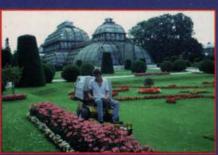
P.O. Box 4449 Jackson, Miss. 39296 800/723-9496 ext. 337 www.yazookees.com

# Commercial Mowers BUYETS GUIDE



Parliament House . Canberra, Australia





Schönbrunn Castle . Vienna, Austria



Residential Property . Kalispell, Montana

# Setting an international standard for "Fast, Easy, Beautiful Mowing!

# FAST

Walker completes the job fast using a balance of consistent ground speed, quick maneuvering, and trimming ability. In many applications, Walker wins the job time race, even in comparison Shloss Au to larger mowers with faster ground speed (it is job time that counts).

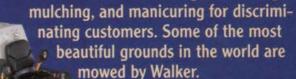
Zurich, Switzerland

# EASY

Walker takes care of the operator with comfortable seating, good visibility, and easy-to-operate, responsive controls providing full productivity and best use of labor.

# BEAUTIFUL

While "mow and blow" may be an acceptable standard for some mowing jobs. Walker offers beautiful mowing, vacuuming,



We invite you to see a demonstration of Walker's "Fast, Easy, Beautiful" mowing on your property.

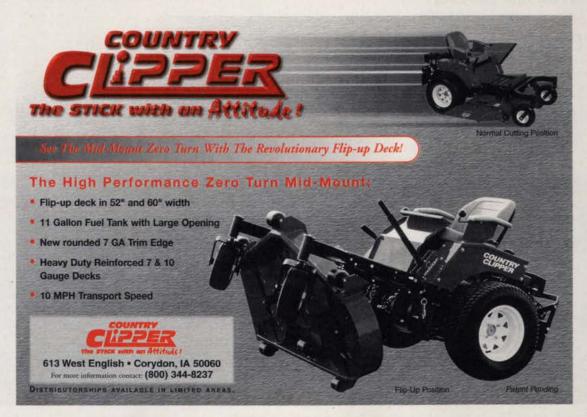
**USE READER SERVICE #157** 

WALKER MANUFACTURING CO. 5925 E. HARMONY ROAD • DEPT. L & L FORT COLLINS, CO 80528

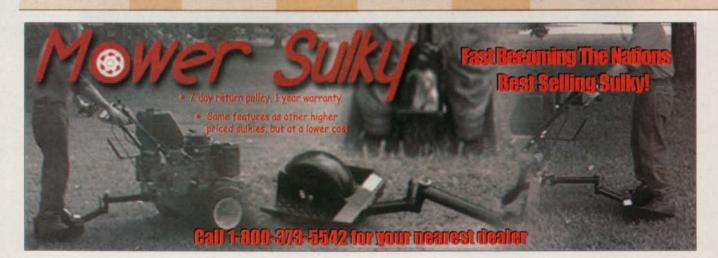
(800) 279-8537 • www.walkermowers.com

DECK SIZE:	GAS OR DIESEL:	HYDROSTATIC OR GEAR DRIVE:	MULCHING CAPABILITIES:	LIQUID- OR AIR- COOLED ENGINE:	ZERO-TURN CAPABILITIES:	OTHER KEY FEATURES:
AMERICA	N HO	NDA MO	TOR CO	ALCOHOLD !	Section.	
21 inches	Gas	Push mower	The second second second	Air-cooled	N/A	
21 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	
21 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	BBC
21 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	BBC
86, 48, 54 and 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	"No Tool" quick height adjustment, Hour met
36 and 48 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	"No Tool" quick height adjustment, Hour met
BLACK RO	CK I	MANIIFA	CTURIN	C		
2 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	12.5-hp air-cooled	No	Kawasaki engine
6 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	12.5-hp air-cooled	No	Kawasaki engine
18 inches	Gas	Both	Yes	14-hp air-cooled	Yes	Kawasaki engine
52 inches	Gas	Both	Yes	17-hp air-cooled	Yes	Kawasaki engine
il inches	Gas	Both	Yes	17-hp air-cooled	Yes	Kawasaki engine
BOB-CAT	- TE	TRON T	IRECAR	E AND S	PECIAL	TY PRODUCTS
32, 36, 48, 54 or 61 inches	The state of the s	VIIION I	UNI UMI	IL MIND 3		
32, 36, 48, 54 or 61 inches	Gas Gas	Gear Hydrostatic	N/A N/A	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	4 engine options, side-discharge cutting deck: 4 engine options, side-discharge cutting deck:
12, 30, 40, 34 of 01 miches	ous	riyurusiunc	N/A	Alf-cooled	162	infinitely variable ground speed
21 inches	Gas	Push mower	N/A	N/A	No	Accessories include a metal screen or polyeste
	Wall Cont	. war mende		The state of the s	SCHOOL STATE	mesh grass catcher
DIINTON	TEV	TOON TH	DECAD	E AND CE	DECLAL	
<b>BUNTON</b> -	TEX		INFLAK	E AND SF		TY PRODUCTS
36 or 48 inches	Gas	Gear	Eco Plate Mulch Kit	Air-cooled	Yes	Five forward speeds, side-discharge decks
36, 48, 54 or 61 inches	Gas	Gear	Eco Plate Mulch Kit	Air-cooled	Yes	3 engine options, stand-up sulky attachemen
36, 48, 54 or 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Eco Plate Mulch Kit	Air-cooled	Yes	available, side-discharge cutting decks Twin speed levers, 4 engine options, side
וט, ייס, אין טו טו ווונוופי	ous	riyarosianc	cco ridie muich kii	Alf-cooled	Tes	discharge cutting decks
11 inches	Gas	Push mower	N/A	N/A	No	Cutting height adjustments from .5 to
						3.5 inches in .5-inch increments
EACTRAAN	IND	HETDIES	HOVED	MOMED	ACCUMENT OF THE PARTY OF THE PA	
EASTMAN			Designation of the state of the	Charles and Charle	223700	
9 or 16 inches	Gas	N/A	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Hover
ENCORE N	<b>JFG</b>	CO.				
2, 36, 48, 52 and 60 inches		Gear/Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes - hydrostatic	
	Ous T	The state of the s	Tes	All-cooled	res - nyurosiunc	
EXCEL INI	JUS 1	RIES				
37 and 48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	H-bar steering, 15-gallon gas tank
18 and 54 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	H-bar steering, 17-gallon gas tank
EVMARK	MFG	. CO.				
LAWAIN	THE RESIDENCE OF THE PARTY OF T	Report Control of the				Aviitate have determined
21 and 32 inches 36 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	No	Quick height adjust, FeatherLite grip tension
18, 52 and 60 inches	Gas Gas	Gear Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes	Quick height adjust, FeatherLite grip tension
the same of the sa		nyarosianc	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Quick height adjust, FeatherLite grip tension
FERRIS IN	DUS	TRIES				
36, 48 and 52 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Simple drive wheel assembly with individual
						replaceable parts
36 and 48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Eaton commercial specification transaxle
18, 52 and 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Self-contained Eaton transmissions and wide,
						low stance for traction and stability
GIANT-VA	CM	ANIIFACT	TIRING			
32, 36, 48 and 52 inches	Gas	Gear/Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	
				The state of the s	W.C.	
GREAT DA	NE F	<b>POWER E</b>	QUIPMI	ENT		
36 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
18 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
52 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
HOWARD	PRIC	F TIIRF	EOUIPM	IENT		
36 to 48 inches	Gas	Gear	and the state of the last of t	Air cooled	Voc	
36 to 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	Floating deck
		riyurusiunt	165	Ail-Coolen	165	Tiouting deck
HUSQVAR	NA					
6 and 48 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	14-hp engine
36 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	14-hp engine
18 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	17-hp engine

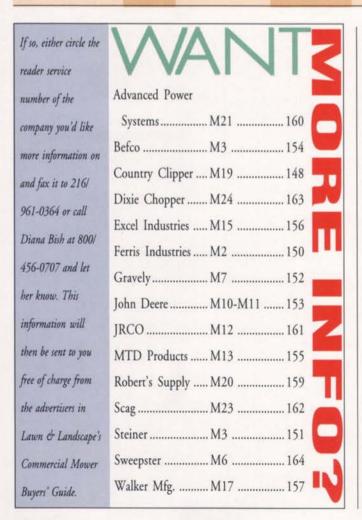
DECK SIZE:	GAS OR DIESEL:	HYDROSTATIC OR GEAR-DRIVE:	MULCHING CAPABILITIES:	LIQUID OR AIR- COOLED ENGINE:	ZERO-TURN CAPABILITIES:	OTHER KEY FEATURES:
<b>JOHN DEE</b>	RE					
36, 48 and 54 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	No	Two-wheel steerable sulky
36, 48 and 54 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	No	Available reverse kit
LESCO						
32, 36, 48 and 52 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Parking break
36, 48, 52 and 54 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Parking break
60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	No	Air-cooled	Yes	Parking break
MTD PRO	DUC	TS .				
21 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	3-in-1
36 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	No	5-speed
48 inches 54 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	E-PTO Floating deck
	-	Hydrosidik	165	All-Cooled	163	Thomas deta
RICH MFC		Charles and the				
48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Can ride
52 inches 61 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	Can ride
	MED	EQUIDA/	ENIT	All Cooled		
SCAG PO	VEK	EUUIPIVI	ENI	4 11	a chicken	
32, 36, 48 and 52 inches	Gas Gas	Gear Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	No Yes	
36, 48, 52, 61 and 72 inches		nyarostatic	Tes	Air-cooled	Tes	
<b>SNAPPER</b>						
36, 48, 52 and 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	N/A	Yes	
36, 48, 52 and 61 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	N/A	Yes	
<b>TORO LAN</b>	IDSC	APE CON	ITRACT	OR EQUI	PMENT	
32, 36 and 48 inches	Gas	Gear	Recycler Mulching	Air-cooled		Fixed decks, 3-in-1 (side-discharge, bagging,
20 24 27 44 150 - 1	C	Understade.	D	No. and A		recycler mulching) decks
32, 36, 37, 44 and 52 inches 32, 36, 37, 44 and 52 inches		Hydrostatic Gear	Recycler Mulching Recycler Mulching	Air-cooled Air-cooled		Floating decks, 3-in-1 decks Floating decks, 3-in-1 decks
21 inches	Gas	Push mower	Recycler Mulching	Air-cooled		, touring actual of its 1 actual
21 inches	Gas	Transmission	Recycler Mulching	Air-cooled		



DECK SIZE:	GAS OR DIESEL:	HYDROSTATIC OR GEAR-DRIVE	MULCHING CAPABILITIES:	LIQUID OR AIR- COOLED ENGINE:	ZERO-TURN CAPABILITIES:	OTHER KEY FEATURES:
21 inches	Gas	Push mower	Mulch	Air-cooled		
TRU-CUT						
21 inches	Gas	N/A	Yes	Air-cooled		
RIDING MODEL	S					
BLACK R	_	MANUEA	CTURIN	C		
48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
52 inches 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes LIDECAE	Air-cooled	PECIAL	TV DDODUCTS
BOB-CAT	Gas	(TRON T	Eco Plate Mulch Kit	RE AND S	PECIAL	TY PRODUCTS 42- or 48-inch side and reardischarge
52.5 or 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Eco Plate Mulch Kit	Air-cooled	Yes	2 engine options, side-discharge cutting decks
72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Liquid-cooled	Yes	Height of cut adjusts from 1 to 5 inches with electri deck lift, productivity up to 5 acres per hour
DUNTON	TEV	TOON TI	DECAR	E AND CI	PECIAL	
BUNTON 48 inches	- I EX	TRON TO	JRFCAR N/A	E AND SI	PECIAL	TY PRODUCTS 3-2-1 warranty, side-discharge or collection decks
52.5 or 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Eco Plate Mulch Kit	Air-cooled	Yes Yes	3-2-1 warranty, 2 engine options, electric deck lift
70:		U. distance	W/A	teach and d	V	for curb climbing, side-discharge cutting decks 3-2-1 warranty, height of cut adjusts from 1 to 5
72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	N/A	Liquid-cooled	Yes	inches, side-discharge cutting decks
COUNTR	Y CL IF	PER				
48 and 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Front-mount, flip-up deck
52 and 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Mid-mount with tilt-up deck and either single-stick
DIVIE CU	ODDE	D				or twin-stick steering control
DIXIE CH		The State of the Land of the L	V	Att and all	V	
60 and 72 inches	Gas Both	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Both	Yes Yes	
DIXUN IN	TRUIN	RIES				
48, 52 and 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Flip-up deck
ENCORE	MFG.					
42, 48 and 52 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
61 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air/Liquid-cooled	Yes	
EXCEL IN	NDUST	<b>TRIES</b>				
40, 48, 54 and 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	H-bar steering
51 and 60 inches 60 and 72 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	Catchers Catchers
60 and 72 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid-cooled	Yes	Catchers
EXMARK	MEG	CO				
44 and 48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Full flotation decks, high speed operation
52, 60 and 72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air/Liquid-cooled	Yes	Full flotation decks, high speed operation



DECK SIZE:	GAS OR DIESEL:	HYDROSTATIC OR GEAR-DRIVE	MULCHING CAPABILITIES:	LIQUID OR AIR- COOLED ENGINE:	ZERO-TURN CAPABILITIES:	OTHER KEY FEATURES:
FERRIS IN	DUS	TRIFS				
52 and 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Independent suspension
52 and 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Drive system includes industrial series Sundstrand
		V11.6.70.0.000000		THE STATE OF THE S	2005	pump and white 11/2inch axle, 5-bolt wheel motors
61 and 72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	Patented electric lift raises cutter deck with flip switch
THE GRAS	SHO	PPER CO	_			
44 - 72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Quik-D-Tatch Mounting System, FlipUp Deck option
44 - 72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid-cooled	Yes	Quik-D-Tatch Mounting System, FlipUp Deck option
<b>GREAT DA</b>	NF P	<b>OWER E</b>	NIIIPMI	ENT		
48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
52 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled		
HECK						
36 inches	Gas	Gear/Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	N/A	
88 inches	Gas/Diesel	Gear/Hydrostatic	Yes	Air/Liquid-cooled	Yes	Flex Deck
55 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air/Liquid-cooled	Yes	Flex Deck
72 inches 91 inches	Diesel Diesel	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes	Air/Liquid-cooled Air/Liquid-cooled	Yes Yes	Flex Deck Flex Deck
HOWADD	DIESEI			All/Liquid-cooled	165	HEX DECK
HUWAKU	PKIL	EIUKF	EQUIPM	IENI		
52 to 72 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air/Liquid-cooled	Yes	Off-set deck
60 to 72 inches	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid-cooled	Yes	
HUSOVAR	NA					
52 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	23-hp engine
52 and 61 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	25-hp engine





Try the Fitch Fuel Catalyst - a pre-combustion fuel treatment product that is PERMANENT! It is not an additive, but rather a fuel treatment device that makes the fuel burn better.

FRAN HODGES DID, AND JUST LISTEN TO WHAT HE HAD TO SAY "I have been using the Fitch

"I have been using the Fitch Fuel Catalyst for several years on all of my equipment from Echo weed-eaters and 20 hp Scag walk-behinds to a 50 hp Kubota. The results have been excellent--power is up, smoke is down, my fuel economy has improved as much as 30% and the cost of engine maintenance has been reduced by half. This product quickly paid for itself and I strongly recommend it to anyone in the business.

President RRR Maintenance
40 years in the commercial
landscape business

Increased Power
Improved Fuel Economy
Reduced Emissions
Easier Starts
Smoother Running
Prolonged Engine Life

Simply Drops Into Tank

Look for the Fitch Fuel Catalyst at a dealer near you



CALL TODAY! 1-888-881-APSI www.fitchfuelcatalyst.com

Send us your comments and you may be featured in our next ad

DECK SIZE:	GAS OR DIESEL:	HYDROSTATIC OR GEAR-DRIVE:	MULCHING CAPABILITIES:	LIQUID OR AIR- COOLED ENGINE:	ZERO-TURN CAPABILITIES:	OTHER KEY FEATURES:
JOHN DE	DE					
38 and 48 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	No	Air-cooled	No	Optional material collection system
18, 54 and 60 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	No	Liquid-cooled	No	Hydraulic weight transfer system
18, 54 and 60 inches 54 and 60 inches	Gas Gas	"Hydrogear" Belt-Drive "Hydrogear"	No No	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	Twin cylinder, 20-hp engine 9 mph mowing speed, 10-gallon tank
00 and 72 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	No	Liquid-cooled	No	Optional hydraulic weight transfer valve
<b>KUBOTA</b>	TRAC	TOR COP	RP.			
10 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	No	
4 inches 8 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Liquid-cooled	No No	Cushion ride auto throttle Cushion ride auto throttle
	ous	nyurosiunc	163	Liquia-coolea	No	Cosmon ride doto milottic
LESCO 4 inches	Con	Understate	V	the souled	Yes	Floating axle
0 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes No	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes	Floating axle
0 and 72 inches	Diesel	Hydrostatic	No	Liquid-cooled	No	Four-wheel drive
MTD PRO						
4 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Floating deck
0 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	No	Air-cooled	Yes	Floating deck
RICH MF	G.					
18 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Can walk
2 inches 1 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	Can walk Can walk
SCAG PO		FOLLIDM	ENT	7.05 3.00104		
0, 48, 52, 61 and 72 inches		Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
2, 61 and 72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid-cooled	Yes	
SNAPPER	2					
52, 61 or 73 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled/liquid-cooled	Yes	
52, 61 or 73 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	
STEINER	TURF	EQUIPN	IENT			
52 inches 60 inches	Gas Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	N/A	N/A	Yes N/A	
18, 60 and 72 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes N/A	Air-cooled/Liquid-cooled N/A	N/A	Flip-up deck
TORO LAI	NDSC.	APE CON	TRACTO	OR EQUIP	PMENT	
4 and 52 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Recycler Mulching Kits			20- or 23-hp Kohler engines or 17-, 19- or 23-hp
12 12 and 72 inches	Con	Understade				Kawasaki engines 23- or 25-hp air-cooled or 26-hp electronic fuel
52, 62 and 72 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Recycler Mulching Kits	electronic fuel injection		injection Kohler engines or 22-hp liquid-cooled
		11 1	* 1 0 115 W			Kawasaki engine
8 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Recycler Mulching Kits	Air-cooled		20- and 25-hp Kohler engines
WALKER	MFG.	.CO.				
86 — 54 inches 12 — 62 inches	Gas Gas	Hydrostatic Hydrostatic	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	
2 – 62 inches	Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Liquid-cooled	Yes	
<b>WOODS E</b>	OHIP	MENT C	D.			
iO to 60 inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Mid-mount
18 to 72 inches 10 inches	Gas/Diesel	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled/Liquid-cooled	Yes	Front-mount
U Inches	Gas	Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Residential unit
WRIGHI	MANU	<b>JFACTUF</b>	RING	Research 1	V	Cland on
36, 42, 48, 52 and 61 inches		Hydrostatic	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	Stand-on
YAZOO/K					W	20.1
52 inches 52 inches	Gas Gas	Gear Gear	Yes Yes	Air-cooled Air-cooled	Yes Yes	22-hp 25-hp
61 inches	Gas	Gear	Yes	Air-cooled	Yes	25-hp

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# the Splits

ore contractors' are incorporating split applications into their preemergence herbicide programs, which means they split the applications into two applications spread out by roughly six weeks in the spring. This approach was addressed by Dr. John Thomas, senior technical specialist for the American Cyanamid Turf and Ornamental Group, Parsippany, N.J.

"The benefits of split applications depend on your location, weather conditions, turf conditions and target weeds. Where cool-season grasses are grown, a split application is usually not needed if a rate of 2 to 3 pounds of active ingredient per acre is applied in the spring just before crabgrass germination. However, if a lower rate is used in early spring, a second application six to eight weeks later offers extended control. Studies at Purdue University showing that crabgrass can germinate through August provide support for this practice.

"The extended germination period for crabgrass and other weeds takes on more importance in warm-season grass areas.

"Split applications may also be useful when turf is a weak, thin stand subject to heavy weed pressure. In this case, there is little tolerance for application or timing errors and a second application six to eight weeks after the first will be beneficial." – **Bob West** 

# Preemergent Control

(continued from page 58)

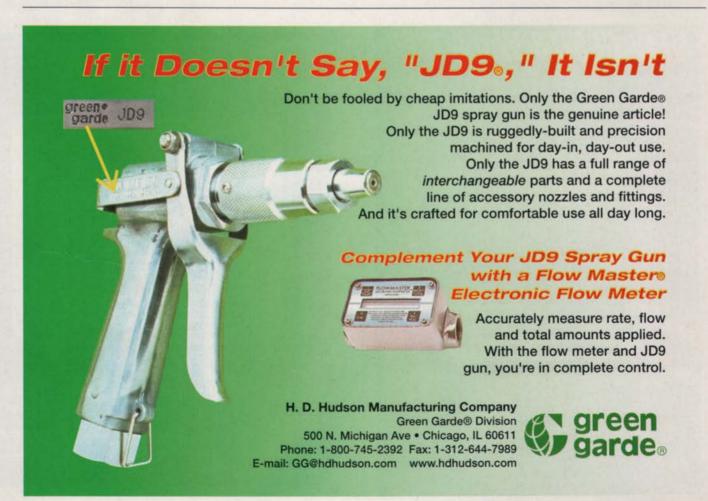
in order to get to all of their accounts in the limited window of opportunity they have," added Miller. "As a result, some lawns get applications early in the season and the product might not deliver as much control or control for as long as the applicator wants, and that may call for an additional application of postemergence products or create control problems in the summer."

Miller also noted that early applications can create more challenges if they end up being followed by a difficult summer, such as the summer of 1999.

"A lack of rain means the turf will be less competitive and LCOs are likely to see more weed breakthrough," he explained. "That's the time when you really want your preemergence product to still be working for you."

Breuninger also recommended that lawn care operators be sensitive to the areas of a property that tend to be most susceptible to crabgrass problems.

"Crabgrass often shows up along the



# **Preemergent Control**

edges of turf and sidewalks or driveways because these areas are likely to heat up because of the sunlight on the hard surface," Breuninger explained. "This extra heat can lead to thinner turf in these areas and let more sunlight get down to the soil layer and breakdown the preemergence product, which makes it easier for weeds to develop."

The answer to this problem is not necessarily to apply extra preemergence product, however, Breuninger cautioned. "Applying a 3x rate or something above the labeled rate will just damage the turf and help the weeds develop," he said.

**DOING THE SPLITS.** The practice of making split applications (multiple applications of preemergence product during the year) has become increasingly popular.

"There is no doubt the southern part of the United States is almost entirely split applications because of the length of the weed germination season," observed Miller. "Some nother aspect to preemergence weed control use is within landscape beds. In these cases, contractors have to be particularly careful when selecting products and making the applications in order to ensure they don't damage the plants that are supposed to be growing in the bed. But beds can be particularly susceptible to weed infestation because of the lack of turfgrass covering the bed's surface and

providing weed resistance.

"I think the liquid products tend to perform better in the beds," related John Smith, president, Better Lawns & Landscape, Jacksonville, Fla. "But I do like to use the granular products in beds when we're planting a new bed or renovating an existing bed and we put down a layer of preemergence granular herbicide under the mulch. This gives us more control over the application and longer control."

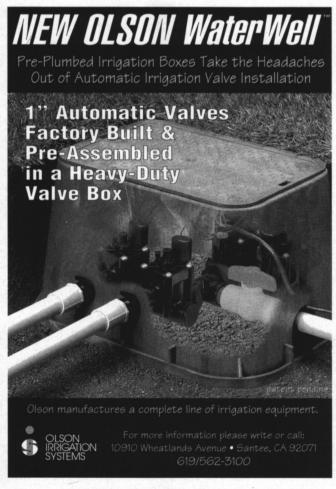
"We make preemergence applications to

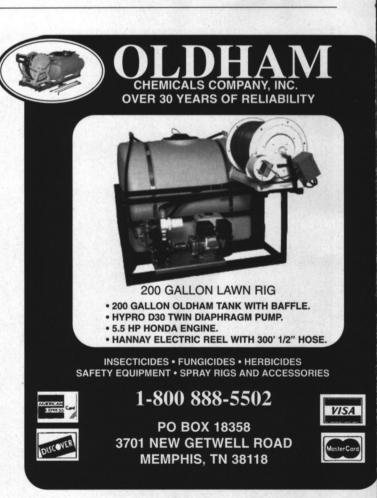
# **Getting into Beds**

southern companies even do three or four preemergence applications during the year.

"Some companies within the transition zone and northern states are doing split ap-

plications to make sure they don't have any callbacks," Miller continued, explaining that the split applications in these areas generally consist of an initial application based on the





# Preemergent Control

beds three times each season," related Paul Jackson, owner, Nitrolawn, Sherwood, Ore.
"We were just doing a spring and a fall application, but we have a lot of problems due to the rain we get and people planting in the beds and disturbing the barrier."

As a result, Jackson said they will plan applications to take place before and after people tend to plant in their beds so the first application keeps out the weeds initially and the second application, which is at a reduced rate, addresses any weed pressure resulting from the disturbance to the initial preemergent barrier. – **Bob West** 

product's standard rate and a later, second application at the full or a reduced rate to get through the summer.

"The benefit of the split application is

protecting yourself against a really bad summer," he added. "If the weather is bad in the summer, a lot of applicators may end up wishing they had made that second application. The applicators who are making split applications part of their regular program are just making sure they'll have enough product down for a tough season."

Riego also observed that some LCOs have taken to reducing the rate in their round one when planning to apply the preemergent in a split application.

"For example, if the product is labeled for 3 pounds to be applied, the contractor might split that into an application of 2 pounds and an application of 1 pound or two applications of 1½ pounds," he explained. "Doing this helps the contractor distribute his or her costs for the product and, if there hasn't been any weed pressure when the time arrives for the second application, the contractor may decide that second application isn't necessary and avoid putting un-necessary prod-

uct in the ground."

FALL GUYS. One idea that has stirred up some debate among lawn care contractors in the last few years is the notion of a fall application of preemergence herbicide. The reasoning behind the idea is that the product won't break down much during the cool winter months and each application made during the fall is one less application that has to be made during the hectic spring.

"Making fall applications does provide a wider window to work in and lets contractors service more customers," recognized Riego. "The disadvantages of fall applications are that the compounds to be used to last through the winter can be more expensive and if the weather doesn't cooperate the product can end up breaking down during the fall, thereby wasting the application."

Contractors are also reluctant to make applications of a product that they might not get paid for, as can be case when a customer



# **Preemergent Control**

cancels a service during the winter after a fall preemergence application has been made.

"Fall applications for crabgrass control are not particularly common but tend to be a little more common in situations where the **TAKING FORM.** Another issue for contractors to consider is the best formulation to use – liquid or granular?

The general consensus is that contractors are fairly evenly divided between the two

regular March application dates," noted Wolfe. "I don't want to apply liquid product that could freeze if the weather changes.

"But then we switch to liquid formulations once I don't have to worry about the weather," Wolfe added, saying he believes liquid formulations are more effective so long as they are applied correctly. "We do a double overlap spray with liquid formulations to make sure we have complete coverage."

One advantage of using the granular products, however, is that technicians can see where the granular product goes when it hits the ground.

"Liquid products hit the ground and disappear into the turf and the soil," related Riego. "Granular products may also be easier to apply because the spreaders are easier to calibrate correctly than a lot of the spray systems are."

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

# When a healthy, dense stand of turf is present,

lawn care operators have less to worry about in

terms of weed establishment because the

competition for space and nutrients from the turf

minimizes weed development.

applicator knows he or she will still be caring for the property the next spring, like on golf courses or municipalities," noted Miller, adding that even then applicators have to be concerned about re-seeding options if they have extensive winter kill of the turf. formulations with factors such as geographic location and application timing weighing heavily on the formulation decision.

"I use granular products because sometimes I can start applications in February because of warm weather instead of our

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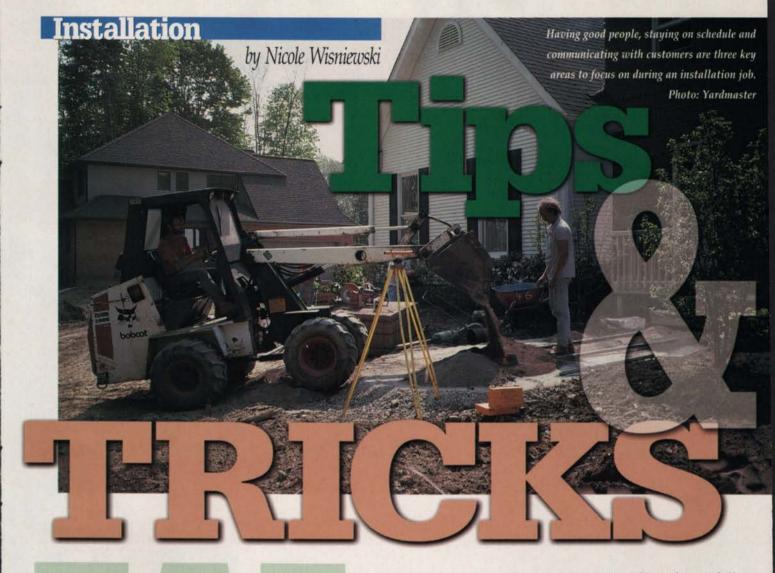
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When a landscape installation job is rushed – as most of Chris Pompeo's jobs are because of the fast track construction going on in Warren, Mich. – landscape contractors are forced to think on their toes to make the best of challenging situations. And, sometimes, according to Pompeo, vice president of operations, Landscape America Inc., nothing good can come from rushing.

Consider, for instance, this example: On one of Pompeo's past jobs, building construction was hurried and the painting of the building overhangs was forgotten until after the landscaping was installed. Not a problem – as long as the plant material was covered up beforehand to protect it from paint splatter.

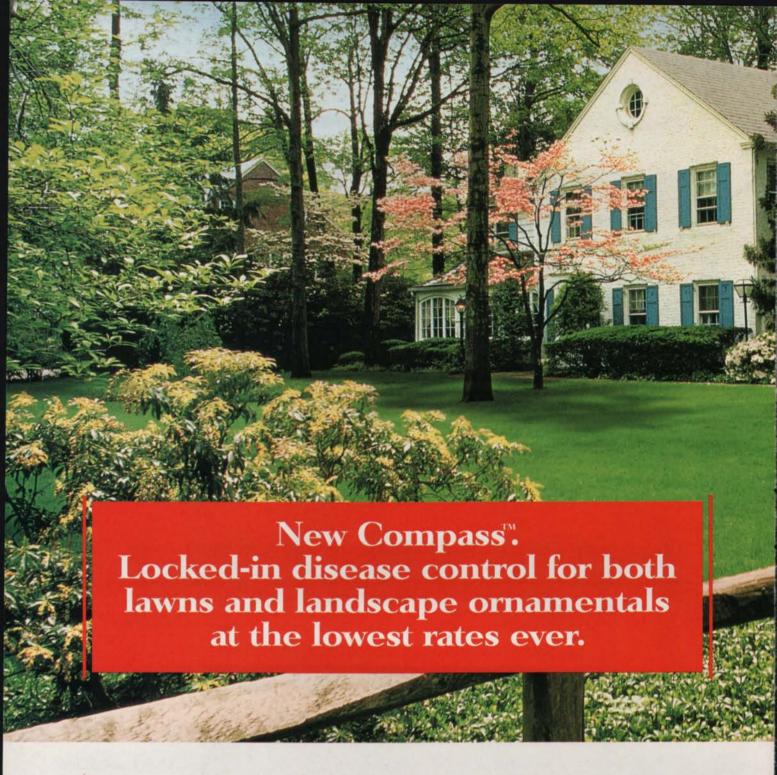
"Unfortunately, the builder covered the plant material with a clear plastic that acted as a magnifying glass with the sun, burning all of the plant material," Pompeo lamented.

Although the disaster wasted money, time and labor, the next time a similar situation arose, Pompeo knew to warn the builders first, telling them to use cloth tarp to cover plant materials instead of clear plastic.

"Builders aren't plant people," Pompeo said, "so they aren't used to working with plant material. Contractors cannot forget that."

To secure a successful installation job every time – despite all of the obstacles that tend to interfere – landscape contractors need to tuck the following installation tips (continued on page 92)

Avoiding the pitfalls of a disastrous installation job takes planning and proper scheduling, good employees and increased communication.



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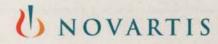
the plant surface due to its high affinity with the surface. Forming a protective reservoir of fungicide on the plant

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# Installation

(continued from page 89)

and tricks into their back pockets and be mindful of them before and during each installation project.

### #1. THE RIGHT KIND OF PERSON.

When it comes to installation, experienced people are an asset to the job.

"A landscape contractor doesn't want to put an inexperienced employee on an installation project," Pompeo said. "There's more to installation than just digging a hole and placing the plant into the soil. If a contractor doesn't have an experienced crew or crew leader, that could mean a short, unhealthy life for the installed plant material."

Qualified, trained employees should understand that the soil condition, the type of plant, whether it likes or hates water and the amount of sun/shade it thrives in are detrimental to a plant's survival.

"Not installing plant material properly, abusing plant material, not understanding plant requirements for proper installation,



If your employees understand the final design before beginning the installation, the job can go much smoother and mistakes can be minimized.

planting too close to a building, planting too deep or not amending the soil after planting, are some of the most common mistakes made on an installation project," explained David Knauff, founder/president, Yes, We Care Landscaping, Wilmette, Ill.

Kevin Robertshaw, installation, TruGreen LandCare – Ruppert Landscape Co., Gainesville, Va., said he tries to make sure he has one specialist in each position on his team. Although employing specialists ensures quality landscape installation jobs, Robertshaw said it can also be a challenge because when one person leaves, he has to

find another person who has that specialty to replace him or her or train someone on that specific specialty.

"We try to instill a small-business philosophy by creating highly specialized positions," Robertshaw explained. "Replacing specialty positions is very difficult."

Making sure a foreman, supervisor or specialist understands the final design before the installation can make the job go more smoothly, Knauff pointed out.

"Along with proper communication with the foreman of a job, a properly trained crew (continued on page 94)







# Rosie Groves thinks her Isugu NPR may be the perfect landscape truck.

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Rosie and her husband, Pete, spent a lot of time designing the body of their "Perfect" landscape truck. "We didn't have to modify the truck at all," says Pete. "It's a standard 109" Isuzu NPR EFI, 13,750 GVW. The body has an II-ft. by 7-ft. bed with dual hydraulic dump lift, removable sides, built-in ramp and multiple tool boxes. It easily carries 6,000 lbs. of anything, from plants to rocks to dist, up the steepest hills. Rosie and I find that this custom body on the Isuzu truck is a perfect combination."

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TRUCK

# Installation

(continued from page 92)

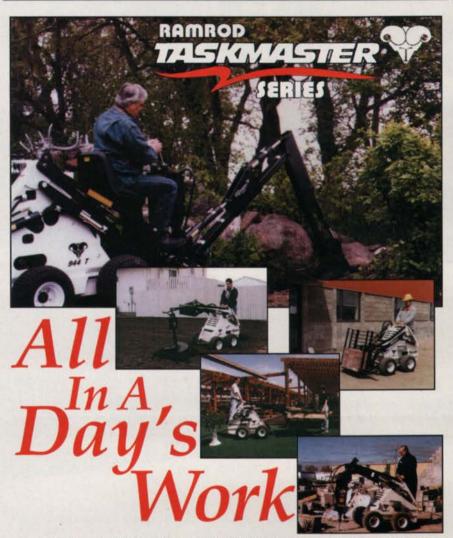
is essential." Knauff said.

Good people is the No. 1 reason for success at Garden Gate Landscaping, according to Charlie Bowers, president of the Silver Spring, Md.-based company.

In the entire design/build process, Bowers said he focuses on a team triangle: the sales person/designer, the crew leader and the customer. He came up with this concept after realizing that he was wasting money on middle managers who confused the team atmosphere and discouraged employee growth.

"We eliminated the middle managers and developed self-managed teams, which helped us to clarify employee responsibili-

(continued on page 96)



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# Working

hen working on an installation project, sometimes contractors will have to bring in subcontractors to perform a part of the job.

According to the Green Industry Expo "Subcontracting to Increase Landscape Construction" seminar panel members Richard Sperber, president, Valley Crest Landscape, Calabasas, Calif.; Steve Murray, Duke-Weeks Landscape Service, Atlanta, Ga.; Rick Doesburg, president, Thornton Gardens, Maineville, Ohio, and Bruce Hunt, vice president. The Brickman Group, Chicago, Ill., there are some simple dos and don'ts landscape contractors can follow when hiring subcontractors.

### DO:

- 1. Choose subcontractors based on the quality of the work they've performed.
- 2. Make sure the subcontractors are fully licensed and insured.
- 3. Provide complete documentation of all initial contract agreements and changes throughout the project.
- 4. Keep a positive working relationship.
- 5. Show appreciation for work well done.
- 6. Keep a safe, clean working environment and make sure your subcontractors do the same.
- 7. Make the installation schedule in advance and give copies to your subcontractors so everyone is aware of the deadlines.
- 8. Make sure the subcontractors are aware of all of the job details and the amount of work involved in the project.

# DON'T:

- 1. Don't keep subcontractors in the dark about deadlines.
- 2. Don't quantify labor/materials for subcontractors - let them do it. You can do it as well in order to make sure yours matches theirs as a way to check if they understand the scope of the project and aren't missing anything.
- 3. Don't delay disputes. Nicole Wisniewski

# Cheslan/

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# Installation

(continued from page 94)

ties and grow our company," Bowers enthused. "The teams are focused on the areas we have a lot of knowledge in. Then we outsource other areas that we need but aren't so knowledgeable in, such as architecture."

Creating these teams meant Bowers could reward his employees with responsibility, authority and training, which encouraged them to work harder to meet their goals.

"I tried to make sure my people are in a job that suits them best," Bowers said. "I also make sure I clarify the consequences of exceeding or falling short of company goals."

# 2. STAYING ON SCHEDULE. To be done in the right order and completed on

time, a landscape installation job needs to be scheduled properly.

"The landscape contractor is typically the last person to leave the property," Pompeo explained. "If the job construction went bad from day one, then the contractor who had six weeks to do a job may now have four weeks or even two weeks, depending on how late the project has become because of building construction delays."

A situation like this can get tricky, especially in an area where weather is detrimental to the success of new plant installation and growth. In this case, Pompeo said, sometimes a building manager who's running late on other aspects of the job will ask a landscape contractor to do the landscape work long before it should be done.

"A landscape contractor may be asked to do his or her job after only the foundation to a home or building has been built," Pompeo related. "This can cause problems because the landscape contractor is now trying to install material when it shouldn't be installed. Once during an installation project of ours, we had to install the material before the builder cleaned off the brick of the building. Well, brick is washed with acid, and obviously this destroyed all the plant material. If they would have used a detergent-based cleanser instead, the plants would have been fine. So, when changes in planning are sometimes unavoidable, proper communication is what gets you through the project."

Tim Petro, director of landscape operations, Smallwood Design Group / Smallwood Landscape, Naples, Fla., had a similar situation when the building painters decided to wash off their paintbrushes and pallets in the neatly planted landscape beds he just finished installing the day before.

To avoid such problems, landscape contractors should meet with the building or project manager as early as possible to find out the scheduled date for the completion of the project, Petro suggested. If the project is a renovation, the landscape contractor should find out when the client expects it to be done.

Once the expected completion date of a project is known, landscape contractors should get together with their subcontractors and set up a schedule with them – discussing when each of them should arrive to and leave from the property, Petro noted.

(continued on page 100)



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# Installation

(continued from page 96)

After the schedule is finalized, contractors should make sure the plant material will arrive on the property in the order needed, Pompeo stressed.

"The rule of thumb is to put the hardscaping, such as paving, walls or sidewalks, in first," Pompeo said.

When materials arrive out of order, the

project installation order is affected, and in some cases, this can negatively affect the project deadline.

"Landscape beds cannot be installed before lighting because to install the lighting, the beds need to be dug up," Petro explained.

For a big job, Robertshaw said, ideally, he has one month to buy the material. Having a good relationship with a key plant material vendor can help to ensure that the best material is available and ready when needed, said Knauff.

"A vendor can make or break you on an installation project," Knauff explained. "If you install the best plant material available, the end result will be a great looking land-scape and a very happy customer."

# 3. GETTING TO KNOW YOU. Taking the time to talk with clients and getting to know them and what they are expecting from the job can also influence a project.

"Communication with the client is the key to the success of an installation project," Knauff said. "Communication includes not only listening to the client at the beginning of the project, but also communicating with the client as the project moves toward completion to ensure the proper end result."

If contractors know their customers, according to Petro, then they can figure out when the best time to show up on their property is or whether they want the site left immaculately clean every night or whether they don't mind that it is "in construction."

"Leaving the site in shambles after the day's work is complete is never a good idea," Knauff advised.

Also, when a landscape contractor knows their installation clients and establishes a relationship with them, communication becomes easier when there is an issue about the installation that needs to be discussed.

Contractors should know their clients well enough to be comfortable discussing changes in plant material or scheduling and deadline problems, Petro suggested.

"I try to establish a relationship with my clients to the point where I know their dog's name," Petro said. "So, no matter how bad of a day they are having or how challenging the news that I have to tell them about the land-scape installation project is, I have something I can bring up to lighten the conversation – I have a personal connection with them."

And, stressed Knauff, communication doesn't stop after the installation is complete.

"Clients need to know what to do to maintain the landscape and what their responsibilities are," Knauff said.

The author is Associate Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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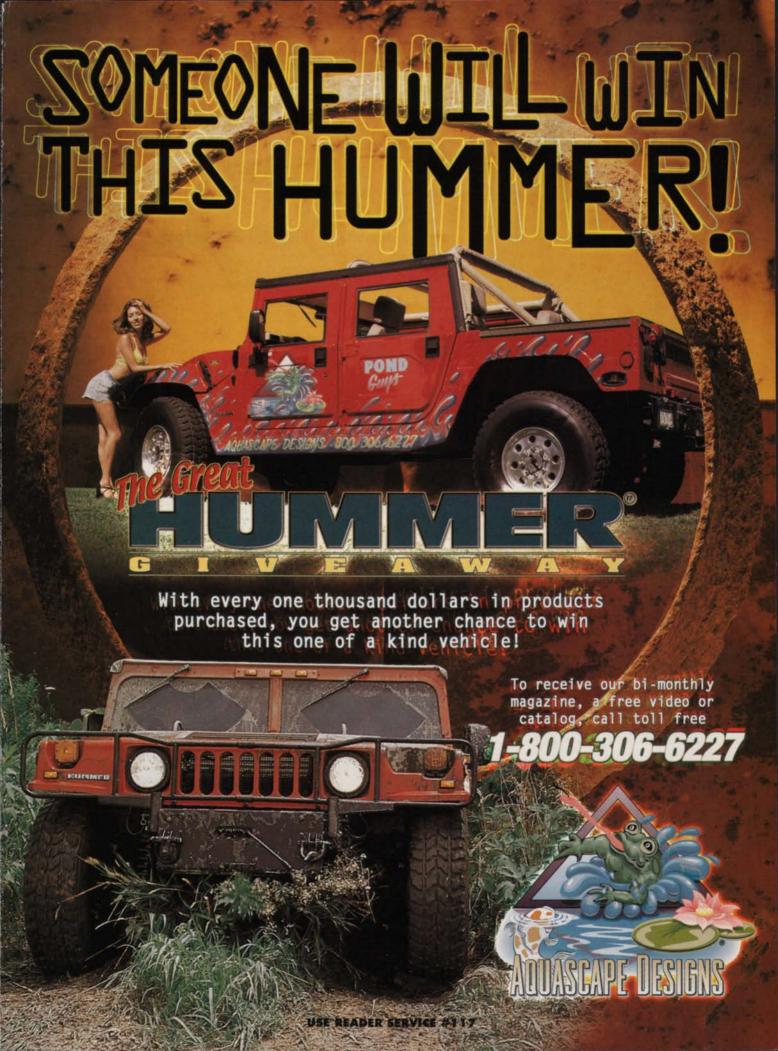
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# **Programming Guidelines**

# by Nicole Wisniewski

According to Kevin Gordon, senior product development manager, Hunter Industries, San Marcos, Calif., after years of gaining experience working with irrigation controllers, landscape contractors develop a 'rule of thumb' as to how much water should be put down daily or weekly in their local service areas.

The problem with this theory, Gordon explained, is that contractors follow their 'rule of thumb' and then leave the rest up to the homeowner to figure out.

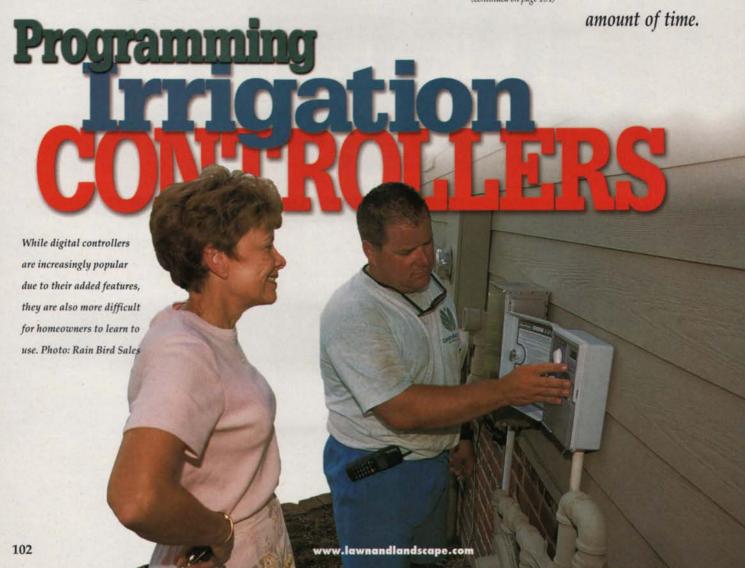
"A 'rule of thumb' as far as water compensation goes in a landscape cannot and will not work for every landscape in a certain area," Gordon said. "Each landscape is different and contractors should be looking at the water needs of every job individually."

Elements such as soil type, moisture loss, angle of slope, amount of sunlight, degree of shade and wind and type of plant material are all factors that can change slightly or dramatically from landscape to landscape. To program an irrigation controller efficiently for each landscape, contractors need to consider and address each of these factors.

**THE CONTROLLER.** There are two classifications of controllers contractors have to choose from when trying to fit the right controller to each of their customers: electromechanical and digital.

"Digital gives you more flexibility and more programs while electromechanical (continued on page 104)

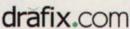
Contractors need to consider all of the elements associated with each individual job to make sure every area of the landscape gets the right amount of water for the right amount of time.



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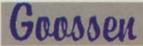
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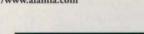
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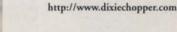
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# **Programming Guidelines**

offers simplicity with a single program," Gordon explained.

Ninety percent of the industry uses digital controllers, according to Gordon, but he doesn't expect electromechanical controllers to completely disappear from the market.

"There are times when electromechanical

controllers are the better choice," Gordon said. "If you have a customer who won't use an ATM machine to withdraw cash, then they probably won't be comfortable with a digital controller. The type of controller contractors choose to install in each of their landscapes will be contingent on their cus-

tomers' specific needs. Every other aspect of programming the controller is dependent on the selection of the controller itself."

The placement of the controller is also important. They should be placed where they are easy to reach, such as obstruction-free on a garage wall at eye level, Gordon suggested.

Contractors should ask themselves two questions before deciding where to place the controller, Gordon said: 'Where are the valve

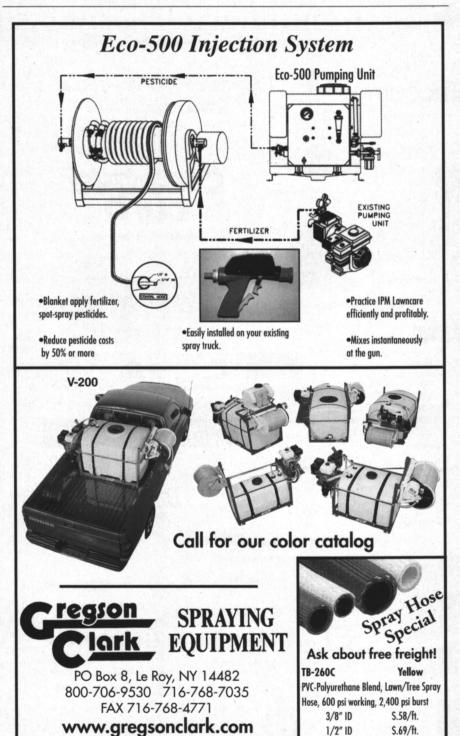


he evapotranspiration rate (ET) is the measure of the amount of water that is lost to the atmosphere by evaporation from the soil and transpiration from plant material and it is generally expressed in inches per day. If landscape contractors can obtain the ET rate in their area of the country, they can calculate precisely how much water needs to be added to the landscape weekly and program the controller accordingly, according to Chip Kah, president, K-Rain, Riviera Beach, Fla.

The evapotranspiration rate multiplied by seven, representing the number of days in a week, will give the contractor the rate of moisture lost in a landscape weekly.

The following list details the average moisture loss per day in different areas across the United States. Contractors should keep in mind that hot, dry sunny days have a higher ET rate than cool, misty days and therefore will need increased station run times.

- Average cool, humid environment loses between .1 and .15 inches of moisture per day.
- Average cool, dry environment loses between .15 and .25 inches of moisture per day.
- Average warm, humid environment loses between .15 and .2 inches of moisture per day.



# **Programming Guidelines**

wires coming from?' and 'Where is the power source coming from?'

"You want to mount a controller close to the electricity so a bunch of large extension cords aren't needed just to connect it and you don't want to mount a controller to a wall if you can't get the valve wires through that wall," he said. "Also, the controller should always be placed at eye level – most contractors place them too low," Gordon added.

**THE ELEMENTS.** If a professional, experienced contractor is installing a landscape and irrigation system, then typically plants will be grouped together according to water needs as well as other environmental needs, which is the proper way to install a landscape. When an irrigation contractor installs

a system on an existing landscape, hopefully, the contractor who installed the plant material kept this in mind.

"The sharp irrigation and nursery contractors typically try to put similar plant material on the same irrigation zone," re-(continued on page 108)

# spiration

- Average warm, dry environment loses between .2 and .25 inches of moisture per day.
- Average hot, humid environment, such as Florida, loses between .2 and .3 inches of moisture per day.
- Average hot, dry environment, such as Arizona, loses between .3 and .4 inches of moisture per day.

But, Kah warned, daily moisture loss isn't the only factor to consider when programming an irrigation controller.

Aspects, such as humidity, temperature, total hours of sunlight and soil conditions, can change how much and how often water is put down in a landscape.

"For example, let's say you installed a system in Florida that is designed to put down 1/2-inch of water per hour," Kah said. "St. Augustinegrass in Florida loses 2 inches of moisture per week in a 7-day period assuming that there is no rainfall that week. Based on these facts, you need to put down the 2 inches lost that week so you can program your controller accordingly. You'd probably put down 1/4-inch to 1/2-inch water every other day. But don't forget to take into account the soil conditions in the area. In Florida, the soil is sandy, so it will easily soak up 1/4inch of water at one time, but clay soil doesn't soak up the water as easily and runoff could occur if too much water is added too quickly." - Nicole Wisniewski



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### **Programming Guidelines**

(continued from page 105)

marked Chip Kah, president, K-Rain, Riviera Beach, Fla.

"If a landscape isn't designed properly, then an irrigation controller cannot be programmed properly," added Dave Shane, Mid-Atlantic area specification manager, Rain Bird Sales, Tucson, Ariz. "In this case, before installing a system, a contractor may recommend the customer have his or her landscape reinstalled based on zones."

Then contractors need to take into consideration whether the plant material is new or mature because the difference means different watering requirements, Kah said.

"Newly installed plant material will need more water more frequently," Kah recommended. "Typically, more mature trees and shrubs can survive longer durations in between waterings because they have a wellestablished root system and can gather water from a larger area - not just the first 8 to 12 inches of the soil."

Properly grouping plant material and determining its age can help a contractor then figure out how the weather, sunlight, sloping areas and shade or wind will affect the material and water it accordingly.

**SOIL CONDITIONS.** Since overwatering is just as big of a problem as underwatering, contractors need to make sure they know the facts about soil type and infiltration (how quickly the soil accepts the water) on the landscape being irrigated to prevent fungal growth and plant disease, Gordon stressed.

The more dense the soil, the better it holds moisture, Kah stated.

"Soil with a lot of clay holds moisture well and can be watered less frequently to prevent runoff while sandy soil doesn't hold moisture well and should be watered more frequently," Kah explained.

Runoff occurs when the soil won't accept all of the water applied and the excess water puddles up on top of the soil until it runs off into the sidewalk or another area of the landscape. This can be a problem with clay and rocky soils, said Joe Cortopassi, vice president/general manager, Green Turf Irrigation, St. Louis, Mo.

To determine the maximum amount of water needed before runoff occurs in a zone and to calculate the appropriate run time for a particular zone, Michael Schmitt, chief technical officer, WaterWise, Calabasas, Calif., suggested a contractor turn on a zone and use a stop watch to measure how many minutes of water the zone needs before runoff occurs.

Another way to avoid runoff, Kah said, is by calculating precipitation and evapotranspiration (ET) rates (see A Look Inside Evapotranspiration on page 104) to determine how much water was lost in a particular area so it can be replaced accordingly.

**COMMERCIAL VS. RESIDENTIAL. De**spite obvious acreage differences, programming an irrigation controller for a commercial property is different from programming

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were not altered in any way to produce this picture.

### **Programming Guidelines**

a controller for a residential property.

On a residential property, usable turf needs to be a consideration, according to Gordon.

"A contractor doesn't want to program an irrigation controller to run on a Friday or Saturday so that the turf is soggy on the weekend," Gordon explained. "Homeowners want usable turf, particularly on the weekends. Contractors need to be considerate of their customers' lifestyles when programming the controller while at the same time meeting the landscape's watering needs."

On a commercial property, there are more stipulations to be aware of and the watering window is limited, remarked Cortopassi.

"Commercial accounts usually don't want the irrigation system running during business hours because of runoff and because they don't want vehicular and foot traffic affected by the irrigation system's schedule," Cortopassi explained.

This can be a challenge, especially when on a commercial property a contractor may not be dealing with an in-house maintenance manager who can monitor the system daily.

"A problem can arise in the early spring or late fall in some areas where cold snaps sneak in and can freeze water left in the pipes," Cortopassi said. "The reason for caution is because if an employee or customer of that commercial client comes walking up the sidewalk and slips on ice caused by runoff water that froze from the cold, then a lawsuit could ensue."

"On commercial properties, the general rule is that the irrigation program needs to be scheduled during the watering window and the hardscapes need to remain dry at all times," Gordon added.

To avoid problems like runoff, drip or subsurface irrigation is often used on commercial properties, particularly glass buildings, according to Cortopassi, because it runs on an hourly basis, doesn't affect traffic and isn't affected by wind, therefore water isn't carried away by a gust of wind to spray the glass windows of the building or the hardscapes surrounding it.

Residential properties can also utilize drip irrigation for plant material that needs watering at the roots and not on the leaves, such as rose bushes, Cortopassi said.

**AFTER INSTALLATION.** After a system is installed, a contractor's work isn't finished, according to Schmitt.

"Maintenance contractors generally include the monitoring and adjustment of controllers as part of their services," Schmitt explained. "Installation contractors are told how long they are to maintain the site prior to turning it over to the owner. Programs should be adjusted as often as possible. At a minimum, I would recommend weekly updates to the controller program, generally immediately after a mowing."

The author is Associate Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.





by Bob West

Telemarketing. Some folks consider it a dirty word. And everyone has received one of those annoying phone calls while eating dinner that oftentimes ends up with a terse, "No, I'm not interested," and a firm hanging up of the phone.

Many contractors critical of telemarketing view the practice as little more than offering bare-bones service at ridiculously low prices. Others see telemarketing as a sign of a company's lack of interest in building relationships with clients and servicing their needs.

Some industry veterans, however, are quick to point out that telemarketing, when managed effectively and strategically, can be instrumental in healthy and profitable growth for lawn care companies.

Despite the
negativity
associated with
telemarketing,
some contractors
rely heavily on
this marketing
approach to grow
their businesses.

**TALKING FROM EXPERIENCE.** Jim Campanella, president, The Lawn Dawg, Hudson, N.H., has watched his company grow to a profitable three-branch operation almost entirely on the strength of its telemarketing efforts.

How can telemarketing do this? Campanella reported that his telemarketing efforts have generated an average of seven to eight leads per hour of telemarketing over the last three years, and his sales personnel have turned 22 percent of those leads into sales.

Sound hard to believe?

Tom Walczyk owns Emerald Earth, a Middletown, Conn.-based lawn care company servicing approximately 700 customers and also relies almost exclusively on telemarketing. He reports average closing rates between 23 and 25 percent on comparable lead generation.

So how do these two contractors turn random phone calls into business? For starters, most of the telemarketing calls their companies make aren't truly random.

(continued on page 117)

Telemarketing:

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### Educational Schedule-At-A-Glance SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

#### SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

1:00 - 4:00 PM Registration Desk

Attendee Networking Lounge 2:00 - 4:00 PM Pre-Conference Workshops

Managing a Multi-Cultural Workforce (Jennifer Thomas) All You Need to Know About Computers and the Web (Bill Cox)

5:00 - 6:30 PM Opening Session

Cactus Rolling: Taking Stress Out of the Workplace

(Dr. Stephen Douglas)

6:30 - 8:00 PM School of Management Welcome Reception

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

7:00 AM Registration Desk 7:00 AM Continental Breakfast 7:30 - 8:45 AM Breakfast Workshop

Strategic Planning: Part I (Jim Huston)

9:00 - 10:25 AM General Session

Managing Growth Effectively (Craig Ruppert and Chris Davitt)

10:25 - 10:45 AM Refreshment Break

10:45 - 12:00 noon Concurrent Educational Sessions

M1 10 Ways to Succeed at Customer Service (Lloyd Smigel)

M2 Open Book Management (Phil Fogarty) M3 New Profit Opportunities (Roger Braswell)

M4 Motivating Employees: A Different Approach (Bill Hoopes)

12:00 - 1:15 PM Contractor Roundtable Lunch 1:30 - 2:45 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions

M5 Leadership Principles (Bill Hoopes)

M6 Repeat M2 (Phil Fogarty)

M7 Designing an Operations Blueprint (Jack Mattingly)

M8 Repeat M3 (Roger Braswell)

2:45 - 3:05 PM Refreshment Break 3:05 - 5:30 PM General Session

All You Need To Know About Estimating and Bidding

(Jerry Gaeta)

5:30 - 6:30 PM Networking Cocktail Reception

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

7:00 AM Registration Desk 7:00 AM Continental Breakfast 7:30 - 8:45 AM Breakfast Workshop

Strategic Planning: Part II (Jim Huston)

9:00 - 10:30 AM General Session

Strategies for Increasing Your Profitability (David Minor)

10:30 - 10:45 AM Refreshment Break

10:45 - 12:00 noon Concurrent Educational Sessions

T1 Benchmarking Your Performance (Judy Guido)

T2 Valuing Your Business (Ed Wandske)

T3 Organizing Maintenance Crews (Tony Bass)

12:00 - 1:15 PM Contractor Roundtable Lunch 1:30 - 2:45 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions

T4 Stand Alone or Franchise: What To Do? (Ed Wandske)

T5 Maximizing Margins (Dick Bare)

T6 Managing Equipment Smartly (Mike Rorie)

2:45 - 3:05 PM Refreshment Break

3:05 - 4:20 PM Concurrent Educational Sessions

T7 Employee Incentive Programs (Rick Upchurch &

David St. John)

T8 Marketing Principles for Your Business (Tony Bass)

T9 Repeat M7 (Jack Mattingly)

### 1:00-4:00 PM

Attendee Networking Lounge Sponsored by Woods Equipment

#### 2:00 -4:00 PM

Pre-Conference Workshops

### Managing A Multi-Cultural Workforce

This information-filled session will help managers develop the requisite skills necessary to effectively manage a multi-cultural workforce. After this session you'll have a better understanding of what motivates Hispanic/Latino workers, learn steps to better communication and expand your knowledge of the cultural values of Hispanic/Latino workers.

Jennifer Thomas, Spanish Training Services, Evanston, Ill.

#### All You Need to Know About Computers and the Web

Have questions on how to upgrade your computer system to keep pace with your rapidly growing operations? Want to know the best way to put your company on the Internet and design a web site that meets your marketing needs? Want to expand your service offerings and customer base through ecommerce? If the answer is yes then join us for this in-depth workshop. You'll take home the information you need to upgrade your company's computer systems and web site.

Bill Cox, Lawn & Landscape magazine, Cleveland, Ohio Sponsored by www.lawnandlandscape.com

#### 5:00 - 6:30 PM

Opening Keynote Session

### Cactus Rolling: Taking Stress Out of the

Dr. Stephen Douglas

Stress. It is an issue everyone deals with on a daily basis and how you handle stress is important to you, your family, your employees and your company. Hear internationally recognized psychological and organizational



Dr. Stephen Douglas

development specialist Dr. Stephen Douglas share his unique view on how to manage stress in the workplace. This is not your typical clinical presentation with a laundry list of recommendations on stress management but instead one highlighted by humor and sharing real-life situations. Dr. Douglas will keep you laughing and learning throughout the program.

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#### 6:30 - 8:00 PM

School of Management Welcome Reception Sponsored by Aquascape Designs

#### MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

#### = 7:00 - 8:00 AM

Continental Breakfast Sponsored by Snapper

### ■ 7:30 - 8:45 AM

Breakfast Workshop

### A Guide to Strategic Planning: Part I

Smith Huston, Inc.

Successfully arriving where you want to go as an organization and how you get there is dependent upon designing and implementing the proper strategic plan. This comprehensive two-



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part session will put you to work with noted management consultant and author Jim Huston in developing a strategic plan for your company. Huston will help you analyze the various aspects of your operation and incorporate that information into a dynamic strategic action plan. After attending this two-part session you'll have the skills to:

- · Prepare and write an effective strategic plan for your company.
- · Learn how to involve your management team and employees in the planning process.
- · Work with your management staff to implement your strategic plan as a vital and dynamic tool.
- · Analyze your company's structure and identify strength and weakness areas.
- · Organize your company structure for maximum efficiency and future growth.

### 9:00 - 10:25 AM Morning General Session

**Managing Growth** Effectively

**Craig Ruppert & Chris Davitt** Ruppert Nurseries





**Craig Ruppert** 

Chris Davitt

Your company is growing. Your revenue is rising and your account base continues to expand. You've added more employees and you've purchased new, better equipment. Sound like a perfect situation? On the surface yes, but if you dig deeper you'll discover you may have problems. You've added to your overhead significantly with additional employees, equipment and related costs, and you've changed the makeup of your company. And because of your success you have become more visible and the competition is nipping at your heels even more. How do you manage this growth process? If you want that answer then this session is for you. Hear from industry veterans Craig Ruppert and Chris Davitt who've been there and lived it. They'll share concepts on how to manage your company's growth effectively so it keeps in step with your overall plan and market conditions. Sponsored by Toro

### 10:45 AM - 12:00 noon

Concurrent Sessions

### 10 Ways To Succeed at Customer Service

Bringing a group of new customers through the front door is good. Letting the same number get out the back door because your follow-up was poor or you didn't deliver what was promised in the contract is bad. And, typically, the difference between a satisfied and dissatisfied customer is a pleasant phone call or quick response to a problem. Learn 10 practical strategies that you can take home and implement in your company that will make your customer service efforts shine.

Speaker: Lloyd Smigel, Care Management Consultants, Oceanside, Calif.

#### M2 **Open Book Management**

There is never such a thing as too much information. Today companies of all sizes are taking an "open book" approach to management and sharing additional business related and financial information with employees. Learn how to use the "open book" style of management and make it a useful educational and motivational tool for employees.

Speaker: Phil Fogarty, JP Horizons, Painesville, Ohio

### **Creating New Business Opportunities**

One of the biggest challenges facing lawn and landscape contractors today is finding new markets for their services. This valuable session that will show you creative, innovative methods to unearth new business opportunities and turn previously unknown accounts into profitable, long-term customers for your company.

Speaker: Roger Braswell, TruGreen LandCare, Memphis, Tenn.

#### **Motivating Employees: A Different Approach**

Managing and motivating employees is a challenging task for managers in the lawn and landscape contracting industry. How do you raise the level of service your employees provide customers and have them enthusiastically buy into your company goals? Learn how to share the keys to motivating employees and getting them to work as team.

Speaker: Bill Hoopes, Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, Ohio

#### 12:00 noon - 1:15 PM

Contractor Roundtable Lunch

#### ■ 1:30 - 2:45 PM

Concurrent Sessions

#### **Leadership Principles**

It all starts at the top. Every company needs an effective leader to guide it on the road to success. In this informative session you'll analyze various styles of leadership that have been successfully used to drive companies to reach the next level. Identify what style is best suited to your strengths as a leader and how you can maximize your talents to be a more effective, knowledgeable and valuable manager.

Speaker: Bill Hoopes, Scotts Lawn Service, Marysville, Ohio

#### Open Book Management (repeat ses-M6

For session description see Session M2

#### **Designing an Operations Blueprint** M7

Learn how to properly analyze your company's operational structure and spot areas where waste and duplicity commonly occur. From route scheduling and sales follow-up procedures to equipment and product inventory, keeping an eye to the vital elements of your company's day-to-day operations is essential to building a well run and profitable organization.

Speaker: Jack Mattingly, Mattingly & Associates, Woodstock, Ga.

#### **Creating New Business Opportunities** (repeat session)

For session description see Session M3

#### 3:05 - 5:30 PM

Afternoon General Session

#### All You Need To Know About **Bidding and Estimating**

#### Jerry Gaeta

Vander Kooi & Associates



Proper estimating and bidding is at the core of every landscape contractor's business operation. If you do it properly you end up with a satisfied chain of individuals - customers, employees and suppliers. If you do it wrong the results can create problems up and down that chain and cost your company money and customers. To secure better control over the bidding and estimating process we've brought in Jerry Gaeta from Vander Kooi & Associates to share with the formula for successful bidding and estimating based on the widely used and respected "Vander Kooi System." This in-depth session is one you will not want to miss and will cover:

- Four Things A Good Pricing System Does For A Company
- Labor Costing
- Equipment Costing
- Handling The Labor Burden
- Overhead Allocation
- Generating Profit

Sponsored by Shindaiwa

### 5:30 - 6:30 PM

Networking Cocktail Reception

### TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

### 7:00 - 8:00 AM

Continental Breakfast Sponsored by Great Dane Power Equipment

7:30 - 8:45 AM

Breakfast Workshop

#### A Guide to Strategic Planning: Part II Jim Huston

Smith Huston, Inc.

Continuation of Monday Session. For a complete session description see the Monday session listing.

9:00 - 10:30 AM General Session

### Strategies for Increasing Your Profitability

#### **David Minor**

In today's bottom line oriented economy many businesses focus their efforts on making the balance sheet as attractive as possible. However it takes more than a sharp pencil to make your balance sheet a true representation of your company's financial standing. It requires an analysis of how you run your company on a daily basis and the David Minor willingness to be flexible when necessary and the strength to hold the



line when you have to. In this informative session join one of the industry's most successful entrepreneurs, David Minor, as he shares strategies that will allow you to increase your company's profitability while maintaining high quality service. Learn how to look at key areas of your operation and position them and your company to succeed. Sponsored by Echo

### 10:45 AM - 12:00 noon

Concurrent Sessions

#### **Benchmarking Your Performance**

How do you currently measure your company's performance? How do you measure your competition's performance? Securing the answers to those questions is important if you want to see your company grow. Find out the steps involved in benchmarking your company's performance and that of your competition. Learn how to interpret and use the information collected to help your company grow.

Speaker: Judy Guido, TruGreen LandCare, Memphis, Tenn.

#### **Valuing Your Business**

What is your business worth? That is a question every small business owner asks from time to time. Knowing that information is important not only if you are considering selling your business or acquiring another company, but also when you are applying for a loan to expand your business. Learn how to accurately determine the value of your business and put your company in the best financial position possible.

Speaker: Ed Wondtke, Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio

#### **Organizing Maintenance Crews**

Properly organizing your company's maintenance crews is a major component in setting up a successful operational structure. In this informative session you'll learn how to determine the size and makeup of the crew, learn tips for improved scheduling and how to maximize the labor time of your crews with an eye to the bottom line. Speaker: Tony Bass, Bass Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, Ga.

#### 12:00 - 1:15 PM

Contractor Roundtable Lunch Sponsored by AgrEvo

#### 1:30 - 2:45 PM

Concurrent Sessions

#### Stand Alone or Franchise: What to Do?

Are you trying to decide if going it on your own is worth it? Is being part of a franchise organization the better route? Hear the pros and cons of being on your own or being part of a franchise operation. See where your company would benefit most and how to go about making this important

Speaker: Ed Wandtke, Wandtke & Associates, Columbus, Ohio

#### **Maximizing Margins**

Improving your company's balance sheet takes more than juggling the numbers at the end of the month. It takes close examination at the operational and financial details in all areas of your business. From employee salaries and benefits to equipment and product expenses, all these items impact your margins. Learn how to prioritize your expenses, identify areas where the belt can be tightened and improve your profits. Speaker: Dick Bare, Arbor-Nomics, Norcross, Ga.

#### **T6 Managing Equipment Smartly**

Equipment is the lifeblood of the landscape contractor - without the proper tools not much gets done. Managing equipment inventory and usage wisely is a key component to a company's productivity and profitability. Discover how to maximize efficient use of equipment to minimize unnecessary labor costs and related expenditures.

Speaker: Mike Rorie, Groundmasters, Cincinnati, Ohio

#### 3:05 - 4:20 PM

Concurrent Sessions

#### **Employee Incentive Programs**

In today's competitive job market where unemployment is low and the demand for skilled workers high, keeping good employees is a challenge. Discover strategies for developing unique and attractive employee incentive plans that will help keep your employees onboard longer and boost profits.

Speaker: Rick Upchurch, Nature Scapes, Lilburn, Ga., & Dave St. John, GreenSearch, Atlanta, Ga.

#### **Marketing Principles for Your Business**

From cable television to personalized direct mail pieces, contractors are flexing their marketing muscle more readily than in years past. You'll review key points on how to "target" market your services to specific customer groups and receive a bigger bang for your marketing dollar.

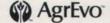
Speaker: Tony Bass, Bass Custom Landscapes, Bonaire, Ga.

#### **Designing an Operations Blueprint (repeat** session)

For session description see session M7.

Speaker: Jack Mattingly, Mattingly & Associates, Woodstock, Ga.

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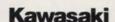
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**IIIECHO** III Husqvarna













### Hotel Information

A block of rooms has been reserved for School of Management attendees at the Dallas Marriott Quorum. Located in the heart of lively north Dallas, the Marriott is surrounded by numerous restaurants and is a free five-minute shuttle ride to the world famous Galleria Mall. Attendees should make their reservations directly with the hotel on or before January 24, 2000 to receive the special conference room rate of \$115 per night (single/double). Please ask for the School of Management Conference rate. For reservations call the Dallas Marriott Quorum at 972/ 661-2800.

### Discount Travel Information

School of Management has arranged for special discount airfare on American Airlines, the official airline of the School of Management. To take advantage of the discount rates, please contact the School of Management's Travel Coordinator Robin Stancik at 800/209-3218 between the hours of 8:30 AM and 6:00 PM Eastern. Her e-mail address is robinstan@aol.com.



### Confirmations

All registrations postmarked by January 28, 2000 will be acknowledged by mail. Registrations received after that date should be picked up at the School of Management Registration Desk at the Dallas Marriott Quorum starting Sunday, February 13, 2000 at 1:00 p.m.

### Airport Transportation

The Dallas Marriott Quorum is located off the Dallas Tollway North approximately 20 minutes from Dallas Fort Worth International Airport and 15 minutes to Dallas Love Field. Super Shuttle service is available from both airports. From Dallas Forth Worth International it is \$19 one-way per person and \$6 for each additional person. From Love Field it is \$12 one-way. Prices are subject to change without notice.

### Cancellation/Substitution/Refund Policy

All cancellations must be made in writing. A full refund will be accepted if postmarked by January 28, 2000. Those received seven to 14 days before the conference are subject to a \$50 cancellation fee. No refund less than seven days before conference. Advancement payment is required for the golf tournament and no cancellations after February 4, 2000. 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.

### Conference Special Events

### Lawn & Landscape Tournament of Champions Golf Outing

Sunday, February 13 = 8:00 AM

\$80 (Includes greens fees, cart, lunch, prizes and transportation)

Spend a morning testing your golf skills at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lawn & Landscape Tournament of Champions Golf Outing. The tournament format is a scramble with the winning team taking home special trophies. Cost for the outing is \$80 and includes greens fees, cart rental, practice balls, lunch, prizes and transportation to and from the course. Advance registration and payment is required. Registration deadline is February 3, 2000.

# Why I Come To The School of Management...

"The School of Management Conference was extremely informative and well-organized. The speakers really knew 'their stuff' and the topics timely. My partner and I learned some fresh ideas that will certainly help our business grow."

Susan Wright Let Go... Let Us Lawn & Garden Care Highland, Maryland



### Registration Form



February 13-15, 2000

Dallas Marriott Quorum

(Please print or type. Form may b	Texas	
First Name	Last Name	
Name As It Will Appear On Badge		School of
Title	Company	Management
Address		Registration Check List
City	State Zip Code	
Phone		Completed Registration Form
E-mail Address		✓ Included Method
Payment Information	THE REAL PROPERTY OF THE PERSON NAMED IN COLUMN 1	of Payment
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Card Number	Expiration Date	Dallas Marriott Quorum
Name On Card		✓ Called for Discount
Signature		Travel Information
	e processed until payment information is received. All faxed and phone registra- nation. Check must be drawn in U.S. dollars and drawn from a U.S. Bank. There	✓ Told a Friend To Register For School of Management
Registration Information	THE PROPERTY OF STREET OF STREET, STRE	
	Number Total	
Full Conference Registration	\$195	For Office Use Only
(Includes all educational sessi receptions, lunches, breakfast	s, refreshment breaks)	Date Received
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One-Day Registration	\$105 =	
	f Outing\$80 =	Payment Type
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4012 Bridge Ave., Cle		Amount
By Fax: Complete form and fa By Phone: Call 800/456-0707	x, with credit card information, to 216/961-0364	I G

Both Campanella and Walczyk emphasized the importance of being as selective as possible with the names you telemarket to.

"Telemarketing is effective when done correctly, and part of doing this correctly is managing the lists you call off of," explained Walczyk, who contracts with a telemarketing service to make the calls for him.

Campanella said he plans his telemarketing approach by prioritizing the streets of homeowners he wants to target in order to achieve greater sales and route density and to minimize bad leads. From there, phone numbers can be gathered from the local phone book or from a marketing service.

"But make sure you're not telemarketing to people who are already your customers, because you don't want to risk upsetting them," Campanella added.

The Lawn Dawg handles its telemarketing efforts internally, and Campanella explained that the telemarketing process begins in the fall of each year with list preparation.

Campanella described list preparation as a two-step process. The first step is to decide what areas of town to market into based on demographics and desired route density.

"We literally drive up and down every single street in a new town before starting our marketing there to decide whether or not we want to market to each street based on the likelihood those people will become customers," said Campanella, saying the 'scouting' process takes a day or two each year. "Then we put those streets into a perfect route order to organize the order calls are made so we develop a density for following up on leads and for servicing new customers.

"With conventional direct mail, the Yellow Pages or referrals, the odds aren't as good that you'll develop the route density you want," he continued.

The second step of the preparation is cross referencing a new list purchased each fall against his current database.

"Then we replace any new names, make any address changes and update phone number changes," he explained. "About 30 percent of this information changes each year, so if you don't update your records each year then you can only get in touch with 70 percent of your potential contacts."

Another key to the telemarketing campaign is hiring reliable people to make the calls and keeping them onboard throughout the calling period, which is one reason why some companies outsource this work.

"Our goal is to have each sales representative handle 30 to 40 leads per day, so we assign one telemarketer to each sales rep that we have," Campanella pointed out.

And contractors need to prepare the callers as much as possible in order to make the

job easier and to boost lead generation.

"Callers have to be prepared because of all of the rejections and wisecracks they are going to encounter," related Walczyk.

Part of preparing the callers to be successful is keeping the script they read from as simple as possible (see Read from the Script, page 118). Campanella said simplifying the

### C & S TURF CARE EQUIPMENT, INC

BUILDING QUALITY EQUIPMENT FOR PROFESSIONALS, BY PROFESSIONALS



Skid Mount Units

Whether you need the Turf Tracker to dramatically increase productivity, a custom built skid sprayer or truck, C&S can build the right equipment at the right price!



**USE READER SERVICE #51** 

www.csturfequip.com

script makes hiring callers easier and helps them become more comfortable with the task.

Campanella's telemarketers have a set schedule to follow. People being called for the first time are called between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. each night while people receiving follow-up calls are called between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. that night.

**MAKING A LEAD A SALE.** Generating all of the leads in the world is a wonderful idea, but contractors obviously don't make money off of leads alone. Devising a plan for lead conversion is just as important as the plan for lead generation.

"We start calling in mid-January, and you should make sure you don't call too early when people aren't even thinking about spring and lawn care," Campanella noted.

Campanella recommended getting an estimate in the homeowner's hands within 72 hours of the original phone call, but he also pointed out that his employees are in-

f a manager hires someone to perform a certain job but then expects the new employee to perform much more complicated tasks, that manager should be held responsible when that employee fails.

Jim Campanella, president, The Lawn Dawg, Hudson, N.H., employs the same philosophy regarding the responsibilities of the people making telemarketing calls for his company.

"Salespeople sell, telemarketers don't," he emphasized. "Otherwise, the amount of leads the telemarketers generate will go down dramatically, which will negatively affect caller morale."

Campanella said these employees are generally difficult to motivate and have to be managed closely.

"Callers have to understand they are temporary employees from the start, and then you have to micromanage them and know how to do the job yourself, otherwise they will be on the phone calling friends instead of potential customers," Campanella remarked, adding that whoever manages the callers should stay at the office as long as callers are there making calls each night.

Simplifying the script callers read from can be a key to boosting their productivity, and here is a sample script that telemarketers for The Lawn Dawg commonly use:

"Hello Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm calling from The Lawn Dawg, a professional lawn care service. The reason for my brief call is that we'll be in your neighborhood this week dropping off some free price and program information to some of your neighbors and I was wondering if we could drop off a free estimate for

# from the Script

### The Spade

"Patented"





- Designed to aid in planting of large trees and shrubs.
- Attaches to any brand skid loader.
- End back breaking labor let spade dig hole and wrap it up!
- Almost no maintenance replace digging teeth and go.
- Great for construction of retaining walls and digging in horizontal banks.
- Need additional soil or compost for your tree? The spade is a 1/2-yard bucket already attached to loader - just haul it in.
- As compared to the auger, which leaves the walls of the hole flat, the spade scores the hole so that the tree enjoys maximum root growth.

Due to enormous response our production costs enable us to pass our savings on to you! We are now offering the spade for \$975.00 plus shipping.

For more information or to order call:

TRIPLE D ENTERPRISES 1-800-478-7077

**USE READER SERVICE #52** 



### Cure for Turfgrass Baldness

When your course or commercial turfgrass suffers from bald spots, the remedy is the 48-inch **Gandy Overseeder**. It's the proven way to grow turf. Use it to dethatch, too.

The **Gandy Overseeder** has 24 outlets seeding on 2-inch spacings. Sawtooth cutter blades prepare the ground for seed. Gandy's precise metering system evenly and accurately distributes any kind of turfgrass seed -- even bentgrass -- to each outlet. Separate disc or shoe openers help postion seed for fast germination. The superior seed-to-soil contact results in thicker, faster turf growth.

Unit is 540 PTO-driven and slip clutch protected for tractors with as little as 18 HP. Pneumatic tires won't mar turf like skids do on other units. Can be ordered as dethatcher only. Trailing gang rollers or fiber brushes are optional. This year, cure turfgrass baldness forever.



It's Gandy

Owatonna, MN 55060 800/443-2476 507/451-5430

you also. There's no obligation and you don't even have to be home – we can place this right in your door. Would this be okay?

IF RESPOND "NO:" Are you currently using another service or do you fertilize your own lawn?

(Regardless of their answer, re-offer delivery of information for price comparison purposes.)

IF RESPOND "YES:" Is your correct address ?

Did you use another service last year? If so, who?

Did you have any problems with the lawn last year, such as weeds, crabgrass, grubs, etc.?

Someone will be out within the next few days. They'll measure your lawn and leave an exact price quote and program information

Thank you for considering The Lawn Dawg

structed just to leave a quote on the door instead of knocking on the door and giving the quote directly to them.

"We've already bothered them once with the phone call, so we don't want to seem like a nuisance," he noted. "We just want to get a price in their hands and let our salespeople go to work."

A follow-up phone call is made the next night by the telemarketing callers, and, again, they have a specific process to follow.

"We're not looking to close a sale with this call as much as we are looking to build a relationship," Campanella noted.

The goal of the follow-up call is to get answers to the following questions:

- · Did you get the lead?
- · Are you interested in the service?
- · How did you treat your lawn last year?
- Can we set an appointment to discuss this further?

"Remember, we're making these calls in

January, so we don't have to close right away," Campanella added. "We want to sell at the prospect's pace, not ours."

Walczyk also cautioned contractors to be realistic about the quality of customers telemarketing can produce and to seriously consider who is sent out to close the sales.

"Closing rates on telemarketing leads can be deceptive because you pick up some one-application sales or customers who have to be 're-sold' before every application," he explained. "And, if you're using independent sales representatives, you could end up just 'renting' customers since the sales people are more interested in an immediate close than a long-term customer because they get paid on how much they sell.

"Training your technicians who care for the properties to handle the sales can avoid this problem," Walczyk continued. "Plus, you won't have to worry about false sales promises, because the technician will not sell the customer on something he or she cannot deliver."



Telemarketing callers who are trained properly can make sure that a prospect who tells the caller he or she isn't interested in the service isn't a wasted call.

"You want the caller to record why a homeowner wasn't interested in your service or have the salesperson record why you couldn't close on the lead for future use," Walczyk explained. "If the family has prepaid for service for next year, note that so you can call them earlier next year.

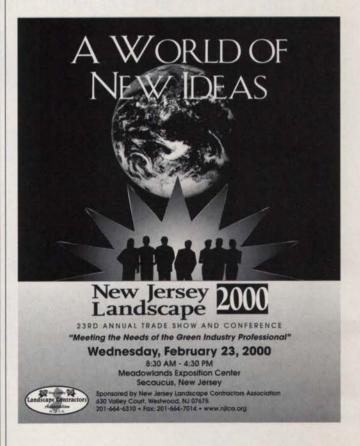
"And, if you're using an outside service to make the calls for you, make sure your sales people keep of list of leads you're given that turn out to be bad leads from people who say they never asked for an estimate or never even received an initial call," Walczyk added. "Then you can get credit from your telemarketing service if they are charging you based on the lead, so long as you negotiate this when you sign up for the service."

Campanella also recommended using (continued on page 136) on Nichols, president of Yes, Marketing, Columbus, Ohio, oversaw Barefoot Grass' telemarketing efforts for a number of years. He and other industry veterans offered these telemarketing keys:

- Identify yourself be honest about who you are and why you are calling. That's
  the only way to begin a relationship with a customer.
- Don't try to hide your company's identification to get through caller ID systems.
   Doing this will just upset the homeowner when they find out who you are, and if they see who you are ahead of time and still pick up the phone then you're probably already halfway to a sale.
- · Do not call random lists that aren't prepared specifically for your use.
- · Use no more than a seven-month-old list.
- · Don't leave messages on answering machines or voicemails for a first call.
- Don't offer promotions associated with telemarketing because that extends the length of the phone call and limits the number of people called.
- · Send any direct mail pieces you have to people who can't be reached by phone.
- Do some competitive shopping for any lists you buy for telemarketing and get the best price so long as the list you purchase can be broken down the way you need it.
- Don't deliver estimates off of leads until you can accurately assess the condition of the turf, especially in areas where lawns may be covered with snow early in the year.
- Bob West

# **Telemarketing**





**USE READER SERVICE #55** 

**USE READER SERVICE #58** 

### Wildflowers

Kristen Hampshire

Landscaping with wild flowers and native grasses may not be simple, but the benefits are worth the work.

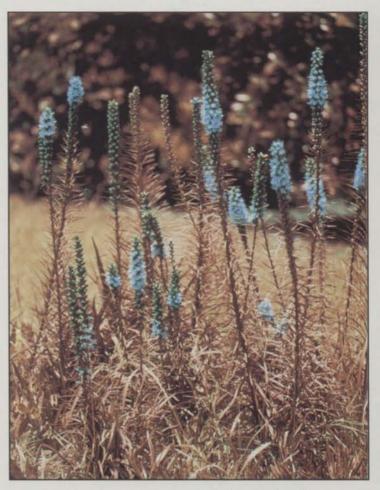
Customers and contractors are discovering the increasing benefits of seeding wildflowers and native grasses – environmental and maintenance advantages that are increasing the demand for naturalistic groundcover. An alternative to traditional turf, the varying wildflower grass blends create a kaleidoscope landscape with an ecological edge that makes the option appealing.

"The landscape market is driven by the customers or the property managers, and more of them are asking for landscapes with wild flowers and native grasses," observed Neil Diboll, owner and president of Prairie Nursery, Westfield, Wis. "The wild flowers are showy, and the grasses are desirable because of their texture, structure and fall color that they bring to the landscape. The flowers are appealing for their overall color."

Contractors are choosing to plant the wild grasses for their naturalistic appeal, and others are seeding the wild-

flowers and native grasses as a sort of trouble-shooter, Diboll noted. Once grown, these plants serve as effective buffer strips between intensively managed areas and water features, protect water quality by filtering applied products, curb erosion and are ideal for problematic areas like heavy clay soil mix and dry sandy soils that cannot establish turf.

"There are many advantages – first and foremost is that native grasses offer an ecologically sound landscape that reduces the use of pesticides and fertilizers, although planting naturalistic landscapes does not eliminate the need for them," Diboll said.



The lively colors that wild flowers produce can vary from year-to-year and bring an additional dynamic to the landscape.

# Wildflowers Native Crasses

### Turfco Sells Lawn Equipment Factory Direct

Turfco Manufacturing Inc., based in Minneapolis, has announced a new direct purchase program for its lawn care products line. The new program will be available to landscapers and lawn care firms involved in commercial turf maintenance.

The new "Turfco Direct" program began November 15, 1999, with important new features for buyers, such as:

- 90-day "same as cash" purchase option
- · No payment for 120 days
- 14-day "satisfaction assured" approval period
- Extended two-year new equipment warranty period
- A new "Parts Direct" overnight delivery program
- Toll-free phone ordering at 800-679-8201
- Online ordering and purchase options at www.turfco.com



"Customers receive products faster for less," says President Kinkead.

### Direct delivery now saves you time and money.

"This new program was developed after very deliberate and careful market analysis," said George Kinkead, Turfco President. "The fast pace of product development and improvements makes it imperative that new products be made available to end users as rapidly as possible. For example, Turfco has introduced 12 new products to the market just in the past seven years. Yet, the "mainline" dealer operations focus most of their efforts on their primary product lines, so renovation and specialty products tend to get lost in the shuffle."

Kinkead says offering both products and replacement parts directly to customers will shorten their turn-around time for getting new equipment into operation, as well as getting machines back to work quicker. "Our product designs now make it possible for equipment owners and operators to make most repairs and adjustments right in the field, using regular hand tools."

Kinkead continued "Our turn-around time will be shorter and our factory will be more responsive. The company's golf course products will continue to be marketed through our existing distribution channels."

The new "Turfco Direct" phone number is (800) 679-8201. Fax requests and orders can be sent to (612) 785-0556, mailed to Turfco Manufacturing, Inc., 1655 101st Ave. N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55449-4420 or e-mailed to sales@turfco.com. For fast, immediate savings, visit the company's website at www.turfco.com.



**USE READER SERVICE #61** 

### Wildflowers

Blends of perennials and grasses create different mixes for each customer, with standard mixes typically containing 15 to 20 flower species and two to four ornamental grasses, Diboll explained. Generally, there is a combination of flowers and grasses in bloom because perennials bloom for a few weeks or a month at a time.

"A lot of customers use transplants to create native gardens so they don't have to worry about whether or not they'll be hearty," he added. "Some people will mix these gardens with existing perennials – they want to be careful that they don't have 8-foot-tall grasses on a neighbor's property line, which is why we recommend transplants for residential areas."

Norm Poppe, general manager of Applewood Seed Company, Arvada, Colo., said custom blending by suppliers for customers is common, whether for height, usage, strictly native plants, single-color mixes or high-color mixes. Suppliers of these plants also carry pre-mixed blends to take some of the

guesswork out of the process for contractors. For example, Poppe said Applewood introduced a series of new blends of native grasses last year.

"The contractor doesn't have to do as much custom blending beSome contractors are choosing

to plant these wild grasses for

their naturalistic appeal, while

other contractors are

seeding the wild flowers and

native grasses as a sort of

trouble-shooter.

cause the four different mixes we already have and the individual species we offer cover the bases," he said. "The end user doesn't have to have as much knowledge to determine how much of each species is required."

The part of working with these plants that contractors might find most challenging – site preparation – also makes some consumers impatient. Diboll said the bulk of the labor related to native grass installations is required at this point in the process, which leaves a less-than-desirable appearance for a little while. Contractors first must completely remove weeds from the ground surface before planting, which can take up to one year and require up to three herbicide sprayings in a season in order to plant in the fall or following spring. Because perennials are slow growing, the growth only needs to be mowed two or three times the first year before annual burning can begin in the third year. Most wildflowers are perennials in native grasses, and they require three growing seasons to reach maturity.

"Our society is all about instant gratification, and working with these plants does not represent that type of project," Diboll warned. "A lot of contractors don't want to take the time and tell customers not to do this – this is slow success. Sometimes clients say they don't want to wait a year."

But Diboll said in a turf-type situation, if the land is sprayed in the fall and stripped or dethatched, the surface will be ready for planting in the spring. Generally, the "window of opportunity" for seeding is between March 1 and June 30.

Despite the initial care wild grasses demand, the labor required to maintain the landscape is still minimal, Poppe said. Contractors see cost savings because the wildflowers need little mowing and watering. Water conservation also attracts many homeowners to this type of groundcover.

And wildflowers and native grasses bring a different appearance to landscapes each year. Weather, maintenance, soil condition and wildlife are variables that determine the presentation of the plants, Poppe mentioned.

This unpredictability, however, is what leads some contractors to shy away from planting the grasses.

"Some are not really comfortable with

these plants because they don't have as much familiarity with them as they do with other materials – they tend to stick with what they know," he observed. "You know that a tree or a lawn will be a tree or a lawn in five years, while a wildflower meadow will change over time from various conditions."

An ever-changing, natural landscape is typically the goal of people who choose to plant wildflowers, Poppe said.

"The biggest thing we see is that contractors usually aren't familiar with planting ecosystems," he noted. "Most contractors install mono-culture plantings grouped together with turf, ornamentals and shrubs. Oftentimes, they are not familiar with planting an ecosystem, the relations between various species, and that some input will benefit some species and cause detriment to others from water to planting rates. It takes a happy medium to keep an ecosystem at a functional rate."

The Midwest and Northeast are the most popular regions for wildflower and native grass growth, Diboll said. And the distinction between generic wildflowers and native wildflowers depends on the area of the country. Perennial prairie flowers have grown for hundreds of years in the Midwest, while many of the wildflowers that are sold commercially are annuals that lack staying power. For a consumer planting a long-term meadow, perennials that adapt to the region are essential for a permanent, low-maintenance landscape.

"These plants last for decades," Diboll pointed out. "They create a wildlife habitat for birds and butterflies, meanwhile creating an ecosystem that is beautiful. You can get all seasons of interest with flowers in the summer and grasses in the fall and winter." – Kristen Hampshire

The author is a Contributing Editor to Lawn & Landscape magazine.



### Environmental Leadership

by Bob West

Ten of the industry's best representatives were honored by AgrEvo Environmental Health and Lawn & Landscape magazine for their environmental focus.



**Envelope** 

The 1999 Environmental Leadership winners were:

DAVE HANSON, Environmental Care, Calabasas, Calif. TIM DOPPEL, Atwood Lawn Care, Sterling Heights, Mich. NORMAN GOLDENBERG, TruGreen-ChemLawn, Memphis, Tenn. TOM TOLKACZ, Swingle Tree & Landscape Care, Denver, Colo. PHIL FOGARTY, Crowley's Vegetation Management, Cleveland, Ohio MICHAEL KERNAGHAN, The Weed Man, Mississauga, Ontario LAURIE BROCCOLO, Broccolo Tree & Lawn Care, Rochester, N.Y.

CHRIS SENSKE, Senske Tree & Lawn Care, Kennewick, Wash,

THE DAVEY INSTI-

TUTE, Davey Tree Expert Co., Kent, Ohio

MARK SCHLOSSBERG,

Pro-Lawns-Plus. Baltimore, Md

Mark Schlossberg wasn't satisfied with what a group of 10 environmental stewards have accomplished thus far.

After accepting his award as part of the firstever Environmental Leadership Awards, sponsored by AgrEvo Environmental Health and Lawn & Landscape magazine, Schlossberg challenged his co-winners.

"I am very proud of what we have all done thus far, but we have to keep working at telling our story to the public and the media so people understand what it is that we do," Schlossberg encouraged the contractors and guests at the awards banquet. "We've made a lot of progress already, but there is still a long, long way to go."

Schlossberg and the nine other recipients received their awards at a reception held at the Hard Rock Café in Baltimore, Md., during the 1999 Green Industry Expo.

Michael McDermott, business group director for AgrEvo Environmental Health, congratulated each of the winners and noted that lawn and landscape professionals aren't publicly recognized often enough for the work that they do to protect and serve the environment.

"AgrEvo salutes these environmental stewards and encourages all industry personnel to remember that our work begins and ends with the environment around us," he said.

Individuals interested in nominating bwest@lawnandlandscape.com.

Dave Hanson (right) talks to the assembled recipients and guests about what being an environmental leader means to him as AgrEvo's Mike McDermott (center) and

Lawn & Landscape's Bob West (left)

listen. Photo: Stuart

Zolotorow.

someone for next year's Leadership Award should contact Lawn & Landscape's Bob West at 800/456-0707 ext. 239 or email him at

### Lesco 48- and 54-inch "Float Deck" Rotary Mower

- Features a floating deck, pneumatic caster wheels and a fully articulating front axle
- Hydro drive mowers with dual hydro pumps allows zero-turning radius, while allowing for positive reverse and eliminating belt slippage in wet conditions.
- Twin ground-speed control levers ensure straight-line tracking
- Upper handle assembly adjusts to accommodate various size operators
- 5-gallon fuel tank
- 48-inch cutting deck model is powered by a 17-hp electric-start Kawasaki engine and 54-inch model with a 20-hp electricstart Kohler engine

Circle 200 on reader service card

### Meyer Under Tailgate Spreader

• The design of the spreader allows for one-man operation and maintenance



- Available in both steel and stainless steel
- Allows for the consistent and even spread of ice control material

Circle 201 on reader service card

### Kawasaki Backpack Blower

- Features a 3.2-hp Kawasaki engine that blows leaves and debris with a maximum volume of 380 cfm and a maximum air velocity of 180 mph
- Four-point rubber engine mount system
- High-density padded backrest and a wide, padded shoulder harness to minimize vibration
- Includes an offset carrying handle and large 2-pint fuel tank
- Noise suppression features include a muffler with glass wool lining and a large volume air cleaner, plastic engine shroud, fan and fan casing

Circle 202 on reader service card

### Otterbine Ozone Generator for Ponds

- Removes nutrients, minerals and suspended solids from the water column by adding a molecular charge to the molecules causing them to become heavy and fall out of suspension
- Ozone also kills pathogens and single cell plants by bursting the cell wall
- Uses the corona discharge method as opposed to UV
- Cost per gram of ozone produced is 70 to 80 percent lower than other systems and the energy cost to produce ozone is less
- Provides safety protection in the form of a door interlock switch that shuts down the power

when the ozone generator's cabinet door is opened

 Will not produce ozone unless the mixing system is operating and

there is oxygen airflow

• Because it quickly reverts back to oxygen, ozone is inherently safe to use

Circle 203 on reader service card

### Reemay Biobarrier

- · Root control system
- Prevents root intrusion problems in retaining walls and foundations
- Guaranteed for 15 years
- Porous, durable geotextile fabric with permanently attached nodules containing trifluralin, a non-system herbicide that is classified by the EPA as Class IV – less toxic than table salt
- Redirects root growth away from the retaining wall site without causing root damage

Circle 204 on reader service card

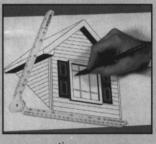
### **Intromark ANDORAY**

- Compact drawing and sketching tool
- Helps artists of all levels render quality perspective drawings and

scale reproductions with proper proportions

• Can be easily transported in a purse, pocket, backpack or carryall

Circle 205 on reader service card



125

### Kano Laboratories Kreen

- Internal engine cleaner that is added to gas and oil every one thousand miles
- Effective on gas and diesel engines
- Uses four-way cleaning power that reaches the upper cylinder, crankcase, lower piston rings and valve stems
- Dissolved the carbon build-up on valve stems

Circle 206 on reader service card



### Resource One Riverside First Mate

- Blend of methylated seed oil, nonionic surfactant, ammoniated nitrogen and compatibility agents
- Formulated to enhance the performance of many herbicides
- Provides growers with the necessary adjuvants needed to help increase weed control from the reduced herbicide rates used in sugar beet microrates
- Raises the spray solution pH to help overcome precipitates and spray nozzles plugging problems caused by the microrate herbicides
- Available in 2 x 2.5 gallons and minibulk

Circle 207 on reader service card

### Vermeer Trencher Products

• LM-11 vibratory plow with Porta-Bore attachment can be used on irrigation, has 715 pounds of optimized weight over the floatation tracs and is powered by an 11.5-hp, one

cylinder Kawasaki engine

- The V6500 trencher/plow is powered by a rubber-mounted Cummins engine for reduced vibration and the 65-hp machine has high torque rise for digging and plowing
- The V-120 utility trencher/plow combo has a rubber-mounted 116-hp Cummins diesel engine for digging and plowing and trenches in depths down to 72 inches

Circle 208 on reader service card

LAWN AND LANDSCAPE COMPANIES HAVE GENERATED OVER

\$1,000,000

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- Measures real-time evapotranspiration
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- · Automates water conversation using input of a professional irrigation contractor
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· Patent-pending technology

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### **Product Profile**

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"The only time the machine is idle is when we get snow," said Kijewski. "We use it for mulch applications and for overseeding patchy lawns in lieu of a total renovation. Plus, now we can install interior and rooftop gardens, which gives us a competitive edge."

Kijewski said the company has boosted mulch applications from 1,500 cubic yards to 3,500 cubic yards with the new machines.

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Automated
mulching
machines
can boost
productivity, profitability and
job quality
while also
reducing a

contractor's

dependence



on manual labor. Photo: Finn Corp

eral, not the least of which is increased profit through higher production and reduced reliance on labor.

"With this equipment, one operator can get as much done at the end of a day as at the beginning because it is easy to operate and is not physically demanding," said Kijewski. "We can take a crew of one or two to operate the Bark Blower and do the work it used to take eight or 10 people to do."

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### **Product Profile**

The units give the company the ability to better serve customers as well. "We're in and out before customers know we've even been there," observed Kijewski. "And, with the hose application, we don't trample the lawns with equipment and a large crew."

Pine Ridge started with the smallest model Bark Blower, then traded up twice to larger sized truckmounted units.

"We are going to get the 40-cubic-yard unit this spring and keep our latest truck-mounted unit, so we'll have more than twice our current capacity," said Kijewski. "Every time we do a job, it's like earning and advertising at the same time. People come up to us on almost every job and want us to do their work too."

Kijewski also said the Bark Blower has improved customer service. "Because the work is so easy to do, we make three mulch applications in summer and fall to keep mulch beds looking fresh," he said.

Pine Ridge also has a speedy technique for mulching islands in parking lots. "One man drives the Bark Blower from island to island. Using a short hose, mulch is applied in about five minutes. Then a crewmember sweeps up, and we're done. The client likes that we

don't interfere with traffic flow."

Kijewski expects to further expand the Pine Ridge business with a larger Bark Blower. "The 40-yard unit

will allow us to service local sports fields, especially for top dressing and overseeding in a single application," he explained. "The fact that sports fields are wide-open flat areas makes it ideal for one man to apply soil mixtures to cover worn areas."

Perhaps best of all, the machines have paid for themselves within one year. "Sometimes you find a piece of equipment that is unique enough to be its own profit center. That's what we've found with the Bark Blower. We're simply taking advantage of the machine's capabilities to grow our business," Kijewski concluded. – Mark Nicholas

**Advantages** of

versatile equipment

are increased profit

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The author is with Gaul Advertising.

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### Telemarketing (continued from page 120)

signed contracts as a method to combat the notorious high customer turnover rate associated with telemarketing.

TELEMARKETING TOMORROW. The telemarketing industry has not been one of the more popular groups with consumers in recent years, and legislators have taken note.

State legislators in Oregon, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Alabama, Georgia, Florida and Alaska have created formal "Do Not Call" lists that individuals can have themselves included on to preclude telemarketing companies from calling them. Bob Swedo, president, McMillen Advertising Corp., Brandford, Conn., said an additional 13 states are considering similar legislation. In fact, South Dakota, New Mexico and Colorado are the only states without any current or pending telemarketing legislation.

"There are national and state laws callers have to be aware of," Swedo added, noting that the laws apply to broadcast faxes and voice messaging as well. "For example, telemarketing can usually only take place between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m."

Campanella said he has observed a noticeable drop-off in the productivity of his telemarketing efforts.

"We used to use one caller to support two sales people, but now we can only generate enough leads to support one sales person per caller," he observed. "The leads are dropping because of the growth of "Do Not Call" lists and the popularity of caller ID.

"But I think telemarketing can still be productive for three to five more years," Campanella concluded.

The author is Editor of Lawn & Landscape magazine.

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### **Help Wanted**

#### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Are you ready for a change? Come join our team in the beautiful southwest. We are searching for top quality people in the following positions:

- Project Manager
- Landscape Designer
- Crew Leaders

Qualified candidates will possess experience in their respective position as well as excellent communication skills, self-motivation and strong desire to succeed. Excellent benefits, profit sharing and relocation allowance. Please mail or fax resume to: Heads Up Landscape Contractors, Inc., 7525 Second Street NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107. 505/898-2105 (Fax).

LAWN & LANDSCAPE

#### **KEY EMPLOYEE SEARCHES**

Florapersonnel, Inc. in our second decade of performing confidential key employee searches for the land-scape industry and allied trades worldwide. Retained basis only. Candidate contact welcome, confidential and always free. Florapersonnel Inc., 1740 Lake Markham Road, Sanford, FL 32771. Phone 407/320-8177, Fax 407/320-8083. Email: Hortsearch@aol.com Website: http://www.florapersonnel.com

### LOCATE IN ONE OF FIVE GREAT CITIES!

Tell us what city you prefer! We are a leading lawn care company that has been in business for 30 years with locations in Cleveland, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. We are accepting resumes for branch managers and branch manager trainees. Our trainee packages average \$35,000 to \$40,000 per year and our branch manager packages average \$75,000 to \$80,000 per year. Both trainee and branch manager benefits include generous salaries, health benefits, new personal vehicles and a large year end bonus. Join a fast growing company that "really cares" about its employees! Branch manager applicants should have managerial experience, and trainee applicants should have assistant manager experience. All inquiries kept strictly confidential. Send or fax resume to: Kapp's Lawn Specialists, Michael Markovich, 4124 Clubview Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46804. Fax: 219/432-7892; or call Mike at 219/436-4336 for more information.

#### PROJECT MANAGEMENT

James Martin Associates, Inc., a well-established commercial and residential landscape maintenance firm, is seeking a team-oriented person with 3 to 5 years experience in maintenance project management to join the landscape maintenance department. The successful candidate will possess experience in project and client management, contract negotiations, client prospecting, estimating and a solid understanding of the grounds management industry. For immediate confidential consideration, please send or fax resume and salary requirements to:

JAMES MARTIN ASSOCIATES, INC. Attn: Chris Keenan 59 East US Hwy. 45 Vernon Hills, IL 60061 Fax 847/634-8298

Phone: 847/634-1660

#### **OPERATIONS MANAGER**

Tovar's Landscape Contractor's Inc., located 25 miles west of Chicago, seeking a self-motivated operations manager with 5 to 10 years industry experience. Candidate must have strong management skills and familiar with remote locations. Responsible for complete operations including scheduling, purchasing and supervision of field personnel. Salary based on experience. Please forward resume to: TLC, 977 Elizabeth St., Elgin, IL 60120 or Fax: 847/695-0417.

### LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT

#### THE BRICKMAN GROUP, LTD.

Careers in landscape management available in: CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, IL, IN, MD, MO, NJ, NY, NC, OH, PA, TX, VA, WI. Fax: 301/987-1565.

Email: jobs@brickmangroup.com Web site: www.brickmangroup.com

### EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE INDUSTRY MANAGERS

Come Join One of the Largest Vegetation Management Companies in the United States

DeAngelo Brothers, Inc. is experiencing tremendous growth throughout the country creating the following openings:

Branch Managers (Various locations throughout the USA) (Immediate openings in New England and Virginia areas)

Responsible for managing day to day operations, including the supervision of field personnel. Business/Horticultural degree desired with a minimum of 2 years experience working in the green industry.

Qualified applicants must have proven leadership abilities, strong customer relations and interpersonal skills. We offer excellent salary, bonus, and benefits packages, including 401k and company paid medical coverage. For career opportunity and confidential consideration, send or fax resume, including geographic preferences and willingness to relocate to: DeAngelo Brothers, Inc., Attention: Paul D. DeAngelo, 100 North Conahan Drive, Hazleton, PA 18201. Phone: 800/360-9333, Fax: 570/459-5500. EOE/AAP, M-F.

### LANDSCAPEJOBS.COM

888/729-LAND National Search

We are presently searching for the following:

- Maintenance Supervisors
- Maintenance Foremen
- Irrigation Technicians
- Construction Foremen
- Operations Manager
- Branch Manager Trainees
   Call or visit www.landscapejobs.com

#### **POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

Western States Reclamation, Inc. is a sixteen-year-old landscape, revegetation, and erosion control company in Broomfield, Colorado, who is recognized for our excellent work. We seek to fill the following positions:

- Project Manager Revegetation/Landscape
- Estimators Senior and Entry Level
- Irrigation Superintendent
- Landscape Superintendent
- · Reclamation Superintendent/Foreman

If you are qualified, you will receive above average wages, excellent medical benefits, 401k/profit sharing, company vehicle (Superintendents and Project Managers), relocation allowance, incentive program and working in a great team environment. All positions are full-time year round. Check our website at www.WSreclamation.com Send resume to WSRI, 11730 Wadsworth Blvd., Broomfield, CO 80020, fax 303/465-2478.

#### **GREENINDUSTRYJOBS.COM**

www.irrigationjobs.com www.treecarejobs.com www.nurseryjobs.com www.landscapingcareers.com Search Jobs and Resumes

### IRRIGATION BRANCH MANAGER/ SERVICE TECHNICIANS

Oasis Irrigation Systems, Inc., a well-established, full-service irrigation company in Atlanta, Ga., and Charlotte, N.C., seeks energetic, highly motivated, and well-organized people to join our team in the following positions:

#### Atlanta

- Service Technicians
- Commercial Foremen
- Residential Foremen

#### Charlotte

- Branch Manager
- Residential Salesperson
- Service Manager

If you are qualified you will receive above average wages, excellent medical benefits, relocation allowance, incentive program and working in a great team environment. All positions are full-time and year round. Mail, fax or e-mail resume to:

4958 Winters Chapel Road Atlanta, GA 30360 Fax 770/913-0180 E-mail: 4958Oasis@aol.com

#### CAREER OPPORTUNITY

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#### **VEGETATION CONTROL**

#### CHEMICAL SALES REPRESENTATIVE

Come join one of the largest Vegetation Management companies in the United States

DeAngelo Brothers, Inc. has immediate openings for Chemical Sales Representatives throughout the United States.

Responsibilities include direct marketing of DBI's full product line of chemicals and related equipment throughout a regional territory. Horticulture or related degree desired, with a working knowledge of Vegetation Management Chemicals. (Minimum two years experience). Qualified applicants must have strong interpersonal and communication skills. Applicants will work out of a DBI Regional Office and must enjoy travel. We offer an excellent salary and benefits package, including 401k and company paid medical coverage.

Please forward resume for confidential consideration, and include salary history and geographic preference in cover letter. Send or fax resumes to:

#### **DEANGELO BROS., INC.**

Attn: Charles Sizer 100 N. Conahan Dr. Hazleton, PA 18201 Fax: 570/459-5500 EOE/AAP/M-F

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#### TREE AND SHRUB CARE

Spray Technician/Plant Health Care Monitor. Plant ID and knowledge of insect pests and diseases desirable. Will consider trainee. Work involves insect and disease control on ornamental plants in southeastern PA. This can be a career position or can lead to other positions within the company. Top pay and benefits. Keystone Tree Experts, 215/348-4444 or email to employment@keystonetree.com

### **BRANCH MANAGER**

LAWN AND TREE CARE COMPANY BOSTON, MA area

One of Massachusetts largest independent lawn and tree service companies is accepting resumes for a Branch Manager's position. Individual will be responsible for day-to-day operations, supervising staff, sales and service. Candidates need to have 5 years experience in the lawn care industry, be a good communicator, have organizational skills, and an appreciation for great customer service.

The Lawn Company offers excellent benefits including health and dental insurance, profit sharing, and 401K. Please send resumes with salary history to Ed McGuire, The Lawn Company, P.O. Box 1430, South Dennis, MA 02660.

### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

The Green Plan, Inc., a fifteen-year-old, full-service landscape, tree care and irrigation company located at the base of the Colorado Rocky Mountains is continuing to grow and expand operations.

Current Positions Available:

- Chemical Division Manager
- · Licensed Tree and Lawn Spray Technicians
- Irrigation Service Technicians
- Landscape Maintenance Foreman
- Landscape Installation Foreman
- Tree Climbers and Bucket Operators

Positions include excellent compensation, year around employment, 401k and full benefits. Immediate openings available with a quality ALCA Member firm. Please forward resume to the fax number or address below.

#### THE GREEN PLAN, INC.

P.O. Box 17338 Boulder, Colorado 80308 303/938-8230 Phone 303/938-8137 Fax tgp@eazy.net

### ACADEMIC SPECIALIST-NURSERY and LANDSCAPE INTEGRATOR

Michigan State University is pleased to offer a nontenure track position in the IPM Program. The successful candidate will collaborate with members of the multi-faceted Nursery and Landscape Industry and MSU colleagues to address problems and enhance adoption of viable Integrated Crop Management strategies. The application deadline is Jan. 15, 2000, or until a suitable candidate is found. MS. required, Ph.D. desired in Horticulture, Landscape Management, Entomology, Plant Pathology, Weed Science, IPM or a related field. Experience/interest in integrated management systems, research, education, and grant writing is required, with practical knowledge and field experience in landscape management systems desired. Excellent communication skills are essential. Competitive salary and benefits. For more information: Charles E. Edson, IPM Program, B18 Food Safety & Toxicology Bldg, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI 48824. Phone: 517/353-5134.

MSU is an affirmative-action, equal-opportunity institution.

### **POSITIONS AVAILABLE**

24-year-old established garden center and landscape nursery on 18 acres experiencing significant growth has positions available in the following areas:

- DIRECTOR OF RETAIL OPERATIONS Senior retail management experience required – Creative vision with an eye to the 21st Century, strong training, supervisory and communication skills needed – help us to expand our product categories, private labeling, E-commerce and more
- BUYER Trees/Shrubs Assist our buyer purchasing a wide variety of trees/shrubs some traveling required
- RETAIL SALES Sell all phases of the nursery operation plus all types of garden products and gifts
- TREE AND SHRUB SALES Sell in the nursery retail operation – horticulture experience is necessary
- LANDSCAPE SALES Experienced individual with excellent sales background in the landscape field, good tree and shrub knowledge required, strong ethics
- PRODUCTION PROJECT MANAGERS manage upscale landscape jobs from inception to completion, client customer service skills, ability to read plans, manage crews and possess equipment knowledge
- IRRIGATION MANAGER(S) for installations, repairs and service. Experience in all aspects of irrigation; customer service skills required. Yearround employment

We are looking for talented individuals excited by and dedicated to horticulture with a focus on doing the right thing for the customer and who seek opportunity with a dynamic, rapidly expanding company. We are interested in professionals who are highly motivated and consider themselves self-starters. Excellent benefit package and competitive salaries. Fax resume to Marders 516/537-7023 or e-mail to humanresources@marders.com Bridgehampton, NY. Eastern End of Long Island. Visit our website at www.marders.com GET EXCITED ABOUT GOING TO WORK!

#### TREE CLIMBER NEEDED

Tree Works Environmental Tree Care, Inc. is looking for qualified tree care professionals to become a part of a growing team of arborists. All applicants must meet the following criteria for consideration:

- Must LOVE to climb
- Must have current CDL
- Must have 5 years experience
- Certification a plus

Starting pay is \$15.00 per hour \$18.00 per hour for a certified arborist. Full benefit package. Send resume to: Tree Works ETC, Inc., 3915 Misty Court, Land O'Lakes, FL 34639 or to fax call 813/973-1931.

#### HEYSER LANDSCAPING, INC.

A DIVISION OF OMNI FACILITY RESOURCES, INC., THE FASTEST GROWING SERVICE COMPANY IN THE INDUSTRY; has career opportunities available for strong management and sales candidates to join our full service landscape team. Offices located throughout the East Coast and the Midwest. SALARY COMMENSURATE WITH EXPERIENCE, PLUS A FULL CORPORATE BENEFITS PACKAGE. CALL 800/462-0343 OR FAX RESUME TO 610/630-1288.

#### CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Well-established, full-service design/build firm in Northeast New Jersey seeks energetic, highly motivated and well-organized people to join our company. Candidates should have minimum 3 to 5 years experience in landscape industry with strong emphasis on sales and customer service for both residential and commercial accounts.

- Department Manager Irrigation should have superior technical knowledge to coordinate underground sprinkler installations and service, systems operations and analysis of system deficiencies.
- Department Manager Maintenance & Lawn/ Tree Care needs thorough knowledge of insect/ disease identification and control. State Certification 3A/3B desirable. Strong Commercial and Residential Maintenance experience.
- Department Manager Design/Construction should have extensive landscape sales/management/production experience. A degree in Horticulture or Landscape Design desired.

All candidates should have excellent communication skills plus strong supervisory and organizational ability. Responsibilities include estimating; sales; scheduling and supervising crews; purchasing and inventory; and budget and profit control. Competitive salary and benefits. Growth potential. Mail or fax resume to: Personnel Dept., Jacobsen Landscape Design and Construction, 413 Godwin Avenue, Midland Park, NJ 07432. Fax 201/444-4334.

### EXCITING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

A Green Care Company providing

- Residential to large scale commercial construction
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in the Chicago North Shore and Northwest suburban area.

We have a professional approach in a casual atmosphere – where WORK IS FUN.

A fast pace, growing company where you can learn and grow – dedicated to customer service.

Work can be boring – not here – we want professionals who want to use total talents and ideas. If you can communicate, listen, are innovative and compassionate, we are looking for you.

If you want to be part of the management team in a medium sized company that is going and growing and have talent and experience we are looking for the following:

- Construction Supervisors
- Landscape Architects
- Maintenance Managers
- Maintenance Supervisors
- Production Assistants
- Sales Managers

We have competitive salaries and benefits with a variety of incentives.

Please send your resume and history to: P.O. Box 7166 Libertyville, IL 60048

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Due to rapid growth, we are now SEEKING High energy, goal driven, visionary, talent for The following positions:

Landscape Maintenance Sales Managers: Individuals must possess the following:

- Strong Landscape Maintenance Sales Background
- · Very Motivated and Reliable
- Excellent Communication Skills
- · Well Organized and Articulate
- Highly Team-Oriented with Good Leadership Skills

Applications and resumes will be accepted for the following positions as well:

- Landscape Designers/Architects
- Landscape Construction Sales/Estimators
- Landscape Maintenance Division Managers and Foreman
- Landscape Construction Supervisors and Foreman
- Irrigation Technicians

Successful applicants shall receive top compensation, great benefits package (including 401k), along with exceptional incentive program. Relocation is not a problem; we'll cover relocation expenses for the right applicants.

Send or fax resume NOW to: Human Resources Department

### COMPLETE INDUSTRIES INC.

P.O. Box 1584 Bowie, MD 20717 Phone: 800/383-0440 Fax: 301/390-5600

### PROFESSIONAL SALES PERSON NEEDED

Large full service landscape contracting design/build firm seeks a highly motivated individual with a minimum of 2 years sales experience. Position consists of client prospecting, estimating, professional presentations and follow up. Experience and education in the landscape industry required. Excellent earning potential with full benefits. Salary compensation package tied to performance. Send resume to: TERRAFIRMA INC., 3780 E. Morgan Rd., Ypsilanti, MI 48197, or call David Silverman at 734/434-3811.

### IRRIGATION PROFESSIONALS

Rain One Inc. of Central Ohio is accepting resumes and inquiries for key positions within our organization. We are looking for candidates with at least 5 years experience to fill immediate positions in the following areas:

- Service Technician
- Commercial Installation Foreperson
- Residential Installation Foreperson

We offer excellent pay, benefits, off season employment opportunities, and a great family atmosphere. Relocation expenses considered. Phone – 614/759-1196 or Fax – 614/759-7099.

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### **How We Do It**

### Creating a Custom Newsletter

For many years after establishing our design/build landscape architecture firm on Chicago's affluent North Shore, we refrained from engaging in strategic public relations and promotional activities. Confident that our high quality work would, over time, speak for itself, we believed our business would grow along with our reputation.

A few years ago, however, we contracted with a local public relations firm to see what might be achieved by sharing information about our company, our employees and our accomplishments. One key element of our PR campaign is a four-page, full-color newsletter, mailed twice a year (in spring and fall, before and after the growing season). We print 1,000 copies of the newsletter and mail it to approximately 600 customers, and

then distribute the rest to community leaders and the green industry trade and consumer media.

Our newsletter is designed to provide information homeowners will find useful planning and maintaining their landscape. Articles range from explaining gardening techniques to the challenges of growing in a Midwestern climate. In most cases, these articles are illustrated with color photos taken during various growing seasons at properties we developed.

From start to finish, the newsletter takes about 30 days to produce. To have a public relations firm write,

produce and print 1,000 copies of one issue, the cost is about \$2,500, not including photography.



- Content should be useful and informative.
- 2. Good photography is key: "Every picture
- 3. Utilize company "experts" as much as possible.
- 4. Keep design consistent and identifiable from issue to issue.

To create the framework for each newsletter we first meet with a freelance writer to talk about the questions our clients are asking most frequently, as well as issues related to the Midwest's growing season. Then we identify the best resources to explain each topic - usually people on our staff - and schedule interviews. Additional research is done on the Internet or by interviewing clients who have solved a specific problem. Each article is sent in draft form to the respective "experts" for review and editing. When all of the copy has been approved by the appropriate staff member, a final

draft is reviewed by our senior management and approved or revised as necessary.

For the first issue, we weren't sure about the the balance between visual and textual information. After receiving good feedback on the visual portion of the newsletter, we added more photography. This year, we used nine photos in each newsletter.

The availability of professional photography also allows our company to remain "top of mind" among the editors at local newspapers, as well as many garden, shelter and lifestyle publications. And an expanded photo library provides our sales staff with images to show prospective clients and use to support applications for regional and national competitions.

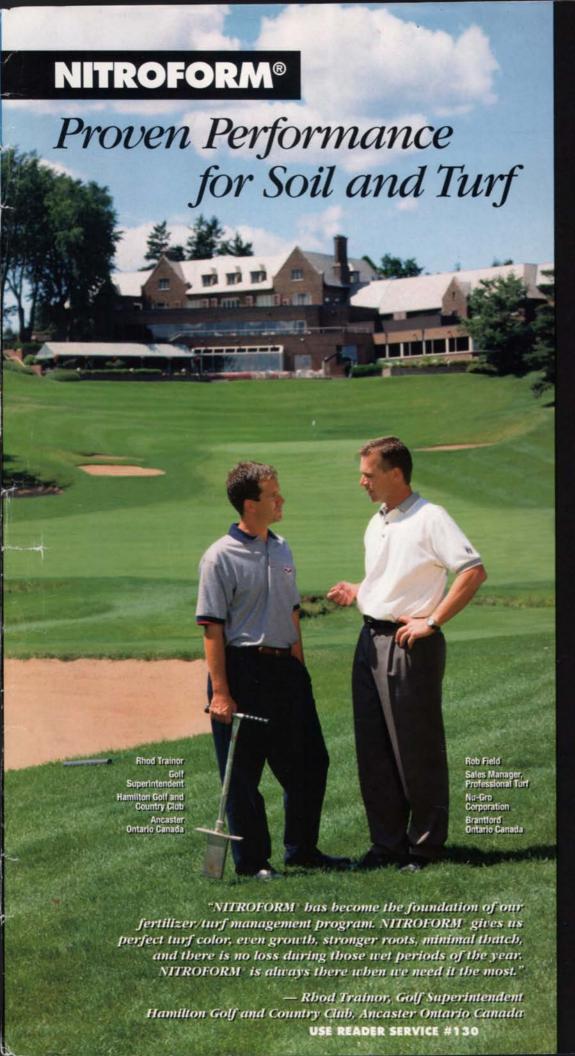
1997, our business has grown by more than 30 percent. Clients tell us they anticipate its arrival, and many go out of their way to mention an aspect of the newsletter that they found of particular interest or to suggest topics for us to address in a future

newsletter. - Scott Byron

Since the debut of our newsletter in

The author is president of Scott Byron & Co., Lake Bluff,







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Photo: Hamilton Golf and Country Club, Ancaster Ontario Canada (18th green)

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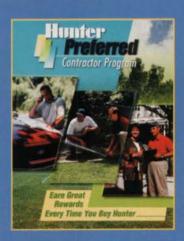
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